



BABYLON 5 WARS * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS

ISSUE
24

AUGUST /
SEPTEMBER
2003

August /
September
2003

Issue No. 24

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www.robertshome.org/babcom

JMS keeps producing

>IIRC, development season should be starting around now. Any plans on dusting off "Polaris" and/or "World on Fire" and pitching them again?

= Polaris is still making the rounds, so we'll see what happens on that front. "World on Fire" is not doable anymore because the events of the world caught up with the story. (Essentially, it was about the events leading up and following America getting into its next war, starting with an attack on New York. Very eerily, nearly everything that was in the script and the planned series has now happened, so the show is now a moot issue.)

>What's happening with your other

projects - new, old, TV, comic, play, audio drama or anything else? = I've put my play "Among the Ruins" on a back burner for now, because it got too clever for its own good, too slick, almost self-consciously so...it needs time to season and develop the right kind of maturity.

Comics: the first issue of Supreme Power comes out August 6th, and it's going to be a terrific book. And Spidey continues apace, I'm just about to start writing issue 500, a 38 page monster that culminates a three-issue arc that encompasses much of Spidey's history and some things that should be real surprises for people.

TV: I'm making the network rounds with the people at Marvel Productions, pitching a new series, but that's all I can say about it for the moment.

Audio: I've finished the 20 short scripts for "The Adventures of Apocalypse AI" for a company that will be distributing them either late fall or early Spring 2004. It's a very, very funny series.

Other than that, working on a novel, making the pitch rounds for Midnight Nation as a feature, and taking some down time after finishing season two of Jeremiah last month.

- JMS

So long... and thanks for all the fish!

*"There is only one good, knowledge,
and one evil, ignorance."*

- Diogenes, ancient Greek Cynic philosopher

MORE than two years ago I was silly enough to volunteer to help compile and publish a "small" fan-generated magazine for the Babylon 5 Wars community.

It remained "small" for about one edition. It rapidly grew - and remained - above 30 pages.

While the workload grew in parallel, I found I did not mind. It was fun. And rewarding people for their creativity by presenting it in a neat magazine format was satisfying.

Babcom soon attracted a core group of volunteers to check, coordinate, publish and encourage submissions. At one stage, the yahoo group established to manage the magazine was repeatedly generating more than 300 messages a month.

That has now fallen to less than 30. And most of those volunteers have passed beyond the rim.

Now, it is my turn.

Changes in work and relationship conditions (both for the better) have finally tipped me over the edge into "permanently too busy" territory.

Such is life.

I've tried to encourage and nurture replacements during the past six months. And Todd Boyce has stepped up to the plate, taking on a considerable portion of the page design and makeup. And Babcom veteran Scott McGaffin has taken on the bulk of the coordination work.

Now, it is up to these two and you to determine if Babcom continues in this - or any - form.

All my Babcom templates and Babylon 5 resources have been copied to disc and distributed among those



who have expressed a degree of interest in helping the magazine continue. I hope they chose to convert their intentions to actions.

I've just finished leafing through the printouts of all 24 editions. I'm very proud of what we have all - authors, checkers and designers - produced.

I'm certain that, with a little enthusiasm and mutual support, Babcom can continue for some time yet. So long.

Enjoy the game. Enjoy the universe.

- Diogenes
(Jamie Seidel)

CROSSOVER: ANDROMEDA ASCENDANT



Andromeda Wars
By James Cunningham

AH, WHAT to say about this show. I recall highly anticipating it. They published a website that went into good detail about the technology of the setting and advertised that the site would serve as the writer's bible when creating stories that involved the technology.

I was particularly interested to see the starship combat because the paradigm that was supposed to be used, involved ships standing off at great distances (light second ranges) and lobbing smart missiles controlled by even smarter drones at each other while point defenses tried to take care of anything that slipped through.

That Kevin Sorbo was the lead didn't bother me much as I hadn't ever really watched any of his previous work. It all started out relatively well. I was not pleased with some of the make-up effects used for aliens in the show, especially for the character of Rev Bem, a spiritually reformed member of the rapacious Magog race. Things rapidly began to disintegrate for me as we began to periodically see swooping starships and close range fighting, but still occasionally the fights would all be played out with targeting graphics on screens indicating how the drone/missile combats were going and then the shots of missiles that had broken through racing up to the target ship. Nicely done stuff, it seemed to be proving that you could do "realistic" space combat and still make it suspenseful and visually enticing.

Well, that became less and less and swooshes and blast-'em-at-close-range became more and more. This process of degeneration seemed to accelerate in the second season after several of

the shows original creative team left and apparently Mr. Sorbo became more and more of the creative force behind the episodes.

For those unaware, the show focused on a ship called the Andromeda Ascendant, a heavy cruiser of the fleet of an idyllic federation style government called the Commonwealth that encompassed multiple galaxies full of different species. This ship, through an act of treason, ends up crewless except for its commander Dylan Hunt (Sorbo) trapped on the edge of a black hole's event horizon. While there and experiencing greatly slowed time, the Commonwealth falls to internal and external conflict. Some 200 objective years later the Andromeda is rescued by a motley group of salvagers who wind up becoming its new crew.

Dylan then embarks on a plan to restore the Commonwealth to its former glory. The incomprehensible magnitude of that endeavor seems overwhelming to me, but apparently he does it with an optimism that I find unfathomable. From then on we see the trials and tribulations of the ad-hoc crew and their captain as they pursue this quest. By the end of season two they had created a fledgling new Commonwealth. My understanding is that this plot point was found to be too limiting in the second season and the focus began moving away from that. From what I've read of the third season and coming fourth season, the mission of the Andromeda to forge the new Commonwealth will be scrapped altogether as too confusing and not enough fun.

Personally, I gave up on the show in the second season, but continue to catch the odd episode.

When I decided to do the conversion of this for B5 Wars, I decided that I wanted to try to go as much as I could from the original concept of how their space combat would work. This got a

little difficult though as B5 Wars wasn't really set up for that 2300AD/Space Cruiser style of space combat.

I did a lot of compromising and finally upon reading about the Orieni Hunter Killers in Wars of the Centauri Republic, I came up with some ideas for how to handle the drone and missile capabilities in Andromeda. I'm not certain, having only had limited access to play-testing these concepts, as to whether my ideas are playable, enjoyable and reflective of what I was trying to model. I also found that the ballistic rules were not an easy fit with their fire first, hit first style and so I came up with Ballistic-2 class. These fire in the ballistic phase and hit in the direct fire phase if the target is within a certain range, but if the target is beyond that range, then they don't hit until the ballistic resolution phase of the following turn.

Combining this with a version of a Hunter Killer drone that can lend EW, have launched missiles slaved to it and then effectively re-launch them later and a number of other functions, I pretty much had my systems set.

Finally I did some analysis of the Commonwealth's level of technology in relation to Babylon 5 races and decided that the Commonwealth which had been in space for 10,000 years was roughly equivalent to the Minbari in technology in many ways and superior in a few.

I hope you enjoy this conversion. For more of the ships from this show please see my Yahoo group devoted to their development <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/androb5w>. Also, I have uploaded much of what I've developed onto the repository if you're not interested in Yahoo groups.



RULES AND WEAPON SYSTEMS

Designer: James Cunningham
Andromeda Rules Version 1.6

ELS MISSILES TUBES

ELS missiles are the primary weapons of the Commonwealth High Guard.

The High Guard, some enemies and allies operate several types of ELS missile weapons:

Missiles fired from ELS launch tubes (not the fighter launch rails) are accelerated like a rail gun's shell and are classed as Ballistic-2* weapons. Fighter Launch rail launched ELS missiles are standard Ballistic weapons (Ballistic-1).

* Ballistic-2 weapons are launched in ballistic phase, hit in direct damage phase if within launch range** or hit on following turn's ballistic resolution phase if beyond it). Unlike most Babylon 5 missiles, they do not have a maximum launch range or maximum range.

They do have an initial launch range which represents the range the launcher can fire a given missile type accurately (giving no range penalty).

ELS Missiles suffer penalties to hit based on range beyond their launch range.

Unlike standard B5W Missiles, they have no built in OEW, but use their launching ship's OEW and the launcher's FC like a torpedo. Fighter launched missiles use the launching fighter's offensive bonus. ELS missiles require a lock-on or suffer doubled range penalties and halved launch ranges (as they also do versus a Jammer).

Light ELS rails are used on fighters and very small craft. These are individual launch rails

and are treated as individual weapons and do not accelerate the missiles to nearly the same degree as the full size tubes and thus are treated as a standard ballistic.

ELS Missile tubes are full sized single tube launchers.

Standard ELS missile batteries have five tubes that fire as a single weapon. Its damage acts as a pulse weapon with the quality of the to hit roll influencing how many of the five missiles hit the target.

Heavy ELS missile Batteries have 10 tubes that fire as a single weapon. Other than this it acts in all ways like the standard battery.

The Super Heavy ELS missile battery is used on stations, installations and a few very specialized or test bed ships. It has 20 missiles tubes, but in all other ways acts as a standard ELS battery.

ELS missiles themselves have the following types:

Kinetic Kill missiles do damage as a matter weapon.

Kinetic Defense missiles are used to intercept multiple incoming missiles, torpedoes, and matter weapons.

Standard Anti-ship missiles contain an explosive warhead and do damage in standard mode.

Long range anti-ship missiles are identical to the standard, but with some of the warhead replaced with fuel

Multiple Independent Kill Vehicle missiles discharge multiple small explosive submunitions, which do standard damage.

Ground attack missiles are used against (you guessed it) ground targets.

Standard and Ground attack missiles may be

equipped with Nova Bomb warheads.

ANTI-PROTON GUNS

The Commonwealth made use of Anti-Proton Guns as a close in secondary weapon.

These are largely identical to those used by the Vree though they tend to have less overall structure, power requirements are generally less and ranges are slightly shorter.

The types used were:

Ultra-Light Anti-Proton Gun: used on fighters. Identical to Vree weapon of the same name.

Anti-Proton Gun: identical to that used by the Vree except for structure and power requirements and a shorter range.

Anti-Proton Array: an array composed of two Anti-Proton Guns, which acted much like the Dual Array for the Centauri.

XRAY LASERS OR XRASERS

The power requirements for this weapon prevented its use on most fighters and very small craft. It is a laser weapon that fires in Standard mode and is very similar to the Blast Laser.

Light Xraser: a short ranged defensive weapon primarily used for anti-missile and anti-fighter work. Fires once per turn.

Light Xraser Array: a paired Light Xraser weapon much like the Dual Array.

Medium Xraser: a heavier, longer ranged version of the Light Xraser that fires every other turn.

Medium Xraser Array: a dual Medium Xraser that fires once per turn.

Heavy Xraser: a very uncommon heavy defensive/offensive weapon used on High Guard sta-

CROSSOVER: ANDROMEDA ASCENDANT

tions. This weapon fired once per three turns.

Gatling Xraser: used primarily on screening elements within battle groups particularly on the GDF (group defense frigate). This weapon used large amounts of energy in order to produce an extremely high firing rate coupled with advanced defensive targeting mechanisms and sensors so that it could defend itself and the other ships of it's group from incoming missiles, fighters and drones.

HIGH GUARD DRONE TECHNOLOGY

The High Guard developed Drone technology to greatly expand the engagement range of its primary weapons, the ELS Missiles and to expand its ships' sensor capabilities.

High Guard Drones act like a cross between a Hunter Killer and an ELINT sensor package.

Drone Control: Drones must be controlled by a ship using a special drone control system which will have the number of drones it can control listed on it just like the Orieni's device, except that these drones may not be grouped into flights and count individually towards the control limit.

Lending OEW: Drones at their most basic level provide a remote sensing package for use in identifying and painting a target for their controlling ship. This ability allows the drone to paint targets with lent offensive EW in exactly the same way that an Elint vessel can lend Offensive EW (including the same restrictions).

Mine Detection, Ship Identification: Additionally these drones could use their EW rating for mine location/identification and for ship identification if using tactical intelligence.

Offensive Ramming: Drones may make ramming runs following the exact same rules as the Orieni Hunter Killers. Various drone types had differing range penalties on the ramming roll and on initiative.

ELS Missile Control: Heavier drones if equipped for it can be used to increase the range of ELS Missiles.

ELS missiles may be launched and then tasked to the drone.

Limitations:

Up to the Drones sensor rating worth of missiles may be slaved to the drone.

This is determined based on launchers. If a 20-tube battery and a one-tube battery slaved their missiles to a drone that would require that the drone had EW 2.

Slaved missiles may only be "held" by a drone for two turns before they must be "fired" or they run out of fuel and self-destruct (harmlessly).

Kinetic Kill and Kinetic Defense missiles may not be slaved.

Drones may not receive lent EW.

ELS MISSILE SLAVING PROCEDURE:

In this case the target drone is announced and the number of missiles being assigned to it is also announced (unless hidden targeting is being used), the type of missiles is kept secret, but should be written down when the missiles are launched. A d20 is rolled against a 20 minus the



range modifier for the type of missile as if the missiles were targeting the drone on the launch turn during ballistic resolution. If they "hit" they have successfully made it to the drone and been slaved to it's control.

Slaved Missile In-Flight Interception: During the turn missiles are making the roll to come under command of the drone, enemy units able to intercept attacks against units other than themselves may try to prevent this transfer from succeeding in the same way they would intercept for a friendly unit. All the conditions for their particular ability to intercept must still be met with the drone standing in as the defended ship.

Slaved Missile Launch: On the turn following being placed under the drone's control, these and any other missiles slaved to the drone may be "fired" at any unit targeted by the drone's OEW. The missiles will be treated as having been launched from the Drone's hex for purposes of range calculations, except that minimum range limitations are removed. Only the missile's OEW is counted for slaved missiles' to hit calculation.

Slaved Missiles' Transfer of Control: Drones may transfer control of missiles to another suit-

ably equipped drone if it is within one hex during the critical resolution phase. If a drone controlling slaved missiles is destroyed, another friendly drone within one hex, may take command of those missiles if it has available control slots (the missiles will not be lost if these conditions are met).

NOVA BOMBS

During the height of the Commonwealth, Nova Bombs were the heaviest weapons available and were used in a similar way to the Nuclear weapons of Earth in the 20th century. These weapons may only target "immobile" enormous units (planets, suns, stations). The effect is similar to that of the Vorlon Planet Killer's main weapon.

Nova Bombs can be launched on their own as a dumb projectile or fitted onto Drones or ELS missiles. Targets struck by them are attacked as by the Vorlon Planet Destroyer Gun. Few ships in the post Commonwealth era have these weapons (thankfully).

DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS

Cold Plasma Armor: this armor is a field of

CROSSOVER: ANDROMEDA ASCENDANT

plasma held relatively close to the hull of the protected ship that provides significant improvements in the ability to dissipate directed energy and kinetic weapons. It requires a significant amount of energy to keep energized. It acts like a Gravitic Shield in terms of mitigating damage only (not reducing signature/to hit).

Reactive Armor/Shielding: this is a highly advanced sensor net coupled with explosive plasma charges peppering the hull of the protected ship. When an impending or continuing (raking) directed energy or kinetic weapon impact is detected, the armor reacts by blasting a spray of plasma in the path of the incoming damage. This can mitigate some of the effects of that damage.

For game purposes this allows ships equipped with it to reduce the damage it takes from every attack by the rating of the reactive armor (typically one to two). This decrease may not be applied to light speed weapons (lasers and typically anything that may not be intercepted) unless they are raking, in which case they may be applied to all "rakes" after the initial. Example: a medium laser hits for 27 damage on a ship equipped with reactive armor of two. The first 10 damage is applied normally, the second 10 and the seven are reduced by two before being

applied. Blast lasers would be completely unaffected by reactive armor.

Battle Blades: these structures are composed of highly resilient supporting spines with lattices of thermal super-conducting, ultra high tensile strength nano-threads strung between them. These serve to distribute directed energy and kinetic attacks along the nano-threads before they make contact with the hull of the ship. These structures act like shields with the damage absorbed from each sub-volley being applied to their structure. They tend to increase the signature of the craft benefiting from their protection.

Escort Suite: this set of sensors and fire controls allows the ship equipped with it to fire all of its weapons in defensive of other ships. The restrictions and rules covering this are exactly the same as those for the Centauri Guardian Array, but can be applied to every weapon aboard the ship with this system.

ASSORTED WEAPON SYSTEMS

PSP Point Singularity Projectors: these massive weapons use extremely advanced gravitic generators to hold micro-singularities in a form of stasis until they are ready to fire. At this point the weapon unleashes one of the micro-singularities at a significant percentage of C towards their target. These weapons have very small arcs of fire and a relatively low fire-control. Critical damage to the weapon can result in catastrophic failure of the containment structure, resulting in usually fatal results for the ship mounting it. In exchange for these downsides the projectiles from this weapon offer devastating damage that

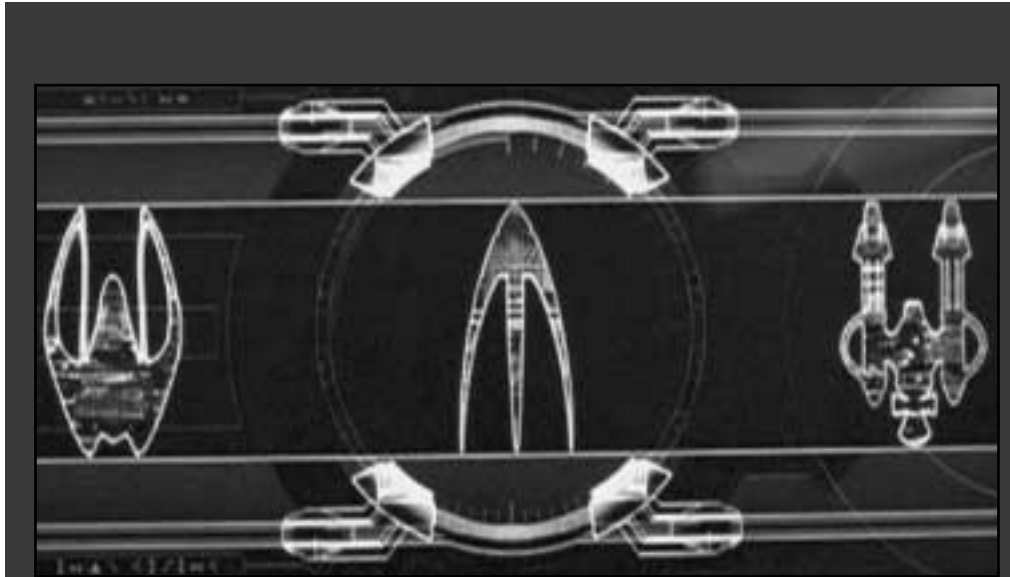
fractions down when actually calculating the effect). Available free thrust may be brought into negative numbers at which point purchased thrust is also affected. When one strikes a Fighter, roll for drop out at +4 for each torpedo that hits (cumulative as they take six turns to degenerate).

Nietzschean Plasma Throwers: there are ultra-light, light, medium, heavy, and superheavy versions of this weapon. It functions like a combination of a matter and a plasma weapon. On the location struck standard armor is ignored, then any blowthrough/left over damage is treated as a plasma weapon attack on the supported system's structure block. This weapon is not intercept-

able by High Guard interception weapons technology.

Pulse cannons: these are identical to those used in standard B5W except that they do not have the ability to intercept non-matter/ballistic weapons. These are operated by many governments.

Rail Cannons: these are standard matter weapons that come in the following sizes Ultra-Light, Light, Medium, Heavy and Ultra-Heavy. There are also rapid firing versions of each called Rail Repeaters. All of these can be used for interception of ballistic and matter based weaponry.



A SELECTION OF SHIPS FROM ANDROMEDA
CONVERTED TO THE B5W SYSTEM CAN BE
FOUND IN THE ATTACHMENTS FOLDER

is very hard to defend against. PSPs ignore all armor and shields except advanced armor and shields. PSPs do matter damage in piercing mode so can be quite devastating.

Seraphim Remote Marauders: these devices are nearly identical to the Limpet Bore Mine used by the Kor-Lyans

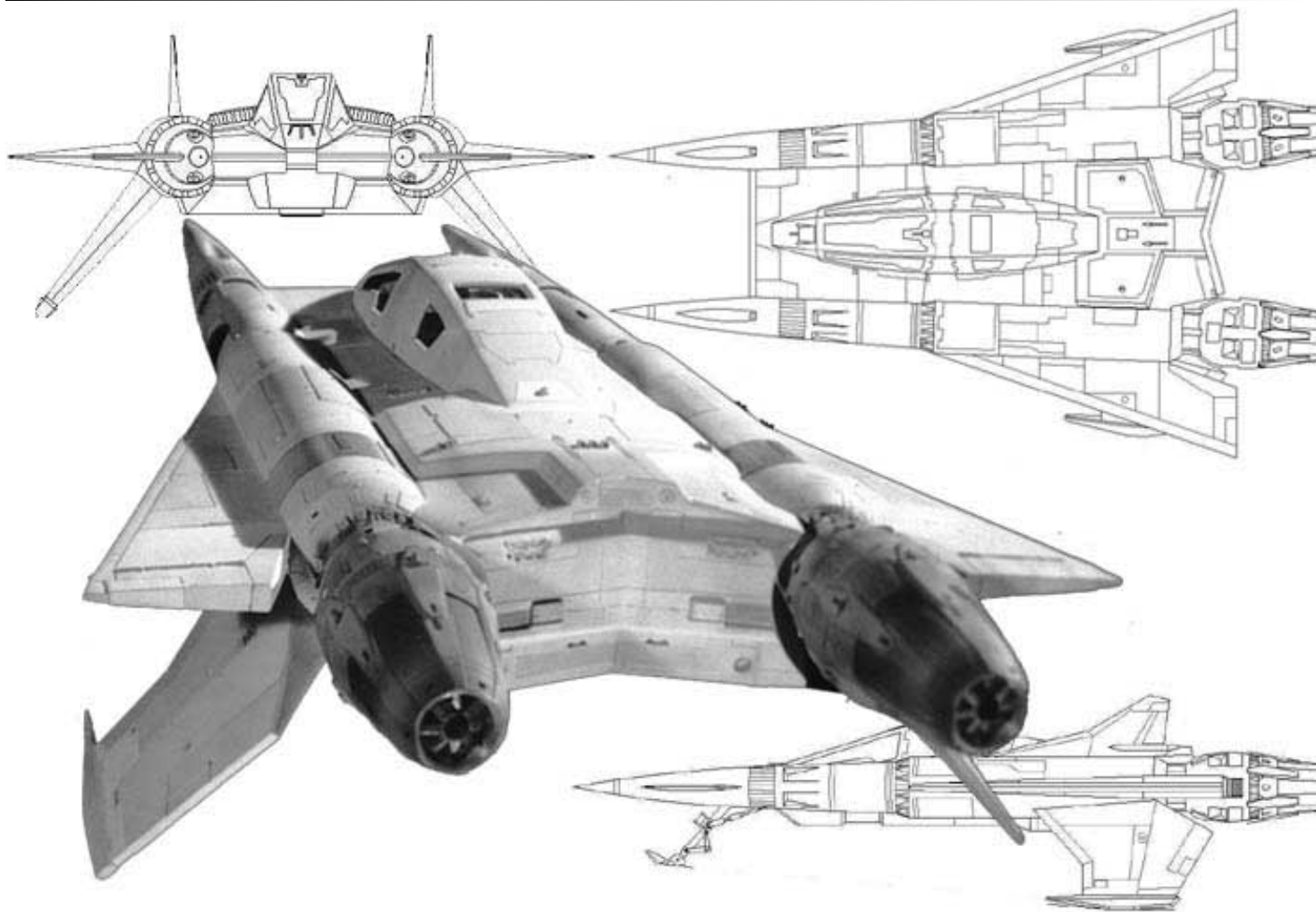
AG Mass packets/Strange Matter Torpedoes: This weapon system is only known to be used by the Pyrian Hegemony Fleet. These packets of strange matter are attracted to and adhere to large masses of normal matter. They increase in mass when in contact with normal matter and take six turns to degenerate. As such, each hit by the weapon on a unit should be tracked by turn. They are treated as a Ballistic-2 weapon doing no actual damage to ships. Their primary effect when striking a ship is to decrease the amount of free thrust available to units struck by them. Each successful hit by Strange Matter Torpedoes decreases the targets free thrust by .25 (rounding

These are considered a very low-tech weapon and are usually not useful offensive weapons.

Pyrian "Plasma Torches": this is the name given by the Commonwealth and others to the Pyrian's Plasma weapons though they are in fact much more advanced. The Pyrians operate the following plasma weapons:

Plasma Spear (Light, Medium, Heavy): these fire in standard or piercing mode and do plasma damage. Obviously in piercing mode these weapons can be devastating. Fortunately they are very short ranged and their damage drops off quickly with range.

Plasma Burster (Light, Medium, Heavy): these fire as plasma flash weapons. These are the Pyrians primary anti fighter weapons other than the Strange Matter Torpedoes. Doing flash plasma damage they are quite good at their job.



Buck Rogers in the 25th Century Wars
By James Cunningham

I AM again trying to get ahead of the re-imagining crew. I'm probably about a decade early on this one.

In 1979 a new version of the venerable Buck Rogers property was developed.

This version featured William Anthony 'Buck' Rogers, portrayed by actor Gil Gerard, as an astronaut frozen in his space shuttle while piloting a one-man deep space probe in 1987. He is found and revived by baddies Princess Ardala and Kane, 504 years later in a plot to help them defeat the Earth. Buck breaks from their plans and becomes the pivotal figure in saving the Earth (again and again).

The implication is that his rough and tumble methods from the 20th century are more suited to solving problems than the overly intellectual style of the humans of the 25th century. This was originally intended to be a set of TV movies, but was instead released as a feature film.

Later scenes were added and then the film version became a TV pilot.

The show ran for two seasons. In the second season they changed the setting from being based on Earth to being aboard an exploration ship called the "Searcher" or "Seeker" (depending on what source you use) and introduced some new supporting characters, most notably a "Birdman" named Hawk who flew a bird shaped fighter and was the last of his race.

Thunderfighter

Overall, the show featured some adequate special effects and stories for the time, though many choices made would have science fiction fans writhing if they were produced now.

Most notably the character of Twiki, who was a three foot tall robot that spoke in the most annoying manner "Beedeebeedeebeep, Hi Buck, how's it going, Beedeebeedeebeep". He also typically carried a wall clock shaped, highly intelligent and equally annoying talking computer brain around on his chest for no discernable reason (giving the computer brain it's own robot body would be so hard? Perhaps they wanted to limit the mobility of it's annoying manner).

In researching this show I was reminded of how mutable memory is. I loved the show as a kid, but have a hard time not being overwhelmed by how kitschy it is now.

So in the conversion process I pegged the size of the standard Earth Defense Directorate Starfighters as roughly the size of a Frazzi and so settled on making them Heavy fighters with

pretty decent structure and armor.

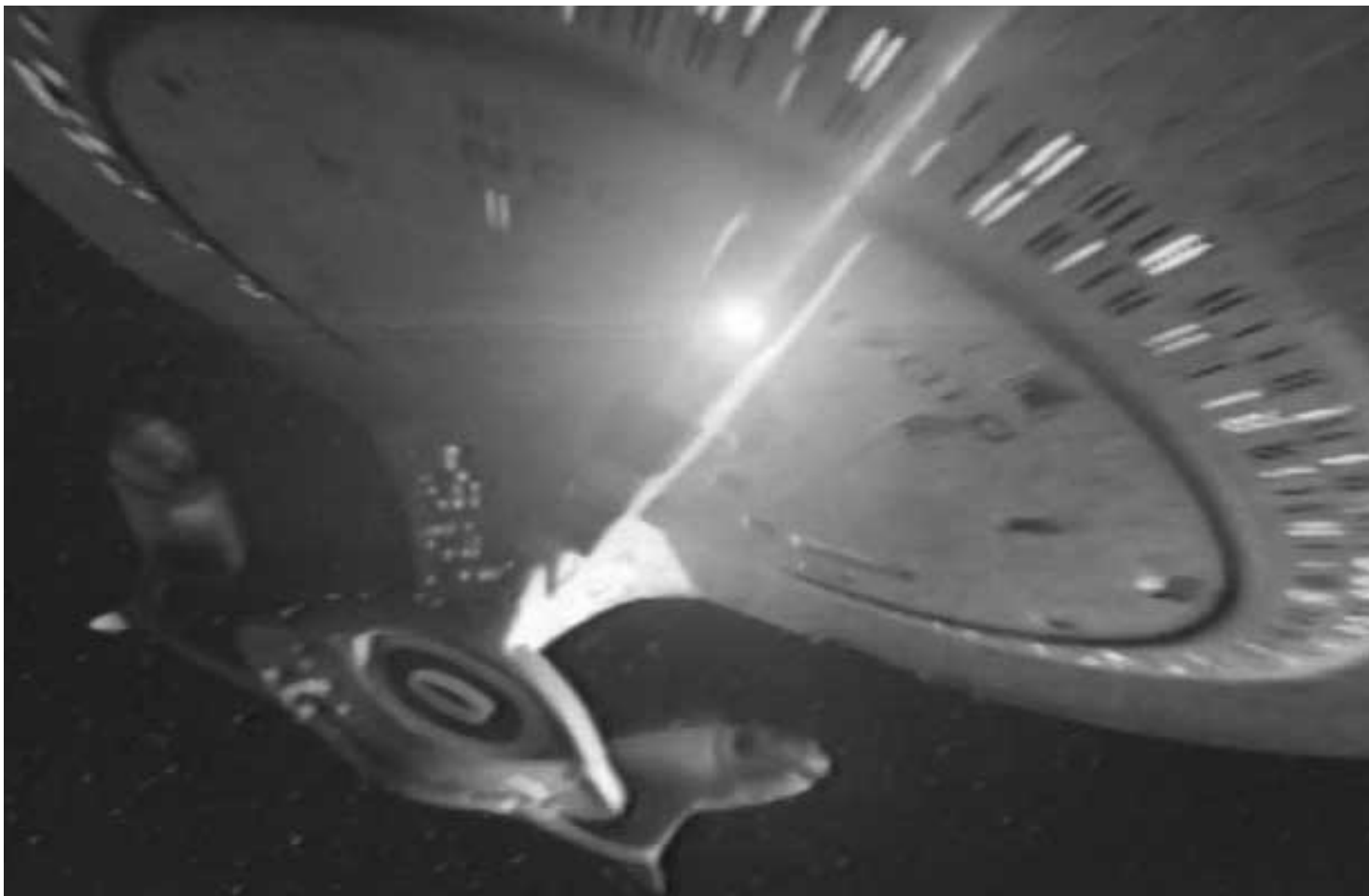
The technology in use in the show was, when taken with a grain of salt for how long ago it was produced, a little better than B5's Earth Force. As such I decided to make the main guns equivalent to a Star Fury's as the baseline.

The Thunderfighter was a heavier Earth fighter used a few times. Hawk's fighter was an interesting design.

Shaped very much like a bird with retractable "wings" and landing gear shaped like and functionally equivalent to the talons of bird of prey. It appeared to be a bit smaller than the Starfighter and was more maneuverable so it became a medium fighter.

There wasn't a lot of ship-to-ship combat in the show as far as I can tell. The focus was on the fighters (much like Battlestar Galactica).

Beyond that, all I can say is enjoy the fighters and the trip down memory lane for those that saw the show.



STAR TREK - FLEET ACTION CONVERSION By ALEX ROBERTS

STAR TREK has been for many decades, one of the most beloved Sci-Fi shows on television. However, despite various board game and RPG incarnations there remains the lack of a viable large-scale space combat simulation.

Fleet Action incorporates aspects of traditional naval warfare in a simple, quick to play, yet futuristic format. By adapting Fleet Action's rules to the Star Trek universe it is possible to enjoyably recreate some of the largest battles of that universe. An added advantage is that the player need only know one set of core rules to play space combat games, rather than a new set of rules every time you sit down to play. The following essay will detail the design philosophy and simplified methodology used to create this adaptation of Fleet Action.

The first thing you want to do with any conversion is find your source material. Ideally this will be another game, if someone is going to go through the effort of publishing their work, they will typically have put in countless hours studying canon material; for a show, this typically means the broadcast episodes. An alternative is technical readout material, which is often published in book format or on the web for popular series such as Star Trek or movies like Aliens.

Typically you want to take all your material from the same source if possible, as being that it is a show on TV, everyone is going to have differing opinions on the strength of a phaser or the durability of shields. Having a uniform baseline from which to compare ships to each other is extremely useful and makes the going much easier. Failing that, you can do your own canon research, watching the show and taking notes on the weapons, arcs, strengths and interactions of ships on various episodes. For a show like Star Trek, this can be a monumental task with literally hundreds of episodes available for viewing. Fortunately, Last Unicorn Games (LUG - Star Trek RPG) has several in print and in e-book format that detail the vast majority of the ships from all of the Trek series, providing a fantastic uniform baseline from which to proceed.

Once you have obtained your source material, you need to figure out a uniform conversion methodology. You want to make sure that your ships first, at least closely reflect the weaponry and combat abilities they display in the show, in addition to making sure they will play to a satisfactory conclusion in Fleet Action. The easiest and best thing to start with is structure. Although you could start off by comparing the size of a Galaxy class ship to an Omega, shows are very difficult to integrate and though you can certainly get close, you foremostly want to be sure you can incorporate all the ships you want. Take a quick look at the ships you want to

include and choose the smallest ship, a medium sized ship and the largest ship you expect to include. For Star Trek this was a Dominion Attack Craft, a Galaxy Class Explorer and a massive Borg Cube. As the LUG material had structure numbers for each ship it is a pretty easy method to simply choose the base structure for one representative ship, in this case the Galaxy at around 15 structure point. From this first figure, calculate back how many LUG structure points equals one Fleet Action structure point. Then perform a similar initial analysis and calculation for shields. Note these statistics on a central methodology sheet to ensure you have everything in one place once you are happy with your methodology and ready to convert ships.

Next, take a look at whatever engine and maneuverability data you have available and try and compare the ships to what you think their maneuverability in Fleet Action would be. For LUG's Star Trek ships, each ship had a specific class of impulse engine and power, which was cross referenced with the size of the ship to provide a base Turn rating for Fleet Action, as well as an Acceleration and Deceleration rating. From here it is easy to get the other maneuver statistics. This calculation was also noted on the central methodology worksheet to facilitate later mass conversions. Sensors were converted by using the rating of Sensor systems in LUG and assigning a corresponding Fleet Action sensor rating. Armor was similarly converted by using

CROSSOVER: ENTERPRISE D REFIT

the integrity of the ship and also assigning an appropriate armor rating in Fleet Action. Defense was again a static factor based on the size of the ship, adjusted accordingly for thin or large profiles.

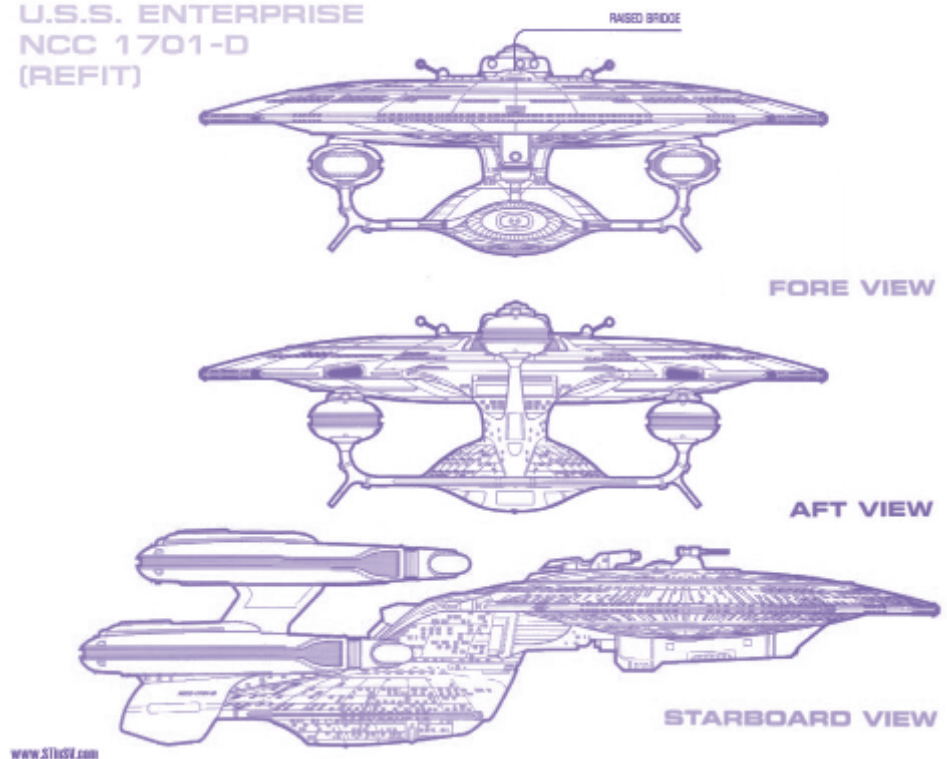
Once you are happy with the base characteristics, you need to look at weapons. The easiest way to convert weapons systems for any game or show is again, to take one or two weapons systems that are representative, in this case Phasers and Photon Torpedoes and assign stats to these based on factors such as how long you want games to last (more powerful weapons will result in quick games) and more importantly, how much damage they should cause in relation to the structure and or shields available to the defending ship in the show. Once you have figured out the stats for these weapons, it should be an easy process to convert the rest of the weapons used by ships you wish to include. One tip is to define the stats of all the weapons you are going to have on all of your ships beforehand, perhaps on a spreadsheet or notebook. By defining everything before hand in one central place, you can easily see if too many weapons are out of line with your baseline, or if too many of them are too similarly powered when the show may indicate else wise.

The final methodology step is to figure out any rules changes or special rules you will need to include. Some things like shields warranted a different treatment than shields in Babylon 5, due to their greater prevalence and differing effects. Specialized weapons such as the Son'a ballistics also warranted special treatment. Generally you want to keep the modifications to a minimum. However, if such modifications are warranted to maintain the feel of the show, certainly any designer should feel free to add or subtract anything they feel necessary.

Once your conversion methodology is finished, the hardest and most intensive part is finished. Having a thorough methodology makes everything else very easy. Simply go through your source material, along with your methodology and calculations quick at hand and take notes on what each ship should look like in Fleet Action. One easy method is to use a spiral notebook, with half a page devoted to each ship. Note down the specifics like CR, CC, Type, Year In Service, Armor and Defense in the left column, structure and sensors in a center column and maneuver stats in the right column. Below that, note weapons carried and draw a small circle with arcs shown. On the left of the weapons, note any special abilities, such as shield ratings. Certainly every designer will have their own methods of note taking, but this is what works time and time again for this author.

After converting every ship and noting them in your notebook, it is a relatively simple, though perhaps labor intensive method, to create beautiful SCS's for your new constructs. If you are using Illustrator (though these recommendations should apply to all conversions) start off by mak-

U.S.S. ENTERPRISE
NCC 1701-D
(REFIT)



ing templates. You want one template with all of the weapons you expect to use, so that you can simply copy and paste as needed. Another tip is to have a separate template based on the number of weapons systems carried. In doing so, you obviate the need for adjusting the damage boxes on the SCS, beyond filling colors. This will save you a significant amount of time. Another thing to remember, if available of course, is that pictures of your ships makes a huge improvement on their use and likeability. Most people don't remember what most ships look like. By having a picture on the SCS, it makes them more usable.

The above essay was intended to give a broad overview of the methodology used for the Star Trek to Fleet Action conversion, as well as help any other designers embarking on their own conversion projects. Full rules and ship SCS's for this conversion can be found at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fatrek>

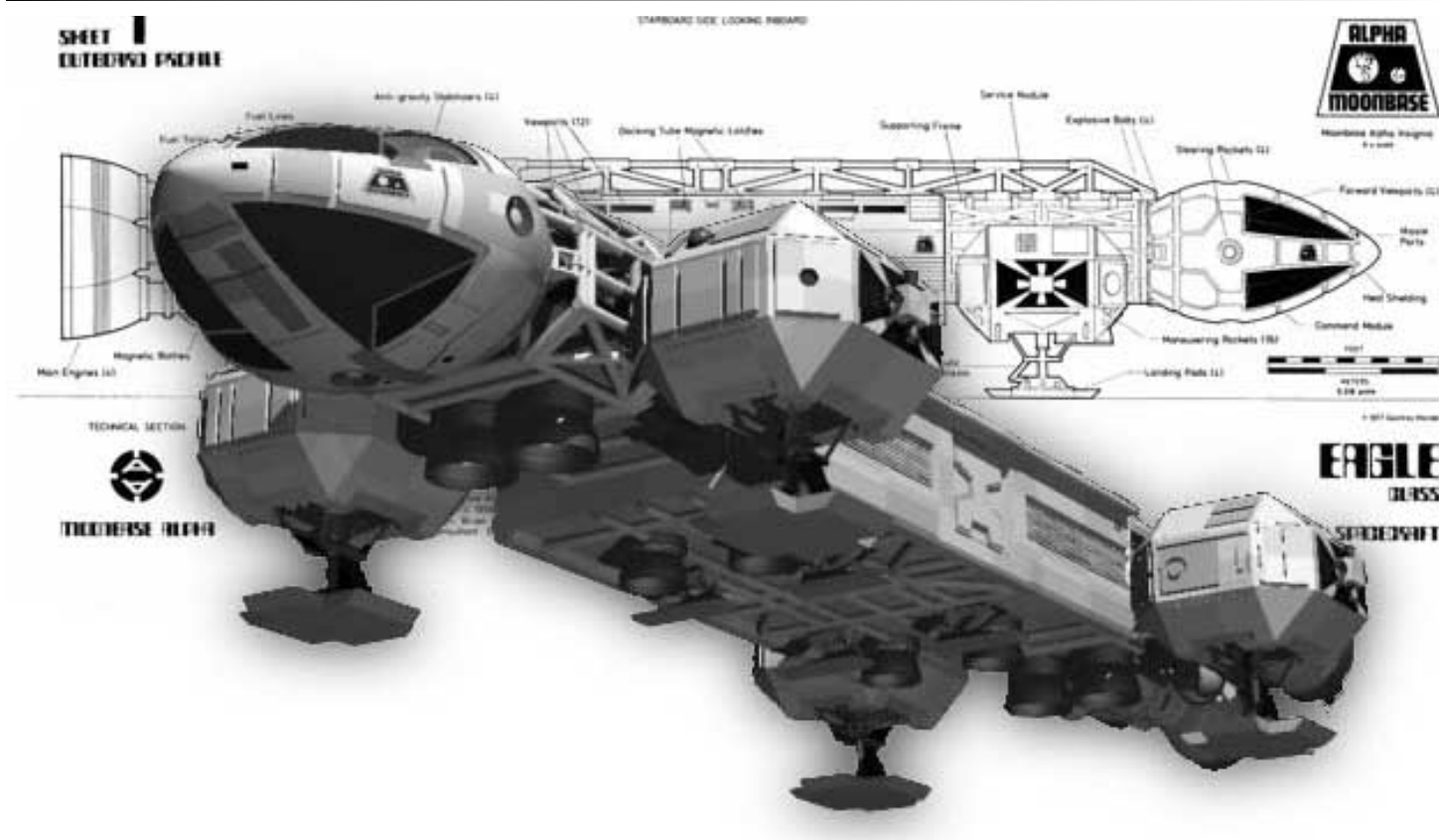
Source material can be downloaded at this site:

http://www.trekrpg.net/trek/core/netbooks_2.asp

Also included within the attachments folder for this magazine is a spreadsheet detailing the conversion statistics used for anyone interested. Note however, that many ships were modified from these numbers by the designer to ensure a more appropriate representation of that individual ship. These numbers are a baseline to work from and don't necessarily represent static numbers used to create ships.

Every piece of game design, be it bottom up or conversion of existing material, involves an investment of time and effort on the part of the designer. However, most designers see their reward not solely in the creation of a product or download, but also in helping others escape from reality, if only for a short while, in the grips of a game. With this conversion, players the world over can become Picard defending the Federation from Borg predation, or lead a massive armada of Dominion ships in an assault on the Alpha Quadrant.

(SCS in the Attachments folder)



Space: 1999 Wars
By James Cunningham

I, LIKE many in our mid thirties or later, have fond memories of the Gerry Anderson produced series *Space: 1999* that originally aired 1975 through 1978. In this time of re-imagining of classic sci-fi shows and a general inclination to recycle things that worked in the past, I decided to get a leg up on the suits over at Sci-Fi.

For those unfamiliar with the series the basic story goes like this: it was imagined that Earth had reached the conclusion in the mid 1990s that much of it's nuclear armament and nuclear waste would need to be put in an ecologically safe and secure location and what better place then a specially constructed containment facility on the moon. In order to manage this waste facility and to serve as a human scientific and manufacturing colony, a moonbase named Moonbase Alpha was constructed. This was originally envisioned as a conversion of the SHADO base from the *UFO* series (another Gerry Anderson production), but that was written out for marketing reasons.

The base was staffed with scientists, technicians, security and such. It was a very slick place considering a large part of their mission was to maintain and safeguard hazardous waste. Everything was going pretty swimmingly for a little while, but trouble loomed ahead.

A new commander arrived to supervise a manned mission to a newly discovered planet called Meta. In the meantime there were signs that the nuclear containment facility was interacting unexpectedly with the lunar environment. Workers were being affected psychologically

and physiologically and more frighteningly the nuclear weapons might be preparing to explode. A last ditch attempt to avert a potentially moon cracking explosion resulted in some pseudo science that caused the moon to be launched out of orbit and eventually well out of the solar system and into encounters with a great many other solar systems.

From then on, the show dealt with the encounters the personnel of Moonbase Alpha had with various aliens, environments and phenomena. The way that the moon moved so quickly and various other big technical questions were to an extent side stepped or ignored. Some overall explanation was offered in an episode that dealt with an omnipotent being that they encountered in the episode: "Black Sun" (a black hole). In spite of some big problems, the show did a good job much of the time with its science content.

The main space vehicles used for transport and combat in the show (the only ones that the moonbase had in fact) were the multi-purpose Eagle transports. These were lovely ships and

very well thought out and designed. The models used in the series were generally quite well done and much credit goes to the series model makers. There was very little of the *Star Trek* smoothness. Instead, there were exposed braces, many sets of directional rocket motors, a modular design and lots of grime where grime ought to collect.

There was one main laser in the nose and it was pretty capable of dealing with most of the things they ever ran across that they had any hope of fighting. The show was not at all focused on space combat overall, though I can't recall an episode that didn't involve at least one Eagle flight.

In deciding to do this conversion for B5 Wars, I took a look at what exists already in the B5 Wars universe and the things that happened in the show. I came to the conclusion that the technology of Moonbase Alpha is roughly 100 years less advanced than B5's Earthforce technology, for the most part, though they did have artificial gravity as a convenience for filming interior

scenes.

The Eagle size wise is a bit smaller than most estimates of the White Star, but clearly quite a bit larger than a Star Fury. I settled on making them LCVs because I couldn't really see them as MCVs in terms of size and durability, but they just seemed too big for a Super Heavy Fighter. This is that unfortunate gray area in the size classes in B5 Wars that I dread, not really liking Super Heavy Fighters or LCVs very much, but these vehicles seemed to blend with the LCV concept quite well.

So I decided to wing it and put these SCS together. The Eagle has multiple configurations called for by its modular design. I looked around for what the most commonly used versions of the Eagle were and made versions for the ones that interested me. There were others that I may get to if anyone has a need for them.

In order to give these something to fight against, I had to sift through the various enemies the show featured. The obvious choice to my mind was the Hawk seen in the episode "War Games", a ship that was the Eagle's combat oriented sister. In some quarters this ship or a version of it is discussed as being older than the Eagle and obsolete. I drew my conclusion, based on the episode, that they were roughly equivalent technologically, but were clearly more combat capable.

There were a number of other ships that saw combat in the show, but nothing else stood out as much in my mind as the Hawk. They only appeared in one episode, but they merited their own model kit and several toys. Most people that remember the show would recognize a Hawk. I based the Hawks armament off of blueprints published originally in Starlog magazine. Other sources report different capabilities for the Hawk, but I settled on these because this wasn't too over the top. People will probably notice (if they are very keen on the show) that the Hawk does not in fact have twice the speed of the Eagle in my version, but it is more maneuverable. This was a design choice on my part. The dialogue from the episode mentioned that the Hawks are going twice as fast as the Eagles, but we all know speed isn't the issue in space combat as much as acceleration is.

For the most part ships seen in the show were either smallish like the Eagle with the occasional large ship thrown in for good measure, but even the large ships would have tended to be HCV to MCV sized in Babylon 5 Wars terms, with some rare exceptions.

As time and interest permit, I plan to create other combat ships seen in the show and possibly create some future Alphan home grown designs.

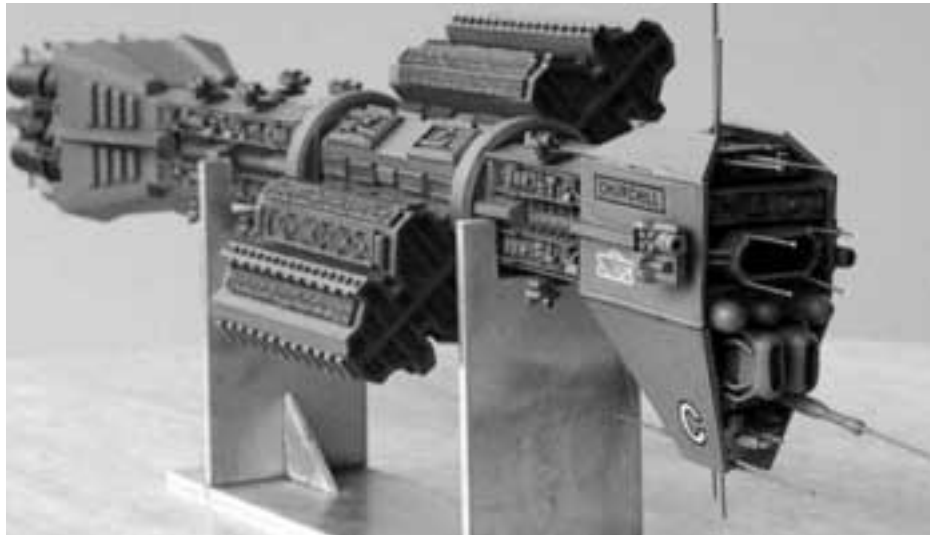
For probably the most definitive guide to Space: 1999 I recommend :

<http://www.space1999.net/catacombs/> .

Enjoy the ships and the nostalgia and if this is new to you, check it out on DVD.

Thanks,
James Cunningham

The unofficial model that makes the grade



THE completed Omega destroyer model is a sight to behold. The detail is very good, but also very accurate. The "unofficial" modellers obviously spent a lot of time watching Omega sequences in the show frame-by-frame.

This is most evident in the engine section, with all its sensor pylons and ducting. The proportions are all quite accurate. There is no sense of the ship being slightly out of shape.

When combined with a good model painter, the finished product is as good - if not better - as the best official starship models I have encountered.

This model took a fair number of working hours to complete, however. Most of that time was spent cleaning up irritating splashes of flash. But it was not more than one would normally expect.

Much of the rest of the time was spent painting and highlighting the fine detail on the ship. This cannot be considered a fault.

There was no stand provided with the model. At the moment a basic light metal brace cut to hold the forward and aft superstructure. This ship has been done up to match the EAS Churchill from the episode "Severed Dreams". It would be nice to get Churchill's coat of arms etched on the base plate. We'll see.

The end product is worth the model's high price.

The Thunderbolt, however, is a major disappointment. We have not been able to correct the severe warping in the wing pylons. This warping destroys the visual effect of the model, as it is highlighted by the skewed engine/aerofoil pods at their ends.

Much heating, twisting and fast cooling has been attempted to correct this problem. It has not worked.

Stay away from this model. The detail, lack of decals, heavy flashing and warped body parts make it next to worthless.



Star Destroyer

Imperial Forces Preview pack

THIS preview pack is designed to showcase the basic ships of the Imperial fleet, the Victory and Imperial class Star Destroyers. These craft are the bread and butter capital ships of the Imperial fleet, and they are presented here with the support craft they deployed in the period before the Battle of Yavin.

The Hangar stats on the SCSs are for the Rebellion era, and describe only the standard load out for that period. The ships can be used with the hangar load outs specified in (Table A).

Victory Class Star Destroyer (Common Availability)

The predecessor to the Imperial Class Star Destroyer, the Victory Class, is atmosphere capable to allow close support of ground troops, a vital role for warships in the clone wars era. This is very much a ship built with an eye to the previous major conflict. The clone wars had

shown the inadequacies of the Dreadnought heavy cruiser, and the Old Republics reliance on light frigates for low priority missions, which led to several missions beginning with the destruction of a delegations transport ship. Fielding turbolasers, quad lasers and torpedo tubes before its Imperial era refit (this refit program, like the Imperial mark II refit, was never fully completed) and heavy turbolasers, turbolasers, quad lasers and ion cannons after, the Victory class Star Destroyer is still an elegant and powerful warship. If it has any weaknesses, it is its low fighter complement, as two squadrons are simply not enough starfighters to cover a capital ship in modern naval warfare.

However this ship is still an important feature of Imperial fleets, and can launch planetary attacks on its own, serving a vital role in maintaining order in the Empire.

However a large number of these ships were decommissioned and sold to the Corporate Sector Authority, where they form the backbone of their fleet.

In the Imperial Remnant period few of these craft remain, but those that do still fill a key role in the Imperial Navy. A number are in private armies, planetary defence forces or pirate fleets, as large numbers of these ships have either been lost in combat or decommissioned.

Imperial Class Star Destroyer (Common Availability)

This enormous warship is one of the most obvious symbols of the Empire, and at 1600 metres long it was the largest warship deployed in its time. While larger ships have now seen service, such as the Mon Calamari Star Defenders and a variety of fleet carrier designs, the Star Destroyer class ships are the starting point for such large capital ship designs.

The Imperial class Star Destroyer is a successor to the pre-empire Victory class Star Destroyers, and while it is less elegantly designed and efficient to produce, it is still an impressive warship. Carrying two full wings of starfighters and mounting 60 turbolasers, the Imperial Star

Destroyer is an awesome fighting force capable of defeating a whole enemy battle group on it's own.

Conventional tactical wisdom dictates the use of Star Destroyers as mobile siege platforms, but more gifted commanders have used them in strike and fades, and a variety of other roles.

The ship was further improved with the Imperial Class II refit, which replaced many of the ion cannons and turbolasers with heavy turbolasers.

The standard fighter loadout for a Star Destroyer at the time of the battle of Endor was two squadrons of Tie Interceptors, three squadrons of Tie Fighters and a squadron of Tie bombers.

However this can vary significantly according to the mission, and the status of the ships captain.

Following the fall of the empire, the fighter complement has begun to vary wildly as fighters like the A-9 Howrunner and Preybird enter Imperial service.

However a hidden strength of the Star Destroyer is its copious storage capacity, as it can field over forty support craft directly from its bays, and carry upwards of fifty other vehicles in vehicle storage. These support craft include Stormtrooper transports, landing craft, AT-AT transports, assault gunboats, missile boats and shuttles.

A Star Destroyer can also dock an MCV class ship or smaller in it's primary bay, enabling it to capture and board small enemy ships.

FIGHTERS AND SUPPORT CRAFT

Tie Fighter (Unrestricted Fighter)

Millions of these fighters have streamed from production facilities across the Empire, and they are the most common fighter in service in the Known regions of the galaxy.

A cheap and expendable fighter it is seen in Imperial fleets and planetary defence forces in vast numbers, using swarm tactics to overwhelm heavier fighters.

Tie Bomber (Unrestricted Fighter)

The assault version of the Tie fighter, the Tie bomber is larger and can absorb more damage, but is much slower, less manoeuvrable and easier to hit. The standard Imperial doctrine dictates that these fighters be escorted when attacking defended targets. They have 12 payload spaces for purchasing missiles, torpedoes and special equipment. For +8 points they can purchase a bombardier, who has the effect of adding +1 to the to hit roll for torpedo and missile attacks, and allows missiles or torpedoes to be fired at a separate target to the fighters laser cannons.

Tie r/c Recon fighter (Unrestricted fighter)

The Tie r/c Recon fighter was the sublight only equivalent of the Tie Scout, created to serve as picket ships around the edge of an Imperial fleet while Tie Scouts attempted to locate enemy formations. The Tie r/c is also used to survey ground targets for orbital bombardment, and to

attempt to locate enemy assets concealed on the ground.

These craft, by their nature smaller and lighter than the Tie Scout, have also been used to scout asteroid fields for pirate or rebel installations where Tie Scouts would find it harder to operate.

This class of craft has been supplemented by the Tie Vanguard, a cheaper version of the original using a less expensive sensor package. Tie Recon are more valued by fleet commanders, and this has resulted in many being reserved in the Core sector fleets while Rimward forces make do with Vanguards.

Tie Scout (Unrestricted fighter)

The Tie scout was the first hyperspace capable scout fighter deployed by the Empire, and it is not unusual for their arrival in-system to act as a warning that an Imperial task force will soon be there.

While it is hyperspace capable, the design still lacks shields and a significant armament, and fly by tactics to ascertain the number of enemy craft is the routine tactic with these craft, thus preventing a level of attrition that would render the design uneconomical.

Lamda Class Shuttle (Unrestricted Shuttle)

With unusually good shields and weapons for a unit of this size and role, the Lamda class shuttle is a transport capable of defending itself. Originally produced by Sienar Fleet Systems, the Lamda is now produced by a number of small companies under licence, as well as a reverse engineered version made by Cygnus Spaceworks, who were originally licenced to produce the escort version of the shuttle. The Lamda now finds itself used by almost every armed force in Known space as a transport and personnel carrier, which is a fitting testament to a well thought out design.

Stormtroop Transport (Unrestricted Shuttle)

With a pair of lasers and ion cannons this transport can disable a target and then board it, but it is slow and vulnerable when compared to fighters. A Star Destroyer commonly carries a dozen of these in bays, and up to twenty-four in storage. These transports are used for opposed landings on planets or boarding actions in space. In planetary assaults these craft are loaded with stormtroopers to be dropped into a hotzone, while in boarding actions they are commonly loaded with spacetroopers and flown close to enemy ships, where spacetroopers disembark and fly the remaining distance to target, then punching holes in the hull and boarding the ship.

Imperial AT-AT Barge (Unrestricted Shuttle)

This enormous landing craft is designed to carry 2 Imperial AT-AT walkers and the troops that accompany them to a held landing zone on a planets surface. Unarmed but heavily armoured and shielded, this unit is often among the units found aboard a Star Destroyer.

The AT-AT barge is a super-heavy fighter, and takes up six hangar boxes.

Amended ISD loadout for Rise of the Empire period

Main Hangar

48 Tie Fighters
18 Tie Bombers
6 Tie Recon
6 Tie Scout
18 Lamda Class Shuttles
12 Assault Shuttles

Forward Hangar

6 AT-AT Barges
12 Stormtrooper Transports
6 Assault Shuttles
6 Lamda Class Shuttles

Amended VSD loadout for Rise of the Empire period

Main Hangar

Either
24 Tie Fighters
OR
12 Tie Fighters
12 Tie Bombers
6 Lamda Class Shuttles

Forward Hangar

Either
5 AT-AT Barges
OR
30 Assault Shuttles
OR
6 Tie Scout
12 Assault Shuttles
12 Stormtrooper Transports

CROSSOVER: STAR WARS

Star Wars Rules for use with the B5W rules system Ver 1.5

Rules Changes and Additions

Changes

Movement

Changes to fighter movement

Fighters can no longer combat pivot. This makes tactics and winning the initiative much more important.

Firing

Interception

Interception degradation is dropped completely, as all interceptable weapons are ballistics.

Interception comes in two modes:- dispersed and directed.

Dispersed:- this is used to intercept multiple missiles approaching along the same vector. Designate the hex from which you wish to intercept fire. You intercept all fire from this hex for the total intercept of the weapons you have designated to intercept those shots.

Directed:- Apply intercept of weapons intercepting multiplied x2 to only the shot you choose to intercept.

You can use both sorts of intercept against the same shot.

Fighter interception

Fighters can intercept ballistics targeted at them or that pass through the hex they are in as long as the fighters have the launch hex in arc.

Ships intercepting on behalf of other ships.

Ships can intercept ballistics fired as long as they are between the launch hex and the target ship. They intercept in any mode they desire.

Ballistics

Ballistics are launched in the firing segment.

If they are launched at range zero they impact in the fire phase they are launched. If they are launched at a target not in the same hex they impact in the following fire phase in the step given.

Escort Craft

Some ships benefit from the escorts special rule. These ships can intercept ballistics fire directed at other ships (though they must designate at the start of the turn what ships are being protected by this rule). As long as the escort

remains within two hexes of its charge, it may contribute interception fire, either directed or dispersed, as if it were the ship itself.

Electronic Warfare

Ships have automatic lock ons. EW points are allocated to give pluses to hit. Defensive EW can only be created by terrain effects, cloaking or other special rules.

When playing games against ships from different settings (B5 and Star Trek) then use standard EW rules.

Star Wars ships may not buy additional EW points greater than 25% of their EW.

Jumping to Lightspeed

Ships can leave play by jumping to lightspeed. They do this by announcing they are planning to do so the turn before they do. Other ships can detect the charging of the hyperdrive and weapons going offline. Ships use this turn to begin to power their hyperdrive (paying the cost for hyperdrive on their SCS) and jumping in the phase next turn. As jumping to lightspeed takes a lot of power, this can mean ships deactivate weapons to power their hyperdrive. Ships that jump to light speed leave the battle, and combat cannot be continued in hyperspace.

Fighters can also jump to lightspeed (if they are hyperdrive capable), but cannot fire weapons the turn before they jump.

Ships jumping into combat appear at the start of the movement phase, but cannot allocate spotter points that turn.

New Weapons and systems

Ion Cannons

Ion cannons have two number split by a /. The first one is a number, the second one is a + number. The first one is the number of location rolls an ion cannon makes if it hits a ship, and the + number is the modifier to criticals or drop out rolls made if it strikes a system or fighter.

Fired at fighters

If ion cannons strike fighters then the fighter rolls to dropout with the bonus given in the ion cannons description.

Fired at ships

Ion cannons fired at ships roll for the number of locations given in their description. A fighter ion cannon would roll one die, for example, and apply ion damage to whatever system it struck.

Ion damage

Against structure - -1 power for the rest of the scenario

Against weapon - disabled for two turns

Against system - roll a critical and add the + number

Against shields - roll the hit location dice as damage (d10 per location die) against the facing shield. If the shield is down and there is damage left, every whole 5 translates into one dice of ion damage.

Shields

These operate to protect ships from damage. Before you even hit a ship, you have to knock its shields down. You do this by inflicting an amount of damage on the shield equal to the total in the shield box for that arc. Shields have arcs and a player taking damage chooses which shield he wishes to fill if ships are firing from the border of two shield arcs. However this applies to all ships and fighters in that hex.

If fighters are range zero against a ship, they do not count as being inside the shields. Star Wars shields work differently to Star Trek and B5 shields, forming a protective layer very close to the hull, rather than a hollow bubble around the ship.

Piercing weapons vs. shields - Piercing weapons punch through shields. Divide damage in half, apply half to shields and half as damage. If the target has a downed shields on the facing being fired upon, resolve using the standard piercing weapons rules.

Shields recharge at the start of the turn at the rate given on the ships shield generator.

A ship may turn off weapons and other systems to divert power to shields (as may fighters)

For every point of power a ship applies to shield recharge, they get 2 points of shields back.

If fighters don't fire their weapons they get an extra box of shields back. If they divert power from engines they have 1/3 less thrust than their free thrust value but get an additional box back. Note that you decide this at the start of the turn and are then stuck with not firing your weapons or only using your remaining thrust.

Fighter Shields

A standard fighters shields empty one filled shield box per turn in the shield charging of the pre turn phase.

Advanced fighter shields empty two boxes, primitive fighter shields empty one box every two turns. If a fighter has advanced or primitive shields it will be marked on its SCS.

Fighter submunitions

Fighters have a certain number of payload spaces to carry submunitions. A fighter can buy one of any sort of submunition but cannot purchase more than it can carry.

Fighters can only buy one type of submunition unless specially noted.

The costs for these weapons are found on the ballistics chart.

Bombardiers

CROSSOVER: STAR WARS

Bombardiers are dedicated crewmembers who handle the submunitions launched by a fighter.

They use a targeting computer to lock onto targets, and do so independently of what the pilot of the fighter is targeting with the ships lasers or ion cannons.

They give submunitions +1 to hit, and allow the fighter to fire its lasers at a separate target to the target of its submunitions.

Scout Fighters

Scout fighters are often deployed ahead of fleets to determine the size, content and location of enemy assets.

Scout fighters count as an ELINT unit for the purposes of identifying enemy craft, using the rules on page 172 of the Rules compendium.

Special Rules

Cloaking

If a ship has a cloaking device and it activates it then it automatically benefits from 18 points of defensive electronic warfare applied to shots fired at it AND shots it fires. Also weapons lose their automatic lock-on when fired at or by cloaked ships. Fighters do not ignore this DEW. Players have the option of using secret movement, though cloaked ships move first, before any other ship. Cloaked ships cannot be locked onto.

Reforming fighter Flights

You may designate your fighters at the start of the battle into groups or squadrons i.e. Rogue Squadron or Gold group. These must be of only one type of fighter.

If during the battle you are left with two or more incomplete flights from the same group, and they are in the same hex, you may amalgamate them into a smaller number of flights, forming complete flights of six whenever possible.

Players may experiment with flights of four if they wish, as it is more realistic to divide squadrons up into pairs of wingmen.

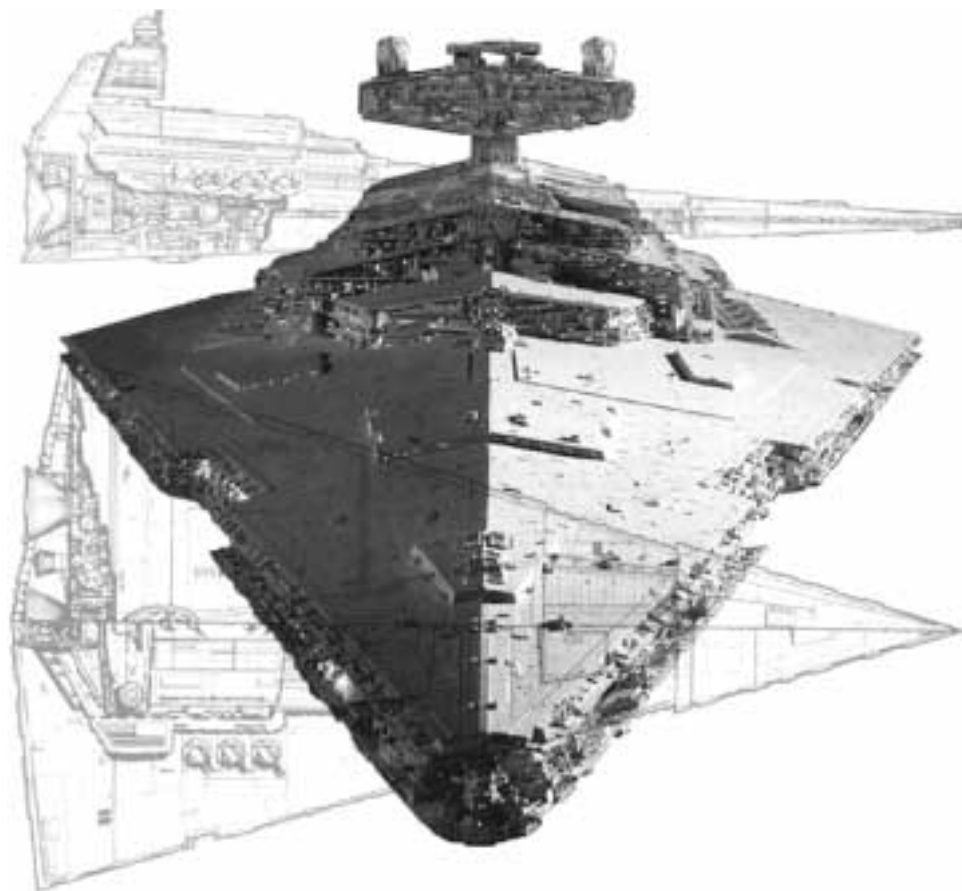
Unreliable Systems

Some ships are so old (or so poorly maintained), that their systems operate at a much lower level than the standard systems on modern warships. They may suffer the penalties for some unreliable systems.

Unreliable Hyperdrive

Hyperdrive fails when activated on a d6 roll of 1 or 2. Power allocated to the hyperdrive is still used.

Availability Rules



When picking forces you must follow the following restrictions except in special case scenarios.

Ships Availability

You can buy any number of ships with common availability.

You can send 33% of your total points on Limited availability ships.

You can spend 10% of your total points on Restricted availability ships.

Fighter Availability

Unrestricted availability fighters can be purchased in any number desired. Unless the scenario is a base or planetary defence then fighters selected without hyperdrive capability must have a carrier.

Limited fighters - one flight of limited availability fighters can be selected for every two flights of unrestricted fighters that have been selected.

Restricted fighters - one flight of restricted fighters can be selected for every five flights of unrestricted fighters you have purchased.

Prototype fighters - one flight of prototype fighters can be selected for every ten flights of

unrestricted fighters you have purchased.

Playing large scale battles -time saving measures

In large battles (10+ ships and 20+ flights of fighters per side) there are a number of times saving measures that can be taken.

Fighters should be operated in squadrons, not flights, or even in wings in very large battles.

Ships should be organised into squadrons with a flagship. The flagship rolls for initiative, and the squadron moves together.

This simplifies movement and initiative. The best way to simplify firing is the use of an electronic dice roller to roll firing, allocation and damage for large numbers of weapons simultaneously.

* * *

(SCS in the Attachments folder)

CROSSOVER: CONESTOGA CLASS



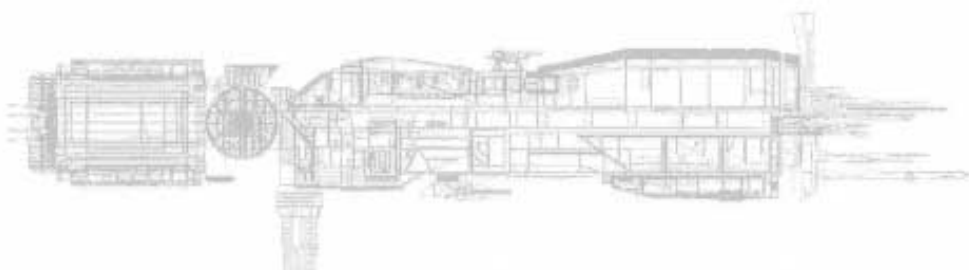
By ADAM FULLER

<http://angelfire.com/fl3/Chicago/movies/alienship4.html>

SULACO is the thirteenth Conestoga class starship to be built. Its final mission was a quick response to the loss of contact with the Weyland-Yutani colony on LV-426. She never returned, her present whereabouts unknown. Originally the Sulaco was designed as a light transport possessing limited armaments for self-defense. However, the Sulaco, with her sister ships, has become a multi-role space vessel. To date, ships of this class have been employed in transport, light assault, space command and control, and orbital bombardment duties. The Sulaco tips the scales at 78,000 metric tons, measuring 385 meters from bow to stern. Her asymmetric configuration allows maximum cargo capacity within the confines of a compact, heavily armored hull. The vessel's structural framework is built around its primary power unit.

Primary/Secondary Power Systems: Primary power is provided by a Westingland A-59 fusion reactor that can generate a peak output of 3.6 Terawatts. The fusion process is fueled by powdered lithium hydride (LiH). Fuel is consumed at .25 mg per second per liter. Auxiliary power of would be provided by a cluster of four Continental Electric AS-4B/AV5 magnetohydrodynamic turbines, each unit capable of generating 20 to 40 megawatts.

Propulsion Systems: All propulsion units are located aft of the Sulaco's main reactor. The Sulaco, as do all Conestoga class vessels, employs a dual drive method for sublight and Faster Than Light (FTL) movement. To maneuver in realspace at sublight speeds, the Sulaco is equipped with four Gates-Heidman GF-240



rockets than derive power from the main reactor. At maximum power, each rocket provides a thrust of more than 35,100 metric tons. However, fuel consumption is astronomical, allowing maximum thrust for short periods. When FTL travel is necessary, the Sulaco employs a Romberg-Rockwell Cygnus 5 tachyon shunt hyperdrive. The normal cruising speed sustainable by these units is .74 light years per Terran day.

Hull/Spaceframe Construction: Spaceframe composition consists of bonded alloy and composite beams. These materials provide enough strength for massive acceleration while remaining flexible enough to withstand atmospherid re-entry. Hull armor consists of one armored skin, heavier than that on civilian transports. The armor is composed of laminated insulators, micrometeorite shielding, composite material, and aerogel. Protection against projectile weapons is limited, as with all spacecraft, but the aerogel is capable of dissipating radiation from lasers and particle beams. The hull is also covered with radar absorbent material. The engines vents are provided with infrared suppression/dis-

person. The hull coating is laser absorbent to reduce lidar detection. The ship is colored in a dark charcoal scheme to reduce visibility. The foremost hull section provides the main cargo area for the Sulaco. Five 25x10 meter cargo doors on each side of the hull provide access. They have even been retrofitted into improvised dropship/shuttle launch bays. Underneath the cargo area reside the Sulaco's dedicated dropship/shuttle hangar with capacity for up to six UD-4L Cheyenne dropships.

Life Support: Cryogenic hypersleep capsules are provided for crew use during the stresses of hyperspace travel. While in hypersleep, the Sulaco's computers maintain the crew's body functions at enormously slowed rates, waking them upon arriving on station. Sufficient capsules are provided for up to ninety crew, marines, and passengers, but there are provisions for troop transport configurations of up to 2000 capsules in the cargo bay. Artificial gravity is provided by field generators parallel to the main axis of the ship.

Computer Systems: To reduce crew workload, and increase efficiency and safety, operation of

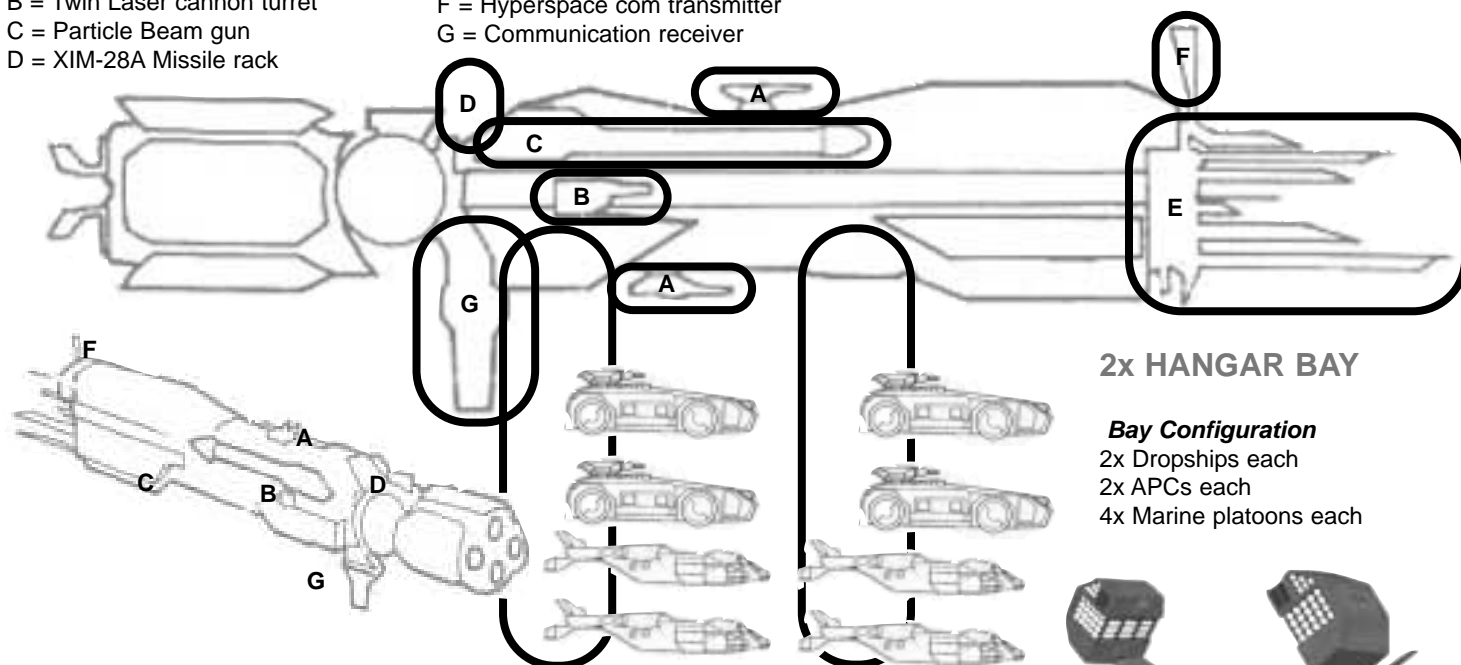
CROSSOVER: CONESTOGA CLASS

WEAPON SYSTEMS

- A = Rail Gun Turret
- B = Twin Laser cannon turret
- C = Particle Beam gun
- D = XIM-28A Missile rack

SENSOR AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- E = Sensor array
- F = Hyperspace com transmitter
- G = Communication receiver



2x HANGAR BAY

Bay Configuration

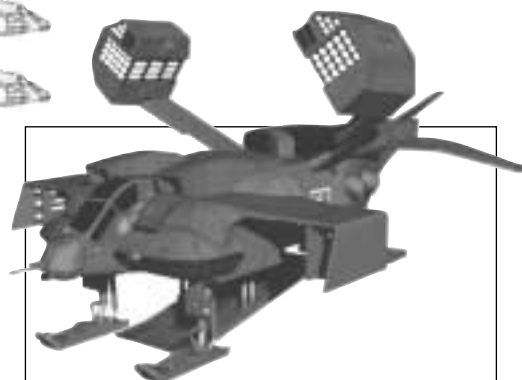
- 2x Dropships each
- 2x APCs each
- 4x Marine platoons each

the Sulaco and all Conestoga ships is fully automated. The Sulaco is equipped with a 28 Terabyte, carbon-60 based core mainframe. In effect, the ship could pilot itself and fight a space battle even if the crew were all dead or in hypersleep. However, at any time, combat or navigational decisions made by the ship can be overridden by the commanding officer. Backup is provided by an 8 terabyte mainframe and local terminals dispersed throughout the ship.

Damage Control Systems: Most damage control is automated by the Sulaco's mainframe. If the reactor suffers severe damage, the entire assembly can be jettisoned before an explosion occurs. If the vehicle is damaged to the point it becomes untenable, emergency evac is prompted by the CO or automated systems. The Sulaco carries 20 type 337 emergency escape vehicles. If the crew is in hypersleep, their capsules will be loaded by the automatic systems. The ship may also be scuttled by the CO. Self-destruct protocols are initiated manually, causing the reactor to go critical after fifteen minutes.

Sensors/Communication Systems: The Sulaco's main sensor array is mounted on the foreside of the cargo bay. Ninety meter pylons project from this area, ensuring that the ship's bulk causes no interference. The passive array consists of: two optical telescopes, two infrared telescopes, a 60m planar-array radio telescope with a 20m backup unit. Active sensing is provided by three radar domes that employ centimeter wave radar for navigation and long range scans. Five more phased arrays along the hull provide target acquisition/tracking information for the ship's weapons. The main comm array is just forward of the drive units, consisting of a 64m antenna used to broadcast during FTL travel, and a secondary 16m antenna for in-system communication. A variety of other relays and receivers exist for securing, and intercepting transmissions.

Main/Secondary Armament: The Sulaco carries a light complement of weaponry that allows it to function as a light cruiser. The main space-to-space punch is provided by eight XIM-28A Long Lance ASAT missiles within a dorsal launch bay. The missile is self guiding, and is capable of homing through the reception of several different formats of energy emission from the target. Its warhead is a forged fragment ring that creates a lethal burst of fragments. Secondary punch is provided by several systems. Twin 800 megavolt particle beams run parallel to the ship's main axis. These weapons are powered from storage cells between the main reactor and the weapons. For close combat, the Sulaco mounts twin railguns in dorsal and ventral turrets. Muzzle velocities exceed 12 km per second, with a practical range of 100 km. A single hit from a railgun round is often enough to cripple a ship. Close-in defense is handled by port and starboard laser turrets. The Sulaco mounts 80 megawatt infrared lasers capable of vaporizing railgun fire or crippling incoming missiles and fighters. A ventral launch bay carries 60 orbital mines, enough to deny low orbit to large ships. A dorsal bay amidships also carries 20 decoys designed to present a radar signature mimicking the Sulaco's. There are also two maneuvering drones designed to confuse enemy spacecraft. Space-to-surface capability is provided by a magazine below the cargo bay and forward of the dropship hangar. 80 free-fall, self-guiding re-entry vehicles are carried. The armament carried by the Sulaco enhances her flexibility, allowing her to function as a multi-role platform independent of a fleet or taskforce. She can carry a sizable Marine complement while defending herself from attack, or provide orbital bombardment in support of a Marine landing or planetary action. This has made the Sulaco and her sisters the prime movers of the Marine fleet for almost two decades.



UDL-4 CHEYANNE

By John Hamill (MrPunch)

No Colonial Marine starship would be complete without it's pair of Combat Dropships, which serve the task of actual insertion of the teams transported by the starship. Capable of carrying an M577 APC or similar vehicle into the thick of combat, and sporting a veritable arsenal of weaponry the Cheyanne is a transport to be respected by both crew and opponents. When deployed in space or for drop, the Cheyanne's primary weapon bays are stowed and only the forward 25mm Gatling Gun and the six larger missiles are capable of being used. Once atmospheric insertion is complete the Cheyanne unfolds its wings and deploys its ground attack weaponry. Four Air-to-Air dogfight missiles become available along with the primary ground suppression weaponry consisting of 32 unguided rockets.

In terms of B5Wars, the Cheyanne sits somewhere between an assault shuttle and a super heavy fighter. Treat it as an assault shuttle for all purposes. When in space only the 25mm gun and the six fighter missiles may be used. Once within the atmosphere and slowed to subsonic speeds, the rest of the weaponry may be deployed, though the GROPOS stats in a previous Babcom would be more appropriate at this stage.

(Stats part of the Conestoga SCS)

Sulaco



Aliens - Conestoga Class Assault Transport
By John Hamill (MrPunch)

INTRODUCED in the mid twenty second century, the Conestoga class moved from an initially requested light transport to a full-blown multi-role combat vessel and assault ship. Massing 78,000 tonnes and measuring 385 meters from stem to stern and equipped to carry 90 marines along with two Dropships and APCs, this ship provides a flexible force capable of handling almost any conceivable problem.

Better known as the USS Sulaco from the 1986 movie Aliens, this is one of my all time favorite ship designs. The whole feel of the Aliens universe (at least the first three films) is incredibly believable as a shape for "things to come". The Conestoga class (as they're called) was allegedly designed by British Aerospace for the filming of Aliens based upon the shape of the M41A Pulse Rifle.

BABYLON 5 WARS CONVERSION Conestoga Class

"These Colonial Marines are very tough hom-bres. They're packing state of the art firepower. There's nothing they can't handle."

First things first, it is a Heavy Combat Vessel. Measuring just 385 meters in length leaves little room for maneuver on that issue. While it's a big ship today, on the scale of B5Wars it's a minnow. That said, it is one of the most feature packed little ships one is likely to find. With both troop transport and cargo capacity and jump capable to boot, this ship can fill many roles. Whether act-



ing as an investigative transport or mainline warship, this class can deliver.

The weaponry of the Conestoga class is impressive for a ship it's size. Primary space-to-space punch is provided by eight XIM-28 ASAT Missiles, launched from a dorsal bay. Two 800 Mega volt Neutral Particle Beams provide long range firepower with the capability of disabling a hostile target at great range. Close in firepower comes in the form of twin turreted Dual 30mm Railguns, top and bottom, with a 360 Degree field of fire. Finally, two twin 80MW laser turrets handle anti-fighter and anti-missile point defense amidships. Backing up all this is a collection of ordinances from mines to nuclear warheads, which can be deployed against planetary surfaces from the dorsal launcher.

XIM-28 ASAT Missile Rack

This is a special Missile Rack that is capable of firing a variety of ordinance. Usually it is loaded with the XIM-28 ASAT Missile, but when needed the launcher may be reloaded to drop orbital

mines or even deliver nuclear ordinance to a planetary surface. Due to the size of the main missile armament, the launcher is capable of holding only eight warheads, and reloading is a time consuming process taking several hours. Game-wise the Launcher is similar to a Class-L Rack, with the exception of only holding eight missiles. It may also be utilized as a Bomb Rack should that be required.

XIM-28 Missile

This missile delivers the primary Space-to-Space hitting power of the Conestoga Class. The missile is self-guiding, and is capable of homing through the reception of several different formats of energy emission from the target. Its warhead is a forged fragment ring that creates a lethal burst of fragments.

In B5Wars terms, the missile is a Long Range Heavy warhead. Due to its large size, the XIM-28 cannot be fired from a normal Missile Rack, only from the ASAT Missile Rack. Should a point cost be needed for the missile (for cam-

CROSSOVER: CONESTOGA CLASS

paign purposes), it weighs in at 20 points per warhead.

800 MeV Neutral Particle Beams

Twin 800 Mega electron Volt particle beams run parallel to the ship's main axis. These weapons are powered from storage cells between the main reactor and the weapons. They provide long-range soft kill capability. While Missiles can destroy a target at range, often the Colonial Marines would prefer to disable and board an opponent instead. The Particle Beams disable electrical systems with ease and can overload and short out a target vessel's power grid with ease.

The 800 MeV Particle Beams function in an identical fashion to the Minbari Shock Cannon. Armor is ignored in all cases, and any system hit takes the listed damage. Should structure be hit (either directly or through overkill) then divide the damage by four, rounding down, and apply as a negative power modifier to the target thereafter. Should a fighter be hit by the Beams, and survive the damage, then it automatically drops out as its electrical systems short out completely.

Dual 30mm Railguns

Close in punch are provided by twin turrets, each mounting two 30mm Railguns with a muzzle velocity in excess of 12 km per second, and a practical range of 100 km. A single hit from a pair of railgun rounds is often enough to cripple a smaller vessel, or at least provide a large incentive to surrender.

The twin railguns act like a pair of Fire-Linked Matter Cannons. One to-hit roll is made, and if successful, a single damage location roll is made. The struck location takes 2d10+2 from one round followed by a second 2d10+2. Should the first shot destroy the system then the second would strike structure. This one-two punch makes this weapon especially deadly.

80MW Point Defense Lasers

Finally, anti-fighter and defensive fire is provided by two turrets amidships, each mounting two 80 MW Infrared Lasers. These rapid tracking turrets provide vital protection against threats to the ship.

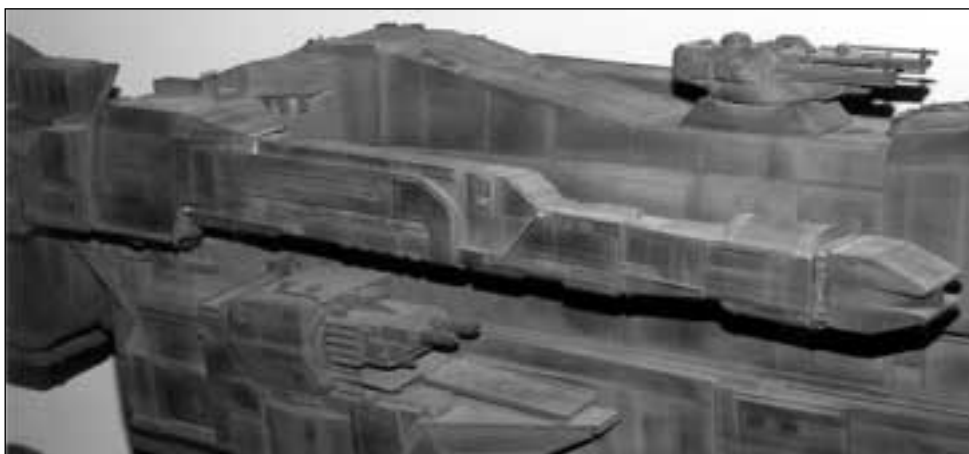
In B5Wars, Lasers rarely get used as a defensive weapon, however the Point Defense Laser does exactly what it says on the tin. A low damage, short range weapon, it never the less is capable of disrupting most incoming fire and swatting the occasional fighter craft that ventures too close to the ship. Though they are mounted in twin turrets on each side, the weapons are separate, fore and aft on the SCS.

Sources

Much information on the size and armament of the Conestoga class comes from the Colonial Marine Technical Manual, by way of many sites on the Web, and from my rusty old copy of the Leading Edge Aliens RPG.

* * *

(SCS in the Attachments folder)



BABYLON 5 WARS FOR



FREESPACE 2

"Thirty-Two years have passed since the Great War. The Shivans vanished half a lifetime ago. And now we live in the mausoleum of history. We inherit the legacy of ghosts who haunt these ruins. The elders call us the lost generation. I remember stories of a glorious civilisation, of cities with spires that reached the sun, of a blue planet with vast seas, of people with myths of humanity everlasting, of children who saw in the embers of dying stars the destiny of their race, and they hurled themselves into the void of space with no fear. They say our people have no present, only a past filled with horror, and a future they can only dream of. Now we forge a new alliance to guard the tomb of space, and to find within its cold expanse the salvation of our race."

- Admiral Aken-Bosch,
Freespace 2 Intro

FREESPACE 1 and 2 have always been some of my favourite computer games. They involve engaging story lines with great graphics and game play. The latter of the two games, has become the last, best hope for a Babylon 5 flight simulator and is showing itself to have some longevity. Several groups are still busy creating missions and campaigns for the game despite the fact its four years old. Due to my love of the game and the accessibility of precise ship and weapon statistics used within it, Freespace seemed to be a suitable choice for conversion to Babylon 5 Wars. And because Freespace provides numbers on all the ships within the game, my approach to designing the ships can be more accurate with less guesses involved. Though of course there will be a lot of compromise and interpretation regardless.

Freespace 2 is a ship to fighter to fighter combat game. As a flight simulator, the fighters are strong and detailed. My conversion therefore is designed to emphasis fighter combat and dog-fights. Expect Freespace fighters to be stronger, with good shields, large missile load outs and in some cases lots of guns. The conversion is designed to be played only amongst itself, and not for combat against other genres such as B5 or Star Wars. This isn't to say the fighters will be unbeatable, in fact many of them suffer from low thrust, armour and horrible turn delays, but they are in general stronger. The Bombers especially

will seem more like small ships than fighters.

Warships will tend to be stronger than their B5 equivalents. One problem lies in the wide disparity between the strength of their hulls. The smallest warship has only one percent of the strength of the largest. Therefore some ships will seem reasonable, and the larger ships will have a ton of structure and incredibly powerful weaponry. I'm not one for making huge compromises for the sake of game play. My primary concern is emulating the game and everything else is secondary. Does it matter that the Shivan Juggernaut has better weaponry than the strongest B5 ancient? Not to me. Every number and ship in B5Wars is irrelevant save for setting a point value baseline. But now to the specifics of the two SCSes within this magazine:

FIGHTERS

As stated, Fighters are fairly detailed compared to their B5W counterparts. They're also in general much more survivable. Essentially there are just a few things which are needed to be known for understanding and playing Freespace fighters. And those are: Organisation, Deployment, Customisation, Counter-measures and perhaps most significant, Shields.

ORGANISATION

Unlike Babylon 5, fighters in Freespace are typically organised into flights of four ships rather

than six. I stuck with this number to not only emulate the game but for the sake of being practical as the shield system just would not fit well with six fighters. As the ships are organised into flights of four, this in turn has implications on the rules. First, there is no flight level combat. Each fighter rolls to hit individually. This makes intercepting fighters more difficult, but fighters were never really intercepted in Freespace in any case. At the same time, the defender no longer has the choice of which fighter takes damage. Hits scored against the flight are allocated randomly, preferably with a d4. I believe that the shield system is simply too easy to be abused without adopting this rule. The only downside is that it means there will be more dice rolling, but since there is more attention given the fighters I thought it was acceptable.

DEPLOYMENT

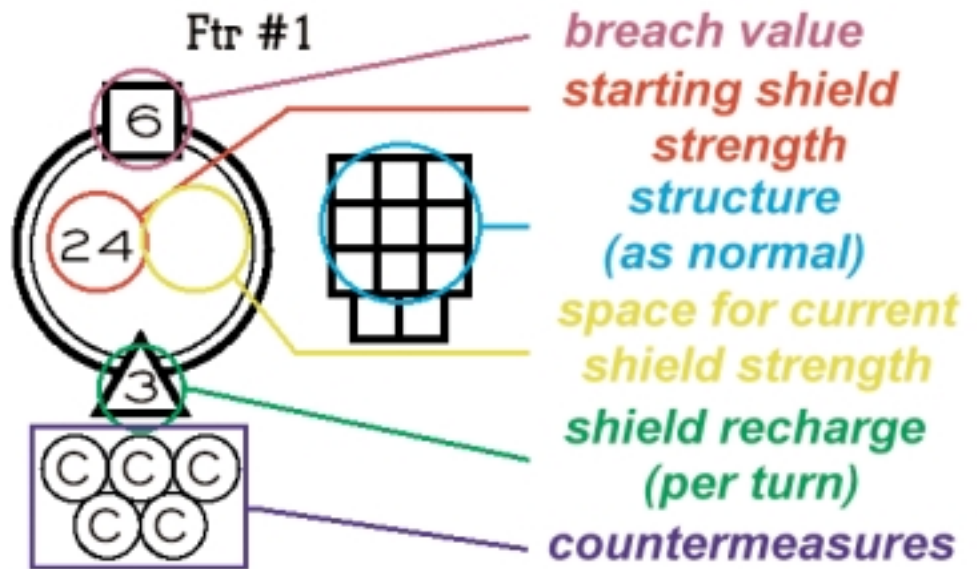
In Freespace, only two types of vessels carry fighters: Space Installations and Destroyers (or Super Destroyers). But because the fighters have their own subspace (jump) drive and because Destroyers are very large, expensive and seem more like super carriers, there are different deployment rules. Quite simply, Freespace fighters do NOT need a hangar to launch from in a battle. Which is good, because the ship I've provided doesn't have a hangar. This means that one side of the battle could be completely fighters if so desired. In a campaign, the fighters would either need a base of operations in system to operate from or if they have inter-system drives, a base in an adjacent system.

CUSTOMISATION

In Freespace the pilot was almost always able to customize the weapons on their fighter. Unlike something like Star Wars, a fighter can have several different guns installed. The game allowed almost any fighter to have almost any gun. I've been a little more restrictive and tried to limit the weapons to suitable choices for the fighter's role. As the Hercules is a jack-of-all-trades, it has a lot of selection. The point value for the fighter is listed along with the weapon statistics. In addition, each fighter may carry missile weaponry. A fighter will have one or two banks (bombers, up to three) in which they can mount missiles. Each fighter will have a list of possible missile loads, and the maximum that will fit in each bank. Each bank may carry one type of missile. Simply write the type of missile and how many carried in the missile track.

COUNTERMEASURES

Countermeasures represent the high-tech equivalents of today's flares and chaff systems. When targeted by ballistic weapons, the fighter may use countermeasures to intercept the missiles. Each fighter has a number of countermeasures, each with a -4 intercept rating. At the moment, a fighter may use as many countermeasures as they choose on one turn. Though this unlimited rate of fire may be subject to change.



SHIELDS

Shields are the most distinctive aspect of Freespace fighters and this conversion. In other conversions we've seen two avenues taken. The block damage approach, and the Shadow tendrill approach. I've taken neither, instead opting for a compromise. Shields in Freespace are detailed, yet very simple. There are three main aspects to consider with fighter shields:

[***Insert Diagram Somewhere near here***]

SHIELD STRENGTH

This represents the overall strength of the shield, the maximum amount of damage that the shield can take. This value will vary greatly depending upon the individual fighter. Some of the smaller Vasudan fighters will have a value of only 8, while the large Shivan Bombers will reach as high as 64. This value is the maximum amount of damage the shield can take, but that does not mean that all of the damage must be taken before the fighter is destroyed.

SHIELD BREACH VALUE

The Breach value is an abstract representation of the four quadrants of a Freespace fighter. Essentially, the Breach Value is the maximum amount of damage that a shield can absorb from any one hit. If a Hercules MK2 has 24 shields overall, each of its four quadrants has only a value of 6. So if it takes 10 points to its right side, 4 points will make it past the shield. Now the fighter SCS is not so detailed to keep track of each shield quadrant because that's just silly. Instead, it's assumed that for EVERY hit (even linked guns), the breach value will apply. One can assume that the fighter knows where it'll take damage and instantaneously strengthens the facing shield to its maximum value to receive that fire. Typically the breach value will be one fourth of the total shield strength, but some races such as the Shivans will have bonuses to both represent their advanced technology and to make

them more playable as their fighters tend to depend almost solely upon shields.

SHIELD RECHARGE VALUE

The recharge value is simply how quickly the shield regains its strength. During the power allocation segment, the value is added to the shield strength up to its maximum value. Fighters can also typically forego firing their guns for the turn, to boost their shield recharge. For those weapons with lower than once per turn rates of fire, treat the weapon as though it had been deactivated as you would a ship weapon.

An Example of Taking Damage for the Hercules Mk2:

In a crazy crossover battle, a Hercules Mk2 with full shields takes fire to its front from a Primus Battle Cruiser. The Hercules has a starting shield strength of 24 with a breach value of 6, and a front armour value of 1 with 11 structure. The fighter is hit by two shots from a Twin Array, with good damage values of 9 and 14. The first hit of 9 damage hits, 6 damage is absorbed by the shield, leaving 3 damage to strike the fighter directly. One damage is absorbed by armour, and the remaining two points damage the fighter's structure. The fighter now has 18 shields with breach 6 and 2 structure damage. The second shot then hits for 14 damage, against 6 damage is absorbed by the shields, which leaves 8 points to hit structure. One damage is absorbed by the armour and the remaining 7 points damages the fighter. The fighter now has 12 shields with breach 6 and 9 structure damage. With only two structure remaining the Hercules has a good chance of dropping out.

Lets for a moment assume that after the first shot, the fighter only had 4 shields remaining. The twin array hits for 14 damage, and typically the shield would absorb 6 but because the shields have only 4 strength left it can only absorb 4 damage leaving 10 to hit the fighter. One point is absorbed by armour, and

CROSSOVER: FREESPACE 2

the remaining 9 cause structure damage. The fighter would then have 11 structure damage which would be a perfect kill.

FREESPACE SHIPS

Ships in Freespace are also different from their B5Wars equivalents. The most notable differences are high amounts of structure with pitiful point defence weapons and a few very strong anti-ship weapons. One of the most deadly ships in the game, the Shivan Lilith is a small ship with a bunch of piddly guns and one of the deadliest beam weapons in the entire game. Its main beam makes the Shadow Slicer seem weak by comparison. But its only one weapon, and without that one gun the ship is just a heavily armoured target. So Freespace ships are a little different, and as with fighters there are a few things one must understand, namely: Sensors, Anti-ship Beams, Anti-fighter Beams, Subspace Drives and general ship layout.

SENSORS

Because Freespace is a game that revolves around fighters, I've taken a slightly different approach with ship sensors. Each ship will have a main sensor array just like in B5Wars, but in addition will also have one or more CCEW pods. These pods are identical in function to the Aegis pods on the Hyperion of the same name, except that these pods can be armoured. An optional idea may be to raise the CCEW range to 15. Since the EW from the pods cannot be combined it wouldn't be a big deal. Ships consequently have rather substandard main sensors. But overall the ships do have high levels of sensors but the difference is that much of it is devoted towards locking on fighters.

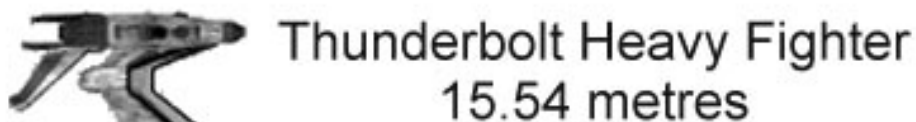
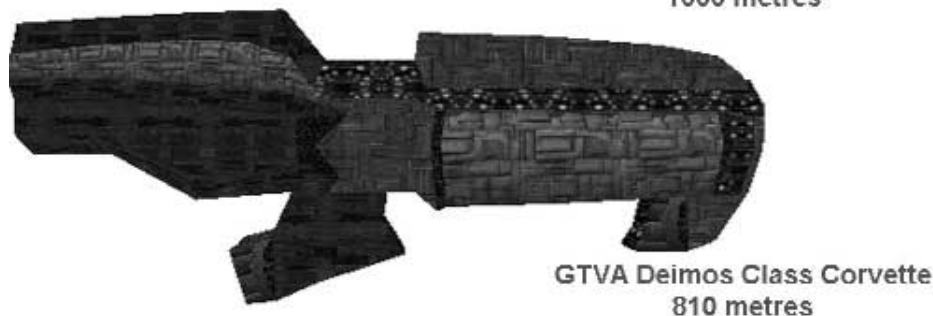
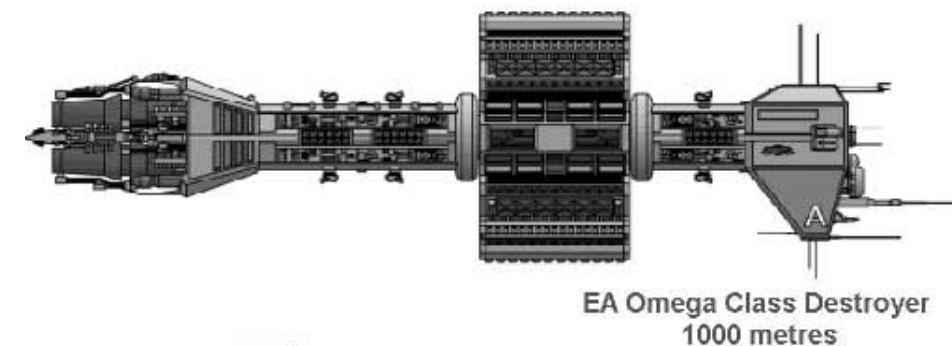
But because ship-to-ship sensors are not as important, I've also introduced a factor that I've used with custom races, Limited Sensors. Limited Sensors are essentially sensors with "overthrust" rules added in. Whenever sensors are boosted, the ship is required to make a critical roll at the end of the turn with the value of improvement used as a modifier to the dice roll (just like overthrusting thrusters). So if a ship has five sensors and the player boosts them to seven, they will roll a critical with a +2 modifier. Any result of this roll is permanent!

ANTI-SHIP BEAMS

Anti-ship beam weapons in Freespace 2 vary greatly, but not in ways that we're typically used to in B5Wars. In general, all beam weapons will have the same range of -1 per 3 hexes (with some exceptions). Beams will vary in their rate of fire, fire control and overall damage. But not only their overall damage, but also the way in which damage is determined. Slashing Beams for instance will have much more variable damage than beams that simply hit their target, yet at the same time they will generally have better fire control ratings.

ANTI-FIGHTER BEAMS

Anti-fighter beams have been given a significant boost in my conversion. In the game they typi-



cally do maybe ten percent versus fighters, yet in the conversion they can kill some fighters dead in one hit. I've always found these to be the deadliest weapons on a ship and so I've tried to mimic the player's feeling rather than the in-game statistics. The main strength of these beams, such as the Terran Minerva, is that they completely ignore fighter shields both in the game and in the conversion. These are by far the best defence any ship will have against fighters.

SUBSPACE DRIVES

These act nearly identical to B5 jump drives except that all units have them, and no unit can enter another unit's vortex, or jump point. There are two main differences to keep in mind. If a subspace drive is damaged, there is no roll to destroy the ship as in B5W. Rather a damaged subspace drive only rolls to see if it works or not. If the roll fails, the jump fails and the drive is considered destroyed (mark off all boxes).

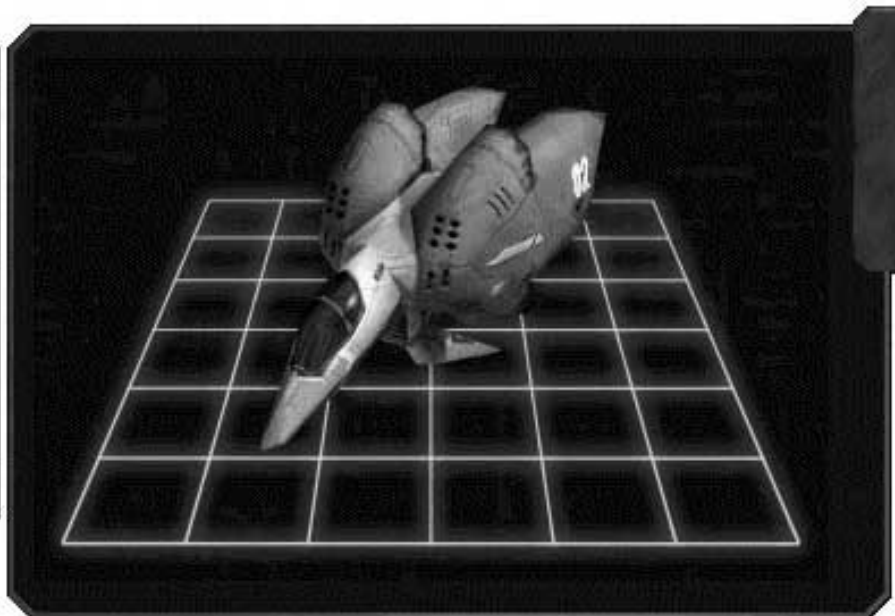
Subspace drives also have different properties. A ship may use these drives anywhere to jump to any point within the same system, but intersystem jumps can only take place at specific points known as jump nodes. This makes blockades a much more viable option. If a battle takes place near a node, simply designate one hex as being the node point. The node has no physical representation (i.e., it cannot be destroyed except for VERY scenario-specific circumstances).

GENERAL SHIP LAYOUT

The first thing someone might notice looking at the Deimos is that "there's guns in the primary! Heck, there's main thrusters in the primary and in the forward section too!! What the hell is going on here?!". Freespace ships tend to have engines mounted from bow to stern, and I've represented that on the SCS. Many ships will also have primary mounted weapons, especially capitals. But seriously, considering what weapons

CROSSOVER: FREESPACE 2

CLASS
GTF HERCULES MARK II
TYPE
HEAVY ASSAULT
LENGTH
17 M
MAX VELOCITY
55 M/S
MANEUVERABILITY
AVERAGE
ARMOR
HEAVY
GUN MOUNTS
4
MISSILE BANKS
2
MANUFACTURER
RNI SYSTEMS



are on the outside of the primary, few people will care for what's in the primary. The precedent for primary weapons is already established and a few piddly guns won't break the bank.

The second thing some people may say is "hey, where's the hangar?". Most of the Freespace ships do not have hangars. Only Destroyers or larger ships will have hangars. All ship transfers are done via dock points on the hull of the ship. The two Terran transports for this operation are the Argo and the Elysium. Realistically the Hangar has no in-game value save soaking damage anyway.

One may also notice that many of the guns are pulse weapons, yet they have no roll for the number of pulses. This has been done in an effort to reduce the number of dice rolls. With rolls already added to such things as fighters, the less rolls the better. So rather than give a gun a higher rate of fire, I've just made them pulse weapons with the number of pulses decided by volley bonus alone.

Hercules Mk2 Heavy Assault Fighter

The GTF Hercules Mark II is the next generation of Terran heavy assault fighter. Introduced during the Great War, the original Herc's balance of firepower and maneuverability made it the most versatile strike fighter in the fleet. Some military historians have claimed the Hercules won the Great War, citing its deployment in key battles near the end of the Shivan conflict. Implementing recent advances in fusion drive technology, the Mark II improves the assault fighter's speed and maneuverability without sacrificing loadout capacity.

Rockeye Heat-Seeking Missile

A fire and forget missile. The Rockeye is a bulky missile with a substandard payload. But the missile is cheap and can be fired with little to no further regard for the target. It is often used by general-purpose fighters and bombers. The Rockeye does not benefit from the fighter's

offensive bonus but instead has a built in +2 versus fighters in addition to the missile's 3 OEW. And because the fighter does not need to lock on, it may also be snap fired at range 0 like the Class-Y missile. In addition, the weapon may be fired at double the standard rate of fire (which is typically 2), and from different secondary banks. In order to benefit from the improved rate of fire, the fighter may not fire any other missiles on that turn. (A Hercules Mk2 could not fire a Harpoon and two Rockeyes, only two to four Rockeyes).

Tempest Dumbfire Rockets

Used to supplement a fighter's firepower at close range, Tempests are inaccurate but deadly. Though considered a missile, they are not ballistic but instead are treated as particle weapons. Which means they fire during the standard fighter vs. fighter and fighter vs. ship segments.

Harpoon Missile

The standard anti-fighter missile, it is both compact and deadly. With good range and damage, it is the missile of choice for Interceptors everywhere.

Hornet Swarm Missiles

Launched as a pack of four target-seeking warheads, the Hornets have a better chance of hitting the target but less chance of doing significant damage. The missiles have the same damage potential as the Harpoon, yet typically only inflict half as much damage.

Deimos Class Corvette

Deimos-class corvettes, such as the GTCv Actium and the GTCv Lysander, are the newest addition to the Terran fleet. These sleek, ultra-modern warships are the products of a new era of ship design, maximizing maneuverability and firepower. Their hulls are strengthened with collapsed-core molybdenum sheathing for better protection against beam fire, and their Vasudan-

designed reactor core provides more energy per ton than any other allied ship class. As the Leviathan and Fenris cruisers of the Great War are gradually phased out, these corvettes will become the foundation of tomorrow's fleet.

Additional Units:

More ships are of course on the way. As I write this I have already completed the SCSes for all of the Terran Fighters and the smaller Terran warship. By the time of publication I hope to have most of the Terran Fleet complete (save perhaps the Colossus). These ships will most likely be hosted by Tyrel on another section of his website: <http://planetside.firenebula.com>. The Terran fleet will allow civil war battles against the Neo-Terran Front. After it is complete I will most likely do the Shivans, and then the Vasudans. Assuming I complete both of these, the future is open to possibilities depending upon the popularity of these ships. Most likely I will then convert the Freespace 1 era ships, but there are also dozens of new ships in Freespace MODs which would make great additions I'm sure. Blackwater Operations and Hard Light Productions alone will provide dozens of new possibilities. If there is something specifically that a person wants to see, feel free to give feedback. Criticism, praise and flames are always appreciated. Though playtest reports are the best feedback that anyone can give.

I would also like to note that I am currently creating a Freespace 2 campaign as well. If anyone who plays FS2 would like to check these out, you can drop me an email and I'll send them to you.

Paul Brown
pbcbrown@shaw.ca

(SCS in the Attachments folder)



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Exiles From The Great Machine

Previously on Babylon 5... *"Any change in those seismic disturbances?" "The surface layers have calmed down but we're still picking up rumblings from further down." "Best check it out just to be sure." ... "What the hell was that!? All of our readings blacked out for a second." "It must have come from deep inside the planet." ... "We've got something ... definitely artificial." "Commander, you okay?" "Michael, you wouldn't believe it! A whole new area of technology, machines as big as... buildings." ... "What the hell!?" "Help me, or your people, all your people, will die."*

- prelude to "A Voice in the Wilderness, Part 2"

The discovery of a vast machine of unknown origins deep within the bowels of Epsilon 3, heralded many events for the diplomatic station orbiting above it, some having a major influence on the future of the Galaxy. The first, however, was the unscheduled arrive of two warships in the vicinity of Babylon 5 ...

The first to arrive was the EAS Hyperion, sent to Epsilon 3 as soon as Earthdome was informed of a possible find of advanced alien technology, with orders to gain control of that technology.

The Exile's cruiser, emitting a scanning beam.

Arrival

"This is Tak-arn, we have your lang-u-age files taken, to learn, to speak, we have been five hundred years searching for this place. We received its call signal ... this world belongs to us; we are last of our people. Searched five hundred years. We will take! Give you ten of

your hours to move aside. We do not wish to kill. But we will if you will not let us take what is ours!"

- Takarn of the Great Machine Exiles

"Is it true that this world and its technology belongs to them?"

- Commander Sinclair

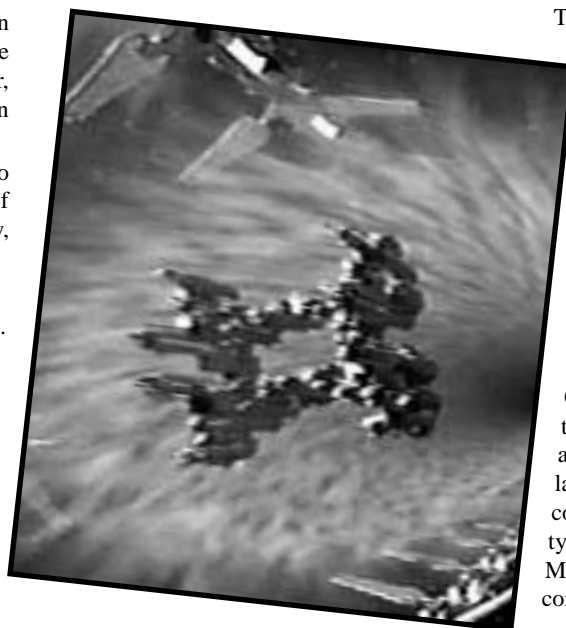
"No, outcast, violent! My people cast them out, centuries ago. Signal was not meant for them, was put here to hide from them. Given to me but the rest of my people died. Sacred trust, legacy, for the future. I am guardian, protector. I live in the heart of the machine, we are one! Five hundred of your years have I waited in the machine"

- Varn, Guardian of the Great Machine

On arrival, the mysterious ship scans both Babylon 5 and the EAS Hyperion with a brilliant white beam. In both cases, the beam appears to be aimed at the command centre of the target, although the beam directed at the Hyperion appears to hit forward of where the bridge is considered to be. The alien ship then downloads Babylon 5's language and translation files and Takarn, the commander of the exiles, learns to speak comprehensible if halting English almost instantly. The resulting conversation, quoted above, reveals that Takarn and his (or her, or its) people are exiles from the Builders of the Great Machine, driven out for their violent ways and probably because they sought to seize the Great Machine to use for their own ends.

The Exile's ship scans Babylon 5 and the EAS Hyperion. Note that the scanning beam directed at Babylon 5 hits near for the control centre, while that directed at the Hyperion actually appears to hit somewhat forward of the bridge.

This scanning technology raises more questions that it answers. Obviously the Great Machine Exiles (as I shall call Takarn's people) have the ability to access alien (to them) computer systems at range. A similar ability was observed being used by the alien attackers in "A View from the Gallery" (See Babcom 22), however unlike those aliens, Takarn's people do not attempt to access anything except the language and translation files, which we can assume would be considerably less well protected than the security and defence grid systems. The Great Machine Exiles make no attempt to disable the computer systems of either Babylon 5 or the



EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: Exiles From The Great Machine

EAS Hyperion, which could indicate that they couldn't do anything except a remote data search on unsecured systems.

The blindingly bright scanning beam appeared to have noticeable effects on the Babylon 5 command crew and could possibly have some negative effects on the C&C of a targeted unit in combat, but was never used that way.

Likewise, the ability to locate and lock on to the C&C of a target unit could be devastating if linked to a weapons fire control, but again, such a capability was not observed (luckily for the Babylon 5 command staff). It is possible that such a use had simply not occurred to the Great Machine Exiles.

Attack

"You have ignored our warnings! You've sent ships to our world. No more lies! Now we take what is ours, and we stop your people!"

- Takarn of the Great Machine Exiles

Interpreting the approach of Londo's shuttle to the planet, Takarn believed that his threats were being ignored and the Great Machine Exiles opened fire upon the shuttle (Takarn's angry outburst, quoted above, implies that some 'off-screen' negotiations might have been going on). Several red-orange bolts, resembling miniature comets, streak past the shuttle as it jinks. A cut back to the Great Machine Exile's cruiser shows it firing a barrage of such bolts from a number of weapons mounts. Each weapon seems to have a fairly slow rate of fire, but there are a number of them and they stagger their fire to create an almost continual barrage.

The Exile's ship fires its weapons.

"They've opened fire, secondary gun array is targeting my ship!"

- Captain Ellis Pierce

Although the weapons being used to target Londo's shuttle and later the EAS Hyperion and Babylon 5 are fairly obvious, it is less obvious what Captain Pierce is referring to by the 'secondary gun

but fail to hit. It also divides up into three sections, the largest consisting of its top half, while the bottom half subdivides further into two smaller sections. Why it does this is not clear at this time. As the Exile's cruiser appears to consist of four similar parts, it is possible that the top section could have also divided into two, but this capability is not shown.



The Exile's ship separates into three smaller ships. It is possible that the larger ship could separate into two more of the smaller ships.

The massed Star Fury fighters open fire on the now divided Exile cruiser. Several Uni-Pulse Cannon shots are observed hitting, creating temporary blue glows on the surface of the ship. The Exile ships continue firing, their rate of fire appears to have diminished somewhat, but this is uncertain.

A Badger is seen close to the camera, firing upon the main Exile ship, its first shot just seems to vanish as it hits the target, while the second hit creates a temporary blue fire on the surface of the ship, as seen above. The Exile ships do not appear to be affected at all by these hits.



The Exile ships return fire on the fighters with another weapon system, which at first glance, resembles the fire from Babylon 5's Quad Particle Arrays; twin streams of red-orange streaks resembling tracer fire, however closer analysis indicates that each streak consists of five closely spaced bolts. No hits on Star Furies are observed.

array'.

It is possible that some of the weapons are in fact larger than others, or possibly the difference is not noticeable to the eye, but some weapons register a more powerful energy spike on sensors.

At this point Babylon 5's fighter wings are launched and fly to engage the Great Machine Exiles, accompanied by at least one Badger Star Fury from the EAS Hyperion. The Exile cruiser fires the same weapons at the oncoming fighters,

Cut to the EAS Hyperion, where several of the larger red-orange bolts are seen nearly hitting the ship, the Hyperion's rear turret opens fire, firing blue/cyan bolts, then the forward turret does the same, firing larger bolts of the same colour (these are probably groups of pulses, however, the shots are sufficiently far from the camera that they merge into one object). These shots are seen hitting incom-

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: Exiles From The Great Machine

ing fire from the Exile ships, exploding it into orange-yellow fireballs, a good example of interception fire.

The EAS Hyperion turns to face the Exile ships, while continuing interception fire.

Endgame

"Hyperion's forward guns powering up, preparing to fire, locking on..."

- Lieutenant Commander Ivanova

The EAS Hyperion fires its main forward gun (firing what appears to be a pair of pulses, similar to those fired by her smaller weapons, but larger, the actual forward guns appear to have four barrels, and so, in some shots, do the turrets); at the same time she also fires her forward turret.

Several shots from the Hyperion are seen missing the Exile ship, as a large orange explosion erupts on the lower part of the largest exile ship, presumably from a hit by one of Hyperion's weapons. The Exile ship shows no sign of suffering any impairment from this.

The larger Exile's ship takes a hit from one of Hyperion's weapons.

The Exile ships proceed to thrust towards Babylon 5, moving as a group.

"Range to target?"

- Commander Sinclair

"Closing, to 300km, 250..."

- Lieutenant Commander Ivanova

"Stand by defence grid, prepare to fire, Alpha flight, take point and engage"

- Commander Sinclair

"Confirmed, control, engaging"

- Alpha Flight Leader

"Fire defence grid, maximum range"

- Commander Sinclair

The Star Furies of Alpha flight are seen opening fire, then the

fire). Fire from the defence grid is seen striking all three Exile ships, creating small explosions, but not appearing to inflict much damage.

Several shots from the defence grid

- Commander Sinclair

"On the other side, the enemy ship's keeping us between them"

- Lieutenant Commander Ivanova

"It's coming round again, weapon system's powering up ... they're locking on!"

- Tech #2

"This is it!"

- Lieutenant Commander Ivanova



This shows that the weapon of the Exiles, when they hit, can be quite devastating, with two hits possibly being capable of destroying the forward section of Babylon 5. It is also shown that the Exile ships, at least in their separated state (possibly this explains why they separated their ship), are more manoeuvrable than a Hyperion heavy cruiser and that the Exiles feared the firepower of the EAS Hyperion sufficiently to place themselves on the other side of a large space station. Alternatively, they might have feared the combined firepower of Babylon 5 and the EAS Hyperion, and manoeuvred to reduce the number of opponents firing on them. It is interesting to note that the shot that struck Babylon 5 appears to brighten noticeably just after being fired.

At this point Babylon 5 is saved by an almost literal Deus ex Machina as Draal uses the Great Machine to temporarily shut down all combatants, and announces his stewardship of the Great Machine to all present. The Exiles ignore his warning and advance towards Epsilon 3. A red-orange beam lances out from the planet, touching each of the Exile ships in turn, destroying them utterly in an instant.

The beginning of the end for the Exiles of the Great Machine. Unlike Shadow Molecular Slicer Beams that would cut through a ship, the Great Machine's beam weapon completely destroys the target.

The ship used by the Exiles of the Great Machine appears to consist of four similar modules connected in a rectangular arrangement, those to port mirror those to starboard, likewise those on top mirror those below. Each module consists of a number of long rectilinear structures of various sizes with tapered ends, resembling long, thin crystals, but of obvious technological manufacture.

The ship used by the Exiles of the Great Machine appears to consist of four similar modules connected in a rectangular arrangement, those to port mirror those to starboard, likewise those on top mirror those below. Each module consists of a number of long rectilinear structures of various sizes with tapered ends, resembling long, thin crystals, but of obvious technological manufacture.

appear to miss and explode in empty space in the vicinity of the Exile ships. The larger Exile ship returns fire, its first shot misses, passing past the forward section of Babylon 5, while the second shot scores a direct hit on the forward sphere, just above the front of one of the Cobra bays. Cut to the control centre, where power fluctuations and noticeable shaking are observed.

"Direct hit, reporting damage to cobra bays, holds"



blue-8 through C buckling, 20% power loss. One more shot like that and they'll blow out the whole forward section"

- Lieutenant Commander Ivanova

"Where's the Hyperion?"

Babylon 5 defence grid is seen firing (yellow orange bolts with a reddish fringe, superficially similar to the Exiles weapon

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The forward ends of these structures, or 'spikes', house weapon systems. It is possible that the rear end might do so as well. Each module has one large such structure, with the others being of progressively smaller size. Whether the size and power of a weapon is related to the size of the 'spike' in which it is housed or not, is unknown. The smaller structures are largely found in the 'bridge' sections connecting the two halves of the ship. Each module has two main thrusters.

It is dif-

ficult to maintain a constant rate of fire, rather than firing all weapons at once, then performing defensive manoeuvres while they recharge. This may or may not be several similar weapons of differing size, however the visual effects of these weapons would appear to be very similar to each other. These weapons are definitely interceptable. The one observed hit by this type of weapon did considerable damage to the forward section of Babylon 5 and from the dialogue, it is likely that a second such hit would have destroyed the forward section.

The other weapon system observed is a rapid-fire anti-fighter weapon. These appear to be twin-mounted and each fires in 'bursts' of five pulses each with a rapid rate of fire. No hits by this weapon were observed, so its firepower is unknown.

The Exile's ship seemed to 'shrug off' hits from either fighter

weapons or the Babylon 5 defence grid, while a hit from one of Hyperion's larger weapons caused them to use Babylon 5 as a shield. There is no visual evidence of any exotic defensive capabilities, however in at least one case, fire from a fighter appeared to disappear upon hitting its hull.

In its separated state, the Exile's ship demonstrated significantly more manoeuvrability than the EAS Hyperion, being able to keep Babylon 5 between them. No ability to open its own jump point was demonstrated by the Exile's ship, however due to the ship's history, such an ability would be likely.

to gauge the size of this ship; the only place where a comparison can be made is the scene where the ship arrives through the Babylon 5 jump gate. From this, it would appear to be somewhat larger than an EA Hyperion-class cruiser. Possibly it is roughly the same size as an Omega-class destroyer or similar.

The ship can separate. It was observed separating into three pieces, one piece consisting of the top two modules, while the other two were the bottom two modules. It appears likely that the larger piece could also have subdivided into two pieces. It is possible, but unverifiable, that each module could further subdivide into two unequal sub-modules, with further subdivision being unlikely due to the observed number of main thrusters. The reasons for this division ability are open to speculation.

Technologically, the ship is somewhat of an enigma. The ability to remote-access computer systems is a sophisticated capability whereas the drive systems do not appear to have any unusual characteristics and the performance of the ship in combat would not appear to be particularly effective.

The ship demonstrates at least two weapon systems. Its main weapons consist of weapons firing single large bolts with a not particularly fast rate of fire, with the fire of multiple weapons being staggered





EXILE WANDERER MODULAR CRUISER

Voice in the Wilderness Exile Wanderer Modular Cruiser

By Paul Brown

Wanderer Modular Cruiser

Designed centuries ago by the same people who built the Great Machine, the Wanderer is a ship comprised of four small segments, which in and of themselves form individual vessels. Each segment is self-contained with its own weapons, power, sensors and manoeuvring capabilities. The unique configuration, previously unseen among the local powers, is designed to maximise the tactical potential of the vessel. By separating into smaller ships it becomes more agile and able to out manoeuvre slower opponents as well as becoming able to successfully bring its limited-arc heavy weapons to bear.

Despite its ability to operate as smaller individual ships, the Cruiser is designed to move strategically as one unit. Consequently minor variations in the segments include the use of a jump drive and a hangar in two segments, while the others utilise the space for rear-firing secondary weapons. While an older vessel, the ship has a strong armament coupled with adequate defences in the form of point defence weaponry and electromagnetic shielding.

Modular Warships:

The rules for Modular Warships can be found on the second page of the appropriate PDF file. While seemingly extensive, many of the rules are necessary non-combat procedures that for the most part will have minimal bearing on any combat the ship engages in.

Solar Blaster:

The primary weapon of the Exile's Cruiser. This weapon is similar to the Drazi Solar Cannon with the exception of being superior in almost every way. The weapon has increased range, damage and a higher rate of fire. Its' main downfall is the size and configuration of the

weapon that results in a rather constrained arc of fire. Regardless, even a single hit from one of these weapons can result in massive amounts of damage to the target.

Medium Bolter:

Though not derived from the Dilgar weapon, the secondary arrays on the Cruiser are functionally identical to their more recently designed coun-

terparts. Like the Solar Blaster the weapon is designed to deliver a high amount of damage through a large volume of rapid fire.

Point Particle Cannon:

This anti-fighter weapon fires a stream of particle bolts with fairly convincing accuracy. With damage comparable to the Standard Particle Beam, the main difference is the more reliable delivery of damage derived from the tight focus of the projectiles. Unfortunately, the weapon loses accuracy fairly quickly at high ranges and has substandard tracking capabilities to intercept incoming fire.

Design Musings and Interpretations

As with the last challenge, I began this one by reviewing the episode in question and then by looking over the empirical evidence drawn up by Nerik. The episode in question was one of my favourites of the first season with a good battle sequence and a huge secondary plot: The Mars Rebellion. But after reviewing the episode I found myself at somewhat of a loss to explain the behaviour of the alien vessel, for several reasons.

The vessel demonstrates the ability to split apart but while it does so, the individual segments stay in close proximity to one another. What does this accomplish? The vessel furthermore seems to have a total of four, quick firing guns that individually cause substantial damage to Babylon 5. And in addition, when I finally was about to create the SCS, how does one handle a ship that may have up to four sensor arrays and enough thrust to move each segment individually. Give each segment three sensors? Why then would the ship wish to separate? Not to mention all the problems of how does one handle the hit procedures of a ship that can appear in three different possible forms. In the end, here's what I deduced/made up.

The process of the ship splitting up was designed with three factors in mind: manoeuvrability, sur-

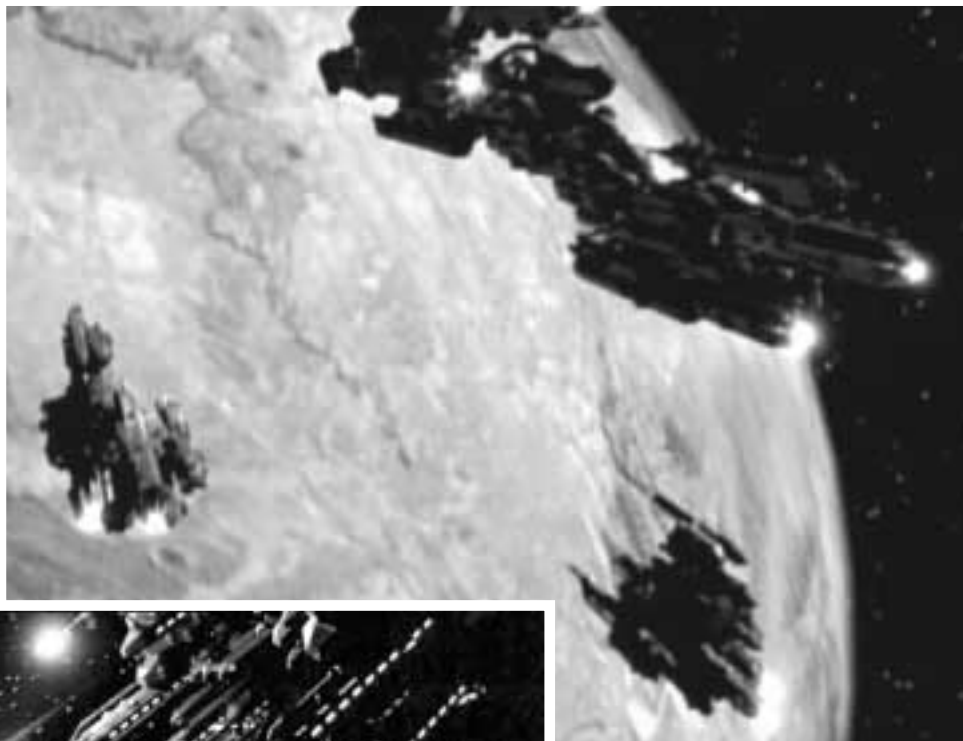
"Centuries ago, our own people cast us out, said we were too foolish and too troublesome. Over these years we have wandered the stars, a lost and forgotten people. We alone endured through our tremendous strength and conviction, while the people of our home withered and died. We have been without a home and without a purpose. But now the signal has been received, the great legacy of our people is calling to us. The rest of our people are dead, but we yet live. We will move to this planet, Epsilon 3, and retake what is rightfully ours. And no one shall stand between us and our rightful inheritance."

-Tonkar, Leader of the Exiles
2258



vivability and offensive potential. A smaller ship tends to be more manoeuvrable than a larger ship. My specific numbers won't make sense but neither do existing turn + pivot costs, so no worries. Secondly, four ships are harder to kill than just one. And thirdly, I decided to give the main weapons of the ship crappy Omega-style arcs. Therefore by splitting up into four segments, they could roll and position themselves so that all four guns pointed at the target rather than just two (centre lining aside). Now why did the ship stay together during combat? That's simple: the desire to concentrate and coordinate firepower plus the benefit of overlapping anti-fighter arcs against a fighter heavy opposition.

For weaponry, I decided on a simple armament. The ship obvious has four main weapons, one of which causes a lot of damage to Babylon 5. Due to the large, seemingly fiery shock wave from the impact against the station, I decided that a Solar Cannon-style weapon would be suitably evil. I increased the values a little across the board and gave it a good, but perhaps not-reflective, fire rate for the sake of game balance. The anti-fighter weapon was a bit harder. I looked at all the different weapons available and decided the best choice would be to create a new weapon. This was actually the hardest weapon to deal with, as I had to think up a new name for it! Now as Nerik points out, Captain Pierce mentions secondary arrays are targeting his Hyperion. Yet it would seem apparent that no such weapons exist from a casual re-watching of the battle. But as I rewound the tape several times to try and capture the silhouette of the vessel (and in the process watching a "it makes a mother proud" Cascade commercial about 25 times), I noticed a blue bolt seemingly coming from the hull of the alien vessel. At first I thought it was a Star Fury round but it seems unlikely that any fighter fired the bolt. The shot appears from the left half of the "upper deck" of the ship, in the very beginning of the scene where a Badger is missed by anti-fighter fire. To



try and represent this I simply gave them some Bolters, which are not very high-tech weapons but I thought they would do all right. The alien ship also seems to take very little damage, as hits from fighters only cause a blue flash and B5's Particle Beams explode all around it without significant damage. The only real damage caused to the vessel is from the Hyperion's main guns. As a result I gave the ship some EM shielding to both reflect the scanning ability of the ship and the results of opposition fire against its hull.

Finally, I handled each ship segment as an individual Medium ship. I avoided the Vree "choose

your structure" mistake by adding an additional dice roll to determine which section gets hit, depending on where the fire came from. Thrust was somewhat problematic but ultimately manageable, save for the proliferation of low-point thrusters. And for sensors I decided that multiple sensors would not combine into some ungodly super-array, but rather took a page out of Dream Pod 9's Silhouette rules where the rolls are not combined, but rather each identical high roll adds one to the total. I believe it works fairly well and allows the player the desire to fight as one unit or up to four individual units.

In any case, I hope you enjoy my interpretation and I pray that no one is rendered blind trying to read the SCS.

The Wanderer SCS can be found in the attachments file.

My Interpretation Of TAKARN'S MODULAR CRUISER

By Charles 'Nerik' Taylor

Introduction

I have based these Babylon 5 Wars implementations of the alien vessel seen in the Babylon 5 season 1 episode: 'A Voice in the Wilderness, Part 2' on my 'Empirical Evidence' article and the research I did compiling it. I call the aliens piloting it 'the Exiles of the Great Machine', or 'Takarn's People' after the spokesperson and apparent commander of this ship.

Background

Takarn and his/her/its' people arrived at Babylon 5 in 2258, claiming ownership of the Great Machine. This was disputed by the Earth Alliance, in the form of Captain Ellis Pierce of the EAS Hyperion, the Babylon 5 Advisory Council and Varn, the Guardian of the Great Machine. The resulting battle caused serious damage to Babylon 5 and was only ended by the intervention of the new Guardian, Draal, who was forced to destroy Takarn's forces.

Technology

The technology available to Takarn does not appear to be particularly advanced, the ship possesses the ability to remote access other computer systems, but this was only used to access language and translation files, which would not be considered a security priority.

Sensors

The sensors of Takarn's ship are not of an especially high rating, but do have ELINT capability, which provides some benefit when the ship separated into its constituent modules.

Given its poor performance in scoring hits, this implies a combination of mediocre sensors and poor fire control ratings, however, its ability to remote-access computer systems implies a certain degree of sophistication, hence the ELINT capability.

Jump Drives

Each module of Takarn's ship possesses its own jump engine and each can jump independently. If two or more modules are connected, the jump delay times are reduced as the jump engines interface with each other.

We have no direct evidence of the presence of jump engines on this ship, however its 500 year sojourn in deep space rather implies that it can jump independently.

Fuser Bolter

Class: Plasma Mode: Flash

This powerful but short ranged plasma based weapon combines features of the Descari Plasma Bolters with the Pak'Ma'Ra Fuser. However, its enormous damage potential comes at the cost of reduced range and accuracy.

This is the weapon that hits Babylon 5, one hit causes significant damage to the forward section of the station.

Medium Plasma Bolter

Class: Plasma Mode: Standard

This plasma-based weapon is similar to the Descari weapon of the same name, and can be treated as that weapon in all respects.

This is the first weapon seen firing at Londo's shuttle. It has a reasonable rate of fire and range, but lacks accuracy. From the battle scene, it would appear to have roughly the same range as the weapons on the EAS Hyperion, or possibly slightly longer.

Twin Pulse Array

Class: Particle Mode: Pulse

The Twin Pulse Array combines two weapons similar to Light Pulse Cannons into a single

mount, in the same way that a Twin Array combines two weapons similar to Light Particle Beams into a single mount.

The Twin Pulse Array can either be fired as two independent pulse weapons, or the fire can be combined against a single target (or flight of fighters), which is resolved as a single pulse-mode attack with a greater number of pulses and an increased pulse grouping.

This is the weapon seen firing at Star Furies. From examination of the visual effects, its fire consists of two parallel streams of pulses, in groups of five.

Military

Little is known of either the Builders of the Great Machine or Takarn's people. Varn described Takarn's people as "Outcast, violent!" but further knowledge is not available.

Starships

Only one ship built (or at least used) by Takarn's people has been seen and it is implied that it was the only one. It is likely that it is a ship built by the Builders of the Great Machine, as some of its design features resemble those seen in the Great Machine.

Takarn's Modular Cruiser - Combined Form Base Hull (Unique Ship)

This cruiser-sized ship is of rugged construction, capable of shrugging off the combined firepower of an Earth Alliance Hyperion Cruiser, Babylon 5 and the fighter complements of both units while suffering only minor damage.

It has the ability to split up into four smaller modules, either singly, or combined as a pair which are described below. While in combined form, the cruiser can share power between the modules and can use any of the sensors on the

TAKARN'S MODULAR CRUISER

modules using the rules for a ship with multiple sensor systems.

In the episode, the ship takes several hits, but is not noticeably affected, so I gave it high armour ratings and reasonably robust structure blocks. For simplicity, I designed the ship as four identical modules, each with its own sensors, reactor and engine. There is some evidence for some kind of shield technology, but it is far from conclusive.

Takarn's Modular Cruiser - Two linked modules
Base Hull (Unique Ship)

This is two of the four modules of Takarn's cruiser combined into a single heavy combat vessel-sized ship. It is more manoeuvrable than the fully combined cruiser, but not as much as an individual module. It does have a longer jump delay than the fully combined cruiser however.

Takarn's Modular Cruiser - Single modules
Base Hull (Unique Ship)

This is one of the four modules of Takarn's cruiser, it a medium-sized ship. Individual modules gain a greater manoeuvrability than any combination of modules, but suffer from an increased jump delay time.

Takarn's Modular Cruiser SCS can be found in the attachments file.



When Collecting Is More Than A Hobby

The Streib Collectors

By Paul Brown

The Streib are both a xenophobic and arrogant people. Their society is driven by scientific and technological advancement, yet for the most part, they avoid outside contact with other species. Their scientists are content with researching and exploring the intricacies of their few star systems and they believe that there is little that cannot be learned within those bounds. They avoid contact with outsiders because they believe themselves intellectually superior beings with little use for lowly outsiders.

Their government is a democracy composed of independent, elected representatives. Once in



office, representatives form coalitions on each major individual issue and both debate and vote upon them. In order to create new bills or laws, an individual person or group will rally others to their cause in order to form a larger coalition on the issue. But on any one issue the large electorate body is typically intensely divided and fragmented. This results in a largely wasteful and ineffectual form of government, which is

satisfactory for every day life, yet often becomes bogged down on major issues.

The two main professions of individuals within the electorate are scientists and military officers. The scientists are usually the more numerous and preserve the xenophobic stance of the government. The military on the other hand, is aware of their technological prowess in comparison to the other species, and is constantly pushing for war and conquest. However, any motion to go to war is consistently denied by conservative coalitions of scientists and other electorate members.

Every once in a while, the military is able to gain backing for a defensive probe into outside territory by convincing the electorate of the scientific value behind the study and dissection of alien individuals and technology. Thus, a ship or small group of ships is dispatched, with the military hoping to gain valuable information about alien defences, and the scientists hoping to study alien "animals" by means of dissection, psychological analysis and study of their fighting prowess and ingenuity in paired combat.

The military representatives hope that these missions will garner support for further military operations. Typically however, these missions end in the destruction of the Streib vessels by alien forces. And this event will usually cement the opposition against any war. When the ships do manage to return, opposition to major military action remains strong, though further defence probes usually follow in the wake of the first mission's success for additional scientific data.

While a group within the military is eager for battle and conquest, the government as a whole, is against outside excursion, either from fear of change or fear of the world outside the boundaries of Streib space.

Military Doctrine

Streib fleet and ship doctrine is different from most other races. While many races employ a range of ships such as destroyers, cruisers and carriers to fill roles within a combined arms doctrine, the Streib focus on specialised vessels. Many of their ships are designed primarily to operate independent of other vessels, while maintaining good integration ability with other ships in fleet situations. The Collectorship for example, is very good at what it does, that is capturing enemy vessels. But in a fleet situation it's improved blast lasers can add to the destructive force of the fleet while its burst weaponry can make other ships incapable of fighting and therefore easier to destroy.

Though the Streib are an advanced race, their

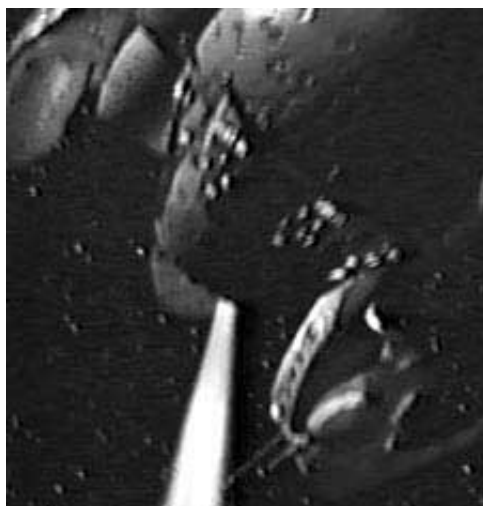


fleet is relatively small by most standards. This means that all ships must be able to help with the defence of their world should they come under attack. And for most opponents, they could employ enough vessels to deter future aggression. In a state of relative isolation, most of the Streib fleet is geared towards the defence of their homeworld. The majority of their space faring military is composed of fixed defences, moni-

tors, and maintenance vessels. Only about one third of their ships are built for expeditionary forces but by their nature, they are the ships most often seen by outside forces, while purely defensive forces remain a mystery.

Streib vessels employ some of the heaviest armour in known space and utilise a mix of laser and electromagnetic weaponry. Laser weaponry is favoured on most of the dedicated warships, yet due to the effectiveness of EM weaponry against fighter opponents, they still see widespread use. EM weaponry is most strongly concentrated on the Collectorship.

Streib forces favour ambushes over other tactics. Their high armour is most effective when the enemy has little chance to respond. While the armour can withstand a few attacks, most prolonged assaults will quickly overwhelm the small amounts of structure on Streib vessels.



New Technology

Surge Laser

The surge laser is a fast firing weapon present on most Streib military vessels. Its primary use is to defend against fighter craft, a role for which it is very adept. Coupled with EM radiation, the weapon cuts apart and disables enemy fighters and gun turrets. It's only failing is its relatively low level of damage and its dispersal pattern against heavy ship armour.

New Units

Intruder Deep Recon Vessel

The intruder is the smallest Streib military vessel and also one of the smallest ships equipped with a jump engine in known space. It is designed primarily for scouting and deep penetration raids against minimally protected convoys and other targets of opportunity. It is equipped with several Surge Lasers that are effective against enemy fighters and poorly armed vessels such as freighters or other logistic transports. When not performing its primary role it can act as an anti-fighter escort for larger vessels or as a border patrol ship.

Adjudicator Prime Warship

The Adjudicator is the primary expeditionary warship in service within the Streib fleet. Equipped with five Blast Lasers and an array of

defensive laser and EM weapons it is a formidable warship by any race's standards. Utilised for quick strikes and ambushes deep within enemy territory, it is also a ship that has not seen much experience on the battlefield. Until the mentality of the Streib government shifts to a more aggressive stance, it will likely remain a rare commodity in common experience and instead be tasked with patrolling the region of hyperspace surrounding Streib space, thereby deterring stray ships and explorers from venturing into the Streib home system.

Author's Interpretation:

The Streib are some of what of a challenge to expand upon. The evidence from the show gives a capable ship from a one-off race, whereas the Collectorship and accompanying fluff in Showdowns-3 presents a much more powerful race than I would have personally envisioned. The ship in S3 is certainly not reflective of what we see in "All Alone in the Night" by my and many other's estimation. If the author of the original Streib is still within the community, I certainly mean no disrespect by this comment. The Streib Collector was in fact a very refreshing change from the typical ships of the time.

The Intruder is quite simply, my interpretation of the Streib vessel seen on the show. It essentially serves the same purpose as the Collectorship but simply at a smaller scale. The Surge Laser was born as a hybrid Laser/EM weapon based upon what I saw on the show. Though it can be justly argued that the ship mounts EM weapons, the consistently destructive nature of the weapon suggests that it's not the typical burst beam armament. From the show I counted no more than four weapon points and added a defensive array for good measure.

The Adjudicator is another ship altogether. It is simply based upon the premise that if the Collectorship is a cruiser designed to capture things, this is what a cruiser designed to kill things would look like. It mounts less EM weaponry and more laser weaponry. Yes it's a very powerful ship, but with the Collectorship as it is, I really saw no alternative. I envisioned that smaller warships without jump drives would exist in the Streib fleet but almost solely in a defensive nature. Showdowns-3 does claim that the Streib would be "quite a threat to known space" if they were more aggressive. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the Streib would probably only operate a small fleet. Just as some people shouldn't complain the Sharlin is too weak unless they fight it on a one-to-one basis versus Hyperions, people must also realise that at normal force levels the EA or any of the other major powers, would probably lay waste to the Streib. The Streib should only be at a level equal to or below one of the middle-ground League powers.

There are other ships forthcoming but some of the fleet is being re-evaluated. One aspect I can most certainly guarantee is that I will not design a Streib fighter. Who needs fighters when ships mount nine armour and Burst Pulse Cannons?

Paul Brown's Streib vessels can be found in the attachments file.

John F. Kennedy Class Space Carrier Vehicle

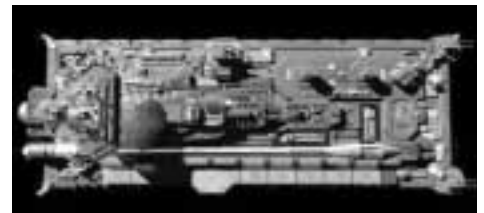
By Jason Stadnyk

SPACE: ABOVE AND BEYOND

Well, this design came from my lackluster attempt of a Space: Above and Beyond conversion of the Saratoga-styled carriers from the shop. Using the specs that were released to the net, I realised one could attempt low damage weapons to reflect the 2063 level of tech. Also, the specifications mention pulse weaponry, which meant a straight adaptation of B5 weapons. I tried to use existing weapons and see how they would fit on this design. The sensors being so low are to reflect the close nature of engagements in Space: Above and Beyond.

To replicate the 50 broadside torpedo tubes would be insane to represent in a true one-to-one representation. I decided that such attacks would be similar to <shudder> the Wing Commander movie's broadside torpedo attacks. Having two ballistic torpedo launchers could simulate the launches without being too overpowering (since only the regular missile launchers were seen in the show (which these launchers also cover).

The SCS for the John F. Kennedy Carrier can be found in the attachments file.



Revival: not remake - nor re-imagination

Will Blake's 7 be back?

BLAKE'S 7 is back. Or at least that's the hope of a consortium including one of the show's original cast.

The 1970s BBC series, about a group of freedom fighters battling against a ruthless interstellar Federation, won an adoring audience with powerful and consistent stories and despite its cheap, low-budget sets and wacky gadgets.

Now, producer Andrew Sewell, who bought the Blake's 7 rights from the estate of its creator, the late Terry Nation, wants to turn the series into a multi-million pound TV film.

He is even lining up original cast member Paul Darrow, who played charismatic anti-hero Avon, to reprise his role.

Mr Sewell said: "The plan is to set it 20 years on from when the last series ended. When Paul did the last one he was in his mid-30s. He's now in his mid-50s."

But the days of props that looked like they had been put together by Blue Peter presenters - one spaceship on the original series was made from an old hair-dryer - are over.

Mr Sewell said: "The beauty of Blake was the characters and it's not going to be overloaded with special effects, but when they are there they will be state-of-the-art."

Mr Sewell said the film would retain the name Blake's 7, despite the fact that the title character was killed by Avon in the last episode to date in 1981.

One of the stars of cult sci-fi series Blake's 7 has signed a deal to bring the show back to screens more than 20 years after it ended.

Paul Darrow, who played the ruthless anti-hero Avon, is in a consortium that has acquired the

BLAKE'S SEVEN

rights to the show from the widow of its creator, Terry Nation.

But Sewell declined to give a hint as to how Avon, last seen surrounded by Federation stormtroopers before apparently perishing with his companions in a hail of gunfire, managed to survive.

Mr Sewell, whose recent projects with BBC Worldwide have included working on the global new media marketing of recent BBC hit *Walking with Dinosaurs*, said he did not yet know who would broadcast the film.

But he added: "It would be nice to think maybe the BBC would go with it, but the new nature of the broadcasting markets gives us a lot of options."

Originally made as a UK answer to *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*, Blake's 7 became a hit between 1978-81 - despite its shaky sets and basic effects.

The new TV mini-series, starring Darrow, will have a budget of \$5-6m (£3-3.7m), the show's website said.

That will lead onto a full series or a string of TV movies, the consortium members hope.

"British science fiction has remained in the doldrums far too long," Mr Sewell said.

"We believe that our plans will deliver a compelling science fiction drama that appeals to the sensibilities of today's audience both domestically and internationally."

A tentative transmission date has been set for spring 2005, its website says - conditional on "many factors, not least financing".

The group behind the new show say it has endured better than any other British sci-fi series, and there is a strong global appetite for science fiction.

Darrow said: "The programme had such a gritty and dramatic style that was every bit as great an influence on the genre as the original *Star Trek*."

Revival: not remake - nor re-imagination

Legacy: the eternal struggle continues

ONCE, the Federation ruled everything... They ruled with a ruthless, iron will... Every inhabited planet, every developing trade route was brought under its control.

There was resistance of course, and none more legendary than Blake's Seven, a largely unprincipled group of disparate dissidents, kept remarkably effective by the leadership first of Blake himself, and then the enigmatic Avon.

Now, after nearly 30 years of civil war amongst the various factions of the Federation, peace has come, Blake and the Seven are myth, and an enlightened new Federation presides over a brave new Empire.

While the heart of the new Federation prospers, life in the distant reaches of its Empire is not what it seems. On the outer rim, where the cutting edge of technology remains decidedly blunt, ruthless dictatorship and rampant corruption secretly prevail.

Meanwhile, in a far-flung prison station, a forgotten legend remains in almost Napoleonic exile, the last surviving member of the Seven.

Conditions are ripe for renewed rebellion.

Or is this a symptom of something altogether more sinister?

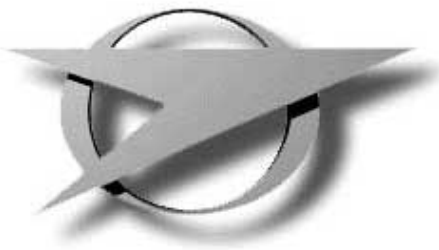
A Rebellion Reborn

Paul 'Avon' Darrow remembers Terry Nation's early ideas for a revival and sets the scene for a Rebellion Reborn.

As we have established against all odds; nobody wins, and if Blake's 7 in the 1980's ended with the triumph of 'Establishment Terror' and the least likely of a hopeful group of dissidents left to oppose it, then Blake's 7 three decades later, must spring forward from that unpromising base.

The good/bad guy is beaten. All's wrong with the World/Universe. When has this been the case before? In Earth's history, many times.

Terry's idea for a later reworking of his Blake's 7 concept was, as before, inspired by his previous work(s). A bleak Universe where if you're rich and powerful - or useful to those who are - you're in a kind of corrupt paradise. Then, out of nowhere, comes one man, then another and another and so on. Hope springs eternal, but (and it's a big but) are these new heroes truly heroic? Not in Terry Nation's Universe. They are, as before, recognisable misfits... Colin Wilson's Outsiders.



Having said that, outsiders are those who trigger, either by default or design, the greatest of changes for those on the 'inside'. There is such a thing as a one-man (or in this case seven man) army and armchair enthusiasts will cheer them on, win or lose. In fact, it makes the enthusiasts feel a lot better if 'they' lose. It saves the insiders collective conscience and excuses them from taking up the mantle of outsiders. Until, of course, the next adventure.

Therefore, Terry's concept for a TV Movie/Mini-Series with a view to develop into another series of Blake's 7, was as follows;

THE basic storyline was that the Federation, while still seeming all-powerful, would be rotting from within (cf, collapse of the Soviet Empire).

Out of the past comes yesterday's man. But all our yesterdays are viewed with nostalgic affection. So, through no fault or will of his own the sole survivor of the original Blake's 7 becomes the catalyst for the creation of its successor. Terry likened this to Napoleon emerging from Elba and fighting his last hundred days. He was always going to lose, but he'd put up one hell of a fight. Glorious defiance is very appealing.

Avon, imprisoned for 25-years, has in the minds of the average citizen essentially 'disappeared'. The Federation's propaganda machine has gone to great lengths to ensure that Blake and his compatriots are remembered simply as outlaws and certainly not hailed as martyrs. Information suppression plus the amount of physical time passed makes Avon a forgotten man. That said there is of course an underground network of dissidents for whom he represents the voice and potency of resistance and in many ways Avon will become the unwitting figurehead to their movement a reluctant El Cid.

The new seven are like a wind, divine or not. Sometimes welcome, sometimes not, the wind is

never static, it always moves on.

Whereas, the mores and values of the TV audience of the time tempered Terry's vision of 'The Dirty Dozen in Space' playing more like 'Robin Hood in Space' the new series must be grittier, more believable, and possess an almost epic and mythic feel to it that will raise it above the 'SF bubblegum' that often predominates our screens.

A good analogy for the series going forward would be West Wing meets The Dirty Dozen where the gloves are off and the rules of engagement ill-defined and thereby the outcome of any conflict either in battle, emotionally or politically, unpredictable!

CURRENTLY in development is a four-hour mini-series reviving the classic 70's SF series Blake's 7. It is the intention of the producer(s) that this mini-series will act as a back-door pilot to a potential series, or a series of tele-movies.

The pilot script has been re-commissioned and is currently undergoing rewrites. It is anticipated that pre-production, i.e., the process of conceptual design, casting and script revisions will commence April/May 2004 with actual production commencing in the Summer 2004. Post-production, i.e., editing, music and special effects are likely to be completed by Fall 2004 with broadcast in the Spring 2005. All these dates are contingent on many factors not least financing.

The consistent ratings success of SF related TV series, the revival of many classic SF show's from the 70s, plus the strong genre retail (video, DVD, merchandise) market, indicate that there is a healthy worldwide audience for original SF. Many argue that twenty-five years on TV SF is still mapping the paths first explored by Terry Nation's creation.

As was the intention of the late Terry Nation, only Paul Darrow who played the character Avon will reprise his role, acting as a catalyst for a Rebellion Reborn. It is fair to say that all the original characters are dead and there are no plans for their resurrection.

The production is currently being budgeted, but will probably be in the region of \$5-6 million dollars.

From baritone to soprano:

Moore tells how he removed the opera from space opera - and came up with a blank space oddity

Taking the Opera Out of Space Opera: Ronald D. Moore discusses the forthcoming *Battlestar Galactica* miniseries

Aug 14, 2003

Author: Robert Falconer

Script Magazine - Scriptmag.com

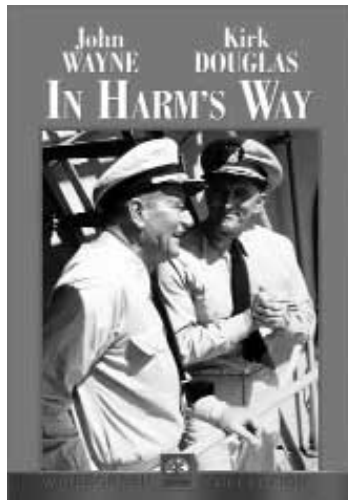
TO SAY that today's TV science fiction is awash in cliché is to tell only half the story, according to producer Ronald D. Moore. The veteran television writer, who began his career with a spec script sale to *Star Trek: The Next Generation* in 1989, ought to know.

Over the past 14 years he's written more than 60 hours of genre television for series such as *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *Roswell*. He has also co-penned two *Star Trek* feature films, *Star Trek: Generations* and *Star Trek: First Contact*. His latest project, the re-imagined *Battlestar Galactica* mini-series for the SCI FI Channel, promises not only to avoid familiar clichés, but to inject realism into what Moore believes has become "an aggressively unrealistic genre."

Whereas sci-fi staples such as UPN's *Enterprise* have arguably fallen victim to formula, other series, such as *Farscape* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, have shown a real commitment to avoiding hackneyed story-telling. In addition, they reflect a more contemporary zeitgeist. But Moore believes sci-fi on television can go even further by introducing new levels of verisimilitude. "Call it 'naturalistic science fiction,'" he says.

"Our goal is nothing less than the reinvention of the science fiction television series," notes Moore. "We take as a given the idea that the traditional space opera, with its stock characters, techno-double-talk, bumpy-headed aliens, thespian histrionics and empty heroics, has run its course and a new approach is required." He believes *Battlestar Galactica* is an ideal premise upon which to base this new approach.

For the uninitiated, the original *Battlestar Galactica* premiered on the ABC television network on September 17, 1978, at a record cost of \$1 million per episode. It was created by writer-producer, Glen Larson, also known for *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and later, *Magnum P.I.* lasting only one season, the series told the story of 12 human colonies destroyed in a genocidal



OFF TARGET: Ronald Moore says he drew inspiration for his *Battlestar* remake from the movie *In Harm's Way*. Not *Galactica*. Is he "re-imagining" the wrong movie?

attack by an alien race known as the Cylons. Led by the only surviving warship, the *Battlestar Galactica*, a convoy of holocaust survivors set off across the stars in search of a mythological 13th colony: a sister world known as Earth.

The new series, which wrapped up production in Vancouver in June, maintains the same dark premise, as well as most of the original characters. Yet Moore elected to make a decisive break with many of the elements introduced in the first series, several of which he believed were impossible. "What attracted me to the project was that at the core of it was a really horrific premise. How many television series get to start with something like that? However, in its original run, the show was a network piece of its time, riding the *Star Wars* crest of fame. I think the original producers felt they had to make escapist, popcorn fare," observes Moore. "I mean, in the pilot they go to the casino planet and start gambling. Starbuck [the dashing fighter pilot] is chatting up the ladies. And just moments ago their entire society's been wiped out! The contradiction between the premise and what they could actually do was inherent within the pilot."

Moore promises that these sorts of contradictions have been addressed in his new version of

Galactica. Other elements have been significantly modified. The new Cylons, for example, look like humans, and there is a significant reason for this. "Human-like Cylons are better from a creative standpoint because the backstory now is that the Colonials created the Cylons," Moore points out. "The Cylons went off and developed on their own ... and then they came back in this new form. There's a stronger tie between Cylon and human; it literally is parent and child now. That creates a different resonance in the piece, because it's really your children that you have responsibility for, that you've created in a very literal sense, and that have now come back to haunt you. I think that's just richer territory."

For the pundits who may suspect the decision was made due to budgetary constraints, Moore concedes that although cost is always a consideration, this time cost and creativity truly went hand in hand. "The discussion did begin with, 'Okay, what are the Cylons going to be?' but once we started looking at doing humanoid Cylons, we realized that, creatively, it was a much better idea anyway. It creates many other possibilities. They can infiltrate human society. Will they lose themselves in human society? Will they begin asking existential questions such as 'Who am I?', and 'Is there a God?' Those are fascinating things when they are ostensibly a synthetic lifeform." Despite this fresh take, Moore promises that the original Cylons will appear in the new *Galactica*. "The original Cylons are still in the story, but in very small roles ... they're not really the newest, coolest model of Cylon anymore."

The new version also departs from the original in other dramatic ways. Thanks to their experience with the Cylons, the Colonials are wary of new technology—a thematic element that plays well in our own increasingly technology-dependent society.

Moreover, realistic characterization is at the heart of this new *Galactica*. Beyond the well-reported gender changes for Starbuck and Boomer (both are now women, played by actresses Katie Sackhoff and Grace Park), Moore promises that, gender notwithstanding, all the characters will be more believable.

"This is perhaps, the biggest departure from the science fiction norm. We do not have 'the cocky guy,' 'the fast-talker,' 'the brain,' 'the wacky alien

RE-IMAGINATION RESULTS:

sidekick' or any of the other usual characters who populate a space series," Moore pledges. "Our characters are living, breathing people with all the emotional complexity and contradictions present in quality dramas like *The West Wing* or *The Sopranos*. In this way, we hope to challenge our audience in ways that other genre pieces do not. We want the audience to connect with the characters of *Galactica* as people. Our characters are not super-heroes. They are not an elite. They are everyday people caught up in an enormous cataclysm and trying to survive it as best they can."

Moore's desire to eschew the traditional story conventions of television science fiction began while he was working on *Star Trek*. "I was thinking about this as I was working on *Deep Space Nine*," he recalls. "On *Deep Space* we were taking *Trek* into more realistic areas in terms of character. We were taking characters away from the *The Next Generation* 'perfect human' model and making them more complicated, more ambiguous. The moral questions were never so clear. That interested me. As those characters became more and more recognizably human, the better I felt the drama worked in the genre. As we pushed those boundaries, I began to get interested in the idea of how much further one could take this concept."

ONE might wonder why Moore didn't begin with a blank sheet of paper and develop an entirely new property within which to explore this approach. He reveals the reasons as part practicality and part creative. "When the idea of *Galactica* was brought to me, I quickly realized this was a really good way to go. Here's an existing franchise. I don't have to walk in and sell them the whole concept-okay, let's do science fiction again-which is hit or miss sometimes. It's always an expensive proposition. Other than *Star Trek*, many are the bodies of the dead," he quips. "Plus [Universal] already owned it, and they already wanted to remake it. I realized that this was a perfect opportunity. Also, the things that *Galactica* was built around-the idea of wiping out an entire civilization and then having this small group of survivors who run away, the fact that it's literally centered around an aircraft carrier in space, the fact that I'm fascinated with the navy and naval history and know the carrier battles of World War II backwards and forwards-it was a happy marriage of all the things I could do, and wanted to do."

Moore's fascination with World War II naval history extends to film, and one of his favorites is the 1965 motion picture, *In Harm's Way*, directed by Otto Preminger. Not surprisingly, *In Harm's Way* offers a good example of the sort of realistic, "flawed" characters we will see in *Galactica*. "Kirk Douglas' character of Paul Eddington and *Galactica*'s Colonel Tigh share many commonalities," offers Moore. "I love the relationship, personified in *In Harm's Way*, between Rock Torrey (John Wayne) and Paul Eddington: two friends, one the stalwart Commander, getting on in years, the other the deeply flawed man who is there for his com-



mander and who can be relied on in time of crisis, but ultimately is a victim of his own weaknesses."

Classic sci-fi films also influenced Moore's approach. "Alien showed a way to present a naturalistic environment on a space ship. The way the crew operated and functioned aboard the *Nostromo*, the way the characters were sketched out-it's a completely believable place. And they're just people on this freighter doing their thing; they're not bigger-than-life heroes. Tom Skerritt's character is just a regular Joe trying to haul cargo from A to B. I loved that."

BEYOND story and character, the most significant departure from sci-fi television is in the approach to the production itself, from editing and visual effects, to the cinema vérité style of filmmaking that permeates the entire look and feel of the project. One of cinema vérité's central tenets is remaining an unobtrusive observer, impartial and outside the process, usually achieved through the use of hand-held cameras and "actual" surroundings, much like a documentary filmmaker. Moore intended this from the outset. "This was in the original pitch. It was one of the first things I said: 'Look, we're going to do this cinema vérité, documentary style.'"

This was constantly on Moore's mind as he wrote the script. "As I was writing it, it was very much in my mind that that was the style. It presented certain challenges because I had been used to writing in a genre that was kind of hyper real, where dramatic scenes were more dramatic than life. I did make concessions to the genre along the way," Moore admits. "There are places where it is a little bigger than is true to the style that we're trying to emulate. At the same time I made a real effort to try to pack down the scenes themselves in the dramatic sense."

This technique extends to the exterior space shots as well. "We're approaching all the visual effects with the idea that someone is documenting them. Someone is sitting in a cockpit [for example] holding a camera and pointing it out the window. We're not going to do the big, sweeping 'hero shot,'" says Moore. "That's not to say we never used a dolly or a crane; we did do a few of those shots. But by and large it's pretty much hand-held, pretty much guerilla, 'you are there' style cinematography." Moore elaborates: "Imagine the sorts of shots you might see on CBS News. If the CBS News crew goes out to the carrier, *Enterprise*, they'll give you an establishing shot of the carrier, but it's shot out the side of a helicopter as it goes down the side of the ship."

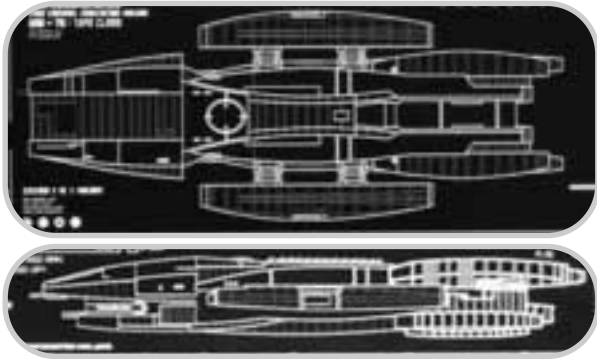
For Moore, this "naturalistic" approach offers a fresh way to do what sci-fi has always done best: explore existential questions about humanity. Furthermore, he doesn't believe that television science fiction has necessarily reached a saturation point in terms of the stories that can be told. "With [science fiction] you still have an ability to challenge the mind in interesting ways, to make you think outside the box, to examine the human condition from a different perspective. Our goal was to find a new way to do all that."

The new *Battlestar Galactica* premieres on the SCI FI Channel on December 7, 2003.

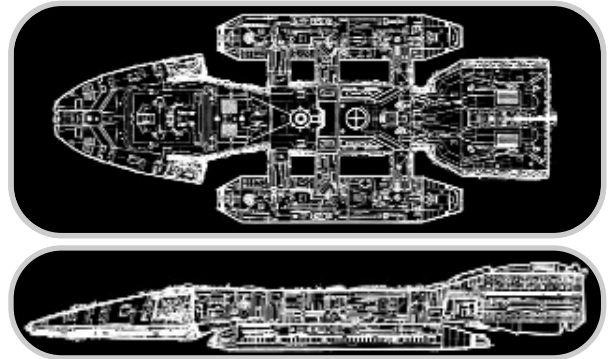
About This Author

Robert Falconer is a professional writer-editor and photographer living in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He specializes in corporate communications, freelance articles and screen-writing for film and television. He can be reached at robertfalconer@shaw.ca

Moore or less the same?



Galactica Mk2



Galactica Mk1



Shuttle Mk2



Shuttle Mk1



Viper Mk2



Viper Mk1



Ship's crest Mk2



Ship's crest Mk2