

Babocom

AUGUST
2002

www.robertshome.org/babcom

BABYLON 5 WARS * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS



500 DOWNLOADS EACH MONTH!

REVIEW

By Gareth Smith
(Damnation)

I WAS asked by Babcom to do a review of the Turning Point on the grounds that I had bought a copy of the rules at Gencon, I was not connected with AoG, or one of the Babcom regular contributors. Archangel, knew this so he could ask me directly to do a review. How could I say no ?

First off, whilst I bought the FA1 rulebooks I never played it. I found the rules a little to much like hard work to interpret. It's not that I couldn't have if I put the effort in but the rules just didn't lend themselves to being easy to pick up. I've played Full Thrust, SFB, Silent Death and of course B5Wars for a number of years.

Format

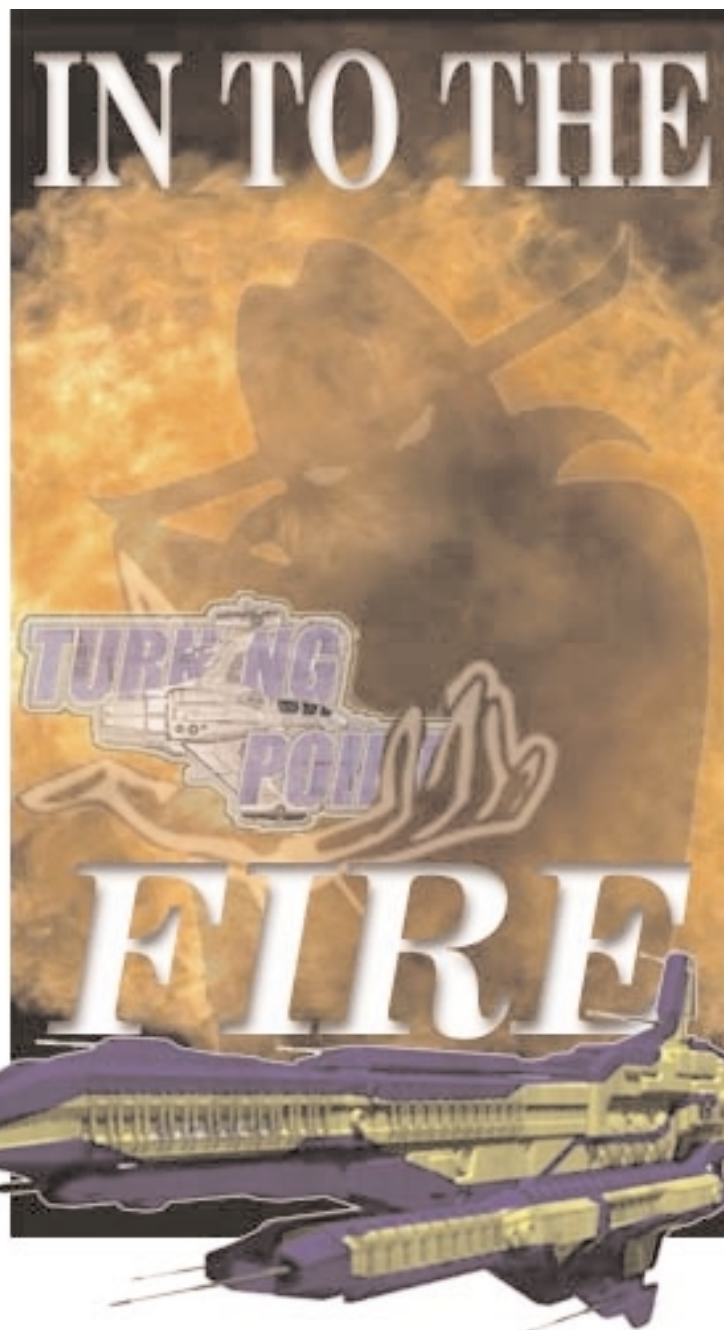
Turning Point comes as a bundle of lose sheets, punched for a three ring binder. The sheets are contained inside a cardboard cover. The whole lot is then shrink wrapped to keep it all together. The cover is in colour whilst the rules themselves are in black and white. The rules can be split into 3 basic sections, the core rules (30 pages), the ship construction rules (18 pages) and the Turning Point background (25 pages) plus the SCS for the ships mentioned in the rules and a set of tables for play and ship construction which comes to another 20 odd pages.

When I came back from Gencon and checked the forums I became aware of the print quality issue. I hadn't really noticed it because I was reading the rules and pretty much ignoring the pictures, which didn't have anything to do with how to play the game.

The pictures of the Turning Point ships are faint, the border of the pages likewise. Many of the 3D ship images have been taken from meshes used for the model maker as they show the top of the sprue attached to the underside of the ship. The text however is perfectly legible.

The Game.

Fleet Action 2 is designed to simulate engagements between fleets rather than individual ships. Whilst the smallest unit is the ship or fighter flight the smallest unit which is moved is the squadron consisting of a number of ships and attached fighters. Based on the Turning



Point ships, demos played at Gencon and assuming you become reasonably proficient with the rules I would estimate that a game with 4 to 6 Squadrons of 4 to 6 ships each would be resolvable within 2 to 3 hours. This is of course an estimate based on experience to date so you might find your own games playing longer or shorter.

The game sequence consists of a start of turn phase, three move and fire pulses and an end of turn phase. Ballistics are fired at the start of the turn and are resolved at end of the turn. Speed is set at start of turn and then the movement of the squadron is split between the three pulses with simultaneous fire at the end of each pulse for direct fire weapons.

All direct fire weapons have a delay in pulses between firing. Fighters are catered for and per-

form all the standard functions such as superiority, escort and attack.

The Rules.

In general the rules are clear and straightforward. There were very few sections which required a reread in order to understand. Having worked through the rules I came to the conclusion that Turning Point has achieved what it set out to do - provide a fleet level generic combat system. However, it has one area which may cause problems. This is the quantity of dice you are going to need to roll to resolve combat.

Say you decide to have a squadron of ships fire at a target. Having determined how many guns are in arc and your chance to hit, you roll 1D20 for each shot. If a shot hits and the weapon can be

intercepted the target ship can roll d10 equal to it's pin point defense rating allocated among the weapons that hit it. If the roll is less than or equal to the vulnerability of the weapon then it is intercepted. Having hit you pick up a number of dice as listed for the weapon and roll each one. You then compare the rolled dice to the armor on the ship and if you roll at least equal to the ships armor then you inflict damage. Possible damage dice are D6/D8/D10/D12. A slight quirk with the system is where a weapon is listed as doing 4D8+1 damage means you roll four D8+1 dice to resolve the damage rather than roll 4d8 and add 1 to the total as B5Wars players would. The difference between the damage roll and the armor is checked on a table to determine extract damage done. A further roll may be required to determine if a system is destroyed or not.

Now when you consider a single UNAN Powell class cruiser can bring 6 5d10 guns, 8 2d8 guns and 5 1d6 guns to bear across it's front 120 degree arc and there can be up to four in a squadron, you will end up rolling buckets of dice. If there is one single downside to the system it is this, especially with the need to roll a second damage dice to get an odd/even result to determine system damage, resolving attacks can take some time. A full squadron of UNAN Dunn missile cruisers fires 120 missiles each of which requires a D20 roll to resolve! If they were all to hit then there would be a further 120 D8 rolls to resolve the damage inflicted. In order to run any large sort of battle you are going to have to switch to percentage impacts in order to resolve attacks or use a computer dice roller. Otherwise even with moderate fleet battles you'll end up spending a lot of time resolving fire.

Many of the rule sections present you with options allowing you to customize the game to suit your play-style. There are three ways of handling ship movement - plotted, semi-plotted or free. Which you use is up to you. Fighters can either be handled abstractly by placing them on the map or they can be moved from the carriers to there targets or patrol areas. You chose which way you want to handle it.

Fighters have there own section. Again the rules are laid out clearly and there does not seem to be any obvious problems. I say seems, because despite having a whole

section on fighters there are no carriers or fighters included in the UNAN or EU forces SCS sections at the back of the book. With no examples it was hard to get any real idea of what fighters can or cannot do and thus to assess the effectiveness of fighters in the game. The omission of example fighters and carriers from the core rules does seem a little strange.

The only rule which I noted is that fighters are limited in the maximum damage they can score of any damage dice is one point of structure and a max of two systems. This compares to ship fire which can cause up to 3 structure damage and 4 systems from a single damage dice. Like B5Wars fighters have to endure all the defensive fire before they can make the attack roll. Fighters have an action point total which is expended to move and to launch attacks. Thus fighters can make multiple attacks in a movement pulse. But without seeing some fighters and how many action points they come with it's hard to see how nasty fighters can be.

Construction.

The construction system seems to be a reasonably simple system, as such systems go, to allow you to build our own ships. Having read through it there did not seem to be any obvious ways to abuse it but only time is going to tell in that regard. However, it does have two things going for it. The first is that the means of calculating the cost of a unit is not predicated on you staying inside the design system.

Thus if you want to equip a ship with a gun it cannot carry there is nothing stopping you. You will however have to pay for it. The second thing is that you can design not just ships but the weapons they field. This feature I haven't seen before. In the two other systems I've played before with construction rules, the weapons were pre-designed and your only option was how many and what arcs they had. Turning point allows you to build the weapon in terms of damage dice, type, range, rate of fire and interceptability. If you want to you could build a Heavy Laser with the

rate of fire and arc of a twin array, but it would cost almost as much as an entire destroyer built with standard weapons. There is no reason why a version of this cost calculation system could not be adapted to calculate a base point value for B5Wars ships. But that's for the future. The other thing I liked is the note at the start of rules which explains that although the construction rules provide a common framework for construction, certain backgrounds may not fit inside the construction system. In such cases you violate the construction rules. But not the cost calculations. As

"Turning Point comes across as a good game system. It has great potential to be expanded to other backgrounds. It is clear and easy to follow. It has a few typos here and there but no more so than I would expect for a product of this size."

behind the Turning Point ships. Again, nothing stands out instantly as wrong, but I'm sure once some of the more technically inclined people get a chance to read through it some queries will be raised. Overall, I found it a light enough read which I didn't have to think to hard over.

Following the background it gives a sample of ships for both the UNAN and EU, the two major powers of the turning point background. One thing that stood out is the reuse of ship hulls. For example, the Powell hull is the same as the Fuqua hull except the Powell was a pair of rear wings. This seemed to hold true for many of the ships. Looking at the TP miniature packs many of them were labeled as being for more than one ship. This may cause problems trying to identify ships in play when using them so clear labeling of ships on their bases will probably be needed.

Overall.

Turning Point comes across as a good game system. It has great potential to be expanded to other backgrounds. It is clear and easy to follow. It has a few typos here and there but

no more so than I would expect for a product of this size. Given the loose leaf nature of the rules any serious problem pages can be reprinted. There is an issue with the print quality which AoG are addressing but it does not stop you playing the game. I look forward to seeing the TP and B5 fleet lists. The B5 lists I think will make or break the rules because they will prove or disprove the generic nature of the rules. I don't think they will be a problem as pretty much everything that is needed is in rules. As long as you tone down the blizzard of negative posts the forums seem to have spawned over the typos/print quality and actually try it I think you will find Turning Point a fun game to play and worth the investment.

long as you use the cost calculation you should be able to build comparable points of ships from different backgrounds and have a fair fight. I'd take that with a pinch of salt but in theory this should be true.

Turning Point Background.

The background fluff for the Turning Point is believable enough and contains nothing which seemed so outlandish as to cause pause. It serves the need to set up a background where conflict will occur in order to make it interesting enough to play the game. The background also goes into the technology

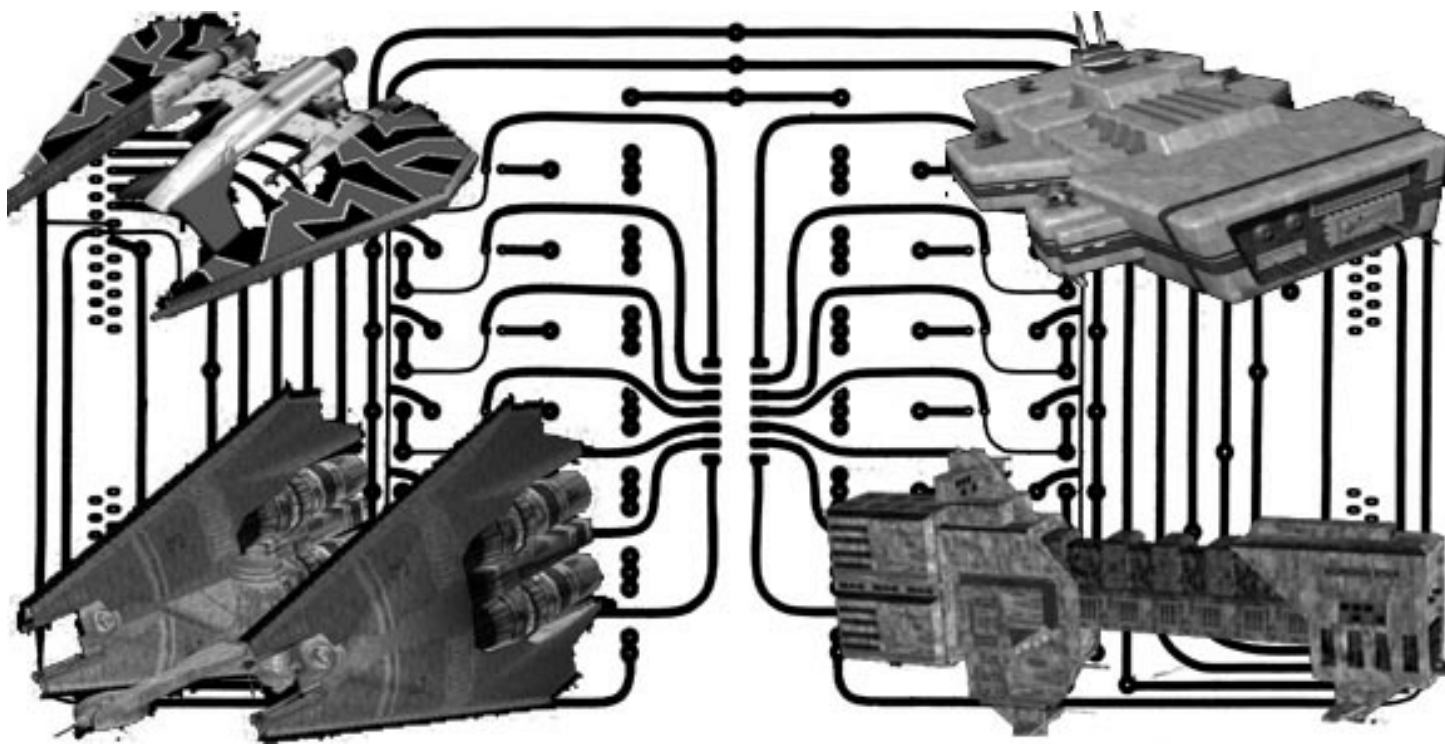
16

AUGUST
2002

Issue No. 16

CONTENTS

- 1 Review: Turning Point
- Damnation
- 4 Tactics: Young Guns
Narn v Earth Force
- Scott McGaffin
- 6 Scenario: Lions Den
- Richard Bax
- 7 Gropos Tactics
- Hardlec
- 8 Gropos Scenario
III Met at St Ives & St George
- Hardlec
- 14 Battleforce
- Edited by Chris Nasipak
- 16 Ships: Grome Gromath Errata
- Kevin Christie & chris Siefert



Young guns

AT THE time of the skirmishes between the Earth Alliance and the Narn Regime, both the EA and the Narns had been in space for a relatively short period.

The EA's first jump engine equipped ship began exploration in 2163, and the Narns began exploration (re: conquest) in 2210. Like the Alliance's earlier encounters with the Koulani, Ch'Lonas and Centauri, the conflict with the Narns was more a series of skirmishes than a full out war although it did give the Alliance it's first taste of ground conflict with an alien race.

This analysis will cover the various units, and strengths and weaknesses of said units for both the Earth Alliance and the Narn Regime during their brief conflict.

NARN REGIME

Facing the EA, the Narn fielded a considerably smaller array of vessels such as T'Narn Cruisers, Rothan Destroyers, Thentus and T'Rakk Frigates and D'Tarn Light Gunboats. From this quick listing of ships available to each side, even if the Narns fielded equal number of ships, they are at a serious disadvantage mainly due to the flexibility and versatility of the EA fleet.

T'Narn Early Cruiser

The T'Narn is an adequate close-in vessel mainly due to it's heavy weapon loadout and decent mobility. It also happens to be the only Narn ship with fighter carrying capacity, a fact that by



Tactical Display

By SCOTT MCGAFFIN

itself makes these ships valuable. Losing one would be a serious blow. The T'Narn also happens to be the Narns only capital class of ship available at this time.

Strengths- two squadrons of fighters, superior EW to almost anything used by the EA, excellent close-in firepower.

Weaknesses- poor anti-fighter weaponry, poor heavy weapon firing arcs, not as durable as comparable EA ships, terrible side profile.

Rothan Plasma Destroyer

The next biggest ship in the Narn fleet, the Rothan is a deadly attack ship. Its mission is simply to race in, hammer its target with its heavy plasma cannons and race out to recharge.

Strengths- it's EW is better than almost anything in the EA fleet, adequate anti-fighter cover, very durable front half.

Weaknesses- all heavy armament is concentrated in the nose, a minor power shortage.

Thentus Frigate

Probably the most feared ship in the Narn arsenal is the small, deadly Thentus frigate. Packing excellent firepower into a small, maneuverable hull, the Thentus is not a vessel to be ignored. Operated in wolfpacks, the Thentus' are easily

able to exploit weaknesses in an enemy's battle line.

Strengths- fast, agile, maneuverable, excellent anti-fighter firepower, good anti-ship firepower, excellent EW compared to the EA for a ship of its size.

Weaknesses- inherent medium ship weakness - not very durable

T'Rakk Frigate

The T'Rakk is simply put: a cheap attrition unit. If it can survive to close range to fire it's plasma cannons then it's paid for itself.

Strengths- cheap, attack unit, pretty good close-in firepower

Weaknesses- poor heavy weapon arcs, terrible anti-fighter defenses.

D'Tarn Light Gunboat

(plasma variant)

- Much like a smaller version of the T'Rakk, in other words an even cheaper attrition unit. It should be used in much the same way.

Strengths- cheap attack unit, excellent point blank firepower, agile

Weaknesses- virtually nonexistent anti-fighter defenses, like all LCVs it is flimsy and easily destroyed

Gorith Medium Fighter

This fighter was the Narn's period fighter. The Gorith is superior in almost every way to its EA counterpart, the Tiger Starfury.

TACTICS: NARN VERSUS EARTH

Strengths- faster, more maneuverable and cheaper than the Tiger

Weaknesses- less structure and less damaging guns compared to the Tiger, only carried on one ship

EARTH ALLIANCE

Facing the Narns is a vast array of EA vessels. From dreadnoughts and fleet carriers to heavy cruisers and attack frigates the EA compared to the Narns, has a vessel for almost any mission type, whereas the Narns do not.

Artemis Heavy Frigate

One of the Alliance's main line warships of the era. The EA in fact has two types of this unit in service: the point blank crunch power of the Alpha and the armor-bypassing power of the Beta. Out of the two, the Beta is clearly superior, due its improvements in EW, engine power, reactor, armor and fighter defenses.

Strengths- the Beta is very heavily armored, adequate interception capabilities, good heavy weapon firing arcs, excellent 360 degree weapon coverage.

Weaknesses- poor EW compared to Narn vessels (especially the Alpha model), general weapon loadout is close range only

Avenger Heavy Carrier

The biggest carrier available to either side. A single Avenger with its deadly cargo can easily tilt any battle in the EA's favor. Due to its value as a fleet carrier it must have an escort.

Strengths- massive fighter capacity, has enough 360 degree light firepower to discourage smaller opponents, excellent anti-fighter capabilities

Weaknesses- no long range weapons, poor EW, poor armor, very slow and ponderous

Hermes Priority Transport

One of the smaller EA ships, it won't usually see front line combat, but if involved it can handle itself well enough to get away. Could also be a good vessel to use in a quick raid.

Strengths- fast for an EA vessel, decent anti-fighter firepower, can carry a single flight of fighters for defense.

Weaknesses- rather meager firepower for a HCV, poor EW, rather expensive for a vessel with it's level of offensive capabilities

Hyperion Heavy Cruiser

The main EA cruiser that was to see so many variants and so many conflicts. The Hyperion is the epitome of EA flexibility and willingness to experiment.

Strengths- good 360-degree firepower coverage, Alpha has excellent point blank firepower, excellent interception and decent anti-fighter coverage, main heavy weapons have good rates of fire, Alpha model carrier a single flight of fighters

Weaknesses- slow and not very maneuverable, Beta carries no fighters

Laertes Police Corvette

An old ship, replaced by the Tethys, it still saw



use during the conflict era and would've no doubt been encountered during the Narn's initial incursion.

Strengths- reasonable maneuverable vessel (for the EA), decent anti-fighter defenses

Weaknesses- anti-ship firepower is lacking, rather poorly armored

Nova Dreadnought

Sn impressive ship unequaled by anything the Narns could field in this period. Its enormous firepower coupled with its fighters could devastate any Narn task force.

Strengths- incredible firepower, two squadrons of fighters, can fight at any range

Weaknesses- slow and not very maneuverable (like most EA vessels), minor power shortage, has poor anti-fighter defenses (has to rely on it's fighters for AF defense)

Olympus Corvette

The EA's other main HCV, the Olympus mounts a similar level of firepower to the Artemis. Where the Olympus is different is in its flexibility of firepower. Medium plasma cannons and railguns for close-in work and missiles for medium ranges.

Strengths- flexible firepower, reasonably maneuverable (for the EA)

Weaknesses- poor EW, poor anti-fighter coverage

Oracle Scout Cruiser

The EA's scout of the era, it has no Narn counterpart. It's EW is a welcome addition to any EA fleet and a target for any Narn forces.

Strengths- decent anti-fighter firepower, reasonably fast and maneuverable (for the EA), good interception

Weaknesses- poor firing arcs on the medium lasers, forward sensors are vulnerable to destruction

Orestes System Monitor

- An older design, the Orestes is still very useful and is often seen on patrol in EA colony systems, and probably would've faced Narn forces quite a few times.

Strengths- excellent 360-degree firepower cov-

erage, good versatile firepower, carries a squadron of fighters, heavy armor and good structure.

Weaknesses- poor anti-fighter defenses, ridiculously slow and unmaneuverable, poor EW, terrible initiative

Tethys Police Cutter

The replacement for the aging Laertes. The Tethys has shown itself to be a flexible ship, second only to the Hyperion in number of variants.

Strengths- fast and maneuverable, firepower varies depending on the vessel allowing mission flexibility, good 360-degree firepower coverage on all models, low point cost

Weaknesses- poor anti-fighter firepower, poor armor

Tiger Starfury Heavy Fighter

The EA fighter of the era. It tends to be poorer overall than it's Narn counterpart, the Gorith. Where it loses in capabilities though it makes up for in numbers.

Strengths- good firepower and structure, tends to be harder to hit than the Gorith

Weaknesses- more expensive the Gorith, poor offensive bonus, initiative and thrust compared to the Gorith

DIVERSITY AND FLEXIBILITY

From the rosters listed above it is seen that the Narns have a serious disadvantage in mission flexibility. They have no large battleship/dreadnought, they have no large fleet carrier, they have very few choices when it comes to what ships to use. Because of this an EA player can easily predict what ships he will be facing and how to counter them.

One of the key disadvantages for the Narns is their lack of carriers. They have one unit (their biggest) that can carry fighters. The EA has five. The sheer number of fighters the EA can bring to a battle can easily overwhelm any Narn force. A single Avenger could devastate a fleet with its fighters. Unfortunately for the Narns this is a lesson they do not learn too well as in the modern era, they still only have one ship that can carry two squadrons of fighters, whereas the EA has expanded on the Avenger and created the huge Poseidon Supercarrier.

From the outset the Narn incursion was doomed. A lack of heavy gunships and carriers and fighters, left them as targets for the EA forces. The only place they could compete successfully was in fast attack ships, but EA fighters could easily maul these.

* * *



The Lion's Den

This scenario is the second in a series charting the story of the prototype light cruiser Arctic in chronological sequence. While it is possible to play them individually you'll get the most enjoyment by running each one in turn.

THOUGH the Arctic had escaped the Epsilon system patrol with little damage, the word was now out. EA commanders accurately concluded that the Arctic was headed for Mentab space and reinforced all patrols along that border. With his original flight plan now cut off, Singh was forced into a dangerous decision. Avoiding the Mentab jump route, Singh instead turned to a minor route that ended in Beta-3, a Centauri outpost system. Singh hoped that if he were to meet a Centauri patrols he'd be able to bluff his way out of the situation.

Unfortunately, a particularly aggressive patrol captain, a Vasiring Ketter, had been tipped off about the situation by a Covran Scout that had recently returned from an ELINT mission at the edge of the Epsilon system. As the Covran moved deeper into the system to report to the Beta-3 commander, Ketter decided that if he could nail the Arctic he could score that promotion that would finally get him out of outpost patrol hell.

While his total patrol task group was not particularly large, he did possess the latest hyperspace eddy data, courtesy of the Covran, by which he set up a tight net of patrols along likely hyperspace exit points. With his patrols in place, Ketter waited and hoped for a little luck. He got it, though the commander of the Haven Mosquito Hawk would have begged to differ.

Set-Up

Singh: Heavy Cruiser Arctic, along with any Thunderbolts remaining after the last scenario in hex 2115, speed 4, heading direction 2.

Centauri Beta-3 Patrol Group 4: Haven



Frontline scenarios

By RICHARD BAX

Mosquito Hawk in hex 2419, speed 6 heading direction 6, 12 Senti fighters, Flight A in hex 2519 and Flight B in hex 2420. Both flights are at speed 6, heading direction 6.

Special Rules

Use a floating map.

The Arctic may repair a total of 25 boxes of damage received during the previous scenario. These repairs may not be used on systems that were completely destroyed or on sides that have been destroyed. All critical effects are removed.

The Arctic has literally jumped right into the middle of the Centauri patrol. The Arctic has one flight of fighters deployed in combat space patrol in the same hex.

Centauri commander Ketter has been waiting in hyperspace hoping to jump in after the Arctic. Roll a d6. On a 1 or 2 Ketter arrives via jump point in 2 turns, a 3 or 4 and he arrives in 3 turns and finally, on a 5 or 6 in 4 turns. His force consists of the Vorchan Pride of Immolan and the Havens Favorite and Stinger.

The jump point from the Vorchan can form in any of the six hexes that surround the Haven Mosquito Hawk. If the Mosquito Hawk has been destroyed an emergency distress beacon will still guide the Vorchan in. Simply mark the hex where the Haven was destroyed and use the above rule.

No fighters from either side may ram.

Victory Conditions

The Arctic wins if it manages to survive and escape into hyperspace. Any other result is considered a loss.

Historical Outcome

Overcoming the initial shock of nearly piling into the Mosquito Hawk, Singh attempted to stall, hoping to buy enough time to recharge the jump engine and escape. Singh's speech was quickly interrupted when simultaneously; the Haven began broadcasting a coded message and the Senti fighters turned onto attack vectors. Fearing the worst, Singh ordered the remainder of his fighters launched and opened fire. The Haven managed to avoid the forward arcs of the Arctic but was crippled by two medium laser bursts from the aft LPA's. The Mosquito Hawk's return fire erased one of the LPA's and seriously damaged one of the main thrusters.

Standard particle beam fire in conjunction the Thunderbolts had almost finished off the last of the Senti, when the Pride of Immolan's plasma accelerator burst plowed into the portside of the Arctic. Fortunately that the portside thruster survived, the Arctic began a game of cat and mouse with the Pride of Immolan attempting to get the ship into heavy particle cannon's arc. For several minutes both ships zigged and zagged when suddenly the Vorchan zagged when it should have zigged. The heavy particle cannon proceeded to remove the nose of the hapless Vorchan and drive deeply into the primary.

With the remaining Haven's hovering out of range, long-range sensors now picked up signs of additional reinforcements. Recovering his fighters, Singh proceeded to jump out.

MILITARY equipment can be evaluated by Strategy, Tactics, and Technology. The Strategy is beyond the scope of the game of GROPOS. Tactics are a moot issue in an evaluation, as official manuals on tactics are not available for any race. Technology is usually evaluated by Mobility, Firepower, and Protection. These are notes on the various races.

Mobility

The Minbari have the clear advantage in mobility. The mobility type of Hover, combined with high rates of speed for almost all units, and easily the highest unit speeds of similar type, provides superiority in all areas. The Hover mobility type makes it possible for Minbari units to go over obstacles rather than around or through them. It is easier for the Minbari to use terrain to their advantage, and it is much easier for Minbari to get in the right location to defeat their enemies.

The Narns have mobility as one of their major assets. While almost as fast as the Minbari, the Narns are hampered by the Wheeled mobility class, which makes them sensitive to terrain. The Narns use speed to their advantage by closing rapidly with the enemy to engage at short range. However, Narn vehicles have limited arcs of fire, which is another impediment on their overall mobility.

The Earth Alliance has good mobility, both in terms of raw speed and maneuver type. It is difficult to put Earthforce units at a major disadvantage due to their maneuverability. While slower than the Narns, EA vehicles have the Tracked maneuver type, making it possible for them to go where wheeled vehicles can't go.

The Centauri are slow and ponderous. The Narns can literally run rings around them, but they need to. Centauri have good firepower and protection. It would seem they want the enemy to close with them.

Firepower

The Centauri have excellent targeting systems, their weapons have longer ranges than most of their counterparts, and the weapons do killing damage. Centauri vehicles have universal arcs (mostly) as well. They can



GROPOS TO THE LOWEST BIDDER

hit hard, and hit often. This is a decided advantage. In regard to raw firepower, the Centauri have a marginal advantage over the Minbari. They have a commanding advantage over the EA and the Narns. Their only exploitable weakness is that their gauss weapons can be partially defeated by reactive armor. Centauri Artillery is brutal and easily available.

Minbari firepower is problematic. They have the best targeting systems, and have weapons with long ranges, but they often have a disadvantage with damage (the exception being the neutron laser). Minbari are at best vaguely inconvenienced by their "Flex" firing arcs. What limits Minbari more than anything, is that the Minbari will have significantly fewer units on the battlefield. A company of 9 tanks will struggle against a company of 12 tanks, even if the 12 tanks are inferior. Minbari also suffer from weak artillery support. The Minbari Air Strike is a much more effective support tool, but neither has the ability to destroy a single point of resistance. The lack of a pinpoint strike can be more than a nuisance.

Earthforce firepower is restricted by modest targeting systems, something marginally compensated for by area effect weapons. What makes the EA a force to be reckoned with is their massive artillery capability. A Loki battery and a Frey battery in tandem, with

adequate spotters, can stop anyone (of course, the EA needs at least 2 companies for this level of support). The ability of Earth units to use their all-terrain capability and good mobility, combined with their universal weapon arcs, give them the edge over the Narns.

Narns do not suffer from a lack of firepower. While they have modest targeting systems, limited range and restrictive arcs of fire, they have excellent speed, and they will probably enjoy a numerical advantage. That the Narn come in last in regards to firepower illustrates just how much all the races value it.

Protection

While the Minbari suffer greatly by having fewer units, the combination of high profiles, high signatures and high armor values make the Minbari the best protected of the races. They have to be because any loss is going to hurt them. Minbari must maneuver and pick their shots. They must use their mobility to augment their protection. The use of the "pop-up" attack is a major plus for the Minbari.

The Centauri do not scrimp on armor, but usually have lower profile and signature values, making it easier to get hits on Centauri vehicles. It is also easier to set up an ambush on the Centauri; they are slow and easy to out-manuever. Centauri figure on getting off at least one volley while the

enemy is still closing, and then winning any contest at short range. This does not always work.

The Earth Alliance suffers mostly from having lower profile and signature values; they have plenty of armor. If they can get in close, where the probability of hitting and getting hit is such that profiles don't matter, they can stand up to most slugging contests. They cannot let an enemy stand off and pick them apart. They have enough mobility to prevent this - sometimes.

The Narns are poorly protected. This, combined with shorter ranged weapons, can be a disaster. The Narns expect to scream in at high speed, and then loose a withering barrage at point blank range. The question is not "can I destroy the Narns" but rather "can I kill them fast enough". This can be very hard on Narn soldiers.

Some Tactical Notes:

Minbari: should always select some infantry. An attached platoon of Jump Assault Infantry is a good supplement to armored units. The Mobile Infantry formations are most useful at the Battalion level. Minbari infantry is excellent, but the carriers cannot stand up to enemy tanks. Select an air strike and Artillery if possible (Use a special ability to allow the CO to call both strikes, but the Air Strike should go to counter-battery until the enemy artillery is silenced).

Centauri: The Centauri must have a balanced force, as the tanks are ineffective against infantry and the infantry is ineffective against armor. A combined arms unit can be awesome, or horrendous, depending on how it is used. Centauri do not have anti-air weapons until their supplement is out, a major weakness.

EA: Artillery, spotters, and as many as possible. Actually, any EA unit can deal defeat to the enemy, but the EA commander must use guile as well as all his assets.

Narn: Speed is not armor, but with Narns the question is "can you kill them fast enough," not "can you kill them". Narn artillery is a very significant resource, and often the Narns can outnumber the enemy by a full echelon. Use the artillery along with Narn speed, and the Narn will triumph.



When cultures collide: The Narn meet the Vatican

Ill met on St James and St George

By HARDLEC

EIGHT Narn commando teams secretly bought passage on a nondescript freighter and made an apparently standard stop over at the Human occupied world of St. James & St. George.

The Narn were annoyed at Earth Force's expansion in their direction. So the commando's were not there to pay a simple courtesy call.

Each team had a mission before the invading force landed. The intelligence on this world was very thin. A religious settlement protected by some mercenaries, who were believed to be police rather than soldiers. No one on Narn knew the military potential of these mercenaries. They did know that pirates had hit the planet once or twice, and the pirates had been defeated. These were very good policemen.

The first team saw its target: a sentry standing by an open door. "How stupid to be a sentry alone, in the open, and in the light like that!" the Narn commando thought as he surveyed his target "and dressed like a parrot besides!" The sentry was dressed in a green, red and yellow uniform tailored from an ancient time. It looked comical. The halberd the sentry carried did not look comical, but the ancient weapon did not threaten the Narn commando. He pulled the hook-bladed combat knife he carried out of its sheath. He had slain so many Centauri sentries. This would be easy.

The commando team was a pair. One Narn would sneak up to the sentry; the other would wait and use his rifle if needed. The first Narn tapped his partner on the shoulder and smiled. They both figured this sentry would be easy prey. The infiltrator began to crawl toward the target. The target seemed to

cooperate by being completely motionless. Slowly but efficiently, the Narn commando crept forward. No sound, not a leaf rustled out of place. So silent, so deadly, and oh so near. The Narn slowly rose to his feet, and crossed the scant few meters to the target, his hooked blade ready.

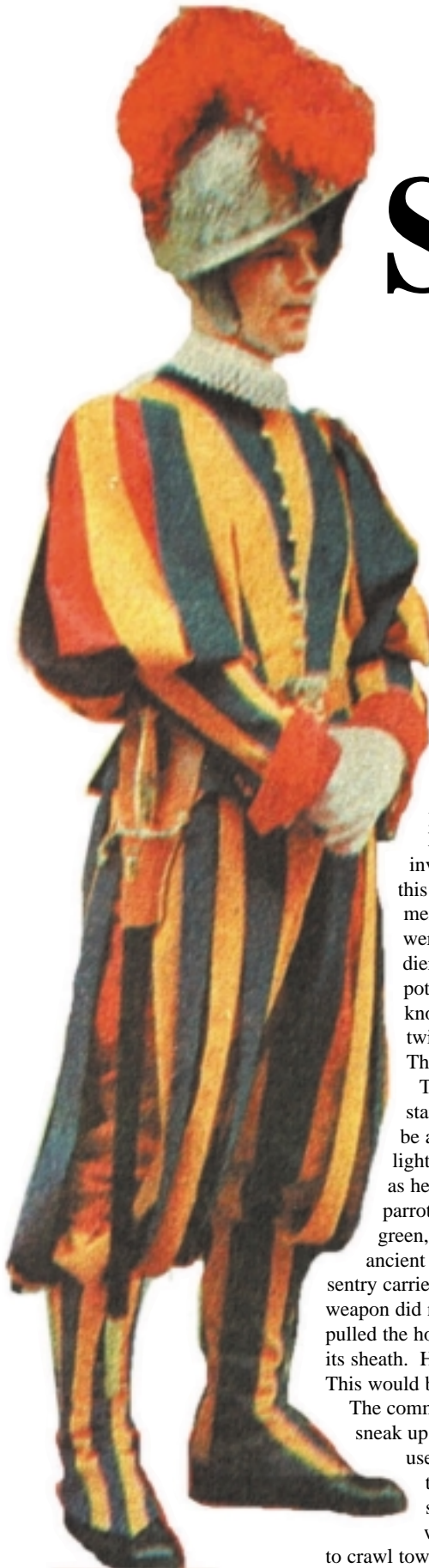
Then all was a blur of unexpected motion. The sentry used the bottom of his halberd to sweep the Narn's feet out from under him. The Narn fell with a thud on the immaculate dressed stone. Before the infiltrator could even roll over, the pointed end of the Halberd was at his throat. The commando had been caught alive. He waited for his partner's rifle to rescue him.

The second Narn hesitated only a fraction of a second. He waited to see if his friend was able to respond then, before he could squeeze the trigger, he froze. The high-pitched and unmistakable whine of a PPG went off a finger's breadth from his ear. He, too, had been caught alive. The Blood Ronin of the Narn were ill met with the Vatican Guard.

Colonel Radigan walked up the steps to the Abbey with a crisp martial bearing. He strode into the antechamber and spoke to the clerk. "I need to speak to the Abbott. It is a secular emergency." What Colonel Radigan had just said was tantamount to declaring Martial Law, and he knew it. He did not appear happy about it. Indeed, he was not.

"Father Superior, we have arrested seven Narns and killed nine others. They attempted to infiltrate St. James & St. George. I know they must have been clever to drive out the Centauri, but they were easy to spot at the spaceport. We had them followed, discretely of course, and we sprung the trap when they made their moves. We should interrogate them better than we have so far, but...." The Colonel's voice trailed off. He hated to ask what he was asking, and the Abbott knew this all too well.

"I understand Colonel. This is not a job for the Cohors Helvetica. Summon Father Sebastian. I think his talents are required."





Father Sebastian was a slight, older man, but far from frail. He had the long, thin fingers of a surgeon, and hands that seemed far too large for his body. His eyes seemed eternally sad. "Reverend Father, I must protest..." he said as he arrived.

"I know you must protest, Father Sebastian, and I am sorry. We will both have need for absolution in a short while. The Narn Regime has sent a large number of commando teams, and we have caught them. We and I mean the whole community here, need to know why they have come. If they are the precursor of an invasion we have very little time."

The office of the Inquisition had been secret for centuries. Since the "third world" put the resources of nation states behind the insanity of terror, the Inquisition had been re-established. No longer was the Inquisition an instrument of fear to keep the intellectually inconvenient from speaking out, but instead were a kind of police force to protect the innocent from criminally insane governments. The other martial arm of the curia, the Cohors Helvetica, had expanded from a few to a few hundred and then to thousands. The Vatican Guard became an international peace keeping force, and now, an interstellar peacekeeping force.

"I serve Christ, who died for me." Father Sebastian turned so quickly the tiny amounts of dust in the air scattered as he left. The Abbot looked at Colonel Radigan.

"Colonel, you have done your duty. If it were my will, you and Father Sebastian would be playing chess instead of preparing to kill enemy soldiers. I have no words that can comfort you, except that you know what must be done, and I know that you and your soldiers can do it. God bless you all." The Abbott made the sign of the cross, and Colonel Radigan left as well. The orderly in his car handed him a phone set as he got in. The preparations had already begun.

The Inquisition chamber was a cruel place, created from centuries of cruelty. Each "subject" was isolated in a meager cell. Each could see, hear, and even smell the proceedings, but not communicate with any other. Each subject in turn was put to the torture, each one succumbed to the questions and told all he knew, and each one, one at a time, died. There was no other possible result.

"There is an invasion coming. The commandos came to spy out the land and sabotage our infrastructure. I am sending disinformation back on their own communication equipment." Father Sebastian looked like he had been a victim of his own torture. He had come here to spend his last days in prayer and to forget the horrors he had seen. Still, he did his duty. The Abbott put his hand on the inquisitor's shoulder with great compassion.

"Only those who hate the job can do it. Those who enjoy pain and suffering cannot be inquisitors. Colonel Radigan's people have already saved hundreds of lives. So have you. Be blessed by the hundreds of innocent lives you have saved. These commandos knew the risk, Father. They died as soldiers."



"Too many have paid the price of sin, Abbot. I know that there is more to do. Thank you, and thank God we caught these commandos. The invasion will be coming soon. My friend Colonel Radigan is now in danger."

"The Narn do not understand what the Vatican Guard is, Reverend Father. They think Colonel Radigan's troops are military police. I also know the forces arrayed against us are from a unit the Narn call the "Blood Ronin." They each carry one of these: the inquisitor handed the Abbot a knife that was at once alien and familiar. "It resembles an earth weapon called a kukri, the knife used by the Gurkha regiments. They are much like the ancient earth "ninja" troops that are not part of the established military; troops that can do dirty jobs with "plausible deniability".

The Abbott responded, "I have contacted the Earth Alliance military, and also the Vatican. The Narns have invaded another world, and Earthforce is quite busy, but the Vatican will send warships and troops to help us. We must hold out for two weeks. I have ordered the evacuation of as many people as possible, and the reliquary, but most of the monks must remain."

"I shall stay, Reverend Father. I am too old to be worth a place in the evacuation, except, perhaps, as part of the reliquary. I became a doctor to be a healer once, maybe I can do it now "

Colonel Radigan briefed his troops before the deployment. Every trooper saw pictures of the Narn vehicles. "This tracked vehicle, with the twin barrels, is a Narn artillery piece. They are our primary targets. Call for pinpoint strikes whenever you see one. Our own artillery will only be able to fire once before they have to run, so only call in the most urgent targets. I am going to delay them, and hope we can slow them enough for help to come.

* * *

In defence of the faith

Scenario 1: HOT ZONE.

Set up: a 6' by 6' area, minimum, up to 8' by 8' if available. The terrain should be sparse, a few hills at least 2' apart from each other. No hills may be higher than 1 inch. Vegetation is also sparse. This area has been cleared to allow ships to take off and land. In the center of the map is an 8" square "urban area" that is the spaceport proper.

Earth: The Forgotten Ones and St. Michael's Own will make the initial defense.

They may deploy dismounted recon and/or infantry from "The Forgotten Ones" in the spaceport, up to 10 stands. One stand must be designated the command stand. This stand may "call" artillery but may not fire when it calls artillery. It may not be a remote turret.

The Special Forces (St. Michael's Own) and the remaining units of "The Forgotten Ones" may deploy outside the Spaceport. They will be hidden until they move or fire. (They will not have any defensive works). All of the Guard Artillery Support is available. The Messengers of Righteousness and the Battalion Command group are the strategic Reserve. Prior to play, the Guard player will designate the side of the map his strategic reserve will come in from, if called for. If called, the reserve will arrive in 2+1D4 turns.

All the Guard Artillery batteries are available; however, the Guard player may not wish to risk all of the available artillery at this time. Likewise, the Regional Air Defense units may be detached from the Battalion Command unit, and deployed forward. This will also make them a prime target, and they are not replaceable in the context of this campaign.

Narn: All assets are available, including the



Ship and assault shuttles. There are 12 T'Kar assault shuttles on the T'Loth cruiser. The shuttles are not replaceable in the context of the campaign, however. The T'Loth cruiser will remain to cover the invasion and is available as orbital support to the Narn in all scenarios. For the landing, there is an attached Dag'Kar Missile Frigate. It will leave the area after the Narns have landed. The Regiment must land and establish a perimeter. Landing will be according to the rules on page 30-31 of the Maxim Core Rules. Shuttles may land no closer than 12 inches to the "spaceport." After each shuttle has dropped off its cargo, it may make two strafing attacks before returning to the ship. The Regimental CO may direct these attacks, and they may be counter battery attacks.

For the landing, the Starship may make one "independent" artillery call. The T'Loth may make up to 3 searches, with 1D6 as a spot die. The ship must spot a unit in order to engage it with an "independent" orbital strike. The exception is counter battery fire, which may fall upon any eligible target. The Independent orbital strike must be given and assigned an activation number. The ship making the call may be activated as any command unit.

Victory: The Spaceport and the area 24 inches around the spaceport must be free of Guard units. A unit in this case is a platoon that is not pinned and has at least half of the surviving elements of that platoon. Dismounted infantry are separate "units" from carriers.

Narn secure the LZ in 5 turns or less: Major Narn Victory (3 VPs)

Narn secure the LZ in 6 to 10 turns: Minor Narn Victory (2 VPs)

Narn secure the LZ in 11 to 15 turns: Marginal Narn Victory (1 VP)

Narn secure the LZ in 16 to 20 turns: Minor Guard Victory (2 VP)

Narn secure the LZ in 21 turns or more: Major Guard Victory (3 VP)

Between the Scenarios: Roll crew quality die for each destroyed infantry stand, not to include turrets; on any result 3 or greater, the infantry stand is recovered. Special Forces are allowed a +1 modifier to this roll. Equipment that is damaged may roll a crew die for each lost box, and restore the box (and related system) on any result greater than 1. The last general damage point may not be recovered. Damaged equipment will start the next battle with at least 1 general damage point lost. Destroyed equipment is not recoverable.

* * *



Waking the WOLVERINE

Fiction: Scene 2

THE NARN Warleader T'Falk, kicked a still-smoldering tire from an APC and cursed in three languages. "Twenty-five percent casualties. More than I expected for the whole campaign.

I was supposed to land with minimal opposition and then overwhelm a police force. These troops were not police. Their ambush almost won the campaign outright right then and there." He muttered to himself.

"A communiqué from the Earthers, sir", the orderly ran up, breathless.

"Read it."

"We have several wounded Narn prisoners. It is our tradition to treat wounded prisoners as we would treat our own wounded troops, but we lack the resources. We ask for a short truce to exchange medical technology so that soldiers do not die needlessly."

"Adjutant, how many Earthers do we hold prisoner?"

"Four sir."

"Including the wounded?"

"We hold no Earther wounded. We have recovered no Earther dead, sir."

"Go on adjutant, give me your opinion."

"These are damn fine troops, sir. They look after their own. These are not police."

"I agree. How many of our troops are missing?"

"Twenty-seven, sir. They must have about half that many as prisoners."

"Runner, go to the field hospital. Tell the doctor to prepare an emergency kit to send to the

Earthers. Make sure it carries nothing that could be used as a weapon against us. Also, tell the doctor to make a list of supplies he needs to care for wounded Earthers. They fight to the knife, these Earthers, but they are not barbarians. We will honor their code: wounded and prisoners get the same treatment as our own troops."

"Adjutant, reply to the communiqué. Tell the Earthers we will comply. Set up a drop-point."

"If this is a trap?"

"Then we will reply in kind. I don't think this is a trap. The Centauri would be using any they captured as bargaining chips."

"They have already deceived us, sir."

"You mean that they caught our spies and sent us disinformation?"

"Yes, they deceived us..."

"No, that is not deception. That is the art of war. If this is a trap, then we can question their honor."

"But they ambushed us..."

"We tried to ambush them, remember? We sent pathfinders who were supposed to assassinate their leaders, cause disruption, and destroy their communications. That is how war is. I can't fault them because they did it better than we did, now can I?" The adjutant looked puzzled.

"We need this planet. The Earthers already have it. High Command launched this attack because they thought we could take it over quickly and they would not send the troops needed to take it back. They were obviously very wrong. Now I have a week, at best, before



ships from the Earth navy appear in the sky and we are driven off. In addition, I have only three quarters of the troops I started with. The Earthers may very well win. Until then, we must show the universe that we are soldiers, not slime like the Centauri. Let me see that document." The Warleader took the actual communiqué from the runner.

"This is on letterhead. Send a facsimile of this to the ship, and see if they can identify the unit we are fighting."

In a few minutes, another runner handed the Warleader a flimsy. It read: Cohors Helvetica, Swiss Guard, Vatican Guard, a small, elite military organization that protects the Catholic Church, the Pope, the college of Cardinals, the bench of bishops, and her earthly dominions from attack. Formed six centuries ago, the Vatican Guard is now mainly used to oppose terrorists and pirates. They defend the faithful on all the colonies operated by the Church. They have never been defeated in battle.

"Great Prophet, we have been dropped smack in the middle of a nest of angry wolverines* defending their young."

The Earthers had waited until the Narn troops landed, and then plastered them with artillery. They took out almost all the Narn artillery as it rolled off the ramps. Radigan had deployed his regional air defense units forward, and destroyed several Narn shuttles before he had the units withdraw. The Special Forces units hid and called in artillery. Each battery fired once then moved. After they fired twice, they withdrew from the field. The Narn troops won the field, but lost the battle. Now they had to break out and start to move.

"We need to break out, not destroy Earthers. Move around them, cut them off. Don't engage them if you don't have to, and for the Prophet's sake, don't get too close together. They still have artillery, and I don't want to waste our orbital support on counter-battery missions".

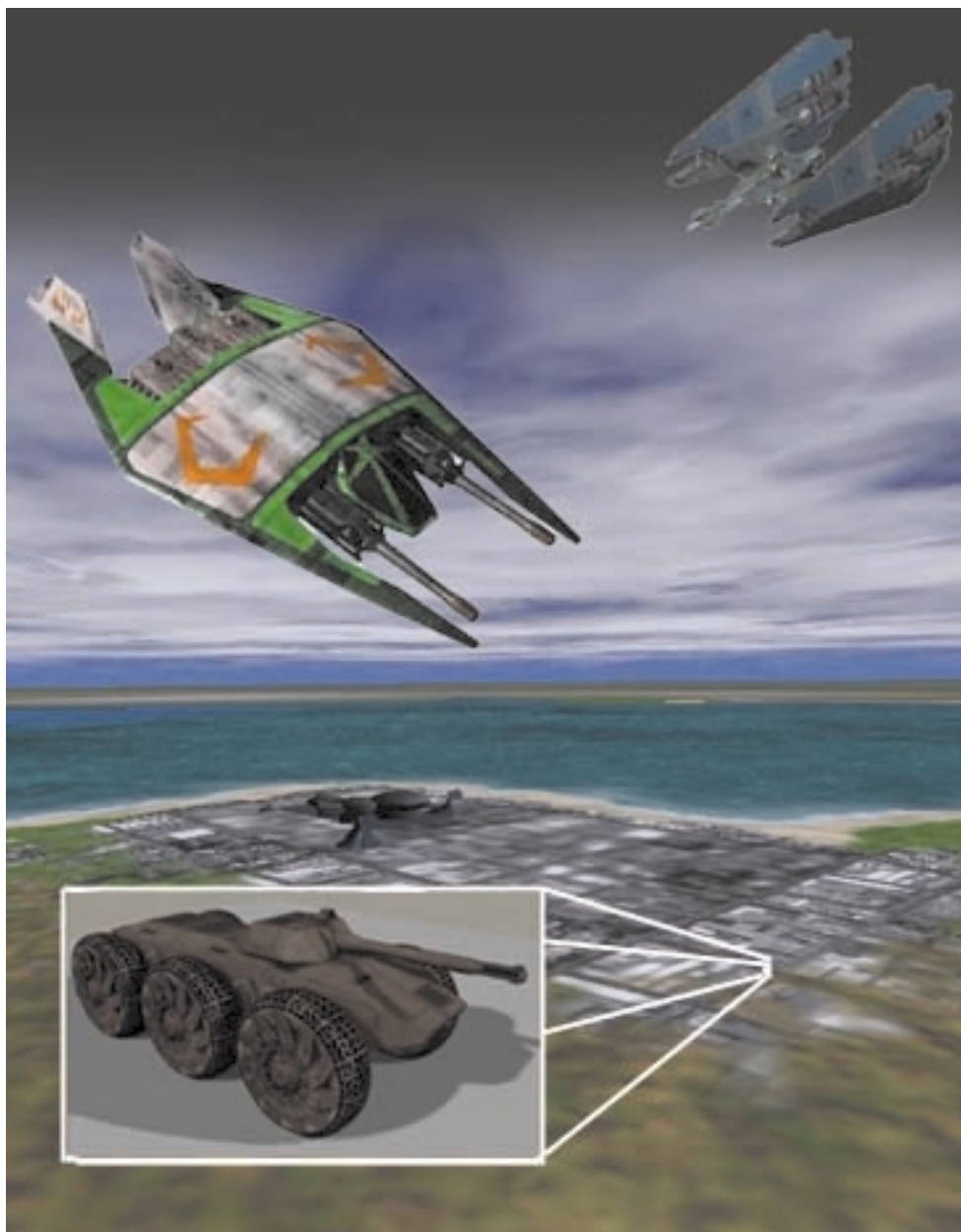
T'Falk was unhappy about everything. This next battle would be decisive.

Colonel Radigan looked at the faces in the tent. All his Company Commanders had survived, his casualties had been light, but he had so few troops, and the Narn had so many.

"Delay them. Hit and move, make them take the long way. Channel them if possible. We still have all our artillery, and I doubt the Narn want to use their orbital support on counter battery missions. If they break through, they can win.

Father Sebastian looked at the field hospital and sighed. He had more wounded Narn than he had wounded Guardsman, but there were still too many of them. If the Narn broke through, the Capital would not be defended. The Narn would win.

* * *



Scenario 2: BREAKTHROUGH

At this point, it is not possible to enumerate the exact order of battle. The players should reorganize their units and prepare for the next battle.

Set up: An area at least 6' by 6'. The area will still have sparse terrain.

Earth: Guard forces will pick a side to defend, and set one company along that edge, no more than 18 inches from the edge. This is the contested edge of the map. The Guard may have off board artillery, if any survived the previous battle.

Narn: Narns will select a battalion. The battalion may have "off board" assets. The battalion must pass 2/3 of its units, by point value, across the contested edge of the map, not including the off board assets. They set up at least 48 inches from the contested edge of the map.

Victory: Narn penetrate the perimeter in 4 turns or less: Major Narn Victory (3 VPs)

Narn penetrate the perimeter in 5 or 6 turns: Minor Narn Victory (2 VPs)

Narn penetrate the perimeter in 7 or 8 turns: Marginal Narn Victory (1 VPs)

Narn penetrate the perimeter in 9 or 10 turns: Minor Guard Victory (2 VPs)

Narn penetrate the perimeter in 11 turns or more: Major Guard Victory (3 VPs)

Between the Scenarios: Roll crew quality die for each destroyed infantry stand, not to include turrets; on any result 3 or greater, the infantry stand is recovered. Special Forces are allowed a +1 modifier to this roll. Equipment that is damaged may roll a crew die for each lost box, and restore the box (and related system) on any result greater than 1. The last general damage point may not be recovered. Damaged equipment will start the next battle with at least 1 general damage point lost. Destroyed equipment is not recoverable.



Battle of lost souls

T'Falk had learned yet another language to curse in. His troops had broken through, but at too high a price.

"Commander, I have a message from the Earthers. They have prisoners they claim are too badly wounded for them to keep. Their doctor wants to arrange an exchange."

"Tell the Earther we have no prisoners to exchange. Be polite."

The adjutant came back a few minutes later.

"The Earthers have offered to arrange a drop off for the wounded, sir. Their doctor said something about 'no victory without honor.' Do you understand? I most surely do not."

"I think I understand. The Earthers are great fighters, and they have done nothing to besmirch their honor, or ours, either. That commander, he is a good one."

"What are your orders, sir?"

"Tell the Earth doctor that we will pick up the wounded. Order our troops that they may not fire on the Earthers' hospital. Now, look at the map: we have to take these key points. We will take the initiative and force them to attack us. That Earther, he has solved the puzzle. He is not trying to defeat us; he is trying to delay us. In a few days, the Earthers can get a starship here. If we lose our orbital support, we lose, period."

Radigan had a very similar map on his wall. He could tell what the Narns needed, and what he needed as well. "This point, this is the key. If we can hold it, the Narns will have to re-route their supplies. It will slow them down. This other, we must deny the Narn. If they break through however, all that is between the HQ and the Narns is the Hospital. We have to hold them here."

The Guard adjutant nodded in agreement.

"Father Sebastian is delivering the Narn wounded tonight."

"Good. In a battle like this, the last thing we need to do is to make our enemies fanatics. Moreover, the last thing I want to do is lose my soul."

Scenario 3: TAKE AND HOLD 1

Set up: An area at least 6' by 6'. The area will still have moderate terrain; two level hills are allowed, up to 30% vegetation. The player who won the last scenario may dress the table with hills and vegetation. The player who lost will select the side he/she will defend, and place 2 objectives. The winner may place 1 objective. Play as the scenario on page 88 of the core rules.



Guard Units: The Battalion HQ unit, all remaining units of "The Forgotten Ones" and "St. Michael's Own."

Narn units: By point value equal to the Guard units, the Narn may use as many "short" platoons as needed to keep the point values close.

Between the Scenarios: Roll crew quality die for each destroyed infantry stand, not to include turrets; on any result 3 or greater, the infantry stand is recovered. Special Forces are allowed a +1 modifier to this roll. Equipment that is damaged may roll a crew die for each lost box, and restore the box (and related system) on any result greater than 1. The last general damage point may not be recovered. Damaged equipment will start the next battle with at least 1 general damage point lost. Destroyed equipment is not recoverable.

THE Narns were over-running the field hospital. Their advance was reckless, and they had wasted many Narn lives. They were desperate. Father Sebastian knew how desperate. He also knew there were three humans and two Narns in the hospital who would die if he did not treat them fast. Father Alfonso Sebastian, MD, SJ, former Head Inquisitor had been retired for 5 years. How he wished he had stayed a surgeon, a healer, instead of an inquisitor. Nevertheless, his record was impressive. He had saved untold thousands by interrogating terrorists, pirates, and criminals. Today he was doing emergency duty in a hastily set-up aid station. He was a master surgeon, and he loved to heal. How he hated war, terror, all the sin that accompanied the most horrible of sentient experiences. Yet, here he was a part of it again. War seemed to chase him like a personal demon. A Narn in battle dress burst into the tent, and sprayed the room with automatic fire. 'Doctor' Sebastian was covering a Narn patient with his body. He was hit five times and began dying. He saw the drama with his last moments. T'Falk entered and immediately recognized the tent as a hospital. Narns and humans were get-

ting the same care. That idiot had just killed a human doctor in the process of saving a Narn soldier! T'Falk pulled out his Kukri and killed the fool where he stood. He then lowered the dying Father/Doctor to the floor. With tenderness, he brushed the blood and sweat out of the man's eyes, and stayed with him until the priest's bright eyes glazed over in death. A final act of mercy.

"Kyrie Elision, Christie Elision, Kyrie Elision". Father Sebastian's last seconds of life were to bless the Narn Officer and praise God. Mercy did overcome hate. For Father Sebastian, the demon was destroyed.

Scenario 4: Take and Hold 2

As Scenario 3 above. In this situation, one objective placed by the Guard player will be the Field Hospital. If things get very bad for the Guard player, he may call for the Messengers. Casualties incurred by the messengers will make the "riposte" scenario difficult to manage.

Colonel Radigan had assembled his remaining troops to make a counterattack. The Narn were over-extended. If they could hold them for just a little while longer, his intact and very anxious Air Cavalry Company would be a messenger of death.

T'Falk got a message from the captain of the starship above him. A force of Human warships was detected. They would arrive in 20 hours. He could evacuate now, or be caught on the ground. Neither was an acceptable choice, but that is all the choice he had.

"Get me the Earther Commander, and bring me my blade."

"Yes, Sir."

"Tell the battalion and company commanders to form up for evacuation. I'll tell the starship captain to expect us. Then get my command car."

"Yes Sir." The orderlies snapped to their orders.

On an otherwise unremarkable piece of ground, Colonel Radigan and his headquarters people met the Narn commander, and his driver. "I am T'Falk. I offer you my blade and ask that you



allow my soldiers to withdraw."

Colonel Radigan took the weapon and replied, "How long will you need to recover your wounded and dead?"

"We will need only a few hours. I also wish to ask for asylum."

"Of course. Please come with me. I'm afraid you'll have to spend a few nights in our brig."

"That will be better than being pushed out an airlock into hyperspace."

Scenario 5: RIPOSTE

In this version of the campaign, there is no counterattack, the Narn have lost before the last scenario was needed, due mainly to excessive casualties caused in the initial scenario. The Guard player in fact set things up exactly right for the landing and scored so well it was as if he knew what to expect. For this reason, the fiction of the captured spies was created. The Narn tried to play catch-up, and the Vatican Guard player stayed used this to his advantage.

Set up: An area at least 6' by 6'. The area will still have moderate terrain; two level hills are allowed, up to 30% vegetation. The loser of the last scenario may dress the table and the other player selects the entry edge for the guard.

The Narn Player will assemble his/her regimental and battalion command units in a defensive perimeter in the center of the map, within 16 inches of the center of the map. The Narn player may select enough other units to match the Guard point value, if such exist.

The objective of the Guard is to destroy the three command units of the Narn. If the Command units are successfully attacked by a close assault, they are considered captured, and count as double.

The scenario will continue as described on page 87 of the core rules.

Victory: 0 Command units destroyed Major Narn Victory (3 VP)

1 Command units destroyed

- Narn Victory (2 VP)

2 Command units destroyed

- Marginal Narn Victory (1 VP)

3 Command units destroyed

- Marginal Guard Victory (1 VP)

4 Command units destroyed

- Guard Victory (2 VP)

5 Command units destroyed

- Major Guard Victory (3 VP)

6 Command units destroyed

- Incredible Guard Victory (4 VP)

THE Whole unit assembled for the funeral services. There were too many coffins, but then, any number was too many. Brave men, good souls, were lost in a diversion with no strategic consequence, a tiny footnote in history.

T'Falk was present, in uniform and under arms. He shed a tear as Father Sebastian's remains were lowered into the grave. T'Falk had known that as the leader in a mission where plausible deniability was required, he could not lose and live. He arranged to fake his death. His "heir" was a numbered account outside of Narn space. He would now work for the Vatican Guard, as one of their small but growing number of alien "consultants." He had spent the last few days thinking about many things.

"Colonel Radigan" The former Warleader began: "Tell me about your God."

"It will be an honor and a pleasure."

NEWS

Aliens v Predator in the works

ANDERSON, the Resident Evil director who will helm the proposed Alien vs. Predator movie, told the JoBlo.com Web site that he's going to write the movie as well. "I'm just finishing the script for Resident Evil: Nemesis, and as soon as that's done, I'm going to begin to work on A v. P."

Anderson added, "I've been waiting to do a movie with aliens in it since I was at school, since the first Alien movie came out, since I fell in love with Sigourney Weaver and since the alien scared the hell out of me. I've been obsessed with Aliens for a while. It's the coolest cinema franchise out there, and Predator is the baddest hunter in the universe. So the idea of combining the two of them is just phenomenal! It will be a stand-alone franchise. It will not be a continuation of the Alien franchise

- Scifi.com

APOLOGY

BABCOM was late this month after a hard-drive failure only minutes before the edition was due to be uploaded for proofreading. While the edition had been backed-up and a new hard-drive fitted within days, key software install disks were then discovered to be damaged - delaying the edition by more than a week



Universe Today

The Babylon 5 First Season DVD box set has been scheduled for release this November.

With the announcement, JMS has given a few more tidbits on what to expect with the release:

"The disk has an on-camera introduction by me (despite my warnings that this would undoubtedly drive down sales), a letter of introduction each by me and Doug Netter, and the half-hour piece features new interviews with Rick Biggs, Stephen Furst, me, Doug, efx maven Mitch Suskin, makeup whiz John Vulich, and others.

They're tentatively targeting next April for season 2, and the following November for season 3."

- jms

SPYHUNTER

CAPTAIN... thank you for coming. I've just been given some very disturbing information. Three hours ago, the liner Scirocco departed the station. We have since learned that this man was aboard. He's known better to our intelligence service as "Source Crimson" - one of the enemy's best agents in this sector. I need you to assemble a fast squadron to get after him. If we're lucky you can catch the liner before it meets their pickup ships. You are authorized to use whatever level of force is necessary to apprehend Source Crimson - although we'd prefer not to blow up a liner full of civilians if we can avoid it. Understood?"

Pursuit Force: Select up to 2500 points of ships and fighters. Calculate the squadron's Speed Factor by the maximum amount each ship can accelerate in a combat turn. This will determine the timing of the scenario.

Pickup Force: The enemy has contracted a mercenary group to handle the pickup and "discreetly" deal with any pursuit. The following units are available:

2x Barque (6x Delta-V each)

4x Gunboat

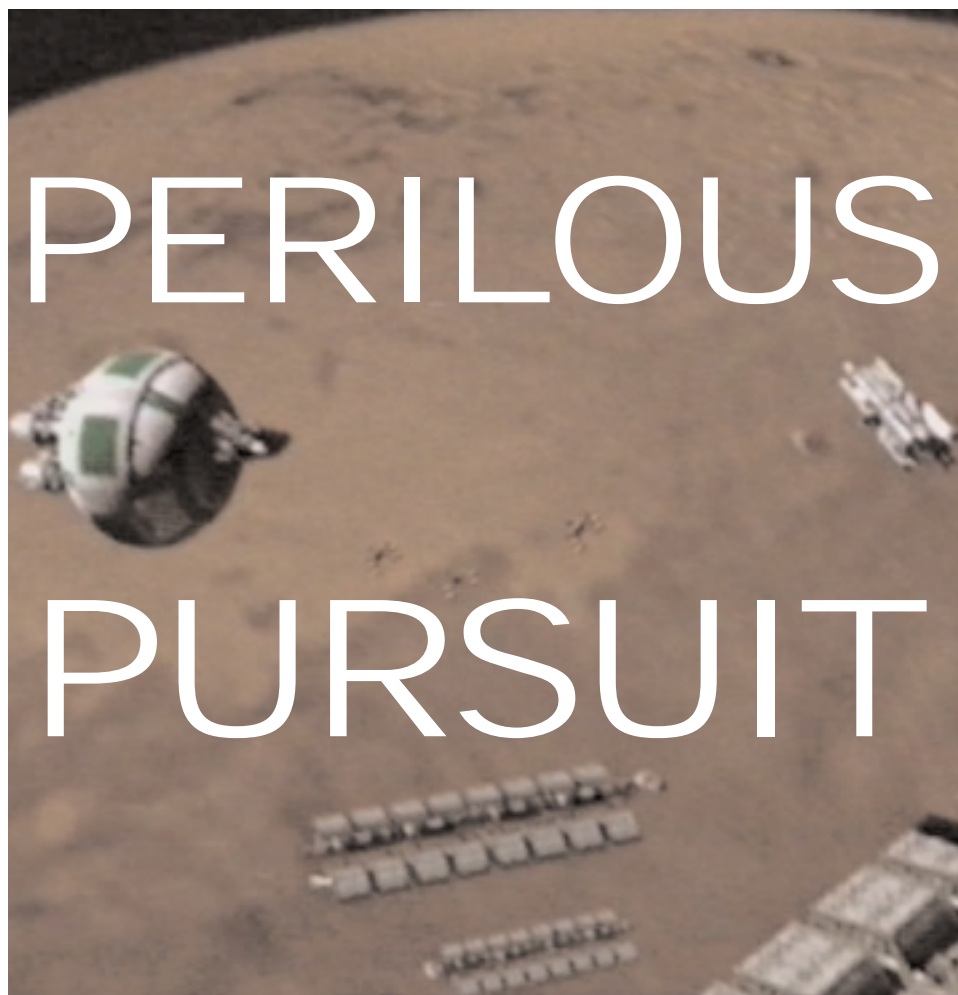
1x Felucca (1 cargo hold converted to carry two Breaching Pods)

Either side may pick up Source Crimson from the liner by boarding it and executing a successful "Rescue a Captive" mission. Use the standard Civilian Passenger Liner SCS for the Scirocco. Exact details of the setup and the control of the liner depends on the speed of the Pursuit Force's arrival:

Speed Factor 3 or less: The Pickup Force controls the liner and may set up with it anywhere within six hexes of 2215 at a speed of no more than 5. Source Crimson is already aboard one of the Pickup Force's Barques. The Pursuit Force enters via jump point, place the vortex before the Pickup Force sets up their units.

Speed Factor 4-5: The Pickup Force has just arrived; the liner will cooperate with the Pursuit Force's commands unless it takes damage to any structure or primary system (at which point it will simply cease maneuvering and EW usage). Both sides enter by jump point, the Pursuit Force places their vortex first.

Speed Factor 6 or more: The Pickup Force has not yet arrived. The Pursuit Force enters via jump-point, the liner is in hex 2215. Subtract five from the Pursuit Force's speed factor; the Pickup Force will arrive this many turns later, via jump-point.



Victory Conditions:

- Source Crimson captured or killed, Scirocco free to continue journey, mercenaries destroyed: Total Victory
- Source Crimson captured or killed, Scirocco free to continue journey: Victory
- Source Crimson captured or killed, Scirocco crippled or destroyed: Pyrrhic Victory
- Source Crimson escapes, Scirocco free to continue journey: Loss
- Source Crimson escapes, Scirocco captured, crippled or destroyed: Total Loss

Variations:

Place the liner under the control of a "referee" player, separate from Pickup and Pursuit

THE PURSUIT FORCES:

Centaury Greyhounds (Dan Foxman)

- 2 Darkner
- 1 Amar w/12 Senti
- 2 Lupa(Particle)
- 1 Lupa(Matter)
- 2500 points

The entire squadron can accelerate 6 points per turn and the Darkner hulls provide Jump Drives should they be needed.
 With the antiship firepower of the Darkners and

the 3 Lupa LCVs this group can handily see off any enemy cruiser that tries to retrieve the spy. And the Sentries and their carrier can protect the Darkners from any fighters that may be in the area.

The amount of firepower this very fast group can generate is awesome. With 4 Battle Lasers, 5 Matter Cannons, 2 Hvy Particle Beams, 10 Twin Arrays and 12 fighters no enemy will escape from this group.

Hyach Interceptor Squadron (W "Venlesh" Lackner)

Elder Ralon sat in the bridge of the Silent Strike, an Alichy Kav Stealth Cruiser stationed in the outer territories of Hyach space. The Silent Strike was attached to the biggest colony fleet in this sector, led by the Urutha Kal Dreadnought Behemoth.

"Sir, we are receiving a tight beam transmission from Behemoth. It seems that a freighter named Scirocco has only recently left Shri-shraba space with a spy called "Source Crimson" on board. The Defense Council is sending all units in its vicinity to intercept the Scirocco. Silent Strike and Shadow are closest to the estimated course of the Scirocco."

"Alter course to ten-thirteen and signal the Shadow to meet us at the jumpgate. Its added fighter squadron should help us achieve our goal to stop the SCirocco without killing it.



Accelerate to maximum." Ralon stretched tired muscles with a sigh. Even now in times of "peace" he wasn't allowed to rest. He would get the job done, if he was able to reach the Scirocco in time.

Hyach Fleet:

1 Alich Kav Stealth Cruiser (Silent Strike)
Tactics Specialist
Hangar refitted to carry a Breching Pod
1 Achilat Breching Pod
1 Alich Tal Infiltrator, refitted (Shadow)
Stealth Specialist
Hangar refitted to carry 12 Med. Fighters
2 Flights Dartha Medium Fighters
2 Achilat Breaching Pods
Total: 2380 pts.

If it's allowed, I'd buy two Navigators for the ships to increase their acceleration rate and maneuverability.

The tactic for this "fleet" is rather simple. If the Hyach find the freighter before it meets with its fleet, all fighters and breaching pods are launched to cripple and capture the freighter. If the Scirocco is meeting or has already met the enemy fleet, the Alich Tal launches its fighters while the Alich Kav closes the range from a different vector. With the help from the fighters the Sub should be able to destroy the ship Source Crimson has boarded. In either case the secrets of the Hyach should be safe.

Earth Alliance Military Police (Peter Michalenka)

Oracle (gamma) 625
Olympus (delta) 600
Olympus (delta) 600
Tethys (kappa) 375
2 Lamprey Breaching Pods 10(surcharge) + 40
(pod cost) ea = 100 total
Ship total 2300
100 pt for special missiles - Suggested load out
6 flash, 10 long range
Final total 2396

This force is envisioned as the fastest force a base commander could readily get into space. An Oracle back for resupply, or on a local survey, the local police ship and the base's defense squadron seemed reasonable. The Oracle has transferred aboard two breaching pods and the commander unlocked the bases special missile armory, based on the importance of the target. The suggested distribution is 2 flash per vessel, 4 long range for the Olympi and 2 long range for the Oracle.

If the liner is caught prior to rendezvous, the Oracle can provide extra EW for called shots against the liner. Then send over the pods once surrender has been secured.

If forced to engage hostile forces, use the flash to handle fighter waves (soomthing this fleet is vulnerable to). The superior EW should help equalize against opponents with greater firepower, while still making a grab for the spy.

Burying the Past (Paul Brown)

All the Hyach wish for is to be alone, to sit behind their closed borders, slowly fading into obscurity. But their dream of isolationism is hard to realise; their borders forever being intruded upon by foes dreaming of conquest and advanced technology. The Hyach refuse their 'right to dominate' with quick and sometimes lethal responses. Few outsiders ever gain favour with the Hyach, few ever become friends. Source Crimson was befriended by the Hyach and in return betrayed their trust. She has stolen advanced technology, and more importantly certain secrets which should never come to light. Special operations has commissioned four nearby ships to the task, their orders to catch and destroy Source Crimson at all costs. All ships and crews are expendable.

Three Okath Kat Frigates will receive an advanced repair team from a nearby Stellar Fortress. These specialists will situate themselves in the main thruster of the ship. All ships will divert all main weapon power to the engine and begin a hard burn after the target. Due to the rugged nature of the gravitic engine, it should be able to operate at increased output for a marginal period of time. At the point when the engine's efficiency is reduced by 50%, the specialists will repair the damage and the ship will move at standard acceleration.

An Alich Kav Stealth Cruiser will follow behind the frigates, power will be diverted as above for 120% standard engine output until such time that the engine requires repairs by the assigned team. Once they've made contact, the Frigates will engage and attempt to destroy the target, if unable to do so, tactics should evolve into an attempt to slow down and stall the target. The objective being to allow the Stealth Cruiser to reach the battle. Once there, it will mark and destroy the vessel carrying Source Crimson with long ranged fire. If the vessel carrying Source Crimson is in doubt, battle will continue with other enemy ships being marked and destroyed in turn. Once objective has been completed, all ships will disengage.

Hyach Task Force "Knife in the Dark"
3x Okath Kat Frigates 1800 points
1x Alich Kav Stealth Cruiser 700 points

All ships are equipped with a Repair Specialist; located in the Main Thruster Ships will accelerate at increased outputs until the first efficiency critical is suffered, at which point the damage will be repaired and the ships will accelerate at standard levels. [Ed. Note: This tactic will increase the unit's Speed Factor by one if the Repair Specialists' abilities are to be available during the scenario, two if they are not.]

* * *

BABCOM

www.robertshome.org/
babcom

A fan-produced
magazine for players
of Babylon 5 Wars,
Fleet Action and
GROPOS

EDITOR:
Christopher Phang
(regret)

FICTION
Reid Hupach
(reid)
b5news_fiction
@yahoo.com

TACTICS & ARTICLES
Alexander Kettle
(squawk)
b5news_tactics
@yahoo.com
b5news_articles
@yahoo.com

SHIPS & SCENARIOS
Alex Roberts
(aroberts)
b5news_ships
@yahoo.com
b5news_scenarios
@yahoo.com

PROOFREADING
Scott McGaffin
(SJM)
b5news_proof
@yahoo.com

PRODUCTION
Jamie Seidel
(Diogenes)
b5news_layout
@yahoo.com

*Babcom is an unofficial,
non-profit magazine
produced voluntarily by
fans for fans of Babylon
5 based wargaming.*

*Babylon 5 Wars, Fleet
Action and GROPOS are
produced under license
with Warner Bros by
Agents of Gaming.
Babylon 5, characters,
names and all related
indicia are trademarks of
Warner Brothers (c)
2000.*

*Original concepts and
mechanics remain the
intellectual property of
the authors.*

GROME: EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM

THIS TABLE WAS MISSING FROM LAST MONTH'S PROTOTYPES 2 EDITION

GROME GROMARTH BOMBARDMENT CRUISER PROTOTYPE

(Unique Mogorta Variant)

By **KEVIN CHRISTIE**
& **CHRIS SIEFERT**

SPECS

Class: Capital Ship
In Service: 2248
Point Value: 550
Ramming Factor: 440
Jump Delay: 36 Turns

MANEUVERING

Turn Cost: 1
Turn Delay: 1
Accel/Decel Cost: 4 Thrust
Pivot Cost: 3+3 Thrust
Roll Cost: N/A

SPEED/TURN CHART

Speed: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
TurnCst: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
T Delay: 1 2 2 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

COMBAT STATS

Fwd/Aft Defense: 16
Stb/Prt Defense: 17
Engine Efficiency: 4/1
Extra Power: -3
Initiative Bonus: +0

HANGAR

0 Fighters
2 Shuttles:
Armor: 0
Thrust: 4
Defense: 9/10
Structure: 9 boxes each

WEAPON DATA

1 x Spinal Railgun (Replace two
front Medium Railguns, and reduce
Forward structure by 20 boxes. The
weapon has a centerlined arc 1 hex
wide directly forward - same as
Med/Hvy Railguns. Weapon armor
is 4, Power consumption is 15.)

SPINAL RAILGUN MODES

The Spinal Railgun can be fired in
two modes: Spinal and Low-Power.
The Low-Power mode operates as
a medium railgun, with the same
statistics. The decision to fire in this
mode can be made once the
weapon recharge cost for the Low-
Power mode has been satisfied -
the player may then fire in Low-
Power mode or continue to wait
more turns to fire in Spinal Railgun
mode.

"Spinal Railgun" mode:

Class: Matter
Mode: Standard
Damage: 6d10 + 20

Range Penalty: -1 per 3 hexes
Fire Control: +2/+2/--
Intercept Rating: N/A
Rate of Fire: 1 per 5 turns
Special: After firing the Spinal
Railgun, roll a D20 and add current
weapon damage, then consult the
Weapon Failure Chart given below.

"Medium Railgun" mode:

Class: Matter
Mode: Standard
Damage: 3d10 + 3
Range Penalty: -1 per 2 hexes
Fire Control: +2/+2/-3
Intercept Rating: N/A
Rate of Fire: 1 per 3 turns
Special: After firing the Spinal
Railgun in "Medium Railgun" mode,
roll a D20, add current weapon
damage, and subtract 5 from the
result, then consult the Weapon
Failure Chart given below.

SPINAL RAILGUN FAILURE CHART

1-13: No penalty - weapon func-
tions normally.

14-17: Weapon Misfire - Weapon
fails to fire, may fire again after 3
rounds if fired in Spinal Railgun
mode, or 1 turn if in Medium
Railgun mode.

18-21: Weapon Overload - Weapon
fires, but shock from overload does
1d10 + 5 damage (flash, no collat-
eral, ignore armor) to the forward
section (roll for hit location).

22-24: Critical Weapon Overload -
Weapon fails to fire, does 1d10 +
10 damage (flash, no collateral,
ignore armor) to forward section (roll
for hit location), and shuts down.

Weapon cannot be fired for rest of
scenario (power can be reclaimed).

25-27: Catastrophic Weapon
Overload - Weapon fails fire, doing
2d10 + 10 damage (flash, no collat-
eral, ignore armor) to forward sec-
tion (roll for hit location), as well as
1d10 + 5 damage (flash, no collat-
eral, ignore armor) to Primaries (roll
for hit location). Weapon is also
destroyed.

28+ (or a natural 20): Catastrophic
Weapon Overload and Reactor
Failure - Weapon overloads,
explodes, causing a chain reaction
in Fusion Reactor and subsequent
containment failure. Ship explodes
in a brilliant fiery flash.

SECONDARY ARMAMENT

2 x Medium Railgun
Class: Matter
Mode: Standard
Damage: 3d10 + 3
Range Penalty: -1 per 2 hexes

Fire Control: +2/+2/-3
Intercept Rating: N/A
Rate of Fire: 1 per 3 turns

2 x Light Railgun
Class: Matter
Mode: Standard
Damage: 1d10 + 5
Range Penalty: -1 per hex
Fire Control: +0/+2/+3
Intercept Rating: N/A
Rate of Fire: 1 per 2 turns

6 x Flak Cannon
Intercept Rating: -3
Rate of Fire: 1 per turn
OFFENSIVE MODE:
Class: Matter
Modes: Flash
Damage: 1d10 + 2
Range Penalty: -2 per hex
Fire Control: --/--/+4

2 x Targeting Array
Maximum Range: 15
Adds fire control to all weapons
against specified target.
Degradation
occurs of multiple targeting arrays
are used on same target. Cannot
be used on fighters or smaller units.

HIT CHARTS

Forward Hits
1-4: Retro Thrust
5-8: Medium Railgun
9-11: Spinal Railgun
12-15: Forward Structure
16-18: Connecting Strut
19-20: PRIMARY Hit

Side Hits
1-6: Port/Stb Thrust
7-10: Flack Cannon
11-15: Port/Stb Stucture
16-18: Connecting Strut
19-20: PRIMARY Hit

Aft Hits
1-6: Main Thrust
7-10: Medium Railgun
11-15: Aft Structure
16-18: Connecting Strut
19-20: PRIMARY Hit

Primary Hits
1-7: Primary Structure
8-9: Targeting Array
10-11: Jump Drive
12-13: Engine
14-16: Sensors
17: Hangar
18-19: Reactor
20: C & C

Note: "Connecting Strut" hits score
double damage to the facing struc-
ture (after armor).