

Babylon

BABYLON 5 WARS * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS

OCTOBER /
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2002

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SHADOWFALL

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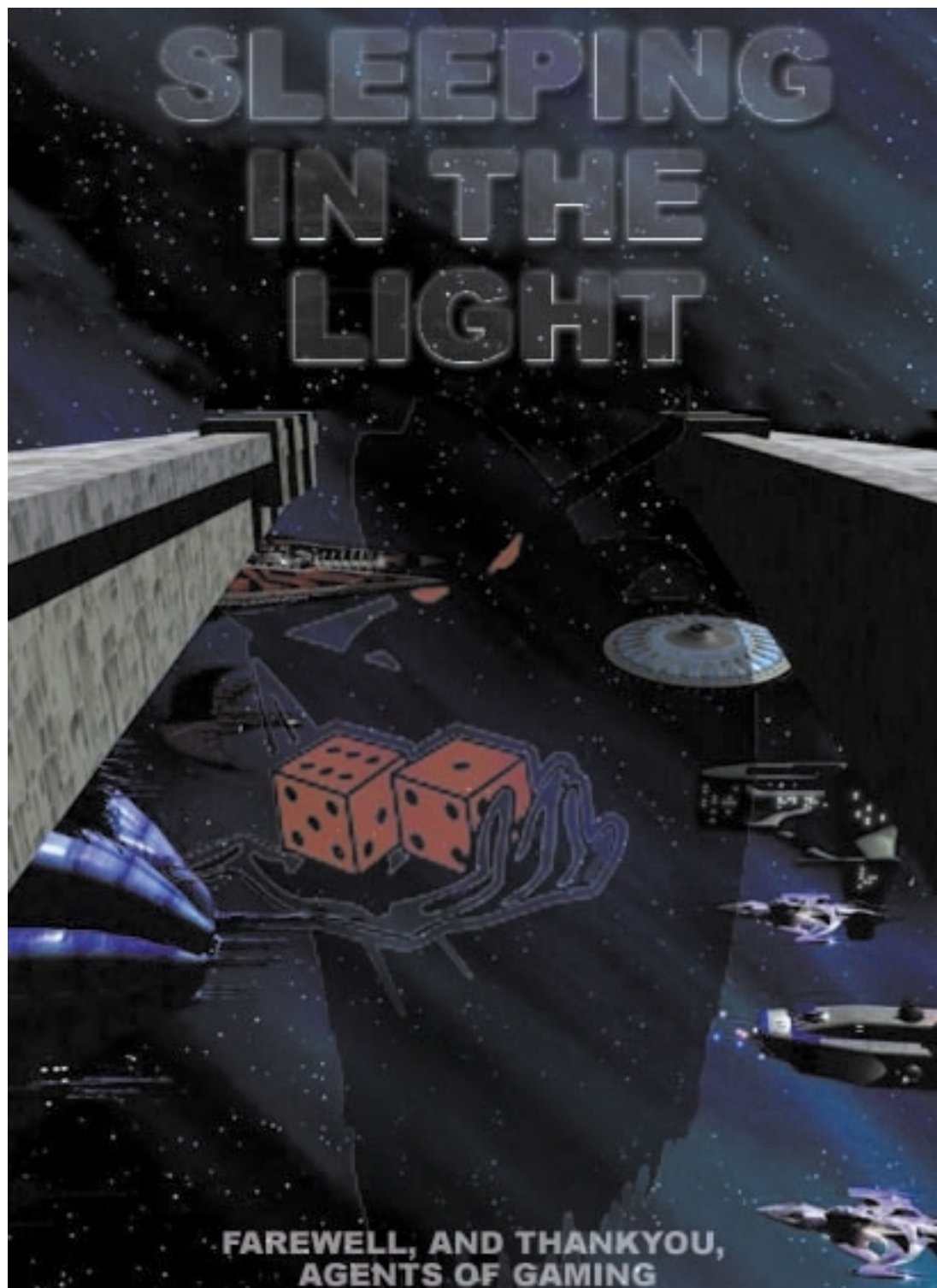
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**FAREWELL, AND THANKYOU,
AGENTS OF GAMING**

AGENTS of Gaming is dead. Long live Babylon 5 Wars, Fleet Action and Gropos!

For a small company, Agents of Gaming was remarkably productive.

Unfortunately, despite worldwide distribution, the scale of the operation simply did not meet the requirements of Warner Brothers.

This was not through lack of trying.

AoG commissioned and created many memorable ship designs. We have them to thank for the distinctive Bin'Tak, the beautiful Torotha, the purposeful Poseidon, the lethal Centurion... and many more.

Through Agents of Gaming, much of JM Straczynski's fascinating Babylon 5 Universe was expanded upon - in particular the Dilgar War, the cultures and histories of many minor races and organisations...

Inevitably, the pressures of keeping a company profitable caused its products to suffer. The lack of competency among the printers did not help...

In the end there was obviously too much to be divided up between too few people.

While there was plenty of volunteers and freelancers among the small, but devoted, fan base - volunteers are not a way to run a commercial operation.

Bruce Graw has moved out of the business.

Robert Glass intends to continue his Turning Point product as a home-based operation.

Whatever their futures, and those of their staff, Babcom wishes to say "thankyou" for a job done to the best of your abilities.

We hope you stay in touch.

Farewell.

“It is said that the future is always born of pain. The history of war is the history of pain. If we are wise, what is born of that pain matures into the promises of a better world - because we learn we can no longer afford the mistakes of the past...”

WITH the passing of Agents of Gaming, Babcom will also be undergoing some changes. The regular contributors and proof-readers of Babcom wish the publication to continue. But in a slightly changed form.

OTHER GAMES: Babcom will now accept submissions for other science-fiction based games. There are many game systems out there for many universes.

CROSSEOVERS: Babcom will now accept “crossover” material. This is where other sci-fi ships, tanks etc are converted to the B5W, FA and Gropos systems. We began publishing such articles last month.

WHAT WE WANT: Babcom also wishes to continue to publish the regular range of submissions.

- Fiction
- Tactical ideas
- Tactical analysis of ships and fleets
- New designs & SCSs (if supported by text-based fluff and reasoning)
- Scenarios
- Rule mechanics ideas

WHO WE ARE: As always, Babcom is entirely comprised of articles submitted by fans of Babylon 5 Wars and related products.

Only through these submissions does the magazine exist.

Some of the more regular contributors have the opportunity to express their opinions on Babcom matters in an editorial discussion mailing list.

These members are also expected to produce specific articles needed to “flesh out” a theme, discuss issues with authors of submissions etc.

A list of these editorial discussion group members is published on the back page of Babcom.

If you are a regular contributor and wish to join this discussion list, please send a note to:

b5news_proof@yahoo.com

PUBLICATION DATES: Babcom will now be a bi-monthly production. For a trial period, it will be published every two months. The next edition is due in the first week of January.



Command Deck

By the Editor, Diogenes

SUBMISSION MAILBOX: The several different email addresses which used to categorise submissions into tactics, SCSs, fiction etc have been consolidated. There is only one submission email address now:

b5news_proof@yahoo.com

This will, hopefully, speed up the process of reading, checking questions with the authors, and forwarding to the layout designer.

DEADLINES: The deadline for submissions is the 15 day of the month before the publication date. So, December 15 is the next deadline.

SUBMISSION POLICY: This is largely unchanged. We continue to welcome well thought-out fiction, tactical analysis, ship designs and criticism. Whether you are a 13-year-old, a 30-year old - or a former Agents of Gaming manager - we will check your submission for consistency, rationality and tone - but little else.

“Let the reader decide” is the only method a fan magazine can operate under, as there are so many fans with so many different opinions.

We urge you to submit your ideas for publication.

All that we ask is:

- a) Write in an unemotional manner
- b) Use the third-person tense of writing
- c) Always give reasons for your opinions, decisions, likes and dislikes.
- d) Refer to as much source material as possible.

OFFICIAL STATUS: With the passing of Agents of Gaming, there are no longer “official” products.

All SCS’s, alternate rules, expanded rules, history, fluff, fiction etc published in Babcom has always been unofficial. Even “teaser” material from Agents of Gaming have been “playtest” and “proof” versions. Therefore, being published in Babcom offers material no status whatsoever.

All of us involved in Babcom will continue to volunteer our time and energy for as long as we enjoy doing what we are doing. Thankyou.

I started this story a while ago, just for fun. The general idea was to use it as the centerpiece for a product we later decided not to use. This is Part 2. If people like this tale, I can continue one part per issue.

- **BRUCE GRAW**
(formerly Agent 1)



THIS time Sheridan's dreams were less pleasant. Or were they dreams at all? He certainly hoped so. He remembered machines and probes, burning sensations in his mind, and a ripping of memories from his brain.

Something was plugged into him. Things were added and other things removed, and there was nothing he could do to block or prevent it. The entire experience wasn't really painful, at least not in a physical sort of way. No, not painful. Just uncomfortable.

Sheridan looked around curiously at his surroundings. The ever-present glow was there, but not as intense this time. He was in some sort of chamber, as opposed to the endless, featureless place he was in before.

The walls were curved and yellow-colored, with blue or green mottling in strategic locations. Not knowing how or why, he immediately recognized those spots as controls or access panels. He was on the ship, then.

He stood up, shaking his head to clear away the lingering memories of the bonding experience. Best not to think about that, he decided. He stepped forward and the wall ahead seemed to bend away from him, opening into a small chamber with a single chair. More mottlings covered the walls, except for a wide swath across from the seat that Sheridan knew would activate as a viewscreen upon command.

Somewhat nervously, and not really sure what else to do, he sat down in the chair. "Okay, ship, here I am," he muttered, half to himself.

The panel ahead of him seemed to shift of its own accord. After a second or two, the random motley arrangement of marks coalesced into meaningful symbols. The language was alien, like nothing he'd ever seen before, and he knew a little bit about pictographs. Even Mandarin Chinese had nothing on this! Yet, to his surprise, the bizarre signs held meaning, and he actually understood them. "And here I am," said the ship.

"You can hear me?" Sheridan asked, surprised more at his comprehension than the ship's response.

"Of course." This time the reply, and his grasp of it, was almost instantaneous. "You need only speak and I will respond. Were you a Vorlon, I would respond directly to your thoughts, but this method should function well enough."

"What if I'm not in this room?"

"I can answer your questions on any surface."

"That's convenient." Sheridan looked around, fixed his eyes on a different piece of wall, and asked his next question. "So are you a computer? I get this feeling you're more than that,

though I don't know why."

"I am alive," the ship replied, its writing appearing on exactly the section of wall Sheridan was staring at. "Perhaps not as you understand life. The Vorlons created us to be their servants and transportation, but we are more than that. More than pets, but less than friends. Companions, if you will. As I am now your companion."

Sheridan allowed himself to relax as he looked around the chamber. He already knew this was the bridge of the ship, and he marveled at its simplicity.

There were controls available, if he needed them, though he already knew the ship was perfectly capable of flying itself without any instructions from him. The control panels (to use the term loosely) were fingertip-activated, and could alter their composition depending on the situation. Part of the acclimatization process—the memory of which had almost completely faded, fortunately—had trained him in the use of these panels. All he had to do was put his hands on them and he had direct command of every ship-board function. What was more, these commands were absolute—the ship could not refuse them. It might be self-aware, but it was not the master here. Sheridan was. Those Vorlons knew what they were doing, he thought.

"I need to call you something," he said after a moment. "I can't just call you 'ship' all the time. Do you have a name?"

The ship did not respond immediately. "A name?" it finally asked. "No Vorlon ship has ever been given a name. Names are not needed."

"Well, I think so. I might as well just say 'Hey, you.' Hasn't anyone ever called you anything other than 'ship'?"

"My previous owner did not refer to me that way. He simply gave me commands."

"Maybe that's the problem. Since I have to talk to you, instead of just thinking my orders, I have to call you something. Any ideas?"

"Though this is a foreign concept, I will try to comply with your wishes, but I have no idea what my name should be."

"Okay, okay. Hmmm." Sheridan thought about that for a moment. "Okay, I think I'll name

you after a good friend of mine, Bob Fitzgerald. He'd be eating this up if he were here."

"Bob Fitzgerald?" The ship had to spell out the name, since there was nothing like it in the Vorlon language.

"Just 'Bob' will do, if you don't mind."

"That will be fine. Your memories indicate this 'Bob Fitzgerald' was a close friend, so I am honored."

"What's that? My memories?" Sheridan didn't like the sound of that.

"You can read my mind?"

"No, that power is not available to me. Your thoughts were examined as part of the acclimatization process. However, the human mind is alien to us, and difficult to comprehend. The only memories we could read were the strongest—close friends, lovers, experiences, influences on your life. Somewhat belatedly, you have my apologies. While I understand the human need for privacy, it was necessary to provide a proper link between you and I."

I'll bet, Sheridan thought. The whole thing didn't sound completely right. If he wasn't hooked up for thought commands, why did they care about his deep memories? That didn't wash. However, he let the matter drop. If they'd wanted to put him under some kind of mind control, they could have done it a hundred different ways, but that obviously didn't suit their purposes. No, for whatever reason, they needed Sheridan as a free-willed individual, not as a slave or servant. Not like that Jim character—otherwise they would have just sent him, wouldn't they? Or someone like him.

No, Sheridan thought, there was something important about him, and him specifically. They already knew it before they submitted him to the brain-scan or whatever it was. So the plucking of his memories must've been routine, or a safety measure. Best to just ignore it and move on.

"Very well, ship-Bob, I mean. Tell me more about yourself. What can you do? What are your capabilities?"

"I was wondering when you'd ask. I am what you would consider a frigate class vessel. I am designed for use as a heavy transport, with light offensive and heavy defensive armament. Unlike

the smaller diplomatic transports, I can open my own jump point into hyperspace, which is why I was chosen for this mission. Like all ships of my kind, my outer skin is protected by shields and can adapt itself to varying conditions. In other words, I can learn how to better defend against certain types of weapons. Confronted with lasers, I can make my surface reflective, for example. However, I have been offline for a long time, and my memory of my last combat encounter is not entirely clear. I will have to learn these things anew. "

Sheridan was impressed despite himself. "I wonder what the Corporate techies would do with this kind of technology," he thought aloud.

"I hope they will not get the chance to find out," the ship replied.

"What?" Sheridan studied the letters on the wall carefully. For some reason, he detected more than just language there. A feeling, too.

Something very much like apprehension? "Oh, sorry about that, Bob. Don't worry, I'm not going to hand you over to them or anything. Assuming you'd even let them get close. "

"You can appreciate my concern," the ship replied, "considering we must proceed to your employers with all due haste. "

That took John by surprise. "Huh? "

"The first step on our journey," Bob went on. "We must find a specific individual among your people. The Vorlons have had contact with him before. Though they did not, at the time, understand his importance, they knew he had a special destiny. That is why they permitted him to go on his way. "

"Okay, where is he now? "

"We do not know, so we will have to ask. That is why I am already en route to your corporation's headquarters. So you can ask. "

"We're moving?" Sheridan was surprised, since the ship gave off no telltale hums or vibrations to indicate it was operational. "When did we start? "

"After you were brought aboard. We're almost there, actually. Let me show you." With that, the front wall shifted and transformed into a viewscreen, displaying the eerie red currents of hyperspace. Almost immediately a glowing golden vortex opened up ahead, obscuring the rest of the scene as the ship dove into its open maw. All at once they were back in normal space, surrounded by star-encrusted blackness. Ahead and to one side lay a civilian starbase, one that Sheridan immediately recognized. This was the same station he departed from weeks ago-or was it months? He had no idea how long the Vorlons held him in their territory.

"I guess we're here," Sheridan sighed, wondering what kind of havoc the ship's sudden appearance was causing on the base. "Who is this guy I'm supposed to be looking for, anyway?"

"His name is Sinclair," Bob replied. "Jeffrey Sinclair. "



An Alternate View : By JJ O'SHAUGNESSY

THE BATTLE in the episode "Interludes and Examinations" was one of the climactic moments of the whole Babylon 5 series. The Shadows, after a whole two seasons of sneaking around are finally letting rip on the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

The League is desperate, but the members refuse to hang together in case they provoke the Shadows. Sheridan has no idea how to turn it around. He shames Kosh into accepting his appeal (in a sense, the moment where Kosh says "I will do as you ask" is the moment everything changed, the moment where the line in the sand was drawn and the endless circle broke, for good or for ill). The moment where the Vorlons emerge from their jump point and rip into the Shadow fleet is one of the most terrific moments in science fiction. A moment where everyone cheered.

And it's a pity that the description in "Coming of Shadows" gets it wrong. The description has five Shadow ships (three cruisers and two carriers) engaging a small Brakiri fleet, and two Vorlon cruisers and a dreadnought emerge and take on the Shadows. While it may be sort of accurate, the ships in question were four Shadow ships (with not really enough fighter support to warrant two carriers), and the Vorlons had two destroyer-type hulls and what looks like a cruiser. With this in mind I sat down one day and looked at what actually went on during this battle, using the new data provided in Wars of the Ancients. I hope I have got fairly close to the actual battle as shown in the show.

Force list

Brakiri: 1 Corumai Dreadnought, 1 Avoki Cruiser, 1 Halik Fighter Killer and 1 Brokados Battle Carrier with full fighter load.

Shadows: 1 Carrier, 3 Cruisers, and 1 Patrol Cruiser.

Vorlons: 1 Dreadnought, 1 Light Carrier, and 1 Strike Cruiser with four levels of crimson enhancement and 24 fighters. Vorlon fighters may enter the map deployed.

Set-up

Brakiri forces set up anywhere along a long edge of the map, any facing, speed 10.

Shadow forces set up on the opposite edge to the Brakiri, any facing, speed 15.

Vorlon Entry Procedures: The Vorlons start off map. In the EW Determination Step of Turn three, the Vorlon player secretly chooses a hex to enter from. At the beginning of turn

four, the jump point appears and the Vorlons enter the field of battle immediately, any chosen speed (this is in violation of the normal jump procedures. This is to simulate the Vorlons ability to stealth their jump vortex when emerging from their hyperspace "bubble". Also, it ensures that the Shadow player is truly "surprised").

Special Rules

For those without Wars of the Ancients, here are the rules for the Strike Cruisers crimson enhancement. Add eight to the capacitor capacity and four to its recharge rating. This is lost any time the capacitor takes any damage. This can be bought back at the rate of one level per repair point (effectively gain two points of capacity and one recharge per level) as long as the capacitor is fully repaired.

Vorlon/Brakiri Victory Conditions

Total Victory: Destroy all Shadow Ships.

Major Victory: Destroy two or more Shadow vessels and force the rest to flee.

Minor Victory: Force the Shadows to flee.

Minor Loss: Lose all Vorlon ships.

Major Loss: Lose all ships to Shadows or be forced to flee.

Shadow Victory Conditions

Major Victory: Destroy all Vorlon and Brakiri ships.

Minor Victory: Destroy all Vorlon ships.

Minor Loss: Forced to flee.

Major Loss: Lose all ships.

Historical outcome

The Shadows began to rip apart the Brakiri vessels as they had done to so many others. Just as all seemed lost, the Vorlons jumped in behind the Shadows and hit them from the rear. The Shadow pilots simply could not adapt to the new situation of fighting an enemy on equal terms and were thrown into complete confusion. The result was inevitable: the complete rout and destruction of the Shadow ships. The League came together and united behind Sheridan. They now believed the war could be won.

This battle had several larger consequences. Firstly, the fact that a Vorlon, a First One, was willing to give up it's life for the younger races had several implications, most of which were missed by everyone at the time. The second was that Kosh Ulkesh, a Vorlon with far different attitudes and aims to its older and wiser cousin, replaced Kosh Narenek.

The Galaxy was suddenly on a far darker path...

BYOG
(Bring Your Own Grog)

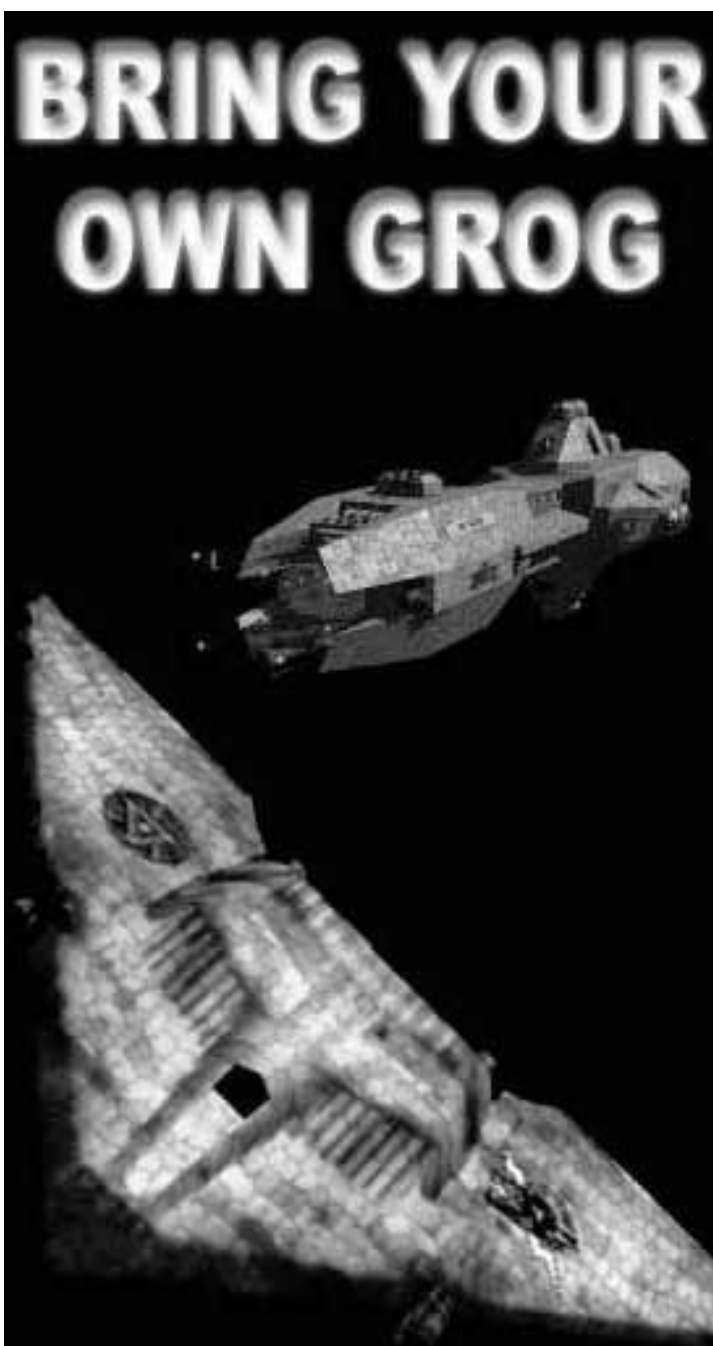
FOLLOWING the mystery Shadow attack, Singh limped the Arctic into Gamma-7 and again met the Bulwark. The local Brakiri corporations agreed to allow the Arctic to stay in exchange for a large "donation" by the Bulwark's quartermaster. Fortunately, the Bulwark's holds were easily capable of making good on the payment. The Bulwark also made good on the lost fighters, though the number of available pilots was becoming critical.

The Arctic was also repaired but with one major exception, a 100% fix on the heavy particle cannon. The instability reported earlier could not be tracked down and all the diagnostics indicated green, yet the cannon refused to arm. The primary armaments expert available finally disengaged the safety interlock that originally shut the cannon down and warned Singh not to fire unless necessary.

With the Arctic mostly in the green, Singh considered his options. Sooner or later, even the Bulwark would run out of supplies to pay the Brakiri bribes. And the bribes themselves did not guarantee that someone still wouldn't inform Earthdome. The Arctic needed an out of the way place to hang out and wait for the lunacy back at Earth to end. Singh settled on the Mitoc system. A dead world following the atrocities of the Dilgar war, the Mitoc system was now claimed by the Cascor though they had done little to the system other than maintain the jump gate.

Taking the Bulwark with him, Singh moved to Mitoc and while the Bulwark waited, the Arctic jumped into the edge of the system. Tired of jumping to one surprise after another, Singh moved quietly through the out skirts of the system, making a careful survey of the system. For once luck was with the Arctic and a particularly sharp sensor tech caught a weak blip of something in the asteroid fields between the outer two most planets of the system. Singh sent a flight of fighters in to investigate while he watched. In short order the fighters came tearing back with Raiders hot on their heels.

Singh sent an open message to



the Raiders that he wasn't looking for a fight but the fighters quickly explained that there was a large base hiding back in the asteroids. The Arctic had inadvertently found a Sanctuary Base and the raiders weren't going to let him leave without a fight. Rather than jump out and be followed into hyperspace where the Bulwark might be threatened, Singh elected to fight it out. Besides if the pirates could build a full size base here and not be found then the Arctic should easily be able to hide here. Once the pirates and he saw eye to eye.

SET-UP

Singh: Heavy Cruiser Arctic, along with any Thunderbolts remaining after the three previous scenarios with the lost Thunderbolts now replaced with

Aurora's. The Arctic is in hex 0313 heading 2.

Raiders: Raider Battlewagon Vainglory with 24 Delta-V fighters is in hex 4117, Raider Sloop Deep Pockets with 6 Delta-V's is in hex 4119. Both ships are at speed 6, heading 6.

SPECIAL RULES

Use a floating map.

All fighters may be deployed within 5 hexes of their mother ship, course and speed same as the mother ship. Fighters may not ram.

The Arctic has had all damage sustained during the previous scenario repaired. The exception is if a side had been destroyed at which point only the structure and the thrusters have been repaired. The heavy particle cannon, assuming it

is present must use the following rules.

The heavy particle cannon is not operating correctly. On any turn the heavy particle cannon attempts to fire roll a d6. On a 1, 2, or 3 the cannon fires, on a 4 and 5 the cannon safety interlocks prevent firing but the cannon can still fire in later turns (the arming is not lost but re-roll the die again). On a 6 the cannon refuses to fire and shuts down. If the cannon shuts down, it is unavailable for the remainder of the scenario. The power may be used for other activities and the weapon can still take damage.

The Delta-V's will surrender if their particular mother ship is destroyed or jumps out. Simply remove them from combat and continue play.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Arctic wins if it manages to survive.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME

The swarm of Delta-V's raised havoc on the outnumbered Arctic fighters. The Arctic easily lined up the lumbering battlewagon, but only the heavy lasers fired as the heavy particle cannon balked and reset, leaving the battlewagon damaged but still alive. Seeing its opportunity, the sloop slipped and landed a number of hits on the Arctic port side, before being crippled by multiple medium laser hits. The Delta-V's managed several passes on the Arctic and scored a significant amount of damage before the Arctic again lined up the battlewagon. This time the heavy particle cannon fired, smashing its way through the side structure and into the primary. Follow up fire smashed the reactor and the battlewagon was gone a moment later in a flash of nuclear fire. Before the light of the explosion had faded the remaining fighters surrendered and the fight was over.

Singh and the Arctic, through the captured fighter pilots managed an agreement with the Boss of the Sanctuary Base. In exchange for the Arctic not destroying the base, Singh got what he wanted, which was simply to be left alone until the end of the Earth Civil War.

(The SCS for the EAS Arctic can be found in the July edition of Babcom.)



Play to your strengths, avoid your weakness

By HARDLEC

EARTH has many infantry units and very good infantry. This is good for Earth, because EA armor is not particularly impressive. The combination of weak targeting and weak damage potential, combined with a modest range, makes it hard to engage the enemy with a Thor. The Odin pays for it's respectable weapon with a poor profile. Again, the weak targeting sensors of the EA make the Odin less formidable than it could be. The strengths of the EA are their artillery, which is abundant and lethal, and their infantry. The Baldur is typical of EA units: it is not weak in any area, but not strong either.

Earth has 5 types of infantry platoons, which are formed into companies: Armored Cavalry, Air Cavalry, Mechanized, Garrison, and Special Forces. Earth has Regular, Anti-Armor, Special Forces, Sniper and Infiltrator types of infantry, (Recon is only available in the standard Sliepner/recon stand package). The excellent Quiver remote turret and CPPG heavy infantry weapon serve the infantry well, as does the excellent (albeit low tech) Hammer ATGM.

The Sniper is hard to spot, hard to hit, and can be more than a little troublesome. One good way to deploy a sniper is to find a piece of cover with a good view and use it as a LFO. A trooper can easily hide in a tree with a pair of binoculars, a secure radio, and be armed with a platoon of Modis, or a battery of Lokis. That is an ugly picture for the enemy. Position snipers in places where you expect the enemy to come to you. It stands to reason that if the sniper has a good shot, the enemy will be minus a commander or critical recon section. It is almost always a good idea to let the enemy frontline troops pass the sniper and then let this wolf loose among the rear echelon sheep. Have a Sliepner drop off the Recon stand in a good spot, and then have it ferry a sniper into position. The Sliepner's stealth makes it a good choice for this, or, have the troopers walk.

The Infiltrator is nearly invisible, and very hard to spot, much less shoot at. Unless the mission requires, do not waste these units skulking about in the bush. Find a good place with a view for them to hide, and use them as LFOs. The rules do not prohibit the use of support troops as LFOs, and this is the best employment of these



units. Again, it is quite possible to let the enemy pass these troops, in which case they can walk to the nearest command post or other vital target and blow it to kingdom come. These guys are great for having your enemy teach you new and creative, if anatomically impossible, colorful metaphors.

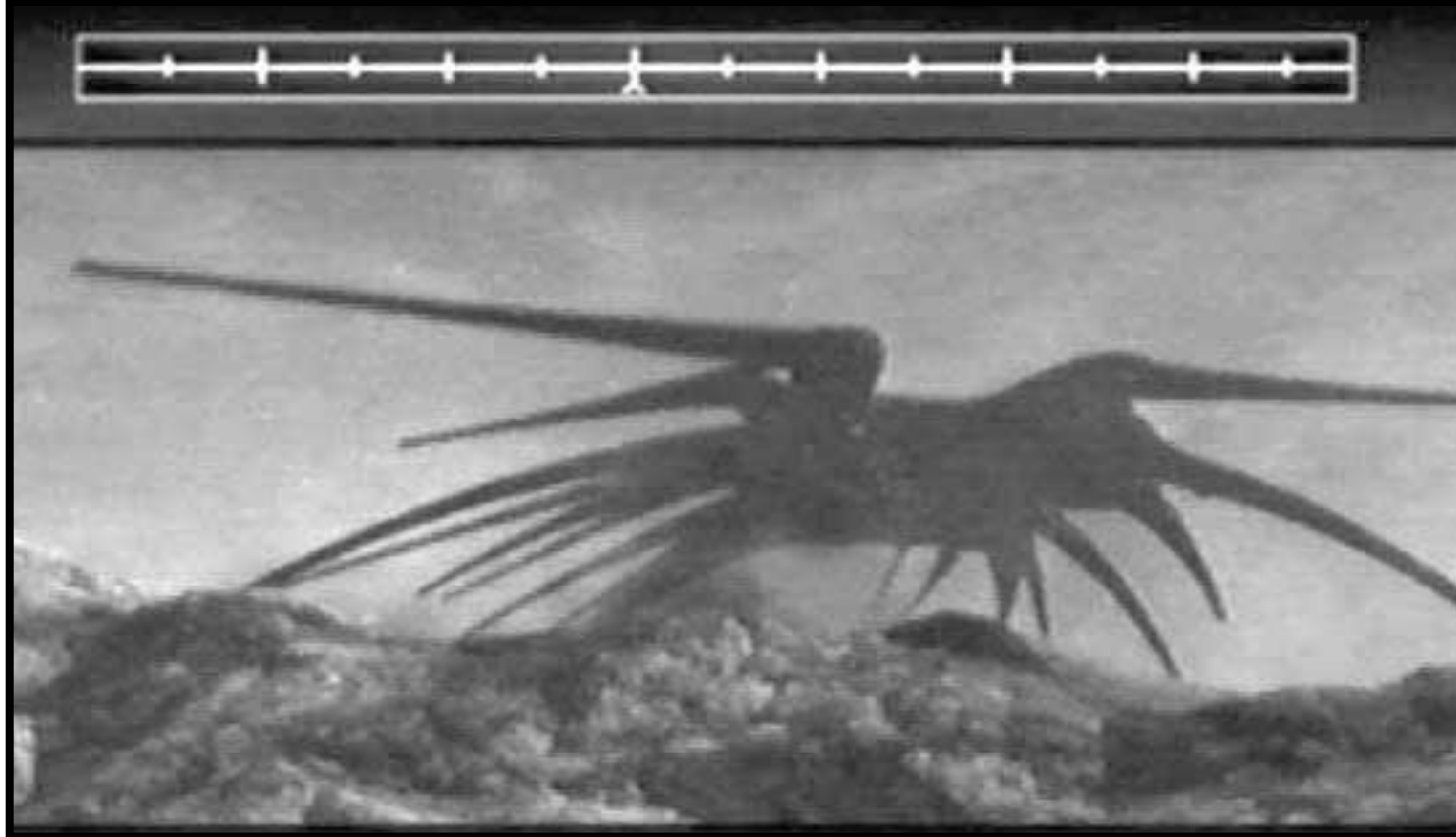
Every stand of Special Forces troops has a Hammer ATGM. The Hammer, like all ATGM, is best employed in pairs. It is quite reasonable to expect a platoon of enemy tanks attacking a platoon of Special Forces to lose vehicles. It is not redundant, however, to put a quiver AND a CPPG in a Special Forces unit; if for no other reason than the enemy will usually try to get the turrets first and leave the more valuable troopers be. Extra firepower is never wasted on Special Forces, but be ready to abandon the turrets and advance when the time comes. Get the Special Forces out of their carriers as fast as possible. This is one case where it is better to take an extra turn moving into position rather than risk losing highly effective infantry in their carriers.

Special Forces are great troops, but they are wasted as assault troops. Employ them with regular troops for this purpose. The EA regular infantry, and the ATGM infantry, can be well employed with standard infantry tactics. The

keys are: get them out of their carriers soon enough to join the battle and, have a mix of standard, ATGM and turrets. When encountering an enemy that relies on armor, or if air strikes are anticipated, take Quivers. If infantry are expected, take CPPGs. If the enemy is unknown, take both and reduce the number of ATGM troops.

The Armored Cavalry Company is a very versatile unit, but it sacrifices strengths for a lack of weaknesses. It is best used independently when facing an unknown enemy, or, as a part of a battalion or larger unit. Given a choice between an Armored Company and a Mechanized Infantry Company, and two Armored Cavalry Companies, go with the two specialized companies. The Air Cavalry Company is very mobile, but it can be vulnerable, and it has the drawback of having its command group be it's major source of fire support. As a single unit, it is best employed in special situations. Combine the Air Cavalry Company with the Armored Company to create a "hammer and anvil" situation. Garrison Infantry is almost certainly the best unit to hold a piece of ground. Make sure the Infantry in any incarnation has as much artillery support as possible.

FORESHADOWING THINGS TO COME



2148

- 18 January Interplanetary Expeditions (IPX) establishes their eighth experimental station near Syria Planum (N-Dark Genesis).
- IPX discovers remains of an advanced civilization across Syria Planum. The find is classified as Top Secret (JMS). The artifacts are removed to the IPX labs in San Diego (N-Dark Genesis).
- 5 May An MRA scientist dies while researching the artifacts (N-Dark Genesis).

2173

- The Psi Corps build a secret facility in Syria Planum to study alien technology (JMS).

2253

- An Interplanetary Expeditions archaeological team, including Mary Kirkish, finds a Shadow ship buried under the Martian Sands in Syria Planum, where Psi Corps have a secret base ("Message from Earth").
- ???? (Day 2) An IPX team excavate the Shadow ship buried for at least a 1000 yrs. A worker touches it with his bare hand and dies ("Message from Earth").
- ???? (Day 6) IPX tells Dr. Kirkish and the others to move out, and a number of unmarked shuttles head in for 6 days ("Message from Earth").
- ???? (Day 7) Garibaldi and Sinclair are shot down [5th day of flying (C-6)]

The Illegal and immoral acts within the Earth Alliance that were to culminate with Clark's ascendancy to the Presidency and his alliance with the Shadows covered decades, if not centuries. These acts are summarised here, adapted from Marc Carlson's B5 History web page.

They have only 5 days of air and food with them as they begin to walk out.

- ???? (Day 9) The Shadow vessel sends out a signal (N-The Shadow Within).
- ???? (Day ?) A telepath named McDwyer touches the ship and goes insane (N-Deadly Relations). Bester first encounters Shadow technology in Syria Planum (N-Deadly Relations).
- ???? (Day 12) A Shadow ship shows up at Syria Planum, digs the other ship out, and both leave ("Message from Earth").

[These ships are tracked by IPX and EA to "Alpha Omega 3" (Za'Ha'Dum") (N-The Shadow Within). Garibaldi and Sinclair spot a Shadow ship digging out the one Kirkish unearthed. They also discover a Psi-Corps base on Mars, involved in some sort of secret project with the Shadows. Talia is one of many subjects

of this project (C8, "Message from Earth").

- *Head of the Black Omega Squadron, and several Bloodhound Units of Meta Pol, Bester first hears of the dark movements in the Corps (N-Deadly Relations).
- *Rumors of a "Rogue" element in the government begin to spread ("A Spider in the Web").

2256

- An IPX probe discovers alien ruins "of an unknown alien race" on Alpha Omega 3 (Za'Ha'Dum) (N-The Shadow Within).
- August [April] Anna Sheridan, under Dr. Chang, returns from a dig on Theta Omega 2, exploring the ruins of the J/Lai (N-The Shadow Within). [There are two dates given here because of contradictions in source material].
- 3 December [15 July] The Icarus departs for the Rim "traveling to explore the ruins of an unknown alien race" ("In the Shadows of Za'Ha'Dum"/v).
- 11 December The Icarus, dropped off in real space by the Explorer vessel DeSoto, begins to interact with the IPX probe from a distance (N-The Shadow Within).
- 27 December [8 August] Official date of the Icarus' destruction ("Revelations"; "In the Shadow of Za'Ha'Dum"/v).
- 31 December The Icarus arrives at Alpha Omega 3 (Za'Ha'Dum) (N-The Shadow Within).

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: CONSPIRACY TIMELINE

2257

- Jason Ironheart begins a secret project for the Psi Corps ("Mind War").
- Sheridan finally learns the name of "Bureau 13" just before his informant dies ("A Spider in the Web").
- 1 January New Years' party aboard Icarus. All communication is cut off. The archaeological teams begin to explore the ruins. Dr. Chang is killed and his team vanish. They appear to have awoken the ancient evil on Za'Ha'Dum ("In the Shadow of Za'Ha'Dum", N-The Shadow Within).
- EarthForce begins experimenting with Shadow Technology discovered in the Lanep system ("The End of the Line"; N - Summoning Light).

2258 "Signs and Portents"

- Luis Santiago re-elected President of Earth.
- 3 August Signs and Portents Morden visits B5 and talks to the various Ambassadors. The Centauri "Eye" is recovered.
- ??? A Voice in the Wilderness, pt. 2 A Minbari, Draal, becomes the Guardian of Epsilon 3. Mars Colony revolt is put down by Earth as President Santiago authorizes the use of Shock Troops.
- Abel Horn killed in Mars Rebellion. His ship was destroyed in outer atmosphere combat skirmish Beta-9 by the Earthforce Omega-class cruiser Pournelle (sw/v).
- December Casting Shadows (pt.2) Technomages Galen and Isabelle go searching for evidence of the Shadows return. They receive information that the Narn transport Khatkhata is carrying human telepaths in sleeper units to the Thenothk system near Z'ha'Dum.
- 30 December Chrysalis President Santiago leaves Mars Colony for Io jump point on a goodwill tour in Earth Force-1. VP Clark remains on Mars due to a "Viral Infection" ("Chrysalis", "Hunter, Prey", "Voice of Authority").

2259 "The Coming of Shadows"

- 1 January President Santiago is killed in "accident" on his ship ("Chrysalis", "Hunter, Prey", "Voice of Authority").
- 19 January Revelations Opening meeting; G'Kar battles Shadow ships after survey of Z'ha'dum; G'Kar returns to B5.
- 11 February The technomage exodus fleet visits the Lanep system in time to catch the hybrid Shadow vessel destroying the Earthforce base and the Cerberus. (N - Summoning Light). Matthew Gideon is stuck in space when his ship, the Cerberus is destroyed by what looks to be a Shadow vessel of an unfamiliar configuration, and is rescued by Galen the technomage ("War Zone", "Path of Sorrows")
- 7 March A Spider in the Web [Dates are estimates] A Businessman is murdered, leading to evidence of Bureau 13 activity on B5. Able Horn wakes up ("A Spider in the Web").
- May Catherine Sakai encounters a Shadow Fleet on her way back to Babylon 5 (N-To Dream in the City of Sorrows).
- May The Mining Colony at Arisia 3 is destroyed by Shadows. (N-To Dream in the City of Sorrows).

- Mid August In the Shadow of Za'Ha'Dum [Date is an estimate] Sheridan learns of the Shadows. The Ministry of Peace begins to recruit on B5.
- Late August/Early September Confessions and Lamentations [JMISC] A Virulent plague - possibly set by the Shadows - wipes out the Markab who have knowledge of the Shadow War 1000 years past.
- Sakai, Sinclair and Marcus travel to Sector 14 to destroy a Shadow attempt to gain control of the Time Vortex. Catharine Sakai is lost in the Vortex (N-To Dream in the City of Sorrows).
- The EAS Eratosthenes, A Wells Fargo jump gate laying ship, captain Johannes Varese, is destroyed by Shadow ships in Sector 913 (N-Clark's Law).
- 28 December Keffer's flight recorder is played on ISN ("A Fall of Night").

2260 "Point of No Return"

- c4 March Mary Kirkish is called in to a dig on Ganymede, where a shadow vessel has been dug up ("Messages from Earth").
- 20 March Sheridan and the White Star reach Ganymede just as the Shadow Vessel is activated. Sheridan encounters the Agamemnon.
- 8 April President Clarke declares Martial Law in "Earth Central"
- 14 April Major ship battle outside B5. The Mars provisional Government refuses to implement Clark's Martial Law decree. EarthForce bombs MarsDome One, and appoints a military governor. Babylon 5 declares independence from the Earth Alliance.
- c20 July Ship of Tears [Date is approximate] Bester arrives at B5 wanting to stop a shipment of weapons components being shipped to the Shadows. These components consist of biotechnologically altered telepaths.
- 26 December Sheridan attacks Za'Ha'Dum; Garibaldi is abducted by the Shadows ("What Ever Happened to Mr. Garibaldi?")

2261 "No Surrender, No Retreat"

- 4 January What Ever Happened to Mr. Garibaldi? [Garibaldi is given to the Psi Corps by the Shadows. They take him to a secret facility on Mars, where Bester intervenes and adds some programming of his own. Bester is aware that some kind of action is being planned against the Corps, but he didn't know what or by whom. Garibaldi's mission is to gather information about the threat to the Psi Corps. ("The Face of the Enemy")]
- ??? Into the Fire The Army of Light mounts its assault. Londo destroys the Shadow vessels on Centauri Prime, and has Morden executed.
- ??? Epiphanies Londo Mollari returns to Babylon 5, leaving Minster in charge as Regent. Za'Ha'Dum is destroyed to keep its technology from falling into the wrong hands. Regent ... acquires a "keeper".
- Early June Atonement Delenn is recalled to Minbar to resolve a problem. Thirdspace The crew finds an alien artifact in hyperspace [This episode, based on internal evidence, takes places during the episode "Atonement"].

TRANSCRIPT: Dr Mary Kirkish IPX archaeologist (Messages from Earth)

FOR the past 12 years I've been working for Interplanetary Expeditions. We conduct archaeological digs on other worlds in search of new technology. Well, new to us anyway...

Seven years ago I was stationed on Mars. We were always getting false leads on artifacts supposedly buried beneath the Martian soil for thousands of years. Nothing ever came of it.

Then one day our sonic probes picked up something 300ft beneath the surface of Syria Planum. We didn't know what it was. Except it wasn't a natural formation and given its depth it had to have been there at least a thousand years.

It was the middle of the Martian winter so we took weeks to dig half of it out of the ground. But that much was enough to give me nightmares for the rest of my life.

It's the same ship we've been seeing on the news lately. The one that looks like it came straight from hell.

That was just the start. It gets worse.

Only a handful of people know what happened after that - including me. All the others are either dead or missing...

We told Earth Central what we had found. It was the strike of a lifetime, we were all very excited. But there was something about it that made us nervous. And then one of our workers who was clearing away the dirt accidentally touched it with his bare hands - he died, instantly, as though the life had been sucked out of him.

But a week later we were ordered to stop digging and fall back to our base two miles away.

We didn't want to go. But we were told that anyone who didn't move would be fired so... we moved.

For six days we just sat there waiting while unmarked shuttles moved in and out of the area surrounding the dig. And suddenly everything stopped. No shuttles. No communications. Nothing. That's when I saw it.

I just wanted to run away and hide, jump in a hole and pull the ground in over me but there was nowhere to go. Nothing to do but watch.

At first I thought it was destroying the other ship. Then I realized it was digging it out.

For 20, 25 minutes... nothing happened.

Then we heard it. A sound that just reaches right in your brain and rips it apart. The sound of something terrible being born.

They warned us that if we told anyone what we'd seen there'd be unfortunate consequences. Then they broke us up, assigned us to other worlds so we never had a chance to talk to each other...

A few weeks ago I was called in to a new dig. They've found another one of these things. This time on Gandymede. But there's a difference. Whoever's behind this back home doesn't want to give it back.

In three days they're going to take it back to Earth, study its secrets and learn how to use it against the other races and, if necessary, against our own people.

That's why I had to warn someone. You can't let them get hold of one of these ships. They don't want it so we can fight these things. They want us to become more like them.

That's it. That's all I have to say.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: CONSPIRACY TIMELINE

- Mid June Lines of Communication (3 days) Shadow remnants begin attacking shipping.
- October? Franklin and Lyta test her ability to wake up the implanted telepaths. After observing the effect of her mental contact with them, Franklin devises an artificial equivalent and feels he's well on his way to reviving them.
- Late November (Day 2. Ivanova and the White Star fleet battles Clark's "advanced Destroyers" (built from Shadow technology)
- 1 December Endgame Sheridan and his fleet disable the Mars Fleet by unleashing the Shadow-modified telepaths.

2262 "The Wheel of Fire"

- March A View from the Gallery [Date is an estimate] An unknown alien species attacks the station after attacking the Gaim.
- May Strange Relations [Date is an estimate] Bester arrives to try to retrieve the refugee telepaths.
- September Meditations on the Abyss [Date is an estimate] Lennier is assigned to White Star 27, "Maria", to investigate possible Centauri involvement in the attacks on Alliance Ships.
- October And All My Dreams, Torn Asunder [Date is an estimate] The Alliance examine evidence that the Centauri have been behind the attacks. They ostracize and blockade the Centauri Republic. The Centauri withdraw from the Alliance. G'Kar and Londo Mollari both leave Babylon 5 and return to Centauri Prime, leaving Vir as Ambassador to B5. The Interstellar Alliance declares war on the Centauri Republic.
- October Movements of Fire and Shadow [Date is an estimate] Sheridan authorizes the White Star fleet to engage the Centauri if they attack any Alliance ships. He asks the Grey Council to release the technology to build White Star ships to Earth to help supplement the fleet. Lyta and Franklin visit the Drazi home world at Vir's request. It is determined that the Centauri ships attacking the Alliance have been uninhabited, piloted by Shadow technology. The Drazi and Narn mount an assault on the Centauri home world.
- November The Fall of Centauri Prime [Date is an estimate] Centauri Prime is decimated by the combined Narn/Drazi fleet. Regent... dies. Londo is made Emperor, and lays the blame on the whole war on the Regent. He voluntarily takes a "keeper" based on the threat that the Drakh will destroy the planet if he doesn't. The Centauri surrender. The Shadows allies flee to Centauri Prime ("War Without End", pt.1.
- December Objects at Rest [Date is an estimate] Londo gives a gift to Sheridan and Delenn for their son, an urn with a hidden Keeper.

2263

- While on a good will tour of Down Below, Sheridan is nearly killed by the Drakh, but he is saved by Vir, and the technomage Kane (N-The Long Night of Centauri Prime).

2264

- The Telepath Crisis leads to the disbanding of the Psi-Corps (OM, "Value Judgements"/s).

- Bester escapes some disaster, abandoning his people. He is branded a war criminal and goes into hiding (N-Final Reckoning
- About this time, John Mattheson is working for Psi-Corps, guarding a rogue telepath. He helps her trigger a locator allowing the rogue telepaths to destroy the enclave ("Path of Sorrows")

c2265 Legends of the Rangers

2266

- Vir assists a trio of technomages to find and destroy all but the last of the Shadow Planet Killers (N-Armies of Light and Dark).
- Late December A Call to Arms The Excalibur and the Victory are launched. The Drakh launch a Shadow Planet killer towards Earth. The Victory destroys itself to save the Earth. the Drakh do manage to infect the planet with an old Shadow disease. 240 destroyers are lost, nearly 7000 killed ("War Zone").
- The Earth is placed under quarantine.

2267 The Babylon Project: Crusade

- January War Zone [Date is an estimate; clearly takes place first, as it's the exposition episode. Black uniforms.] With the Earth under quarantine, the leadership of the Earth Alliance appears to shift to Mars. Gideon is given command of the Excalibur, and to try to find a cure for the Drakh plague. He may have made a bargain with the Drazi and Brakiri to find this cure in four years, or return to Earth and spend the fifth year on picket duty ("Racing the Night"). The EAS Persephone forces a Drakh ship, fleeing the battle around Earth, down on Ceti 4. The Persephone is destroyed. On their way to test Excalibur's systems, they receive a distress call to Ceti 4, rescue an archeological expedition besieged by Drakh who are stuck there after attacking Earth. Captain Gideon's crew capture a Drakh.
- February Racing the Night On an unnamed world, the crew of the Excalibur discover a civilization destroyed a thousand years before by the same Shadow virus infecting Earth.
- September Patterns of the Soul [Date is an estimate; Black uniforms] Excalibur is assigned to track down some refugees who have possibly escaped from Earth carrying the Plague. Gideon discovers that they were infected by Earth Force to cover up the military secrets they hold.
- Vir is allowed to return to Centauri Prime. He spies for the technomage Galen. Vir learns about the Drakh and Londo's Keeper (N-Armies of Light and Dark).
- Sept 2 or so - To The Ends of the Earth/syn Excalibur encounters a hybrid Shadow ship.
- Sept 3 - The End of the Line/syn Excalibur and Galen track the Hybrid ship back to its base, an EA research base. The technomage/Shadow connection is revealed. Gideon takes the whole story back to Mars where he is shot in a cliffhanger.

2269

- 5 May Sheridan learns of the Drakh "munitions plant" on the Centauri continent of Xonos (N-Armies of Light and Dark [Date given is

2270]).

- May G'Kar, Garibaldi and Lou Welsh travel to Centauri to check out the plant. Welsh is killed. In repayment his killer and a number of Prime Candidates are blown up by Vir. The underground resistance is born (N-Armies of Light and Dark [Date given is 2270]).

2270

- Sometime before this, the Drakh Plague is cured by the crew of the Excalibur (N-Final Reckoning, N-Legions of Fire).

2271

- 18 January Several Centauri munitions plants are blown up (N-Armies of Light and Dark).

2275

- Vir encounters Shiv'Kala the Drakh (N-Legions of Fire).

2277

- David Sheridan is given his "Gift" from Londo, and the Keeper attaches to him. He escapes from Minbar and flees to Centauri Prime (N-Legions of Fire).
- The Drakh/Centauri fleet is finished and moved into position to attack the home worlds of the Interstellar Alliance (N-Legions of Fire).
- 31 December Vir destroys the Centauri "Tower of Power", revealing the Drakh presence on Centauri Prime, and the existence of his "Legions of Fire (N-Legions of Fire).

2278

- 1 January Shiv'Kala detonates a third of his fusion weapons on Centauri Prime, destroying much of the Capitol City . (N-Legions of Fire).
- 2 January Sheridan appears on Centauri Prime, after being lost in time ("War Without End", pt.1). Londo manages to subdue his Keeper long enough to allow Delenn and Sheridan to escape. ("War Without End", pt.1,"War Without End", pt.2, N-Legions of Fire). Before Londo can be controlled again by his "Shadow", he asks for his "old friend" G'Kar to kill him. Londo and G'Kar kill each other ("Midnight on the Firing Line", "The Coming of Shadows", "War Without End", pt.2, N-Legions of Fire).
- 12 January Vir claims the title of Emperor. He is supported by the Great Houses and the Military. The Military is recalled to Centauri Prime, and reassigned to attack the Drakh home world (N-Legions of Fire).
- 20 January Vir returns to Centauri Prime. He encounters Shiv'Kala again, but the Drakh is killed by Garibaldi. With the death of Shiv'kala, David is freed from his Keeper (N-Legions of Fire).

* * *



Where it all began?

"Something's out there, Captain, something big and dangerous. And it doesn't want us to know it's out there."
- Garibaldi.

THE COMIC *Silent Enemies*, by JMS, casts a revealing light behind the events of *Messages from Earth*. In this comic, JMS details Garibaldi's and Sinclair's experiences on the Martian fields of Syria Planum.

Plot Revelations:

When Sinclair was stationed on Mars, he was given an assignment to look into "possible covert Earth-Alien activities." We do not know by whom, but it may have been General Hague or his allies.

In the course of this investigation, Sinclair and Garibaldi crash when their shuttle mysteriously loses power while surveying Syria Planum.

They find a gigantic spidery ship apparently excavating another just like it as people from a nearby building watch on. These people are soon revealed to be telepaths of PsiCorps.

Inside the cluster of buildings was a huge transparent dome containing a large alien biomechanical construct, veins and skin and bone intermingling with tubes and panels. Passing through the organism were scores of human bodies on a conveyer belt. The whole operation was being monitored by technicians in a small isolation area jutting out the side of the dome, as workers milled about the rest of the building with heavy weaponry.

An atmosphere of self pity and fear pervades itself into all who come near.

The bodies on the conveyer belt appeared to have energy fields surrounding their heads. To Garibaldi, it was clearly some kind of medical experiment.

After Garibaldi and Sinclair escape - during which they damage the Shadowtech with a grenade attack - they returned to the site with an Earthforce detachment.

There is no trace of buildings, an excavation, or anything...

Garibaldi found the only evidence, which he kept to himself. A scorched PsiCorps badge.

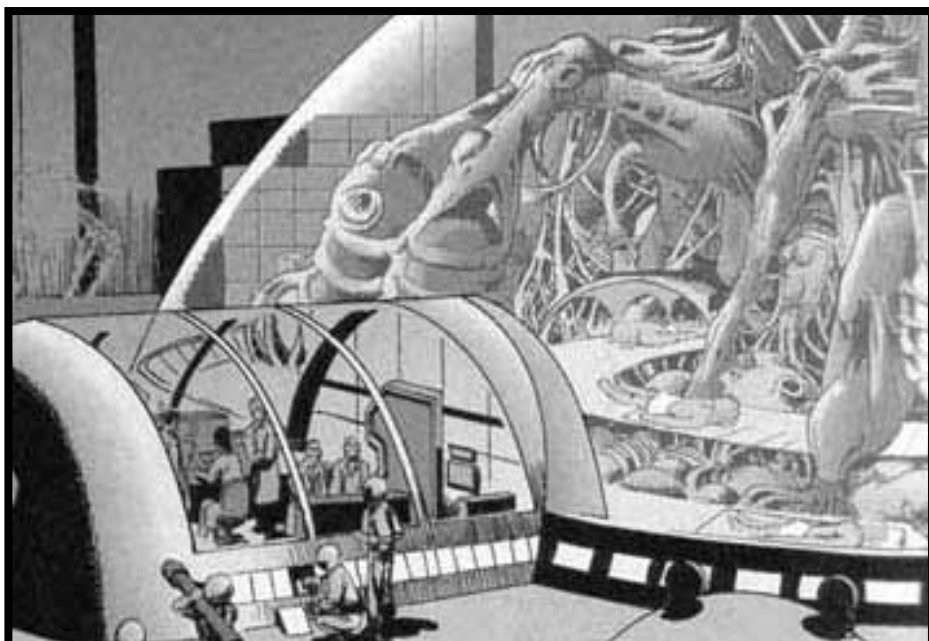
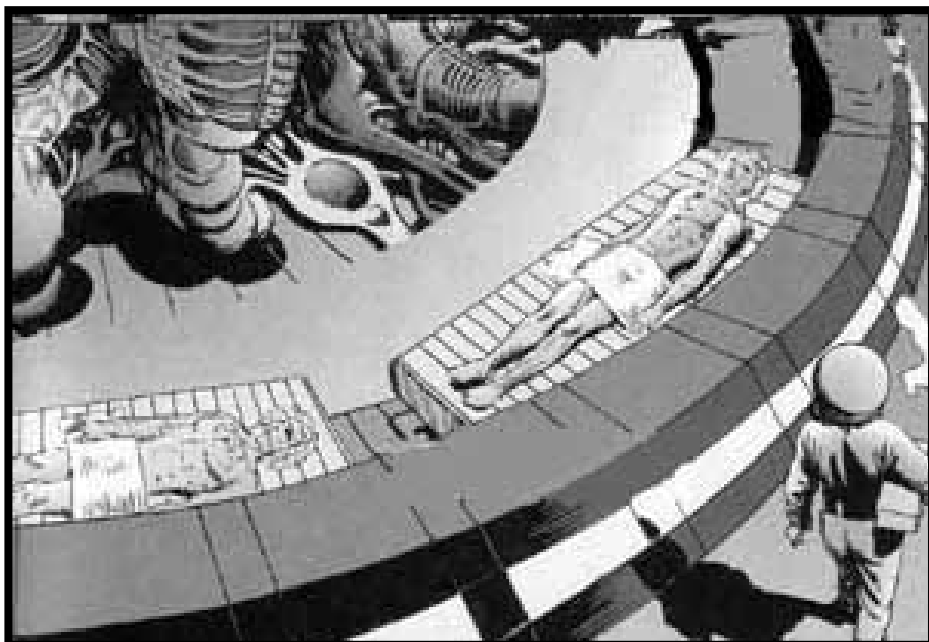
Implications:

- That the Shadows, or their agents, were well and truly active within the Earth Alliance long before the *Icarus* was sent to Z'ha'dum.

- What the Shadowtech machine was doing is not revealed. It may have been associated with the PsiCorp "personality implant" program on Syria Planum (*Divided Loyalties*). Or it may have had something to do with the cyber implants of *Ship of Tears*. Or both.

- On page 12 of the comic, a shape can be seen standing by the left wall. From its outline, it looks like a Shadow.

- Talia Winters may have been among those being "processed" by the Shadowtech machine. She survived the erasure of evidence on Syria Planum. (This is shown on the last page of the comic, and is a deliberate spoiler by JMS for the episode "*Divided Loyalties*.")



THE SHADOW WITHIN



ARCHAEOLOGIST Anna Sheridan is working on an Interplanetary Expeditions (IPX) dig at Theta Omega 2, a planet once inhabited by the J/Lai, an offshoot of the Brakiri.

She discovers a bio-mechanical artefact that looks somewhat like a mouse. As she studies it, she briefly makes contact with a quasi-consciousness embedded in the artifact.

The object later begins to overheat until it explodes, sending a telepath called to examine it into a catatonic state (doing similar damage to all telepaths in a 3 mile radius). His brain is locked into a rapid cyclical pattern, and he keeps repeating "I am the machine". This telepath is then whisked away by Donne, a Psi Corps representative investigating the incident.

A tight veil of security is clamped upon the project, Anna's artifacts are confiscated by the expedition's head - Dr Chang - and she is only allowed to keep her research notes.

However, while recuperating at Station Prime, orbiting Centauri Prime, Dr Chang promotes Anna to a science officer and recruits her on a mission aboard the Icarus to further investigate the source of the object, a planet on the rim of the galaxy designated Alpha Omega 3.

Dr Morden, an archaeolinguist working for an Earthforce division called New Technologies, is part of the survey team. He is in a state of grief, having recently lost his wife and daughter in a terrorist attack.

Anna also discovers Psi Corps has an interest in the expedition - Donne. He had been assigned

This is an abridged version of the Lurker's Guide plot summary of the novel "The Shadow Within", by Jeanne Cavelos. This focuses on the story of Anna Sheridan, and the fate of the crew of the IPX Icarus.

"The story of the Icarus as presented in this book is considered canon."

-JMS

to the crew by the Psi-cop Alfred Bester.

Her suspicions reveal EarthGov and Psi Corps had learned of the planet after planting a homing beacon on an alien ship encountered on Mars three years previously.

At the IPX mission briefing, Chang shows them pictures of the planet Alpha Omega 3 (Z'ha'dum), including a series of inscribed pillars and an egg-shaped biomechanical structure which has similarities to the "mouse". Afterward, Anna learns that Donne and Morden have a deep distrust of each others' organizations.

Morden shares some preliminary translations with Chang and Anna: the pillars appear to say, "every light casts a shadow," and the largest inscription on the egg is "what is desired" or "all that is desired."

Twenty days from Alpha Omega 3, Anna uses an IPX probe's remote control to explore a cave

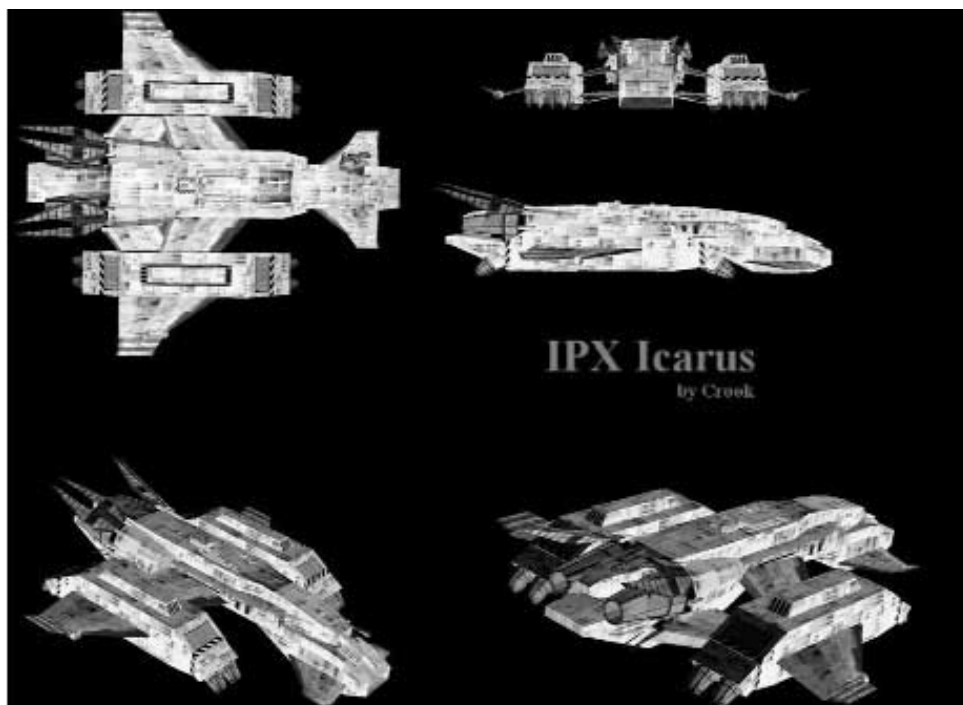
near the planned landing site, and finds two artifacts - one similar to the one she discovered earlier, and another resembling the biomechanical egg.

Chang reports back to Earth that Donne is planning to smuggle artifacts to Earth for Psi Corps to study. He also refers to the Shadow ship found on Mars, and a hypothesis of Morden's, that it returned on automatic.

Morden tells Anna about the Shadow ship discovered by IPX. When the ship was excavated and first exposed to sunlight, it transmitted a message. Morden was on a team from Earthforce New Technologies sent to study the ship at IPX's request.

After planetfall on Alpha Omega 3, half the archaeological team, including Chang and Donne, go to investigate the egg, while Anna, Morden, and the others head for the cave where she found artifacts. Morden has refined the translation of the pillar inscriptions to "Every light carries a shadow." Arriving at the cave, they find that the bio-tech mice are gone and the hole they were removed from has been partially filled in. Anna, Morden, and Dr. Favorito explore deeper in the cave, and find a corpse that appears to be a biological creature inside a biomechanical one. As far back in the cave as they can go, they find a black sphere blocking a passageway.

At Babylon 5, Sinclair has contacted Senator Hidoshi about the expedition and been referred to President Santiago's science adviser, Dr. LeBlanc. LeBlanc is unaware of any expedition



near the rim, but promises to check on it.

Dr. LeBlanc calls Sinclair back and tells him the expedition will not be recalled. She suspects that it may discover something powerful that can be used against the Minbari.

The expedition starts suffering equipment malfunctions and personnel losses.

Anna searches Donne's quarters. Inside a roll of lingerie, she finds a collection of small body parts and a Psi Corps badge with a black square in the center.

Morden attempts to kill Donne. Donne says that Morden hid the bio-artifacts; Morden says that Psi Corps wouldn't have left anything for Earthforce to study.

Donne believes that the biomechanical egg was sending out a telepathic attraction, which she was able to block once she became aware of it. She says that when Chang's group reached the egg, some of them climbed into openings in it, and the openings vanished. It then changed shape and oozed away down the crevasse.

Donne leads Anna and Morden to a chamber below the crevasse, where they see what appear to be cryogenic chambers, one for each person on the Icarus, and the egg. As they watch, the

egg lets out a crew member, who is taken away, struggling, by three pale humanoid aliens. They hear a drill, and screams from one of the crew. Anna sees some kind of wiring attached to the face of the person in the nearest chamber and realizes the aliens are preparing the humans to become part of the biomachines.

A crew member says that he is now an emissary from the resident aliens, who are willing to share all their technology if their existence is kept secret. Anyone who serves them willingly will be rewarded with their greatest desires; anyone else will be forced to serve unwillingly. New, spidery aliens begin to materialize all around.

Before Anna can detonate one of the bio-organic telepathic bombs to save herself, Morden is overcome - he has given himself in to the aliens' promises of power and immortality when they tempt him with images of his dying wife.

Anna is left to become a part of the Shadow war-machine. The rest of the story is revealed during Babylon series 3.

* * *

IMPLICATIONS

- Anna Sheridan discovered an ancient psi-bomb left over from a previous Shadow war. Had telepaths been used against the Shadows before? Had the Shadows attempted to eradicate them? This fits with the eradication of telepaths on Narn after G'Quan's resistance efforts.
- The psi-bomb would be a good tool to incapacitate telepaths without killing them, making them perfect for inclusion.
- Alternatively, had the psi bomb been developed for use against the Shadows? They, being powerful telepaths themselves, could be vulnerable to their effects...
- If the Shadows have anti-psi weapons, why were these not used against Sheridan's forces?
- Psi Corp covered up the psi effect of Anna's initial Shadowtech discovery, but Earthforce - or at least Morden's division - figured out what had happened. Was Morden a member of the anti-telepath movement?
- There is division between PsiCorps and EarthGov on one level. Support on another. Is this the difference between Clark's faction and Santiago's?
- The crew of the Icarus seen in the underground chamber was undergoing the same procedure used on the telepaths in "Ship of Tears" and shown in the comic Silent Enemies.
- The comic, this novel and various statements in the B5 series show apparent conflict as to when the Shadows were "awakened". But this is merely based on confused interpretation of the word "awakened". The Shadows have returned to Z'ha'dum. Z'ha'dum has long been populated by Shadow minions. The Shadows have always been "awake", quietly going about their business. But, about 2253, they increased their tempo - and began to "openly" interfere with the affairs of the younger races.
- Morden, archaeolinguist working for an Earthforce division called New Technologies, mentioned having worked with IPX twice before. One time was when the Shadow ship was found on Mars; what was the other?

FIRST ONES VARIANTS COMPETITION

To be conducted by the author of Wars of the Ancients, Matt Plonski

Winners will be given Matt Plonski's "stamp of approval", be published on his web page and published by Babcom in a special First Ones Variants edition.

- Submissions must be made by December 31, 2002
- Submissions must be sent to: b5wars@tralfazsolutions.com

Supplemental material for Wars of the Ancients can be found at:
http://www.tralfazsolutions.com/wota_supplemental.htm



Clark: Selling his soul to defend the Homeland

HIGH-LEVEL Earthgov personnel involvement in Shadowtech programs is a certainty. Massive expenditure, such as that needed for building a series of warships, cannot be hidden from everyone. Nor can the ongoing diversion of military personnel and resources.

Key people in the chain of command would have to know. So would politicians involved with military portfolios. And the Clark government was certainly amenable.

His nomination as Vice President was controversial because of the open acclaim he received from PsiCorp - supposedly a non-political organisation.

No doubt he also received strong financial support from PsiCorp and possibly Interplanetary Explorations (IPX).

Clark's strategy was simple: win votes through playing up to the population's fears.

Blame everything on "an alien conspiracy".

Xenophobia was not a new political tool. But the Earth-Minbari war had sown the seeds of fear among the voting public of the Earth Alliance.

All Clark did was to feed it, encourage it.

When it came to enforcing his policies, Clark pursued another time-honoured ploy: fill all key positions with people known to be loyal, and "remove" those who are not.

It was a political strategy the Shadows were bound to be impressed by.

There can be little wonder, therefore, that we eventually catch glimpses of Morden with key Earthgov personnel.

Political Machinations

The government of President Santiago was no utopian ideal. It led a questionable policy of separating social from economic issues. It also tried to "lead from the front" an effort to further open economic and political ties with alien governments.



It was a split government, having to deal with strong factions opposed to alien contact and promoting hard-line policies.

In the environment of fear, Santiago did not take a populist position. Instead, he attempted to go against the prevailing mood and do what he believed to be in Earth's best interests.

But the behaviour of the Mars independence movement was no help. It gave the hard-liners an excuse for their attitudes, and a tool with which to criticize Santiago's softly-softly approach.

The background events to *A Voice in the Wilderness* reveals open revolt on Mars. Earth's response is brutal: martial law.

Recipe for Disaster

At this point the xenophobic factions within the Earth Alliance appear to be fractured.

"Pro-Earth" senators and military commanders content themselves with small, disparate, "black" projects such as the Bio weapons Division.

PsiCorp has its own Bureau 13 covert branch. Heimdahl, while the recipient of considerable support, is an outlawed terrorist organisation. It was an underground political reactionary organ-

isation established to feed off the racial paranoia many humans felt towards aliens. It had grown in popularity after the devastating Minbari War. With the nomination of Vic-President Clark, the Home Guard - as Heimdahl was also known - felt its agenda was becoming accepted. Therefore it became more confident in its attacks. A Homeguard cell became active on Babylon 5 in 2258, under the command of Malcolm Biggs, plotting to assassinate alien ambassadors.

But there is evidence of a coming-together of these factions.

PsiCorp sensed an opportunity to use this xenophobia to advance its own causes. It offered its services and power to Clark in return for increased independence to pursue its own agenda.

No doubt, it is PsiCorp that finds these diverse bastions of xenophobia and brings them together under their puppet - Clark.

Overthrow

President Santiago's behaviour is not acceptable to this unholy alliance. Especially not the signing of new legislation supporting contact with alien races...

An extensive plot is hatched - probably with the support of Heimdahl - to take over Earthgov in a disguised coup.

Garibaldi unravels this plot to kill President Santiago. He captures a murderer named Deveraux who has an unmarked PPG - a trademark of Earthforce secret agents. He finds the man had equipment designed to jam Gold Channel transmissions used by Earthforce One.

Garibaldi is severely wounded by a "sleeping agent" among his own staff - his personal aide, Jack - before he can do anything about it.

Clark's coup was extensive and well planned. However, the method of killing President Santiago may have been a bit impromptu given the surprise appearance of the pro-alien legisla-



tion. Once in power, Clark had to slowly but surely - so as not to draw undue attention - weed his opponents out of key military and political positions.

Garibaldi eventually discovers who shot him in the back - his aide, Jack. Jack says: "There is a new order coming, back home". He was referring to the growing power of Nightwatch - an official organisation under the auspices of President Clark.

He salutes Garibaldi with the same distinctive style used by Bester - further implying an association between Clark and the Psi-Corps.

Jack may have originally been a Heimdahl operative. Many of Heimdahl's leaders received legitimacy by being appointed positions of command under Nightwatch when that body was created in 2259 under the auspices of the Ministry of Peace.

Earthforce Bureau of Internal Investigations (eyes for short) was also infiltrated to an unknown degree. It was used by Vice-President Clark to assess the loyalty of command staff throughout Earthforce in 2258. The move was controversial as it involved telepath scans - a move somewhat doubtful under law.

Clark's influence was widespread. It even extended to sympathetic members of the Earthforce Special Intelligence Division.

Earthforce Special Intelligence falls directly under the control of the commander in chief, the president of the Earth Alliance. The ESI sent special agent Derek Cranston to Babylon 5 with gun-camera footage from Warren Keffer's Star Fury of a Shadow ship. He shows it to Sheridan and the major ambassadors in an attempt to discover what they know about the vessel.

Only G'Kar is forthcoming, relating to ancient legends of the Shadows.

Endawi returns to Earth and reports the "lack of knowledge" to a Senator at Earthdome. Morden and a PsiCop enter after that meeting...

Endawi clearly doesn't know the meaning of what he has just done. Nor does he know anything about the ship.

Shadow involvement

But, the Senator clearly does, demonstrating the Shadows have considerable contact with Earthgov.

It is just a glimpse of a Shadow-Clark link. But a clear one.

Another clue is presented a few episodes later. In Voices of Authority it is implied that President Clark has a similar arrangement to the Shadows as Ambassador Londo Mollari.

Clark and Morden are recorded by the Great Machine discussing President Santiago's death.

This recording is given to ISN, but it is dismissed as part of an "alien conspiracy" to over-

Earthforce wants kept secret. Whether he believes this himself or not is unclear.

This episode also reveals a split within Earthforce. An agent, called Sarah, contacts Sheridan on behalf of General Hague - instructing him to protect Dr Jacobs, and the information he contains about Clark's faked illness to get him off Earthforce One before the explosion.



MATTERS OF HONOUR

Endawi: "You'll find the report quite complete, Senator."

Senator Young: "And no-one else knows what this ship is or where it came from?"

Endawi: "Not that I could determine. I came across some interesting stories here and there. Most of it from a 1000 years ago. I don't know if it has any relevance or not."

Senator: "Well we'll leave that for the experts to tell us. Good work on this Endawi. I'll let you know what we find."

Senator (to Morden): "I told you to wait outside. You could have been seen."

Morden: "No harm. No-one knows who I am."

Senator: "It's all here. They don't have much to go on. A little from the Narns..."

Morden: "Yes, well, that's to be expected. But I think we've neutralized that problem. Nothing else then?"

Senator: "Not that I can see. The ship's a complete mystery to all of them."

Morden: "Good. My associates will be very happy to hear that. There's no need to rush things. Your government can dismiss this as an isolated incident."

Senior PsiCop: "I don't know... there's something about this idea of a threat to planetary security I find very appealing. As long as we keep the real truth to ourselves, there's no reason we can't use this situation to speed up the program here at home."

Morden: "Interesting. What exactly did you have in mind?"





BUREAU 13 & SYRIA PLANUM

Bureau 13, a secret research base in the ruins of San Diego. The bureau was run by a Psi Cop who had been "officially" declared dead. She went by the designation "Thirteen". This bureau was involved in illegal cyber-organic research, including Project Lazarus, during the 2230s. In "Deathwalker," NaToth recalled that the Dilgar were experimenting with brain implants. Was Earth continuing the Dilgar research? Did they receive research data after the war,

It was labelled by Sheridan - who first heard of it in 2253 - as a "dirty tricks squad that deals with starchamber justice and black projects".

It terms its operatives knights, giving individuals numbers to distinguish themselves. The organisation appears to go to any lengths to expose real or believed alien conspiracies to undermine Earth's strength.

The Bureau sent two of its Knights to use highly advanced neural net equipment to trap Commander Sinclair in a virtual reality world in an effort to uncover what happened at the Battle of the Line.

With the ascension of Clark to the presidency, Bureau 13 underwent a restructure and name change - though JMS never clearly stated what. (The real reason was Bureau 13 was a name registered by a RPG company)

It is possible that Bureau 13 "evolved" or "merged" with the secret PsiCorp operation at Syria Planum, Mars. We know that experimentation on Telepaths took place at Syria Planum. It is likely the drug "dust" was developed here, as were telekinetic drugs. It was also here that telepaths were given deep, implanted, alternate personalities to force them to act as sleeper agents and spies...

Psychics who refused to join PsiCorps were imprisoned here - and were made subjects of experimentation and "modified" to act as "processors" for Shadow vessels.

Syria Planum was destroyed by the Mars resistance, with the help of the PsiCop Matheson who allowed a rogue teep prisoner to notifying them of its whereabouts.

throw the Earth Alliance. That Xenophobic strategy again.

Shortly after, Sheridan becomes aware that IPX and Earthgov have discovered another Shadow ship. this time on the moon Ganymede, in orbit around Jupiter.

The implications of Clark's usage of Shadowtech is disturbing. As is the possibility that Earth has an alliance with this force of darkness. Sheridan's efforts to destroy the Shadow Cruiser before it is taken back to Earth for study provides impetus for Clark to act.

He has cleared most of his opponents from government and military ranks. He knows he has full support for even the most drastic acts.

In the name of interstellar security, he declares martial law throughout the Earth Alliance.

He becomes, in effect, a dictator.

It is a bold move.

But he believes his powerbase within the Earth Alliance is strong. And he believes he has powerful allies in the form of the PsiCorps and the Shadows.

Downfall

In Epiphanies, with his Shadow allies gone, President Clark views Babylon 5 as a significant threat to his power. So does the Psi-Corps.

Both realise the loss of the Shadows is a potential setback to their plans.

The implication is that the PsiCorp, and Earthforce, are eager to get to Z'ha'dum to "loot" as much Shadowtech as possible.

Z'ha'dum is destroyed, but not before the Shadows' allies left with unknown quantities of Shadow technology and artefacts.

And the close ties between the Drakh and Centauri government - on behalf of the Shadows - is likely to have been emulated on a smaller scale with Earthgov.

Are there Drakh contacts, Drakh "Keepers", among President Clark's supporters?

We know a Drakh "Keeper" was used to infiltrate the Mars Resistance. Surely such creatures were in use within Earthgov itself?

This episode also raises some doubt as to who is in charge of this xenophobic political alliance.

Not even Bester isn't let in on the entirety of

Clark's plan, just the part involving his personal Black Omega squadron. What else is planned? Bester's superior said the plan involves the Ministry of Peace and the Nightwatch, at least..

The episode Between the Darkness and the Light is confirmation of Shadow involvement with Earthgov.

Or is it?

Are the Shadow Omegas the product of a technology exchange between the Shadows and Earthgov in payment for services rendered? (Most likely keeping out of the Shadow War)

Or are the Shadowtech skin and beam weapons on board these Omegas covertly gained technology from samples taken from the Mars and Ganymede discoveries?

This is unlikely - though not impossible. It is generally established that Shadowtech can "talk" to other Shadowtech. Thus any major Shadowtech components would likely betray their own presence...

We never see, nor hear, of any further Shadow related issues within the Earth Alliance.

The fall of President Clark was taken to represent the collapse of the xenophobic movement, and of any vestiges of Shadow influence.

It is not until many years later that this assumption is proven wrong.

Drake, the project officer in charge of the Victory Class Destroyers, is exposed as a Drakh sympathiser. But worse is to come.

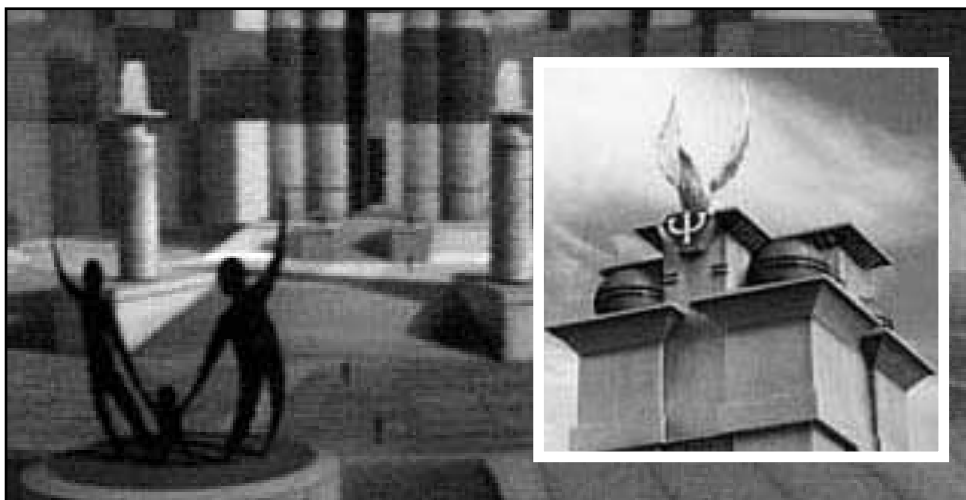
It is later revealed Earthforce had been maintaining secret Shadowtech research facilities, construction yards, support facilities and operational bases for more than a decade.

This must have involved the hiding of money, resources and personnel at all levels of the military and government.

Was there an "underground" Drakh presence within the Earth Alliance?

Or was this a completely independent operation, driven by xenophobes and utilising whatever Shadow technology could be scrounged and whatever support they win or blackmail?

Crusade was cancelled before we had a chance of finding out.





BLACK PLAGUE

COMMENT

By **ROMAN ALEXANDER PERNER**
(ShadowScout)

It all started when AoG released the ShadOmega as SotM. I realised there was something wrong with it on first sight.

Actually it was only its weaponry - Light Molecular Slicer Beams when all Shadow MSB's are purple in color (the standard one on the Cruiser, and the light one which at that time I presumed must have been mounted on a Destroyer-variant, since such a hull fired a -purple- beam in "Into the Fire", and I didn't think it could've been a true MSB...

The main beams of the ShadOmega were certainly cyan-blue instead of purple (and in fact looked just like bigger versions of the small beams coming from the secondary turrets...)

The other problem was the Phasing Pulse Cannons when the ShadOmegas never displayed any pulse capability in the episode (and If we remember how the WhiteStars kicked their ass they'd have fired any weapon they had - if they had it).

So at that time I sent an e-mail to Agent-1 explaining my thoughts and suggesting the first

and crude version of Multiphased Beam armament... (I figured since the big beams looked like bigger versions of the small beams, why not make them that? And the gun layout I took from the Beta Omega - four heavy front, six light side and four medium aft) but I got told I was the only one who complained, and he got a couple of mails of (probably EA) players who liked it as it was... and besides, it was a little late for AoG to make such a major change, playtest it, etc.

Very well, some time later the AoG version was printed in CotS, and I was disappointed. But around that time I started mailing around with Tyrel Lohr, a proud possessor of a version of Adobe Illustrator capable of making SCS icons (I at that time had only Adobe Acrobat, which is nice for altering SCS, but incapable of altering the icons themselves). Well, some day I sent him drawings of the MPB icons I derived from the Light Multiphased Cutter icon on AoG's ShadOmega, and asked him to make me SCS icons for them. He found the time to help me with those (and a few other) icons, and I started making my first corrected ShadOmega SCS, which I immediately mailed to AoG with a message saying something like "I know you're not likely to change something that's already

released just cause I say so, but here's how the ShadOmega should've looked like..."

Ever since then the inaccuracy of AoG's ShadOmega has been one of my special topics certain to get me posting my PoV, and sending the SCS to anyone who wants it.

From my PoV the only controversial thing about my version of the Shadow Omega is the blue beam; mainly since AoG 'officially' made it a LMSB on the ShadOmega (But it seems I was the only voice of reason in a sea of EA players drooling about getting their hands on armor-ignoring guns...)

So I took the Light Multiphased Cutter from AoG's ShadOmega and used it as a base for my Multiphased Beam range - adjusting the power to something the Shadows would have discarded as obsolete millions of years ago - the result is quite capable and performs more like the ship in the show than AoG's ShadOmega.

And it avoids the problem of making it too easy to mount First Ones weapons on Young Race hulls...

(The SCS for this adapted ShadowOmega is in the Attachments folder)

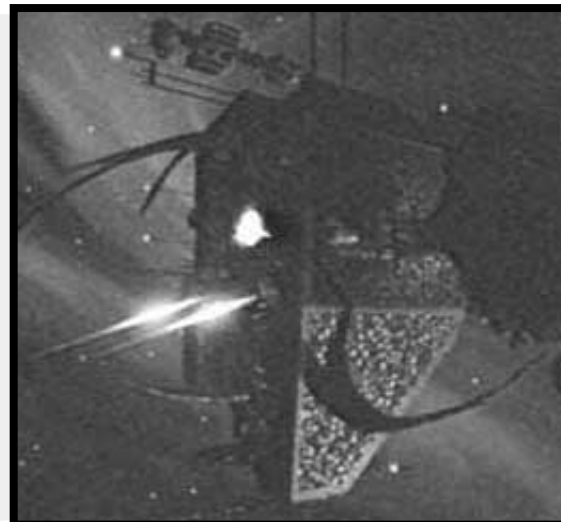
BETWEEN THE DARKNESS AND THE LIGHT

How was Earth able to adapt Shadow technology so quickly, given that it's millions of years more advanced and apparently has a completely dissimilar basis (living matter as opposed to steel and wires?) Did Clark's people, or maybe the Psi Corps, receive technical assistance from the Shadows at some point?

Earth's researchers weren't completely new to the concept of living weapons; the confiscated Ikarran artifact in "Infection" gave them the context they needed to begin to understand Shadow artifacts. The ships on Mars and Ganymede would have provided chances for experimentation, if brief, and the opportunity to take samples.

"These new EA ships with Shadow tech...Are they susceptible to telepaths like the shadow vessels were?"

Negative...they don't have living beings as CPUs, they're still working at adapting the basic tech, the other stuff is still a bit advanced. The Advanced destroyer group was still somewhat in the works when they hauled it out to go after the fleet. They'd been expecting mainly to go after other Earth ships (as was noted in the episode), and didn't count on exclusively being confronted by Whitestars. Still, there were a lot of them here, and they did a lot of damage by sheer force of numbers - JMS





INFECTION

Dr Vance Hendricks was an exenoarchaeologist working for IPX. He led an expedition to a promising world known as Ikaara 7. What he found there excited him so much that he and his assistant - Nelson Drake - ignored standard quarantine procedures on Babylon 5 in order to smuggle several relics back to Earth. They even went so far as to kill a customs officer.

Dr Hendricks' suspicions were proven correct when an artifact proved operational - assimilating his aide. It coated him in a living armor-like material, wrapping an arm with bio-organic weaponry and took control of his mind. (Infection) Ikaara 7 was a world that had been destroyed almost a thousand years ago. It was a world paranoid about defending itself from invaders and cultural and physical impurities. To defend themselves from without and within, the Ikaarans built themselves the perfect bio-weapon - a bio-nanotech device that was able to merge with, and adapt, any living being. It was an advanced fighting machine with a degree of self intelligence - just enough to rationalise what was not a "pure" Ikaaran, and dispose of it. The brainwaves of an artificial intelligence researcher, Tu'Lar, had been grafted on to the genetically engineered brain to act as a basis for its cognitive processes. Eleven of these defensive weapons were built.

However, their biomechanical intelligence was not a cognitive success. The weapons took too literal a definition of "pure", and thus wiped out the entire Ikaaran race.

This technology drew the attention of the Earthforce Defense Bioweapons Division. Dr Hendricks was arrested for his crimes and sent back to Earth. His assistant, Drake, survived the experience after Sinclair pulled the central component out of its self-generated slot on Drake's chest.

According to a medical scanner used to analyse the Ikaaran device, it was made up of dinoribonucleic acid, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, xanthan, maltodextrin and okuduzin. These are mostly common breakfast cereal ingredients (The Babylon File).



Profit at any cost

INTERPLANETARY Expeditions is an Earth Alliance megacorp. It has made its billions by patenting technology it did not invent - but whose original makers are dead.

The moral and ethical issues of profiting from another race's misfortune does not bother IPX. It believes that its work is an imperative, a necessity to boost the Earth Alliance's technology levels to a level equal to - or beyond - its alien neighbors.

Peace through superior archaeology...

Applying hard-nosed corporate tactics to archaeology has produced a business little different from grave-robbing on the one hand, and espionage on the other.

IPX expeditions often act as a "cover" for covert operations conducted by Earthforce special intelligence divisions and PsiCorp.

And IPX itself is not afraid to hide behind the presence of "independent prospectors" who break the rules and go poking their noses where they should not.

Like most gargantuan profit-driven organisations, it is not above politics. It used its financial and advertising clout to support the nomination of Vice President Clark. Once he ascended to the Presidency, it was time for the favor to be returned: IPX was given numerous exemptions and a blind eye was turned away from its breaches of the law.

IPX has always had a close relationship with Earthgov. It has operated with archaeolinguists from the Earthforce New Technologies division

(Silent Enemies). It has ties with the Earthforce Bioweapons Division (Infection). And it can call upon powerful political favors in order to ignore even the blockade of Babylon 5 (Thirdspace).

We hear of IPX working on Ikarra 7, which had been a home to a highly advanced space-faring society that died out a thousand years ago. Their technology was organic: tools and artifacts made of living tissue yet immune to decay.

Organic technology is, according to archaeologist Vance Hendricks, *"The one trick Earth hasn't been able to crack. The ability to create living ships that thrive in the vacuum of space, to create weapons that produce their own power through internal generation, like a firefly lights up at night."*

Obviously, organic tech is a major goal for IPX.

IPX survived the Civil War intact.

It obviously escaped the recriminations and criminal investigations into Clark's coup.

By the time of Crusade, we discover it is operative on dozens of worlds - scrounging around for new dead civilisations that may provide clues that can help Earth "leapfrog" technologically.

But, once again, their activities have an air of sinisterness.

Are they still pursuing their Clarkist agenda?

* * *

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Spearhead of new technology? Or front for the Shadows?

Speculation: By DIOGENES

EARTH has a long history of plundering the battlefields for technology it does not have.

The results of this scavenging have caused Earthforce to make several giant leaps in weapons, starfighter and starship design.

But it has also given it the scandalous reputation among its interstellar neighbours as a "cheap facsimile" force - full of poorly understood ideas copied from someone else.

This is closer to the truth than Earthforce cares to admit.

DILGAR WAR

While not the first occasion that battlefield booty has been of benefit to Earth, it is certainly a classic example.

It was at this time that the Aegis Programme - a joint operations unit comprised of various Earthforce intelligence, science and research divisions - was established. Earthforce was able to capture and analyse Dilgar pulsars and fighters. Earthforce's trademark Pulse Cannons and Aurora Star Furies were among the projects to benefit.

On a more sinister note, the PsiCorps delved into research into brain implants by the Dilgar scientist Deathwalker. She had mutilated hundreds of Narns in her experimentation. But PsiCorp continued this research, incorporating her findings into the likes of Project Lazarus.

MINBARI WAR

The crisis of the Minbari War broadened the Aegis Committee's responsibility beyond ensuring all programs were aware of what others were doing, eradicating duplication and ensuring breakthroughs were properly exploited.

As the war deepened, the Aegis Committee was given emergency powers to facilitate - and fast track - these research programs.

It was permitted to initiate espionage and intelligence operations among foreign governments. It was permitted to illegally enter other nation's space to examine archaeological sites. It was permitted to abduct and interrogate alien scientists and technical specialists...

It was also allowed to conscript the expertise and facilities of the civilian corporation

Interplanetary Expeditions. Most controversially, the Aegis Committee was not required to fully report its actions to the Senate military oversight committees because of "commercial confidentiality" concerns regarding IPX patents.

All of these powers, though extreme, were considered justified given the threat the Earth Alliance was facing.

And these powers were never fully revoked after the war.

PROJECTS

The Aegis Programme covered technologies including the illegal Black Light Camouflage, bio-technology weaponry, bio-technic armor, bio-technic implants, quantum processors for faster computers and more sensitive sensors, gene warfare and germ warfare.

Some of the Aegis Programme's projects became public knowledge in an effort to justify expenditure. The Aegis Anti-Fighter System for warships was one of these.

Others projects, such as the emergency modification of incomplete Omega hulls with Shadow armor and weaponry, remain secret even to this day.

The Aegis Committee somehow survived Clark's downfall, though in a modified form. It's contribution to technological advances was considered "too valuable" to discontinue.

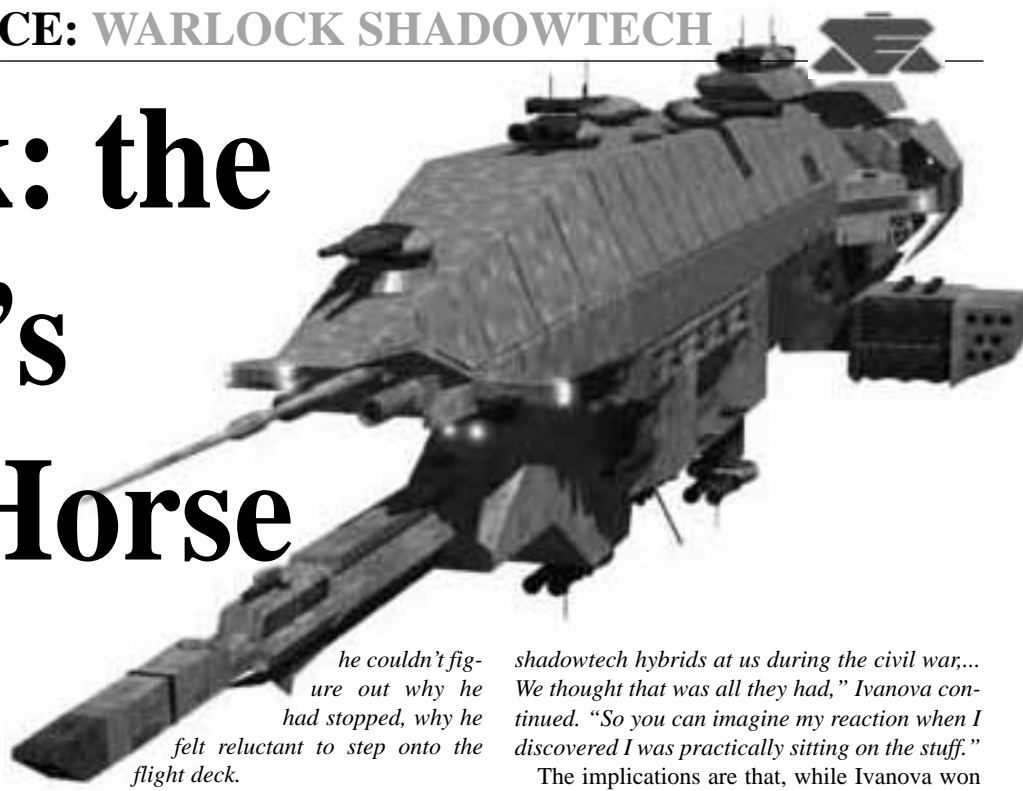
AFFILIATES

Military, political and corporate organisations suspected of being involved with the Aegis Programme include:

- Interplanetary Expeditions
- Earthforce New Technologies Division
- Earthforce Special Intelligence
- Earthforce Bioweapons division
- PsiCorp's Bureau 13
- Nightwatch



Warlock: the Shadow's Trojan Horse



THE Warlock Advanced Destroyer Program was at a crucial stage of development when President Clark ascended to power. It represented Earthforce's next generation of main-line warship. And, like the Omega before it, it involved a huge leap in technology.

It was an ambitious project. But it was an ambition born from fear.

Large sectors of Earth society was paranoid. They knew they had come within hours of extinction at the hands of the Minbari. That was never to happen again. Whatever the cost.

From the outset, the Warlock class was to integrate technology captured from the Dilgar, purchased from the other major races and dug up among the ruins of dead civilisations.

The Warlock represented the best hope of the paranoid factions within Earthforce and Earthgov to give the military a clear edge over all foreseeable opponents. And allies.

When the Shadows made contact with President Clark, their offer of advanced technology in exchange for political support proved too good to be true.

Unfortunately, the Shadow's offer *was* too good to be true...

CRUSADE: Hidden Agendas Implications raised by the short story by J. Michael Straczynski

Captain Susan Ivanova was assigned the command of one of the first Advanced Destroyers to come off the assembly lines - the Titans.

It was supposed to be the realisation of a dream. A ship. Her own command. Her crew. Her responsibility.

But, from the outset, she was beset with unease.

Her suspicions were raised. So she decided to share them, and invited President Sheridan aboard.

"The shuttle moved through the (Titans) space locks, finally coming to rest in the main secure bay. There was a hiss of equalising air, then the shuttle door popped open, and Sheridan appeared in the opening. He nodded to her as he stepped down the steps and stopped just before reaching the deck. He looked down, almost as if

he couldn't figure out why he had stopped, why he felt reluctant to step onto the flight deck.

"You okay?" Susan asked.

"Yeah... fine," he said, "just had... an odd feeling, that's all."

"What kind of feeling?"

"Like someone walked over my grave."

Sheridan, of course, was particularly sensitive to Shadow technology. The "residue" of Kosh within him reacted strongly to its presence.

Sheridan only had to touch one of the Titans' computer screens for its to flare "with colours that gave way to a swirl of darkness and unrecognisable symbols before shutting down altogether."

Thus Captain Ivanova's fears were confirmed.

"It started pretty much the first day I took command of the Titans," (Ivanova) continued. "We had a telepath on board, teep security for an Earthforce senator on a VIP tour of the facilities and he couldn't bring himself to stay for more than ten minutes. He kept saying he felt something was wrong, somewhere in the ship. When he said he could hear something screaming in his thoughts, I figured, okay, we've definitely got trouble."

Shadowtech was not a new experience within Earthforce. But Ivanova and Sheridan believed the Earth Shadowtech program had been destroyed in the battle that had almost cost Ivanova her life.

But they should have known better. The experiences of Commander Sinclair, Security Chief Garibaldi and Captain Sheridan should have warned them.

"We know Earthforce was working on adapting shadowtech for their own purposes, because they wanted a technological edge in dealing with the other races. We even came across a secret base off Jupiter trying to take apart a vessel and figure out how it worked. Unfortunately they woke it up while they were poking around, and it sliced the place into a million pieces before we finally blew it out of the sky." (President Sheridan)

"But they clearly got something out of it," Ivanova said, "because they threw some massive

shadowtech hybrids at us during the civil war... We thought that was all they had," Ivanova continued. "So you can imagine my reaction when I discovered I was practically sitting on the stuff."

The implications are that, while Ivanova won the physical war against Shadowtech, the political battle after Clark's overthrow had not even been fought.

The Shadowtech program, initiated on Mars, continued with the Z'ha'dum expedition, and supplemented by the Ganymede discovery, continued.

Shadowtech properties

"My guess is that it was designed so that it can adjust to any kind of technology, however advanced or simple, and grow there, the way a weed infests a garden and takes it over unless you're on guard enough to pluck it out fast."

- President Sheridan

The organic nature of Shadowtech gives it some unique properties. It is able to adapt to, and interface with, electronic and nervous systems. Even fragments appear to have some form of "life", often detectable by telepaths.

Shadow processors - as demonstrated by the human subjects provided by PsiCorps - appear to be able to interface with any technology. This was made apparent when one subject attempted to take control of Babylon 5's computer systems, and when Captain Sheridan exploited this ability to sabotage the fleet defending Earth.

But such processing ability does not have to come in the form of a human or alien. It can also be an "egg", as shown in the remote controlling devices used by the Drakh to control Centauri vessels.

Obviously, no such "egg" was aboard the Titans. If it was, Ivanova's repeated searches would have found it.

Instead, the Shadowtech neural network is likely to have been integrated into the very materials used to power, connect, wire and insulate the warships major computer systems.

Of greatest concern, this Shadowtech is "self-aware".

"(Lyta) could feel a blind, searing rage emanating from somewhere deep inside the ship, where the sentient, organic shadowtech had



been carefully woven into the ship's normal computer system... could visualise its thoughts in the darkness behind her eyes, could see its desperation as a bright red flare lashing out in every direction."

The Warlocks are "alive", in the same sense that the Shadow dreadnoughts, cruisers and destroyers were "alive". They have cognitive abilities. They are aware. They have their own agenda. And they have the rationale to react when that agenda was initiated, or threatened.

Captain Lochley: "If we try and remove it and we fail, which I think is almost a certainty, the system would almost certainly red flag the intrusion into its database. Then the next time it linked back to the EarthForce main relay system for instructions and updated clearances, that information would find its way back to the Powers That Be."

Political Implications

"If this was done by EarthForce, it's a damned good bet that they know this stuff is there, so nothing's going to be served by telling them except to let them know that we know... which would almost certainly result in Captain Ivanova here being transferred."

- Captain Lochley

President Sheridan's success in the Civil War appears to have been less than complete. The death of President Clark has not resulted in an end to the deep-seated paranoia that has motivated the attempt to harness such dangerous - and poorly understood - technology as that provided by the Shadows.

Samples of Shadowtech must have remained in secret laboratories. Data about their DNA structures, composition and abilities must also have been distributed to research bases. And some must have been putting their knew-found knowledge to work.

Obviously this would have to remain a secret project - probably with government knowledge, but not necessarily so.

Earth had not been directly involved in the Shadow War. So the inherently evil nature of their technology was not widely known. Most civilian and military people assigned to such "black" projects would have honestly believed they were working in Earth's best interests...

Only their leaders would have understood the implications, and accepted them.

And, under President Clark, the opportunity existed to divert funds for the infrastructure nec-

essary to exploit such research.

The implications are, these facilities were built, remain fully operational and involve high-level officials and technicians still active in Earthforce.

But the nature of politics in the post-Civil War Earth Alliance poses a quandary:

"If we go in guns blazing and tell them to rewire their new, top of the line warships to our specs, they'll use this to say we're trying to weaken their defences for our own purposes, that we're interfering with their internal affairs."

- Captain Sheridan

Deep suspicions remain within Earthgov and Earthforce about Sheridan's motives. The Civil War did not end the deep divide within society. Many still believe that all aliens are out to get them, to destroy their way of life, their economy, their independence.

And the newly formed Interstellar Alliance - of which Sheridan is president - is the new target for these fears.

Earth teeters on the brink of choosing between unilateralism or inclusion when it comes to interstellar politics.

"I'm only saying that we have to proceed cautiously. In the best of all worlds, over the next few years, as the Alliance grows, and as those who were involved in President Clark's shadowtech program are eased out, better people will take their places and we can influence them to remove what should never have been put in those ships in the first place."

- President Sheridan.

The Warlock

"I've had engineering go over every inch of the ship looking for anything out of the ordinary. Wherever the Shadow interface is, we can't find it."

- Captain Ivanova

The Shadow intelligence built into the Warlock Advanced Destroyer Class is deeply rooted. It is not a human processor or Drakh-egg. It is not an easily identifiable biomass that can be detected by sensor sweeps.

Instead, it is probably widely distributed neural network incorporated into the most modern - and secret - components of the vessel.

And therein lies the problem.

Earthforce, in its desperation to leap forward in technology, is adapting technologies it does not fully understand. Earthforce scientists may not know what it is about a particular conduit or

motherboard that makes it work so well - but they know it does work well.

So they use it.

They may not know how a particular super-conductor conducts. But they use it anyway.

Under such circumstances, redundant Shadowtech neural networks can slip by unnoticed...

And where the neural net exists, Shadow intelligence can take hold.

"Look, the number one danger of having shadowtech in these ships is that they can be compromised. Their systems can be taken over by someone using a stronger shadowtech system, which leaves whoever's commanding them vulnerable. For the moment, at least, the best thing we can do is to make sure that Susan doesn't have to deal with that problem. If the other Warlocks should fall, we need to ensure that she can remain in command of her own ship, and act as she feels appropriate."

- President Sheridan

In the end, only Vorlon technology was able to defeat the Shadow technology built into the Titans.

Kosh's old ship was interfaced with the Warlock Destroyer. Lyta Alexander - the Vorlon enhanced human telepath - also took an active role.

In the end, the battle ended up being a battle of wills.

No physical presence was found and destroyed. Instead, it was a consciousness that had to be overcome.

It was not destroyed through the destruction of a computer console, a covertly fitted device, or a spreading biomechanical mass.

It's willpower had to be crushed.

The Titans' Shadow intelligence was destroyed. But the Shadowtech that supported it remains buried deep within the destroyer...

The other Warlocks retain their sleeping secrets...

Sheridan watched from the shuttle as the Titans pulled away from Babylon 5 and angled toward the jump gate. It was Ivanova's ship now, no one else's, no hidden agendas, no chance of compromising control. He knew it could come in handy someday, if whatever leftover shadowtech programs had been implanted in the Warlock class of warships was ever activated. If that day came, he knew that there would be at least one ship free of that influence, that would not go along with the rest, that would be independent.

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Fearsome or false?

What we know about the Shadow Hybrid

THE problem with creating a “super-battle-ship”, as the Excalibur certainly was, is that it needs a “super” opponent. The combination of Earth, Minbari and Vorlon technology created a monster. A massive warship that was faster, better protected and better armed than anything left within the galaxy.

But the plot-line of *Crusade* quickly lets us know there is another vessel out there, equally as formidable as the Excalibur.

And it was there first.

With a mere flick of its main beam in 2259, it was able to erase the Earthforce Omega Class Destroyer Cerberus from space.

It took eight years. But this ominous looking piece of Shadowtech was to appear again.

Crusade: To The Ends of the Earth Extracts and implications from the unpublished script by J. Michael Straczynski

“As the forward alien ship continues to burn, various life pods ejecting, we now finally see the ship that is doing the attacking, tearing the ship apart: the same ship, or type of shadow-ship variation, that destroyed Gideon’s ship, the Cerberus. A Shadow hybrid. It fires on the escaping ship again, almost the death shot.

The alien ship is destroyed by the Shadow hybrid vessel. It then turns and begins picking off the various life pods.”

The ship initiating this villainous act is quite distinctive. It has strong Shadow influences on its design - the black mottled skin, the tendrils, the purple beam. But it is also quite distinct from what we have seen of Shadow ships before. Where the Shadows flew “battlecrabs”, this looks more like a “battlehawk”.

Where the Shadows had sweeping, spidery tendrils, this has neat rows of interconnected tendrils.

There is also a “flying” structure - not unlike the bridge of a Whitestar - attached to the back of the vessel.

The overall impression is a dark, ominous and powerful presence.

“He said they attacked out of nowhere. No warning. No mercy. His people were completely

outgunned. But he thinks they were able to damage the ship’s jump engines.” - Eilerson

Immediately it is established the ship is not invulnerable. The “easy pickings” it chose to raid proved not so easy after all.

The hybrid’s jump engines were damaged. It has to flee in real space.

The engines flare to life and the Excalibur blasts away from the area of the carnage. This should feel as fast as the last moments of the escape from the Shadow planet killer in “Call.” Maybe split it into two shots to accommodate this.

Gideon: “Assuming they have the same limits we do, the laws of physics being what they are, their maximum speed should be roughly the same as ours.”

The pursuit begins. And Gideon’s nightmare appears to be as fast as his previously unsurpassed Excalibur.

Moving for all she’s worth, the damage from the prior battle visible. The Excalibur is a dot far behind, barely visible.

Matheson: “Picking up ion - she’s launching fighters.”

A series of fighters are already peeling away from the shadow hybrid, heading back toward the Excalibur as the hybrid continues to try and escape.

A series of shots of the Excalibur charging right down their throats, firing from all sides. The ship is moving fast, as fast as possible, the fighters firing back and trying to stay in front of the big ship. Some of the bursts hit...

As the Excalibur pulls away from the fighters; then try and pursue, but they can’t keep up, and begin to fall behind.

This initial clash between the Excalibur and the Hybrid is brief, but telling.

The fighters launched by the Hybrid are capable of scratching the Excalibur, but not severely hurting it. Nor are they capable of matching its - or their own motherships - maximum sustainable speed.

What kind of fighter did JMS intend?

Obviously not established or known designs, as that would have blown the Hybrid’s identity.

What is also telling is that the Excalibur did not even bother launching its own fighters.

Would the Thunderbolts have been just as slow? Or slower?

Gideon: “I know what that ship is capable of doing, Galen. It killed the Cerberus without even trying. I think the Excalibur has a better chance against it, but the truth is, I still don’t know for sure if we can take it.”

Matheson: “We lost scanner contact with the ship just as it approached this asteroid belt. The heat signature faded out and disappeared. It could be anywhere.”

The Vorlon and Minbari enhanced Excalibur has no difficulty tracking the Hybrid while both ships are at full thrust. But when the Hybrid cuts its power, it is inert enough to the Excalibur’s sensors that it cannot be discerned from the asteroids surrounding it.

The Shadow mechano-organic hull is obviously able to deflect, or distort, scanners seeking unusual concentrations of particular materials or the rarer materials used in ship construction and operation.

Favouring the shadow hybrid, as it rises into frame behind the Excalibur (the Excalibur in far background, there’s quite some distance between them). A huge asteroid, a ship killer, rolls toward the alien ship - and it fires a thruster to avoid collision.

The Hybrid’s “stealth” systems are, from this, obviously passive and inert. Like a submarine, it must “run silent” - with emissions powered down - to be truly stealthy. Propulsion emissions are not being masked. Nor is the propulsion system “silent” as with Shadow vessels.

As (Excalibur) blasts straight down, a flurry of round crystalline objects flying out of the back of the ship just as

(the Hybrid fires), the beam striking the countermeasures, which deflect and refract the beam into various colours as they break it down into its various frequencies (many of them are destroyed in the process).

JMS describes the Excalibur as though its was coasting through the asteroid field - its own engines powered down as it “listened” for the Shadow Hybrid.

He does not specifically say its active sensors have been turned off. But it can be assumed to.



Either way, the Shadow Hybrid remains undetected - but knows well enough where the Excalibur is to open fire.

Presumably, only the energy spike given moments before it fired - or Gideon's intuition - betrayed its position in time for countermeasures to be fired.

As for the effect of the Excalibur's weapons upon the Shadowtech vessel's hull, we are left guessing.

As (Excalibur) returns fire from rear-mounted guns. Most of the burst are intercepted by the asteroids in-between them and the target, but a couple get through, scoring good hits. As the mountainous asteroid (practically a planetoid) ahead of the hybrid is hit, and blasts into a million pieces, racing away in every direction at top speed, a cloud of them slamming into the Shadow Hybrid.

The cloud of supersonic hard rocks slam into the hybrid, practically shredding it .. skinning away weapons and just wreaking all kinds of hell, incapacitating it.

Matheson: "Scanners are barely functional, but it looks like the debris has shredded the enemy instrumentation, navigation, and weapons. She's intact, but floating dead in space."...

Matheson: "That's really it, sir? The same one?"

Gideon: "The same one - or a modified version. It looks like there have been a few changes since it killed the Cerberus."

Changes?

We are left guessing as to what these changes are. But they must be obvious enough to be noticed with a casual glance by Captain Gideon after XXX years.

Eilerson: "I've been studying the record of the battle, and I found something I think might interest you.

He pops in a datacrystal which shows a distant shot of a Shadow vessel and the Shadow hybrid side by side.

"These ships were built by the Shadows, an ancient race that left known space about five years ago."

Gideon: "I've heard of them. The Drakh worked for them."

Eilerson: "Yes, but this design isn't Drakh. It's definitely Shadow in origin. There aren't many close pictures of Shadow vessels because if you got too close you usually got destroyed, but as you can see, there is a definite resemblance. What if someone else - has been doing the same thing?"

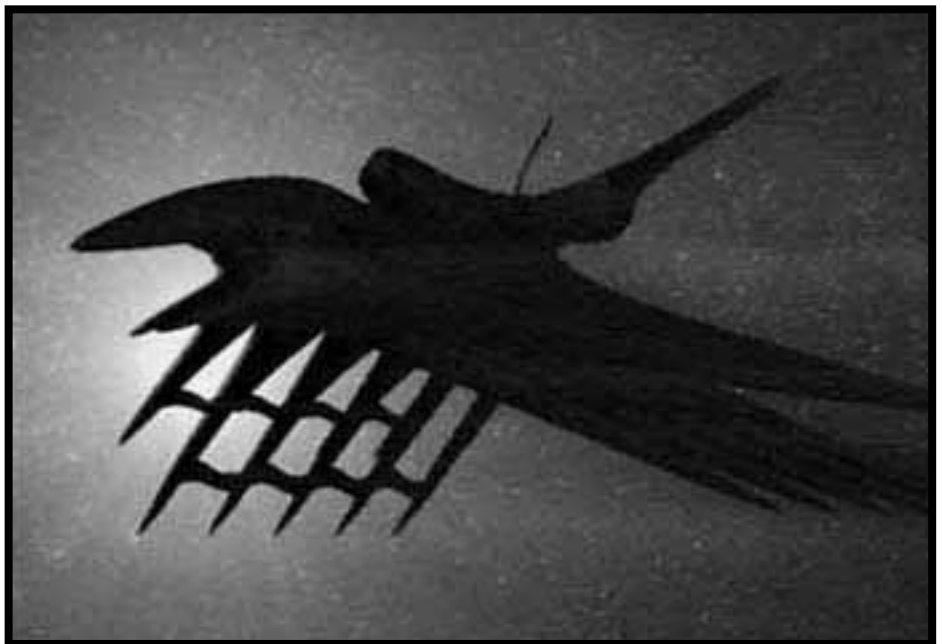
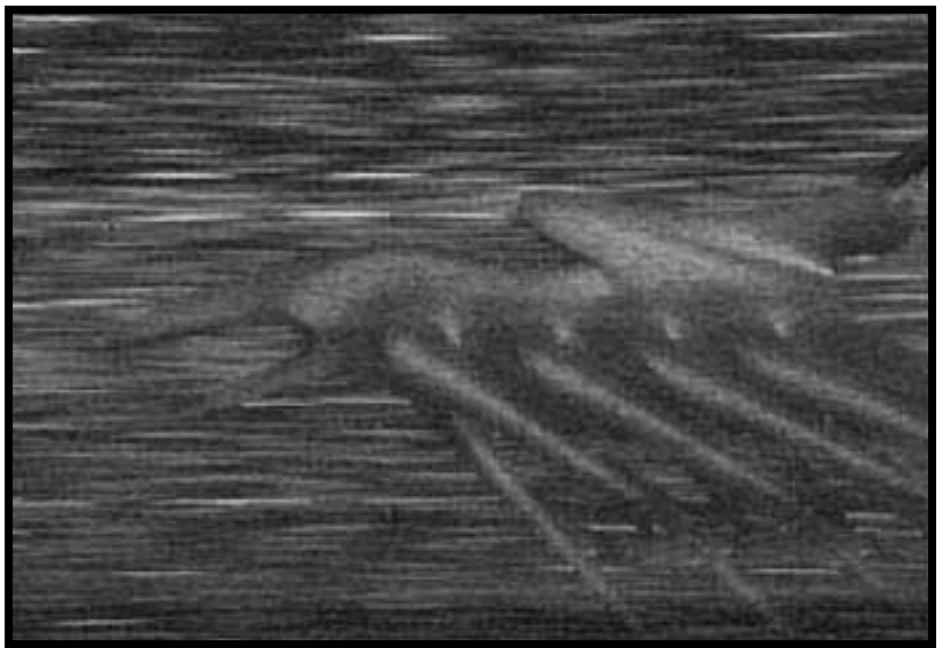
Here, JMS indulges in telling us what we already know or strongly suspect.

He highlights the distinctly Shadow technology used in the hybrid. He separates the Drakh from the equation.

But the Shadows are gone. So who had adopted their technology and techniques so closely?

(Exterior Excalibur, asteroid field) As it pulls away from camera, we move into the floating maze of debris - and something slowly tumbles toward us out of it. As it does, we see it more clearly: an old Kennedy silver half-dollar. As it continues moving end over end, past camera...

And thus, the Shadow Hybrid's origins are revealed...





THE PRICE OF PROGRESS

IN EARLY 2259, an unidentified vessel destroyed the EA Omega class destroyer Cerberus while it was on patrol - only one man survived. Initially the EA government, then under the control of President Clarke, denied the existence of this vessel and hid all evidence.

While at first it may have seemed a new kind of Shadow vessel, in truth it was a co-production of EA design and Shadow tech - a Shadow Hybrid warship along the lines of the Shadow Omega, but with even more Shadow-supplied technology.

And that was the problem - the control interface proved unstable, causing the CPU to go insane during the first test run, resulting in the fatal attack on the Cerberus, and in the destruction of the Hybrid soon thereafter when it's power core overloaded.

It is unknown how exactly this hybrid was constructed in the first place, or by whom. The only certain thing seems that the EA must have had some serious help in adapting Shadowtech to build this ship - and that if any other Hybrids had been build at that time they must have left with the Shadows after Coriana, taking the secret of their construction with them, as Clarke's forces only had Shadow Omegas available during the defense against Sheridan's insurrection.

But shortly before the Drakh attack on earth, EA scientists somehow managed to re-activate the Shadow built shipyard where the original Hybrid was constructed, and built another one - this one was later hunted down and destroyed by the lone survivor of the Cerberus, now captain of the Excalibur, Matthew Gideon. He then fol-



Shipyard Supervisor

BY ROMAN PERNIER

lowed its tracks to the base, where he discovered the EA's involvement in this project. Meanwhile his associate Galen, a rogue Technomage, disabled the shipyard - probably permanently.

So it seemed unlikely there will be any more such Hybrids... unless someone within this galaxy still holds the secret of their construction...

Special rules

The hybrid fighters are usually remote controlled by the Hybrid; when this is the case, they gain a -4 bonus to dropout rolls, however, should the Hybrid's C&C be damaged, the fighters will suffer the same penalties as their mothership, and if the Hybrid is destroyed all it's fighters automatically drop out.

Reasoning

I made the Hybrid as a balance act between CGI and playability. We saw it a few times in Crusade, and there it exhibited frightening power; while in the unfilmed JMS scripts it wasn't so tough when confronted with the Excalibur.

First I thought about the particulars. From the Crusade scenes it was clear this baby packed some hefty firepower - in the scene where it destroyed the Cerberus it fired two quick & small purple beams doing a little damage, and then vaporized the rest of the ship with one continuous purple Shadow slicer beam. To repre-

sent this, I gave it a full-size MSB and two LMPC's in its nose - the LMPC's were the two quick shots, while the killing blow came from the triple-charged MSB.

I also made a note that the ship seemed quite nimble compared to your average Capital Ship - it made maneuvers we saw from smaller ships. But I didn't want it to be too bad, so I drew the line at what maneuverability other younger races could build into a ship this size.

Next came the big question - how Shadowy was the rest of the ship? Not very, as the unfilmed script mentions a scene where the Excalibur's Neutron Lasers blow a hole in the Hybrid's "ShadowSkin" to expose normal ship structure beneath. That made it clear it would use the standard ship layout. I made it a Capital ship, as it was described as big (and I didn't want anything smaller to mount a MSB - it would have set a bad precedent). Following all that reasoning the ship also became a normal thruster system instead of bio-thrusters, though I made it a gravitic system, as the ship never exhibited any exhaust - and it seemed logical.

Next the diffusers. I had already decided to make the ship light on weaponry, so I had the diffusers as the only system on it's sides. The ship had five twin tendrils per side - but I didn't want to give it ten tendrils, especially since I couldn't give it less tendril capacity as the big Shadow Omega tendrils; so I decided to group each two "upper & lower" tendril pair into one tendril. Originally I had a bit more capacity, but after playtesting I made it five 12-hit tendrils and a rating-6 diffuser per side - enough to take quite



some damage, not enough to make the ship invincible (after all, it still had a lot of structure to take damage beneath its diffusers, unlike true Shadow ships - and I couldn't justify making it tougher than a true Shadow Cruiser, even though in the final analysis it may be just that in certain situations).

Then, the internal stuff. The scripts had the Hybrid with a fighter compartment, and I didn't think the designers would make it a small one - not if the EA had any say in its design, as the scripts indicated. So I gave it a 24-fighter hangar. Next the Sensors - one more than what most other younger races could do for their command ships seemed right - after all, the Dilgar managed Sensors of 10, 30 years ago, and many League races had that value too; so 11 it was.

After that I noticed something missing, it had no weapons to the rear! Not something the EA is known for. So I added two LMPC's to its aft section. That also had the added effect of allowing it to deactivate its secondary weaponry to boost its sensors to 12 - if the Shadow Omega can do it, the Hybrid can't be allowed less.

Basically that was it - a little more tweaking, a pulling of a point value out of my hat, testing that value, and finally finishing the ship.

Only thing missing then were the fighters. But these were easy. I made them from a picture in the now long defunct Babylon 5 magazine (the same drawing where I also found my Drakh Patrol/scout ship), which showed a half-ShadowSkin ship. I gave it no diffusers, as the things died too easily against the Excalibur's fighter wing - and also since considering the rate of Shadow Ship diffuser capability and Hybrid diffuser capability, I couldn't justify enough diffuser capability to be worth the effort of keeping track of it (especially not as it would have had to have a diffusion rate of about "1 per 3 turns" or so; not something you should have to keep track of for single fighters). So no diffusers, but advanced armor, gravitic drive and nice, "multi-phase" guns. As an afterthought I added the "remote control" rules, because I did not remember anything in the unfilmed scripts about pilots being recovered when the Hybrid fighters stayed behind to try and delay the Excalibur when it almost caught the Hybrid (not that this had helped - and pilots would have given away the identity of the Hybrid's builders too soon, so I reasoned there can't have been any).

Voila - the Hybrid and its fighters were done.

(An SCS for the Hybrid and Hybrid Fighters can be found in the Attachments folder)

HYBRID FIGHTER



THIS drawing of a fighter-sized vessel appeared along with other sketches in a B5 magazine. While its purpose was not clearly stated, it has been taken to represent a concept drawing for the "hybrid fighters" mentioned in JMS's scripts as being launched from the Shadow-Hybrid warships.

As these "hybrid" fighters were not recognised by the crew or computer systems aboard the IA Excalibur, it is likely to have been intended as a new design.

Later, "Black Thunderbolts" are clearly mentioned in a different context. So they are not likely to have been the same fighters.

This fighter appeared alongside sketches of a Drakh-ish looking small ship - possibly a scout or fighter (which appears in the February 2002 issue of Babcom).

Roman Pernier (Shadowscout) has used this drawing as the basis for his Hybrid Fighter. He has given it a multi-phased weapon, of similar concept to those found on his version of the Shadow Hybrid.

This fighter also has been given advanced armor, remote control and gravitic drives.

(The SCS for the Hybrid Fighter can be found in the attachments folder)

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Fleet Action Rules

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Thirdspace Background	Play-Aids
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Conversions to Fleet Action

The front page was getting crowded, so all the mods for FA on my site can be found below



Where there is a fortress of light, one must expect a bastion of darkness...

THE EXTENT of Shadow corruption within the Earth Alliance only becomes evident six years after his overthrow. In season two of *Crusade*, Captain Gideon and his crew make a major breakthrough.

The discovery of a secret Earthforce base.

Precursor

There are allusions to the existence of a major Earthforce Shadowtech research facilities. Where the Shadow Omegas were built was never addressed. And where the Hybrid came from was always a mystery.

In *To the Ends of the Earth*, the *Excalibur* tracks down a transmission from the destroyed Shadow Hybrid warship.

It finds an uninhabited system. The destination of the message was a moon.

(Exterior Moon) As the thunderbolt races overhead, we pan around to reveal an area that has been glassed over, burned by a superheated blast sufficient to fuse sand. There's some sign of heavy lifting equipment sticking out of the fused sand.

Matheson: "Whatever was here - it's gone now. An area this big - could it have been a construction site? Maybe this is where they made that ship."

(Interior of Thunderbolt) As they continue their flyby, we begin to feature Gideon.

Gideon: "Maybe - that's one of the three things that worry me. You don't just build one ship like that. If there's one - there are bound to be more."

Matheson: "What are the other two?"

Gideon: "If there are more than one of those ships, the one we chased may not have been the one that killed my ship. Which means there's still a score to settle with somebody. Beyond that - take a good look at that blast site, Lieutenant. The way the impact has fused the sand into glass. Look familiar?"

Matheson: (realisation) "It's the same signature blast made by the main guns on the *Excalibur*."

Gideon: "Exactly. That's why I didn't want anyone else on the crew to see this. It appears that we have an opposite number, Lieutenant."

Was it a shipyard?



Was it a maintenance facility?

Was it a forward supply base?

Was it something else?

What we do know is that these Hybrid ships have a support network.

And we know they are willing to go to great lengths to keep their identity secret.

CRUSADE: Shadow of His Thoughts Analysis of the unpublished script by J. Michael Straczynski

Location and Implications:

Crewman: "I dunno - the bridge is buttoned up tight as a kettle drum. All I know is we're hauling major ass toward sector 420..."

Matheson: "According to the charts, this is supposed to be an empty sector. No known colonies, planets or stations. Nearest jump gate should be about two point five light years from here."

Gideon: "Should be?"

Matheson: "If something's in this sector, it has to get here somehow. Unless all their ships are jump capable, which is unlikely, there has to be

a jump gate around here somewhere."

Gideon: "But it's not on the Hyperspace beacon map. So whoever's out here, they managed to build a jump gate without anyone knowing about it. That means power and money. And power and money means trouble."

That power and that money was invested in the fourth planet of the system the *Excalibur* was investigating.

And whoever invested that power and money was willing to protect it.

Galen: "There's something out there. A cloud of small objects, several thousand of them, each no larger than a marble"

These "marbles" quickly destroy the *Excalibur*'s probes. The chain reaction that ensues would not, we are told, have destroyed the *Excalibur*. But it would have disabled the ship, leaving it helpless.

These mines were unexpected. And they were not of any readily identifiable variety.

But Gideon is in for another surprise.

A surprise that harks back to the bad-old days of the Civil War.

A mole. A covert operative within his crew



SPIDER IN THE WEB

Project Lazarus dated back to the 2230s when Earthforce experimented with cyber implants to enhance the fighting abilities of soldiers.

But computer implants and the human mind proved incompatible. Earthforce scientists exceeded their mandate by continuing their tests on human subjects that were close to death. They hardwired neural pathways with computers while using telepaths to "entrap" any remaining consciousness. By focussing this consciousness - usually on the moment of death - computers were able to gain access to the remainder of a brain's processing abilities.

These experiments were discovered and declared illegal before the Earth Minbari war. But the research was continued in secret by Bureau 13.

One of their illegal experiment was Abel Horn.

He was part of the movement that turned Free Mars in to a militant terrorist group. By the 2258 rebellion, he was one of Free Mars' most aggressive activists. However, his ship was intercepted by the Earth Force Omega class Destroyer Pournelle near Phobos. His ship was damaged and Horn killed.

His body was recovered by operatives of Bureau 13 who revived him under the Lazarus Project and converted him into a cyber-organic assassin. His personality was locked into an eternal loop to enable his remaining cognitive abilities to be used as a covert operative - controlled by computer implants. He was given a mechanical prosthetic arm with an extremely powerful power cell - capable of electrical discharges that can disrupt most cells in a human body. In 2259 Horn was sent to Babylon 5 to kill an Earth business executive who was negotiating a deal with a Mars leader that would help mend relationships between the two worlds.

His buried conscious was, however, susceptible to telepathic probes. Talia Winters was thus able to provoke his real personality, which in turn confused the computers controlling his body. Horn was killed - for a second time - by Captain Sheridan. His body then self-destructed to eliminate any evidence.

that has been leaking information to subversive elements within Earthforce and Earthgov.

And he's willing to die to protect his cause.

The method he choses to die is also revealing:

Jensen: "You don't get it, do you? What you're up against is bigger than you. Bigger than me and a hell of a lot bigger than this ship. Right now, you and me, we've got one thing in common."

Suddenly he reaches for the back of one of his hands and before anyone can stop him he snaps it back sharply (prosthetic). A mechanism inside is activated with the snap, and with a pulsation it begins powering up.

This is a human being that has been modified with barely detectable cyber implants. This is reminiscent of Project Lazarus' Abel Horn. Not to mention the Minbari assassin in the pilot.

It seems Clark's forces, and methods, are back in action.

Gideon: "If that's true, then whoever's behind all this has contacts deep enough in Earthforce to plant a fake personnel jacket. Probably making sure nobody in Earthforce gets too close to the truth about these ships, whatever that is. This is getting more interesting by the minute."

The Base

As (Excalibur) heads past camera toward a brown, hazy planet in background.

Matheson: "We're picking up a series of small domes on the planet's surface. No markings of any kind."

The welcome is unfriendly. Fighters are launched from the unidentified base. But there is one more surprise.

These fighters match the Thunderbolt configuration.

Matheson: "The enemy fighters' silhouettes match starfury and thunderbolt readouts. Those are Earthforce ships out there."

External space - angle on enemy fighters.

Black Thunderbolts and Starfuries race past camera, heading for the oncoming force from Excalibur.

A tense standoff ensues. Then the Excalibur's

comscreens flicker into life.

On the monitor appears an Earthforce officer, Major Lee. And he's not pleased.

Matheson: "Captain - what the hell's going on? We were on the trail of that vessel that killed an Earthforce ship. What's it doing leading to an Earthforce base?"

It is a last-ditch ploy by the Shadowtech base to protect its secret.

Pulling rank is a universal method of concealing the truth.

Major Lee: "Then let me enlighten you, as far as I'm able under the regs. This is a research and development facility, one of half a dozen others, all working on weapons technology vital to the protection of Earth and her colonies. The work is extremely dangerous and highly classified. To protect innocents, and the privacy of our work, we've been located well off the beaten track. We're not on any map. Officially - we don't even exist. And we intend to keep it that way. This base is none of your concern, Captain. I've told you all I can, and that's the end of it. Whatever prompted you to come here, you will now turn your ship around and leave the area at once."

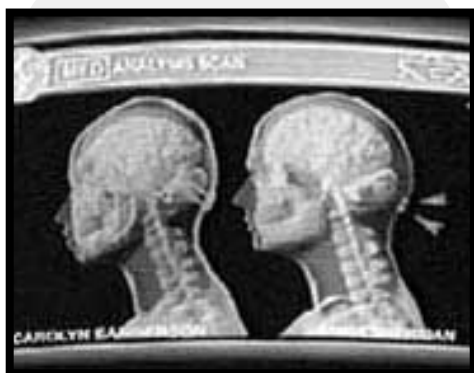
But Gideon is unimpressed. He smells a rat. He also senses his grudge over the Cerberus has worse implications than he had previously realised.

Whatever the case, Gideon won't be fobbed off.

Gideon: "There's a path that leads from the Cerberus right to this base. Could be they're making preparations to deal with it. Maybe something on the R&D board was stolen and they're covering it up. Either way, I'm going back. I need someone who can slip me onto the planet, get me past the scanners."

Shadowtech

Gideon: "I had Matheson scope out the area, didn't tell him why. According to the scanners that place is twice as big below ground as it is above, so that's probably where they're hiding the really interesting stuff."



WATCHING THE WATCHMEN

Many episodes make reference to the Psi-Corps tendency to experiment upon its own people.

"Mind War" is perhaps the best example.

Jason Ironheart flees to Babylon 5, pursued by a secret squadron of black Star Furies - the Psi-Corps' Black Omega squadron. He is able to blot them out with a thought. But Bester and a Psi-Cop called Kelsey arrive on the station, hunting him down.

He was a successful subject in an experiment to create a "stable" telekinetic. Too successful. Jason had killed the researchers and destroyed their records once he realised that he was intended to be used as an assassin - secretly strangling targets to death with the power of his thoughts.

Importantly, Jason tells Talia that Psi-Corps is no longer controlled by the government. In fact, it is now influencing the government. Telepaths are the ultimate blackmailers, he states...

He also tells Talia that Psi-Corp is developing new weapons, including his telekinetic powers.

It is one of the first scripts to hint at the sub-plot interaction between Clark, the Psi-Corp, and the Shadows.

The ultimate expression of this alliance was the "modification" of "blips" - rogue telepaths - to enable them to operate as processors in Shadow warships.

What they were given to the Shadows in exchange for is unknown - though it is likely to have been the price for new technology.

From the comic *Silent Enemies*, it appears these teeps were "fed" into a Shadowtech device that implanted cyberorganic nodes into the brain. This surgical process proved virtually impossible to reverse.

These "cyber-teeps" were overwhelmed with a desire to interface with "the machine" and their original personalities suppressed.

Were these teeps the Shadow's attempt to counter the psychic threat to their fleet? Would ships that had teeps as their processors been immune to the "blocking" effect of psychics, cutting the warship off from the hive mind?

The interior cavern of the research facility is huge, a mile or more across. A great open pit where high tech structures have been built into the walls of the cavern.

Catwalks and other support structures ribbon the area above, almost (but not quite) like spiderwebs. Pinpoints of light and spotlights. Large machines on rails move back and forth, carrying pieces of Shadow-style ship parts to assembly lines. Give this a good long moment. This has to be our best, most detailed and realistic CGI to date. Possibly use multiple shots. We can make out movement in the darkness, human forms, but they're in darkness and we can't make out details yet.

And sees something terrible - and impossible. It's a human, or more properly what was once a human female. But its skin is covered with black, hard matter, similar to a shadow vessel carapace. (Prosthetic is similar in some ways to Delenn's shell in "Revelations.") They both freeze for a beat, each looking at the other in surprise!

Then she points at him, eyes widening, and lets out an inhuman howl (use some shadow-scream sounds in this).

This is a defining moment in the whole EarthShadows plot line that has been gradually developed since the very beginning of the Babylon 5 series, now brought to climax in *Crusade*.

Earth is not only building Shadow Technology ships.

As indicated in *Infections*, *Spider in the Web*, *Ship of Tears* and other episodes, there are elements within the Earth Alliance that are more than willing to sacrifice their very human essence in their bid to become a master race.

Here we have a major construction facility crewed by bio-mechanical human machines. Slaves.

These are people like Anna Sheridan and Abel Horn who have had their souls destroyed or entrapped in order to commit their physical bodies to a life of servitude. They have been modified - enhanced - as the research assistant was in *Infections*, and the rogue teeps in *Ship of Tears*. And the process is likely to be even less reversible.

This research base represents the pinnacle of the corruption within Earthforce, Earthgov, IPX and PsiCorp.

Interestingly enough, there appears to be no teep involvement in the base at this time. This may be a consequence of the Telepath War.

Perhaps Bureau 13 died with the PsiCops?

Captured by Earthforce Marines (the normal kind), Gideon is taken before Major Lee.

Because it is such a major plot exposition, the dialogue speaks for itself:

Major Lee: "Your ship is a combination of Minbari and Vorlon technologies, highly advanced, reverse-engineered so that we could incorporate them into our own designs. Did you think she was the only one of her kind - or that we weren't looking at other possibilities? There was another race, just as old as the Vorlons, and just as advanced."

Gideon: "The Shadows."

Lee: "They were known by many names. That's one of them. They were a million years ahead of everybody else."

A little over ten years ago, during the last war, we came across some of their artefacts. Once we realised what we had, we were authorised to conduct covert research and development on these artefacts. We wanted to see if we could adapt that technology and make it work for us. When the Drakh used some of this same left-over Shadow tech to hit Earth with a plague, our work gained even more importance. Hell, it's altogether possible that we could find a cure here a hell of a lot faster than you could by wandering around the galaxy digging holes.

Gideon: "Do all the Joint Chiefs know about this?"

Lee: "Some do, some don't. It's on a need to know basis - and we get to decide who needs to know. Given the importance of this mission to Earth security, anyone lower on the food chain who shouldn't know about this - doesn't stick around very long."

Gideon: "Is that what happened to the Cerberus? Did Captain (name) find out something he shouldn't have? Did he see something he shouldn't have seen?"

Lee gets up, moves away. This is a sore point for him.

Lee: "What happened to the Cerberus was a tragic mistake. Shadow tech is organic, it incorporates living being into its operating system. Sometimes the mix goes well, sometimes it doesn't. That's why the Alliance considers it forbidden tech. Sometimes the subject .. goes mad. And the ship that's a part of him also goes mad. Something went wrong during one of those merges. The ship broke free, went on a rampage. We couldn't stop it in time. The Cerberus was in the wrong place at the wrong time, that's all."

Gideon: "That's all. Three hundred and sixty men and women die, never knowing why, and all you can say is it was a mistake? And what about those people I saw underground? Where do they fit into this?"...

Lee: "Captain, where do you think the technomages got all that advanced technology? Technology so advanced it looks like magic - ships that have a mind of their own - personal control systems that are merged right into their own bodies. It's organic tech, light years beyond anything anyone has got. Shadow tech, Captain. Stolen. Same as ours. That's why they left known space during the war. They weren't running from the Shadows. They were running from us. Because we wanted what they had - and they wouldn't share."

So now you know the truth. The question is .. what do you want to do from here? The Cerberus was an accident, the unfortunate by-product of our efforts to try and keep Earth at the forefront of new technology. You're a sharp man. You can choose to join the right side and be a part of the solution, or make yourself part of the problem. So what'll it be, Captain?"



BLACK T-BOLTS

By JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY
(Archangel)

IN THE regime of Clarke there was nothing but secrecy. Paranoia. Paradoxes. The Shadows wormed their way in, breeding distrust and hate. Hate and fear bred anger. Anger bred Strife. Strife bred innovation.

That was the Shadow ideal.

When the influence of the shadows left their work continued fed by human failings.

Allies turned their back on Earth. Paranoia returned. Human turned on Human once again and, in the darkest secrets of the Warren of Clarke's paranoid dream, there grew a new organisation. One's with no ambition, no soul, fed by Clarke's fear and greed. It had only one name. Aegis.

Aegis grew out of a secret Psi-Corp base on Mars. Those who discovered the thing under the sands were recruited or silenced. It soon spread beyond telepaths, incorporating scientists, engineers; people greedy enough or weak willed enough to obey Clarke without question. Experiments spread to Ganymede, where despite the careful preparations the base was destroyed. Experiments continued with some alien artefacts, using the lost, the disappeared. And some things were born, some things that should not have been...

The Black Thunderbolt was one of those things. It began as an experiment with Omega's to bring them up to Shadow levels. Shadow skin was grown and added to a Thunderbolt. During the first test run the fighter went out of control and exploded. The next few tests made the designers think that those pilots' emotions were at fault. A few lobotomies produced better results.

Corp Psychic Surgery was needed; and it was applied, setting the pilots' personality into an endless feedback loop, preventing madness.

Once the pilot component was sorted out a full prototype was assembled. The Shadow skin was applied thickly and replaced a large proportion of the ship's hull. An extra thruster was added in the back section to increase acceleration. However when the ship launched there was consternation: the wing engines broke off. The missiles either failed to launch or launched uncontrollable. The pilot uttered horrible moans in flight. But at least the thing didn't blow up.

When the ship was recovered it was discov-



ered that the shadow skin had eaten into the ship structure, particularly around the wing area. In essence it was trying to form spines. This pleased the designers, who felt they were getting somewhere. When the cockpit was cracked open, it was discovered that shadow stuff had wrapped itself around the pilot and entered his body, fusing him to the fighter forever.

The fighter was redesigned; Spines were moulded onto the machine, fused with a non-organic core. Missiles were dropped. The fighter had exhibited an ability to manoeuvre without

the nacelle engines so those were scrapped, a large engine replacing the navigator seat. All in all they termed the fighter a success. The fighter was able to diffuse energy along its frame. The

pilots were almost fearless, not fleeing where others would. Of course there were problems. The pilots were rather poor dogfighters, and their accuracy ratings were rather lower than they had been before assignment. But it was worth the cost, the scientists agreed.

REASONING

When I was handed this fighter to construct for the game, I thought the look of the fighter was unusual. I thought that it would have to be radically different to the regular Thunderbolt in many respects. First it looked like the metal core of the fighter was still there, but had been "sprayed" with Shadow material. While it did not look like the materiel was thick enough to warrant "advanced armour" status, it had cer-

tainly altered the fighter in a number of ways. Firstly, the engine pylons on the wings were gone, to be replaced by an attempt at diffusers. I deduced that the Shadow material had eaten the wings away in an attempt to return to a Shadow shape. The necessity of placing an engine in the body of the fighter in that case would have precluded the use of a navigator. Also I seriously doubt that you could attach the connections necessary for the missiles in the wings with Shadow material flailing about, so the missiles had to go.

Another reason for the changes above was the effects that Shadow material had on unprepared humans. In an episode of B5, a person was said to have been killed instantly by contact with Shadow material. It was said to be as if the life had been sucked out of him. The changes to the pilots necessary to have them work in close proximity to the stuff must be extreme, particularly with the crude trial and error experiments of the EA scientists, who thought that they understood what they were dealing with. Therefore a navigator would have made no difference, and trying to get zombies to fire missiles at the right time would be a waste of time. However I had to simulate the substandard pilots in the game. So I reduced the fire control and initiative by one (essentially the reverse of the expert dogfighter rules in the Rules Compendium). I also reduced the thrust to slow the manoeuvrability a bit, which also had the nice bonus of simulating shoving the engine into the back of the fighter.

On the plus side the fighter is extremely tough, and it still has the Thunderbolt Big Gun. The dropout bonus is there to simulate that the pilot won't (indeed can't) eject, and the diffusion gives it a limited repair capability in flight. It may be slower than the regular Thunderbolt and be a bit sluggish, but it will be sheer hell to get rid of in a dogfight.

Therefore I feel that only a slight increase in regular Thunderbolt costs is warranted.



Hidden AGENDAS

TECHNICAL DISCUSSION
By REID "The Merciless" HUPACH

DRAHK influence on the Centauri Republic is a much-discussed topic among B5 Wars fans. How much help and what degree of technology given are two subjects, which are left unclear by reading the *Legions Of Fire* series of books.

For the B5 Wars player this can be looked at in two ways. How these books would be interpreted for the show storyline, and how it affects the game. These are two separate views. As we all know the show only dealt with a couple of ship designs for the Centauri, the Vorchan/Demos class and the Primus class. The books "suggest" that the massive fleet buildup is of these types of ships, even though the suggestion is extremely vague. At only one point in the trilogy is a ship described and that is at the beginning of the second book. The time between that incident and the Great Fleet of Three Thousand warships is several years.

In the game though there are several ship types the show never mentions. For the purpose of this article the assumption will be that these units have existed all along and will be used and changed along with the show ships and that the games Centauri technology had already surpassed that of the show by the introduction of the Dargan and the Rutarian fighters.

First we must look at what the motives of the Drahk are for using the Centauri as puppets. Primarily they wished to destroy the Interstellar Alliance and punish Sheridan and Delenn for

making the Shadows go away. They wanted a rejuvenated and more advanced Centauri military to do this for them. Also they wanted to punish the Centauri for destroying the Shadow vessels on Centauri Prime. Now even though they wanted the Centauri to destroy the IA they wished the war to leave the Centauri sufficiently weakened so they could come in after the war and openly take over.

Next we must look at what the Drahk had to offer the Centauri to sufficiently make their military powerful enough to defeat the IA but still inferior to themselves. Therefore it should be surmised that the Drahk would hold back on some of their tech to keep an edge, in other words several of the proposals by players of Shadow style weapons and systems would probably not be given to the Centauri. Instead the most likely scenario would be the upgrading of present Centauri tech into more powerful versions. The reasoning behind this is that in the trilogy the Centauri advances in tech are given to Minister Durla in the form of planted dreams. Durla, though a major mover and shaker in Centauri politics, is still just a palace guard with a Napoleon complex. Durla is not a scientist, he was a soldier, he would have a hard time relaying extremely technical plans for weapons and systems to his research team since he himself couldn't understand them.

When you look at what little we have on what the Drahk have technology wise, we can see that they are probably masters of miniaturization. Their ships are of the LCV or MCV class but pack the weaponry of a capitol ship. They also

seem to have some form of stealth tech since they are able to move around without being detected by normal means. The power output of their small ships also points to advanced reactors and engines.

Now comes the real meat of this article, what does all this mean to the Centauri ships of the three thousand ship "Grand Fleet". Lets start with the power output; this tech would allow the Centauri to be able to increase the weapon quantities and the sensor levels of their ships. That's the easy part. Now the miniaturization technology would allow weapons to be put into smaller mounts or much more powerful weapons to be fit onto the ships. Also the shrinking of other systems such as reactors and engines will allow for a larger power curve for your weapons array.

As to stealth, the Centauri already have the Chameleon Sensor Suite and the stealth coating for the Rutarian. These systems would probably be implemented on new ships for the Republic. With a few Drahk improvements, the CSS could probably be augmented into imitating other space objects other than ships. Think about it: a Haven making itself look like a star base, or an Octurian pretending to be an asteroid. The Drahk would probably stop before making it into a true cloaking device, but would advance it to make it more useful. The Stealth coating according to the Rules Compendium can be applied to any Centauri ship; it reduces its defense profile by 1, but wears off over time moving through space. Advances to the stealth coating would be along a few different lines, first make it more durable so it doesn't have to be



constantly reapplied. Second, have it act for ships as it does for fighters only make the non-lock on range higher for bigger ships. LCV range 8, MCV range 12, Capital range 15, Battleships range 18 and bases range 30. Of course these are just suggestions and are in no way official.

Next we will tackle the weapons. With the power increase and miniaturization from the Drakh, Centauri weapons can take on very deadly forms. Here are a few suggestions for upgrades of Centauri weapons.

Heavy Weapons:

Gatling Heavy Array: all the weapons stats stay the same except it has 4 barrels and has a ROF of 4 per turn. Power cost: 7.

Heavy Matter Cannon: larger version of the popular medium. ROF: 2 turns, Fire Control: +6/+3/-3, Damage: 3d10 + 4, Power cost: 6, Range: -1 per 3 hexes.

War Laser: the BIG gun, Range: -1 per 5, ROF: 3 turns, Fire Control: +5/+2/-2, Damage: 5d10+8, Power cost: 9, Modes: R,P.

Medium Weapons:

Improved Assault Laser: Range: -1 per 3, ROF: 1 per turn, Fire Control: +5/+3/0, Damage: 2d10+6, Power cost: 6.

Improved Ballistic Torpedo Launcher: Range: 50, Reload: 2 per turn, Power cost: 6.

Light Weapons:

Gatling Twin Array: 4 barrels, ROF: 4 per turn, Power cost: 3.

Gatling Guardian Array: 4 barrels, ROF: 4 per turn, Power cost: 3.

Light Matter Cannon: Range: -1 per hex, Fire control: +2/+4/+6, Intercept rating: -3, Damage: 1d10 +3, Power cost: 2, ROF: 1 per turn.

These are just a few possibilities for upgrading the Centauri weapons with Drakh help. There are other opinions and possibilities, these are just the conclusions which this article has come to. As for new ships, well lets just say new ship designs are a whole different article. If you go by the Centauri of the show or books there will be upgraded Vorchans and Primii. If you use the game for a ship source that is a huge difference in hulls for the "Grand Fleet". Since we will never have official word on this it would be very difficult to make decisions on how to approach the new ships.

Enjoy some of these thoughts and whether you want to use them in your games is totally up to you.

Another thing to remember, at the conclusion of the trilogy, Centauri Prime is again in Centauri hands, and the three thousand ship "Grand Fleet" still exists. The lion may not be hungry right now, but he can still roar. Just a fair warning for the rest of the Galaxy.



CENTAURI DEVORAS

IN 2261 the Centauri Regent secretly ordered construction of a fleet of new warships. Few Centauri knew about this, as it was done in utmost secrecy, and people who were too nosy fell victim to strange "accidents" or "suicide".

Unknown to any but the Regent, the Drakh had come to Centauri Prime, and had plans for the Centauri and their new fleet. They equipped these new vessels with special Shadowtech control pods, thereby allowing them to operate without crew, and used them to prey on League shipping.

This was intended to maneuver the Centauri into conflict with the ISA, for one, as revenge against Londo Mollari's actions during the final days of the Shadow War, for another, to bring the Centauri in a position where they could shape them as they wished. Having no crews these ships carried out their assignment without mercy or knowledge of any actual Centauri, in total secrecy, until they were observed blasting apart some Brakiri transports by Ranger Lennier - as the Drakh had planned from the start.

The results of their manipulations are in the history books, the attacks by these automated ships started the war between the Centauri and former League races that would result in the bombardment of Centauri Prime and the isolation of the Centauri Republic from the ISA.

Special rules

It's Shadowtech control system usually works in semi-autonomous mode; then it has only half it's usual initiative bonus, and has to choose a target which it will single-mindedly follow and attack until it is destroyed, then switch to another one, while ignoring all other ships or fighters (which is the reason this Shadowtech was never very popular as sole control system for their ships - a dead technology).

The system can also work in remote mode, and then it needs a "control ship" nearby (within 150 hexes), suffers no penalties, and can be controlled fully by its player.

And it can be turned off and the ship given a crew, in which case it functions normally.

Control ships with "stronger" Shadowtech can wrest away control from the initial controller (right now the only ones with access to stronger Shadowtech than the Drakh would be

the Shadows themselves, but there may be yet unknown Shadow minions who also have access to such tech. minions who were working for the Shadows longer than the Drakh, and therefore had more time to understand the systems). This will work even if the ship is crewed, since the Shadowtech systems are designed to allow overriding the crew - just in case. And since the Drakh have stronger systems than the pods themselves, and pod-controlled ship can be controlled by a Drakh ship, even if the Drakh player is the enemy (something the Drazi might want to learn before they make use of the control pods they captured from the Centauri in season 5).

If the ship has to switch modes (because it's command ship is destroyed and it goes semi-auto, or because a command ship appears and takes control) the ship's control system is "distracted" for the turn while it changes modes (changing modes is declared during EW phase, and takes effect at the end of the turn) and suffers a -1 penalty to initiative and all to-hit rolls. It also has one less point of thrust available.

Though the ship has shuttles in it's hangar, it cannot launch them without having someone present to operate these shuttles (remember the ships were initially constructed as standard ships with crew, and only later secretly refitted by the Drakh with their control pods).

And finally these ships can always ram, no matter what the scenario says (semi-auto ships will automatically attempt to ram once they have no weapons left, remote ships will do so if the player controlling them wishes).

Reasoning

These were easy - I just thought up the automated rules, and modified the Demos to better represent the way these ships acted in the show; I never saw them fire any energy shots but volleys of four to six yellow pulses - obviously more than four HA barely could generate; and no orange bolts I had come to associate with older Vorchan CGI. So I just replaced the PA with another HA, giving the ship more raw firepower in exchange for the one big plasma hit. Every Centauri Captain will likely agree this is a worthwhile trade if he were to get to fly such a Devoras.

(A B5W SCS for this ship can be found in the Attachments folder)



By TYREL LOHR

AS THE Interstellar Alliance continued to grow and mature, member worlds began trading technologies. Though the primary objective of these technology exchanges was to uplift less technologically sophisticated races to the galactic norm, some advanced weapon and system technologies were traded between the ISA's larger members.

In 2270, several pieces of advanced technology were procured (confiscated, actually) from the Earth Alliance and put under the direct authority of the ISA. Included in this cache of plans and relics was several items of obvious Shadow origin.

One of these Shadow artifacts was something resembling a touchstone. The device was of bio-mechanical construction and a shade of black like none that scientists ever witnessed before. Inscribed in a rough circle about the artifact was a series of runes, similar to those reported by the crew of the Icarus located on the Shadow homeworld of Z'ha'dum.

It did not take long for scientists to discover the device's true purpose. What they held in their possession was nothing less than a 'black box' exactly like those the Shadows and their allies offered President Clark for use in the construction of the Shadow Omega fleet. The ISA believed that this artifact was the last of its kind (Historical Note: Later this would prove to be false, however, as a covert division of EarthForce also maintained control over a similar relic). Because of the design of the Shadow device, it did not take long for scientists to stumble upon the means to activate and begin to explore its uses. At first it merely allowed for the creation of an oily paste similar in form to the skin grown over the Shadow Omegas but later ways were discovered to have the device create far more complex objects and systems.

Author's Note: The Shadow Star is a joke. Don't take this to be a soberly designed munchkin ship; this is a humorously designed munchkin ship! It is an attempt to see just how disgusting a Shadow/Vorlon/Minbari hybrid could be.

Needless to say, such a ship is hideous to contemplate.

As part of a decision made by members of the Alliance, and over the objections of the President, it was decided to test the effects of the Shadow device's full potential upon several White Stars that had been critically damaged in battle and put in mothballs in orbit of Minbar. The Shadow hull material was produced and grafted onto these White Stars' hulls. Special precautions were taken to ensure that the Vorlon element of the ships' hull would remain intact, allowing the ship to retain the learning capabilities of its adaptive armor.

Amazingly, the effect of adding a coating of Shadow hull coating over the original Vorlon engineered hull actually made the resultant armor stronger, allowing it to be more effective against enemy fire than ever before. The White Stars (or "Shadow Stars" as they had come to be called) then had several Shadow weapons 'grown' onto the hull, mainly because they could draw off the natural, ambient energy field created by the Shadow skin grafts. This in effect eliminated the White Star's power problems while increasing its total firepower.

Despite the results of their testing on the White Stars, there were many things that troubled both the scientists and engineers working on the project and the politicians who backed the project. Workers claimed that they couldn't sleep while onboard the ship. They said that,

when the room was dark, they could sense a presence and hear faint, piercing screams. Others claimed to have seen pieces of the hull rippling towards them while working on the external hull. One worker even claimed that the ship attempted to 'grab' onto his foot while he was performing routine EVA work. Many became nervous because of these reports. Much of it could not be substantiated, but medical evidence from those suffering from sleep deprivation and numerous other mysterious afflictions could not be entirely discounted.

Only five Shadow Stars were modified using the device. Three others were under initial stages of grafting, but scuttled after the decision to halt production was made. Of the five that were completed, all were crewed with Rangers and sent on shakedown cruises on the frontier borders of the ISA member states. This was done just as much to shield them from the public eye as to patrol the frontier. One of the Shadow Stars took onboard the Shadow 'black box' device so that technicians could continue studying its functionality.

Each ship was sent out alone. Each ship's crew reported strange occurrences within the hours immediately following launch. Within a week the ships were gone.

No traces of the ships themselves have ever been discovered. Drazi patrols near Enfil space did manage to find a lifeboat from one of the Shadow Stars in late 2274. Inside they found the remains of a single male, human Ranger, the corpse still clutching a piece of metal in his left hand. On the wall of the lifeboat was carved the words "They are alive" in both English and Minbari. The meaning of the dying man's last message will never be known.

THE leader of the Thunderbolt flight flexed his fingers and reaffirmed his grip upon the joystick as the proud assault fighter of Earthforce's fleet, slowly flew alongside the wreckage of the Explorer ship.

The incredibly expensive Explorer, was a vessel whose sole purpose was to survey space beyond Earth Alliance territory and construct new jumpgates and beacons in promising systems. Now though, as the pilot gazed from the right side of his cockpit, he was confronted by the twisted fibers of metal and scorch marks that plagued across the entire hull. He shuddered at the very thought of what the massive ship must have endured to have ended up in that current state. A cold chill ran down the pilot's spine and he gulped further at the thought. The Lenkov had been dispatched to search for the Magellan since it failed to return to the supply outpost after a six-month survey. Now here they were and they had found her, but it was not very assuring that perhaps whoever or whatever had destroyed the Magellan might come back. He knew that an Omega class destroyer was more heavily armed and ideally suited to combat operations, he still didn't favor the outcome of what would happen if they did.

"I can't believe seeing something like this." The various chatter from the other pilots in his flight affirmed his very thoughts and he too would have liked to have some answers to those many questions, but it was not his concern.

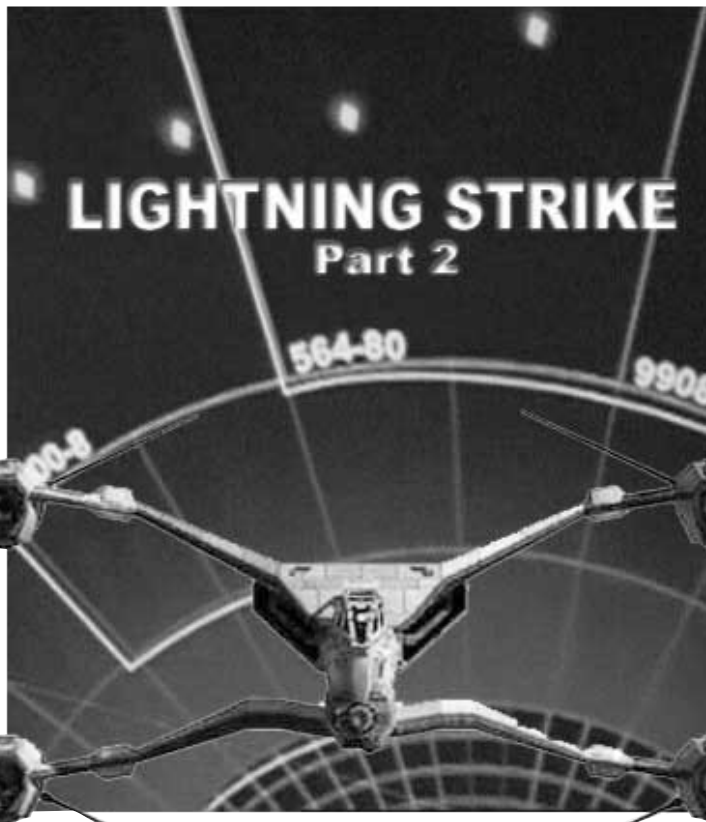
"Keep the chatter down, Delta Five" he ordered. It was standard procedure, almost common sense when in a situation like this, where much was unknown and the danger still undetermined.

"Delta Three to Delta Leader." Bare seconds since he had given the prior order to keep silent that another voice filled his ears.

"Go ahead, Delta Three."

"I again picked up an intermittent contact on my scanners, then it disappeared again."

"Your scanners must be on the fritz, make sure to log it in and we'll get the maintenance teams to fix it." It was an odd occurrence that he could only explain as being



a malfunction as no one else in the fighter group had picked up anything. He reminded himself to give the maintenance crews a thorough seeing to after his flight returned to the Lenkov.

"Confirmed, Delta Leader."

William Roberts stood before the tactical display screen setup in the center of the bridge, analyzing the surrounding area, as it would appear to the crew around him. Instead he looked through the transparent material with concern at his Commanding Officer who sat up within the small office area. Gazing upon his face he could tell that he was in deep thought and he wished he could have known what he was thinking. But he was no telepath and it was highly immoral and unethical to do such a thing even though he was only showing concern. That was probably Psi-Corp's first thought until their ideals radically changed and they became a -distrusted organization.

Still he felt sympathetic over the grief that this man, his friend, felt. Oscar hadn't finished the story of what happened when the Raider battlewagon had jumped into the system and opened fire on the Themis. It had obviously involved his son Alexander, and it really could have meant only one thing.

"Commander, EVAC shuttles are ready and prepped for launch."

"Launch them, Lieutenant." Within a minute, two slender shuttles exited the Lenkov's massive

launch bay and with the momentum provided by their small thrusters, propelled themselves towards the derelict. According to scanners provided by the advance Thunderbolt flight there were still fifteen life signs aboard the mile and a half long vessel. Only fifteen out of nearly a thousand. Still, by just observing the damage the Magellan had sustained, fifteen was even hopeful.

"Commander?" His rank was cried out from the opposite side of the large chamber, the heart and soul of any Earthforce ship. To many the real power behind the Earth Alliance could have been found here. Holding the key to such devastating strength felt good, it made any man who commanded it feel almost like a god. That was the reason why every Captain before attaining a ship was put through rigorous psychological tests as an unstable man could do serious harm not just physically, but to the entire political stability of the Alliance.

"What is it, Lieutenant Franks?" William briskly moved to the sensor station and stood over the young man who was the veritable eyes and ears of the Lenkov. Everything that happened outside basically came from that one man. With the command deck located within the center of the mass of metal and material just looking out a window to see what was going

on, simply wasn't the case.

"Very odd, sir. There was what I thought a blip on the extreme verge of our sensors, but its gone again."

"A ship?" The tone in the Executive Officer's voice indicated a degree of alarm. If that was the case, then they were not alone and it was a suitably high chance that it was the same one that had destroyed the Magellan. Certainly he did not want to find the Lenkov on the receiving end of that firepower.

"Could be, but the system's star is spilling out a high degree of radiation so it might be just an echo." The young lieutenant looked up at the XO, the uncertain explanation showing in his innocent eyes.

"Keep an eye on it." Will Roberts pushed himself off from the sensor station and moved towards the center of the deck. Looking to his left, he was surprised to see the Captain stepped down from his office. His face was now devoid of that grief he had seen just minutes before.

"What's going on, Will?"

"The EVAC shuttles are enroute to the Magellan and we're picking up ghosts on our scanners. Lieutenant Franks thinks it may be just echoes from the radiation in the system."

"Anything else?" There was a certain oddness to the lines of Oscar's face as he listened to his Executive Officer's report on what was happening in the universe outside of the Lenkov.

"One of the Thunderbolt pilots keeps reporting seeing a ghost as well, though none of the others can. We've labeled that down as a sensor glitch."

"Prepare for Battle stations. Weapons control, arm all batteries. If we do get into a fight, I want to be ready." As if he someone had turned on a switch and light replaced darkness within a room, that Captain Kasrov suddenly turned from being calm to now taking control.

"Aye sir." Klaxons sounded throughout the command deck and crewmen and women now rushed back and forth from stations as the state for battle readiness had been called. Although it wasn't certain, they would probably be expecting a small war to begin shortly and each and every one of them had to be ready for the fight that was coming. William Roberts turned to his Captain to see how quickly his mood had changed. Oscar then turned to him with the look of bold determination on his face.

"I'm not making the same mistake I did nine years ago."

(To be continued...)

DEFYING ARMAGEDDON

"It is the End... But the moment has been prepared for..."

Edited by CHRIS NASIPAK

THE YEAR is 2263. The Shadow War nears its end. The First Ones are awakening and preparing for battle. And the Vorlons have decided to end the Game of Ages once and for all. The Planet Killers are brought forth from their sleep, and set to their gruesome task.

The Rules of the Game: Survive. Create a BattleForce of up to 10,000 BPV, of which up to 3,000 can be borrowed from neighbors, mercenaries, or whomever you can beg, borrow, or blackmail into helping you. Take them down if you can.

Scenarios: The players should choose whether they will meet the Vorlons in deep space, or near the planet, and design their battleforces accordingly. The "Enhanced Ancients" rules are in effect.

Scenario One: Deep Space: The Vorlons have paused to be sure all is in readiness. Calculate the speed factor of your fleet using the same method as in the September pursuit (maximum acceleration). Subtract the result from 8; this is the number of turns the Vorlons have had to start recharging their jump engines as the defenders arrive. Place the Planet-Killer in hex 2215 and the Escort Fleet within five hexes of it to start, all fighters in their hangars. The defenders may enter from any map edge or via jump point.

Scenario Two: Planetary Defense: If the Vorlons survive Scenario One (or it is not

played), continue to the homeworld's orbit. Deploy the defending vessels where you will, with minefields and OSATs as appropriate, designating the xx30 map edge as firing range for the Planet-Killer - if it reaches this point and is able to fire its weapon, the game is over. The Vorlons will enter via jump point on the xx01 map edge.

THE VORLON ESCORT FLEET:

- 1x Heavy Carrier
- 24x Heavy Fighters
- 2x Battle Destroyer
- 1x Destroyer Escort
- 2x Transport

Possible variations: Substitute a Shadow fleet and Death Cloud; assign skin colors to the Vorlons; have fun. If it seems too difficult for the defenders, drop the Enhanced Ancients rules.

Victory Conditions: If the PK gets its shot off, you lose. Any other outcome: You win.

The Grome: Crack-Shell with Black-Shell (Timothy R Jordan)

IN THE end, the Grome knew their chances were slim; their fleet had been picked thin between battles with the Shadows and the Vorlons. When the massive Vorlon Planet Killer appeared from hyperspace following a straight line to Homeworld, the Grome admiralty knew they had only one chance to save their people from extinction. A small fleet was secreted away in orbit of the moon, and defensive satellites were stationed around the planet.

The plan was simple. The Vorlons had chosen to use the most terrifying weapon imaginable, capable of destroying whole worlds. Well, the Grome were not armed with mere slingshots. The fleet would wait for the Planet Killer and her escorts to close near the homeworld and attack with surprise. The Frigates would do everything in their power, ramming if necessary to keep the Planet Killer's escorts at bay. This part of the plan was critical, and the crews were specially picked for their zealotry in defending their home. Meanwhile, the Gunships would approach as close as possible to the Planet Killer and fire their heavy railguns, each loaded with the fearsome black shell.

If possible the Gunships would fire a second salvo of black shells before ramming the Planet Killer themselves. The OSATs were kept as a last resort, also armed with a single deadly black shell each. It would be their job to stop the Planet Killer if it survived the ambush fleet.

Fleet

- 5x Groth Gunships
- 4x Morgat Heavy Frigates
- 11x Gormok OSATS
- 31x Black shells
- =10000 Points

The Orieni: To Fight the Odds, to Betray the Gods (JBW)

IN A strange turn of events, the Orieni Republic was targeted by the Vorlons for eradication. Perhaps the Vorlons believed that the Orieni had experienced "too much" exposure to the Drakh



and Shadows after they besieged the original Drakh homeworld.

Regardless of the reason, a Planet Killer was found to be lumbering towards the Orieni homeworld. Events far away had drawn the attention of the Vorlons, and the Planet Killer was left vulnerable. The Orieni gathered together four of their most powerful ships and a meager escort group in an effort to destroy the Planet Killer and save their world.

The force was intended to maximize Alpha Strike effectiveness (high damage in a single blow) and to use a diversity of weaponry (matter, laser, and ballistic) in an effort to penetrate Vorlon Defenses.

The Orieni had discovered that their superb interceptor was of little use against the Shadows' advanced armor technology, and they imagined that this was likely to prove true against the Vorlons as well. Thus, the force engages without a fighter escort and relies upon RGRs for antifighter defense.

The Hunter Killer (HK) was intended to be the primary weapon against the Vorlon Planet Killer. With only limited numbers available in their peacetime inventory, the Orieni spread out ten flights of Shining Stars across the four mother-ships...hopefully it would be enough.

Orieni Force
1x Paragon Strike Force Command Ship
3x Prophet Command Ship
10x Shining Star Improved Hunter-Killer Fighter Flights (60 Fighters)
8x Vengeful Laser Frigates
45x Heavy Missiles (Class H)
=10000 Points

Designer's Note: There are 3,800 points worth of Limited Availability units in this force (this amounts to 38% of the force). While this is technically illegal (the normal limit is 33%), the scenario designer said "anything goes", and this is generally less "cheesy" than many other possibilities.

Tactics are simple: Ignore any escorts and dive at the Planet Killer...the HKs must get through! Heavy Laser Lances, Heavy Gauss Cannons, and Missiles (especially Heavy Missiles) can all damage the VPK, even if it isn't by much with each shot.

If the shields go down, then fire away with the RGRs...if you get lucky, you might do a few points of damage per shot. Remember that matter weapons treat Advanced Armor as if it were two points lower so, at best with a full three points adaptive assigned to matter, the VPK can only boast a 9 armor rating against matter weaponry, and your maximum damage is 12 (hey, take what you can get).

The key is really the HKs. If they impact, they can each do up to 80 points of damage. Theoretically, a single flight can kill the VPK. Of course, the chances of this occurring are VERY small, but you have ten flights, so you should kill it in a single pass with the "swarm of death" unless the Vorlons have an abundant antifighter defense (which is relatively uncommon for them...or any other Ancient). Did I mention how easy it is to hit an enormous unit with HKs?

It's just so inspiring to rise against your Gods and actually have a fair shot at victory!

We're Sorry, The Vorlon Planet-Killer Does Not Accept Visa... (Ivan Edgerly)

KNOWING the Brakiri had been tainted by the Shadows, the Vorlons decided to end the torment of their lives. As a large Vree convoy starts to enter the local jumpgate, a Planet Killer and its escorts jumps in a short distance from the Planet's outer defenses. Not wanting to leave the Brakiri without any help the Commander of the convoy ordered four of his escorts to help the defenders of Brakir.

The Defending forces are made up of.....

Brakiri
2x Kaliva 1550
1x Corumai 1050
2x Brokados 1600
36x Pikitos 2808

Vree
4x Xill 2800
Total 9808

Battle plan
Kill or disable all the Vorlon escorts. Then use the remaining fighters to skindance under the EM shields and target the forward and port shield system. The larger ships will try to exploit this hole as much as possible but they will never stop firing till the VPK is disabled or destroyed.

Designer Notes

This fleet was meant to take advantage of the fact that the VPK has only four pts of adaptive armor at the start of the scenario. It is important to hit with all three types of weapons on the same turn (remember it only has 4 points in the beginning) so wait till you have all your weapons recharged before you hit the VPK for the first time. After that never stop until it or your planet is gone

[Ed note - plenty of points for fighter missiles left up there...]

Shadow Taint? (daoloth)

THE Vorlon planet killer is approaching the production facilities of the Shadow Omega program. Protecting the facility are three Shadow Omegas. One was already assigned to patrol the system and is fully operational. The other two however are in the final stages of commissioning and though they have full fighter complements they do not yet have enough crew to field them. Between the available crew of the patrolling ship and of the facility they manage to find just enough people to man each Shadow Omega and field seven flights of Thunderbolts.

EA Fleet
3x Shadow Omega 6600
42x Thunderbolt 3360
Total 9960

Tactics

The Omegas should try to keep a steady barrage up on the planet killer, preferably through the same facing. Basically anything they don't need to deal with the immediate threat of the escorts. It's probably better to go for a shot per turn with the slicer beams, rather than wait for the larger damage rolls.

The fighters should harry the escorts to keep them off the backs of the Omegas. Called shots, if permitted, should be taken to take out shield generators. If an opening presents itself the fighters should do the same to the planet killer.

Er, sorry, wrong universe... (William Murdick)

SUDDENLY a swirling pattern of energy appeared in front of the Vorlon Planet-Killer. A tunnel of sorts.

The Vorlons paused. Could it be the Thirdspace aliens? Or some other dimension that the Walkers had found in the remote past? Some new trick by the Shadows?

NO!

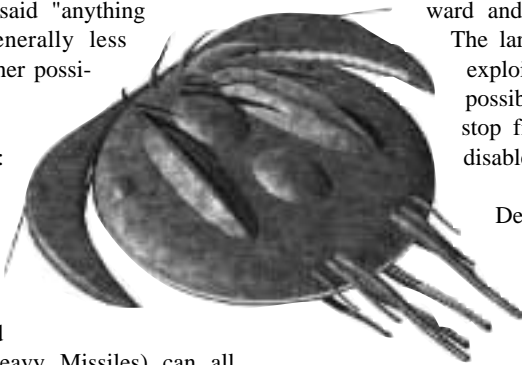
Through the swirling energy two shapes began to appear... and then a lot of smaller ones... Slowly they coalesced into...

Dominion Fleet

1x Dominion Jem'Hadar Battleship
1x Dominion Jem'Hadar Super Carrier
20x Dominion Jem'Hadar Attack Ships
=10,000 Points

[Ed Note: See:

<http://planetside.firenebula.com/startrek/races/dominion.php> for Dominion SCS's.]



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Bumper Stickers of the Galaxy

By JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

Seen on Centauri Ships

WE COME IN PEACE!!!

(Shoot to kill)

Seen on EA ships

Contains all human technology!

(Apart from the bits from Altair IV, Homeworld,
Centauri Prime, Minbar, Ornelos, Shri-Shraba,
Abba, Zhabar, Melat, Zha'Ha'Dum and Ventox).

Seen on Minbari ships

You know, if you could see us, You
would be **really** scared...

If you **can** see us, we have just
made a serious tactical error...

Seen on Vorlon Ships

**Buy Dr Kosh's Total Anti-Virus
Suite!**

Seen on some Shadow Ships

**Galaxy painters and redecorators
at your service!**

See on many Dilgar Ships

**Despite numerous requests,
This ship does not exist!**

Seen on Vree Ships

**Any resemblance with any UFO
sightings, science fiction shows*
and some conspiracy theories is
entirely coincidental.**

*apart from Battlestar Galactica

Seen On Drazi ships

**If you move, we'll shoot you!
If you don't move, see above.**

Seen on Pak'ma'ra Ships

If you can read this, You are in really big trouble