

Baboon

NOVEMBER
2001

INSIDE



Akdor Campaign: From Page 3:

Three scenarios, force lists, background details and fiction provides a comprehensive setting for GROPOS, FA and B5W



Battlestar sunk? Page 26:

On the brink of filming, efforts to revive Battlestar Galactica appear to have stalled.

BABYLON 5 WARS * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS

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Six months of surprising achievements



Command
Deck

By ALEX ROBERTS

WHEN Babcom first started out none of us figured we would have much of a following. Sure, those die-hard Babylon 5 gaming fans with internet access would check us out, but we only expected perhaps 100 readers.

We expected to release a small newsletter, of perhaps 8-12 pages a month, depending on time available. To our great surprise, 268 people downloaded our first issue the month of its release.

Each month since then Babcom has gone from strength to strength. We have grown into a full-fledged magazine, encompassing 20-25 pages a month with more words printed each issue than many other gaming magazines in physical print.

We've even been able to print work forwarded by several Agents of Gaming freelancers and press releases such as that regarding the new Fleet Action 2 system and Turning Point Universe.

Our most recent issue, October's, was downloaded

by a record 612 readers worldwide. For an online magazine that is not advertised beyond a posting on a mailing list and in a forum, it's pretty amazing.

All of the volunteers here at Babcom devote a lot of time to putting it together every month, along with the help of submissions from fans like you.

If you have feedback, comments, or thoughts for improving Babcom, please let us know. We want to put together something that you, the reader, is going to enjoy every month - and want to contribute to.

And of course keep on reading, and tell a friend. Leave an issue in your local game store. The more people who read Babcom each month, the more inspired we- and hopefully you - are to help produce even better issues in the future.

Remember: Babcom is made by fans like you, for fans like you.

Don't be afraid to submit!

* * *

News updates from the Agents of Gaming

B5 FA2 answers

How soon after the core rules are out can we expect the B5 supplement?

"Probably simultaneously. The first supplement will include all the stuff out already plus as much other data as we can stuff in. I don't have a schedule yet for the other races. The plan (which could change) is to include all the stuff already out in that one book. Just like with any game that changes editions, pretty much all the old stuff will be invalidated. (Seriously, can you think of any game that has ever moved to a new edition without doing this?) I'd rather not discuss actual game rules at this point, primarily because they aren't finished and things could change drastically in the next couple of months. Plus, I personally just don't know. Rob may know. I'll see if I can get him to pop in and answer."

Will counters be produced for the new version of Fleet Action (TPU)?

"Probably, only on the web site, not for sale."

How much more generic are the ships and fighters get? They are already pretty wiped down.

"They will not be any more generic than they have to be. The more details we can use, the better the customizability later. You can only put so much information on a card, of course."

- Agent One: Bruce H. Graw

TU Universe

"In the FA universe Canada and the United States, while separate political entities on paper are more or less a unified nation. The two militaries are seamlessly integrated and the military uses a modified flag which incorporates both the stars and stripes and the oak leaf of the Canadian flag. Within the context of the TP universe this did not occur as a result of pressures from the United States or Canada begging to be



WIRE TAP
From the Agents

let in (this would never happen and I have too much respect for Canada to write that sort of event) and in fact was resisted for a long period by the United States. Rather economic factors and difficulties with the European Unions domination of the world economy made it a necessity. As a side note: the South American Federation doesn't really have much of a fleet. Primarily they have blockade runners and only a few ships larger than a destroyer. They have absolutely no dreadnoughts or battleships (actually, only the EU field a battleship). Australia has a small but well equipped fleet designed strictly for self-defense."

- Robert Glass

Turning Point minis

"For those of you that are wondering, the scale of the figures for the Turning Point universe will be 1cm of miniature length equal 100 meters of actual ship length. A typical cruiser is around 700 meters long so the miniature is 7 centimeters. The figures will fall between FA and Full scale in over all size -- close to FA."

... "The scale is not yet set and I am starting to lean towards reducing the size."... - Robert Glass

B5W mini production

"The existing full scale miniatures will continue to be produced. We're just not making any new ones, that's all. You'll be able to pick up existing designs for as long as we're making Babylon 5 products"

- Agent One: Bruce H. Graw



The high price of political expediency

*Technology is a powerful drug. It envelops its users with a sense of confidence and security. But, at the same time, it gives a distorted view of the world. Over-confidence can be lethal. It is a trap militaries have been falling into for thousands of years. The Romans versus the Visigoths. The British in the Crimea, the United States in Vietnam, Russia in Afghanistan... In 2259, the Earth Alliance proved no better. When faced with an ally's call for help against a civilian uprising, it felt its new weapons would give it the edge. But they were weapons designed to fight the last war. **DIOGENES** examines how the determined Sh'Lassen people did not prove to be the pushover Earthdome expected them to be..*

Sh'Lassen is a troubled nation with a chequered history. But it has recently entered into an era of relative stability under the reign of a Triumvirate.

Each of the three worlds have one leader. These leaders have dominion over their own world and an equal say in the system's interstellar relations.

Some have called these leaders benevolent. Some have called them dictators. Others have called them tyrannical organised crime bosses responsible for countless crimes.

The truth of these claims is hard to determine, for Sh'Lassen is a closed nation. Its citizens are not allowed to travel freely among the stars. Nor are members of other races permitted to visit without government approval.

But its diplomatic relationship with the Earth Alliance has always been a cordial one.

The Earth Alliance was one of only a few nations willing to sell surplus military equipment to Sh'Lassen.

Military ties grew to include training programs, joint manoeuvres and officer exchange schemes. All this time the internal politics of Sh'Lassen gradually became more unstable. But it suited Earth dome to ignore the rumors of civil rights abuses and murder.

Political imperatives

Eventually the turmoil became too loud to ignore. Earthdome made public pleas for the Sh'Lassen government to show tolerance towards emerging vocal opposition parties.

Democracy was an ideal it wished to share with the universe, after-all. But the Triumvirate's cracked-down violently upon its own people - with predictable consequences. A major military installation on Akdor, Matok, mutinied. Civilians wanted by the Government fled to the sanctuary of its walls. Soon, they took the fight back to the government itself - attacking proper-

ty belonging to the planetary leaders, leading riots in the central business districts and sabotaging military equipment.

It is against this background that the Sh'Lassen Triumvirate made a plea through its ambassadors on Babylon 5 to help quell this uprising.

Earth's representatives at first refused. The moral integrity of the Triumvirate had been suspect for some time. But internal power-plays among Earth Alliance factions eventually came out in favor of sending military support.

At stake was the vital strategic partnership Earth had nurtured so carefully over the years. Earthdome's greater needs were at risk.

The good of the Sh'Lassen people would have to wait until more peaceful times.

Strategic significance

Sh'Lassen sits at the junction of Narn, Centauri and Earth space. While the Centauri Republic and Earth Alliance share a border between Epsilon and Beta 3, the Narn Regime has no such common space. The most direct link between it and the Earth Alliance is through the Sh'Lassen system.

Earth dome has always considered this transit route vitally important. Through it can pass cargo and emissaries Earth and Narn do not want Centauri Prime to know about.

But, most importantly, Earthdome's congenial relationship with the Sh'Lassen triumvirate has allowed the almost regular secret passage of intelligence gathering vessels into Narn space.

At the outbreak of the War of Retribution between Narn and Centauri in 2259, this narrow junction became even more important.

The Earth Alliance felt it would eventually be forced to take sides in the war. But on whose side was uncertain.

Either way, the Sh'Lassen jumpgates would be come even more vital. Negotiations were underway to establish a permanent military support

base within the system. These negotiations could not be allowed to fail.

Operation Sudden Death

Earth force finds itself in a difficult position. It had orders to assemble a full division of space marines quickly - and in the utmost secrecy.

The 366th Infantry Division, under General Richard Franklin, was already embarked upon its transports ready to relieve the garrison at Io. These could be diverted at the last possible moment into Sh'Lassen space - once they had regrouped and resupplied at Babylon 5.

The Division also had just been assigned a full complement of the new Valkyrie VTOLs.

This ground-attack capability was to be further supplemented by the secret deployment of a flight of the new SA-26A Thunderbolt atmospheric-capable Starfuries. It was widely known these new craft could only be deployed aboard Omega-class Destroyers. But two Covert-Ops Hermes transports capable of carrying six Starfuries each had been further modified to dock Thunderbolts. This capability would add to Earthforce's technological edge.

Naval forces were another issue. The movement of big ships was hard to keep secret.

While there was no expectation of opposing naval forces, it was judged prudent to supply the troops with at least a minimal naval escort.

The old Nova-class dreadnought Schwartzkopf, which had been relegated to training duties, was diverted to Babylon 5. On board was General Franklin who had earlier been flown to Earth dome for a briefing.

One Hyperion-class heavy cruiser, the EAS Phaeton, was to divert from its patrol route in the area to rendezvous with the EAS Schwartzkopf Task Group for the final jump into Sh'Lassen space.

Nothing could go wrong with such a plan . . .



Surprise or be surprised - beating the best laid plans

By **DIOGENES**

GENERAL Franklin embarked upon the Akdor campaign brimming with confidence. He had 25,000 of the best troops Earth could muster, equipped with the latest improvements in Earth technology.

Akdor was a backwater, full of bickering civilians with out-dated weaponry at the best.

What could go wrong?

He was soon to find out.

The best-laid plans never survive initial contact with the enemy. General Franklin was reminded of this as soon as he jumped into the Sh'lassen system.

Sh'lassen is a busy jumpoint - serving three fully inhabited worlds.

The Sh'lassen Triumvirate had "guaranteed" Earthdome that there would be no problems getting the troops to Akdor's surface. The rebels had no space-going assets, they insisted. Besides, the Sh'lassen navy would provide cover.

But Earthforce was prudent. It sent a minimal escort - both to screen the vulnerable Condor troop transports and to provide naval gunfire support if called upon.

The officer who took this decision to include the Nova and one Hyperion should have been awarded a medal.

The Sh'lassen Triumvirate was wrong.

News of the Task Force's arrival was leaked by elements within the military to the civilian rebel commanders at Matok. They resolved to take pre-emptive action...

SETUP:

At the extreme bottom-left corner of the map is a jump-gate. The diagonal hex-line this is on, and the two hexes to either side, is a commercial shipping lane. The Sh'lassen navy has cleared the area for a 15 hex-radius around the jump-gate of civilian traffic. Its major ships are waiting - stationary - to one side of the gate ready to fall into formation with General Franklin's Task Force. The Sh'lassen police boats are dispersed



Frontline scenarios

among the shipping lanes - in individual positions and under their own individual command - but in locations determined by the Earthforce player. These are moving at speed three.

The rebel player can position and pilot the eight merchant vessels in a ragged line within the shipping lane. The reasoning behind this? If anything can go wrong - it will. And you can guarantee the rebel player to ensure things are "inconvenient". Merchant vessel start speeds should be set at three.

Civilian attack: At this point, small pieces of paper with the designations of each of the eight transports must be bundled into a cup - and shaken. The rebel player may select one of these pieces of paper - and keep them secret.

Random revolt: Also at this point, small pieces of paper with the designations of each Sh'lassen naval vessel must be bundled into a cup - and shaken. The rebel player may choose three of these pieces of paper - and keep them secret.

Rebel Commander:

The rebel player may pilot all the civilian vessels within the shipping lanes to the jump-gate. Their start speed is three. The speed limit is four - until the rebel player commits to an attack. Only the rebel player knows which one of the merchants is the flying bomb. He can pilot this vessel - with the intention of keeping it concealed from the Earthforce player - into a position for a ramming attack against an Earthforce vessel of his choice. Ramming rules for Fleet Action are discussed in a separate article on page 6 of this edition of Babcom.

The Sh'lassen capital ships (the Oracle and the Olympus variant) begin in an "out of command" condition, controlled by the Rebel Commander. These ships *must* move in a direct manner to squadron locations specified by the Earth Force commander. Once in these specified squadron

hexes (under the command of the Nova or Hyperion), command of these ships are handed over to the Earth Force Commander.

Earthforce Commander:

Your small squadron is jumping into a busy commercial shipping lane. You have been assured there will be no enemy activity. You have been assured additional escort vessels loyal to the Sh'lassen Triumvirate will be there to place themselves under your command. These ships are to be integrated into your Task Force and squadron command structures immediately upon arrival - as though they were your own. You will play them as such. Speeds should not exceed the commercial limit of four before the outbreak of conflict.

FORCES:

The point values for these forces - especially when the random turncoat rules are applied - are very uneven. That is the nature of this scenario. Against the odds. The object is for the rebels to use wit, cunning, guile and ruthlessness to obtain their objective.

Sh'lassen Triumvirate:

1x Oracle D Cruiser (Earthforce surplus)
1x Armak Destroyer (export version of the Olympus)
1x Veltar Frigate (Laertes/Raider sloop)
1x Police Leader*

4x Tethy's Police Cutters*

*These ships are to be operated as though they are independent, individual squadrons. Thus they can be dispersed among the shipping lanes.

Civilian Merchantmen:

1x Passenger Liner
2x Ore Barge
2x Tug
3x Bulk Freighter

* Each of these ships is under independent command (form its own squadron).

Earthforce:

1x Nova Dreadnought
1x Hyperion Theta
5x Condor Transports



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- No Sh'lassen naval vessel can revolt until the civilian transport has carried out its attack. This is the action that prompts the mutinies/hijacks of the naval vessels.
- Earthforce squadrons must travel in close proximity, as though they were a military convoy. This should remain the case once the Sh'lassen navy units have been integrated.
- One of the three Sh'lassen naval "turncoat" cards held by the rebel player cannot be played until the destruction of the first rebel naval vessel. The choice of which vessel will be held back is at the rebel player's discretion.
- Sh'lassen naval forces remaining loyal to the Triumvirate will nevertheless be initially reluctant to fire upon their own people. Thus they will suffer a 1 Turn (three combat pulse) delay before they can open fire. They can, however, manoeuvre freely during this time.

OBJECTIVES:

Rebel: You must do the maximum amount of damage to the Earthforce Task Force. The primary objectives are the Condor transports and the troops they carry. However, a damaging strike upon the flagship - EAS Schwarzkopf - is an equally significant outcome.

Earthforce: Your objective is to traverse to the

opposite corner of the map safely. You may initially travel within the shipping lane, or within the two hexes either side of the shipping lane. This may change once hostilities commence. You must not lose any of the Condor transports.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

Rebels:

Major Victory: The loss of one or more Condor Transports

Minor Victory: Severe damage to, or destruction of, an Earthforce capital ship.

Earthforce:

Major Victory: No significant damage, no Condor Transports lost.

Minor Victory: Damage limited to capital ships.

SCS LOCATIONS:

The FA versions of the civilian vessels and the Oracle D can be found at:

<http://www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa>

The B5W and FA versions of the Armak Destroyer variant and the Veltar Frigate variant can be found in the attachments folder.

There is no B5W version of the Condor at this stage. Use a merchant replacement. The FA version is in the attachments folder.



Shipyard Supervisor

CONDOR Military Transport (Common)

The Condor is a utilitarian vehicle, capable of travelling for short distances via hyper-space jumpgates to contested worlds and delivering four companies of troops to a planet's surface. The need to traverse a planetary atmosphere and gravity well has limited the size of this ship. It carries two very powerful engines on VTOL outrigger pylons. The hull is modular, allowing airline-seat style troop accommodation to be removed and a multi-deck vehicle parking bay module to be installed in its place. Ramps allow troops to disembark via the liftable nosecone while the tail ramp detaches and lifts to the different vehicle decks. Weaponry and armor are limited to the minimum for self defence.

- Diogenes

TRIUMVIRATE Cruiser (Specialty: Only 3 exist)

Late in the 2250's the Triumvirate began expanding their small navy. Three Earth Alliance surplus Oracle-Delta light cruisers were selected to serve as squadron flagships. The first jump-capable warships the Sh'Lassens possessed, they were also delivered with their weapons suites intact (less the proprietary Interceptor technology). A proposal to refit them with additional weapons batteries is being considered. Use the Oracle-Delta SCS, deleting the interceptors.

ARMAK Destroyer

(Base Hull / Unlimited Deployment)

With the power vaculme left by the diversion of naval fleets to the Dilgar War, Raiders promptly became a serious problem. The Sh'lassen Triumverate realised they would need to begin fielding a competent, capable naval force of their own. An Earthforce "lend-lease" package included a small group of Olympus Corvettes. The ships were delivered stripped of all proprietary technology and their entire weapons. Sh'Lassen shipwrights did their best with the outdated hulls, refitting them to almost match modern Earthforce standards. When the time came to arm the ships, they turned to homebuilt technologies, using a mix of missiles, primitive particle beams, and basic matter weaponry.

- Chris Nasipak

VELTAR Frigate

(Base Hull / Unlimited Deployment)

Several of the aging Laertes patrol frigates were purchased from th EA. Armed with the same low-tech mix as the Armak destroyers, they became the mainstay of the Sh'Lassen navy, patrolling the system and escorting civilian vessels.

- Chris Nasipak



Optional ramming rules for Fleet Action

FA1 House Rule By KARL JOHNSON

SPECIAL scenario rule for Dilgar-era games only; not intended for general use (except as allowed by players in campaigns or specific scenarios).

A - To make a ramming attempt against an enemy ship, the targeted ship must be within 3 hexes of the ramming ship, and the targeted ship must also be within the front arc of the ship making the ramming attempt. Ramming attacks may be announced against specific legal targets at any point during the ramming ship's movement and are resolved at the end of the movement segment of the same pulse in which the ramming attempt is announced (note that the ramming ship need not move into the target ship's hex). Determine the facing of impact on the target ship as if firing on the target ship from the respective ships' current positions at the time the attack is announced; the ramming ship will always have damage applied through its forward facing (this is to determine armor values for damage resolution).

B - Ramming attacks may be made by: 1. Dilgar Delegor Suicide Frigates at any time during a scenario. 2. In scenarios set in 2232, any Dilgar ships in squadrons failing their Morale die roll (as an alternative to disengaging by distance or jumping out). 3. In scenarios set in 2232, EA/League ships in squadrons that fail their Morale die roll AND subsequently roll a 1-3 on a d6.

C - Fighter flights may make ramming attempts when any friendly ship becomes eligible to make ramming attacks AND rolls equal to or higher than the number of fighters currently in the flight on a d6; Dilgar flights add one to this die roll. Each flight rolls individually and may roll once each pulse, prior to executing its movement in that pulse. Fighter flights, unlike ships, **MUST** enter the target's hex to make a ramming attempt. Fighter ramming attempts are made after fighter movement but prior to AF fire and fighter strike resolution.

D - The chance to ram a selected target ship is equal to the difference in the two ships' current Turn track ratings (or a fighter flight's movement rating less the target ship's turn rating) on a d12 (subtract the target's current Turn rating from the ramming ship's Turn rating); roll less than or equal to this number to hit. An unmodified die roll of 1 always succeeds as a Catastrophic Collision, even if the ramming ship's To Hit chance is negative. Each ship (rammer and target) rolls the appropriate dice against the other

B5W House Rule: Suicide Intercept

SOMETIMES, a ship's captain will know that his vessel is expendable: that the chance of getting another ship - such as a liner loaded with refugees - to safety is far more important than his own survival.

This captain would be entirely willing to take the fire directed at the target, and will gladly do so, as the Narn did in the episode *Acts of Sacrifice*.

System: Suicide Intercept is allowed under the same conditions as Ramming.

If at the time of declaration of fire, a ship is on the direct line of fire between an enemy unit and a target he wishes to protect, or within 1 hex of that line and has enough Free Thrust

left for a sideslip, he may declare a Suicide Intercept. Place the intercepting unit on the direct line between the firing vessel and its target if it is not there already.

The firing vessel may switch his lock-on to the interceptor, if he wishes, exactly as if the target had moved behind an Enormous Unit. Fire is then resolved on the intercepting vessel as if it had a Defense Value of 20.

(The raised defense value represents the interceptor's willingness to sacrifice himself by deliberately seeking to take the fire directly on his ship. It's called suicide intercept for a reason...)

- Chris Nasipak

ship on the FA damage chart. Subtract two from the die roll when attempting to ram an immobile unit (Starbase or OSAT only). Subtract one from the die roll if the target ship is Out of Command, and add one to the die roll if the ramming ship is Out of Command. All die roll modifiers are cumulative.

EXAMPLE: A Dilgar Delegor Suicide Frigate has fulfilled the conditions to execute a ramming attack and is attempting to ram a Markab Shafab Heavy Cruiser. The Delegor has a current Turn Rating of 15 (it's taken some damage), while the Shafab has a current Turn rating of 9. The number that must be rolled on a d12 for the attack to succeed is $(15-9)=6$ or less. Since the Delegor has a bonus -2 die roll modifier to all ramming attempts (as noted on its datacard), it needs to roll 8 or less on a d12.

E - Damage is calculated according to the severity of the hit, based on how well the ramming unit rolled:

DR Type of hit/damage

0-1 below To Hit number = Glancing Blow: each ship loses 1 structure (or 2 fighters).

2-5 below To Hit number = Collision: each ship rolls 1/2 of the listed damage from the Collision Damage Chart.

6+ below To Hit number = Catastrophic Collision: Roll dice as indicated from the Collision Damage Chart.

Collision Damage Chart:

Fighter Flight: d6 per 2 fighters, rounded down
Med: 2d6 per current structure

HCV: 2d8 per current structure

Cap: 2d10 per current structure

Enormous: 3d12 per current structure (Facing Structure PLUS Primary Structure).

- The ramming ship rolls the number of dam-

age dice indicated by its size category against the target ship; likewise, the target ship rolls the number of damage dice indicated by its size category against the ramming ship. All damage is applied prior to executing any ship's direct fire attacks in the pulse.

- Dilgar Delegor Suicide Frigates (only) add a +2 to each damage die rolled, as indicated on the ship's datacard.

EXAMPLE: The Delegor from the above example rolls a 4 on its ramming attempt (after modification), indicating that it splats into the Shafab, but, as 4 is only 4 less than 8, a Collision occurs, showing that only half of the listed damage dice are rolled for resolving damage to each ship. The Delegor's current Structure is 3 (again, having taken prior damage); it's also a Medium category ship. The Delegor's impact will cause $3d6(+2/die)$ damage to the Shafab, while the Shafab, a Capital category ship having a current (undamaged) Structure of 10, will roll 10d10 damage against the Delegor.

F - Ships that fail their ramming attempts are left in their present hex on the map; ships that succeed in inflicting at least a glancing blow against the target are placed (if they survive) in the same hex as the target ship.

G - Ramming ships which fail to strike their targets may fire in the ensuing fire phase, but do so with all weapons' x factors halved (round DOWN).



Surgical strike or meatgrinder? The battle for Matok

Fiction: By DIOGENES

THINGS were not going to plan. General Franklin had entered Akdor's atmosphere aboard a Hades assault shuttle. It had dropped like a stone, jinking hard from time to time to reduce the chances of any sensor locks. Four other shuttles had followed - no more than four of his staff officers per shuttle. All had arrived safely, but Franklin was not certain whether this was due to skill or luck.

What else could go wrong?

A civilian tugboat had rammed his flagship, the EAS Schwarzkopf, shortly after his Task Force had jumped in-system. This act appeared to have been a trigger for a mutiny among the Sh'lassen warships sent to "escort" the Earthforce squadron to the planet.

Fortunately the EAS Phaeton had been on the ball. The vulnerable Condor troop transports were safe. But it had been several hours before the Schwarzkopf could rejoin the squadron and move into position above the planet to fulfill its gunfire support role. But then part of Akdor's satellite defence grid had been hacked!

Franklin shook his head. This was not going to plan at all!

His mood improved slightly when he reached the beachhead. General Franklin had worried about a safe base for ground operations for days. Finally, he had settled on a tabletop mountain only a few hundred kilometers from his objective - the Matok fortress.

The mountain's steep slopes would provide protection for innocent - and not-so-innocent - local civilians. It was also an ideal vantage point for observation and artillery. And its flat plateau was almost a natural landing-ground for VTOLS.

The shuttle banked hard, responding to an instruction from the ground controller. Engines whined as it slowed for a final approach.

Below were the six Condor Assault Dropships. So small looking in space, their true size was apparent when on the ground. The dropships were arrayed in the standard "hot-zone" deployment pattern. All were facing outward in a large circle, giving their limited armament maximum protective coverage of the troops and vehicles being disgorged from their bow doors and stern ramps.

Dust, smoke and the unrecognizable smells of an alien world whipped General Franklin's senses as he stepped out of the shuttle and into the wind. Several fully armed GROPOS rushed forward to escort him, an officer close behind.

"Well, David?" General Franklin had to shout over the gale.

"The mountain is secure, sir. We're digging in right now."

Franklin nodded as he looked around. Steel mesh sheeting already coated the ground at the center of the plateau. Several Valkyrie and Frigga VTOLS were dipping in to land. Nearby troops were unpacking ammunition trucks. The 366th was nothing if not efficient.

"General, this way," the lieutenant colonel motioned towards an armored command vehicle that was already securely positioned within a dug-out trench. Soldiers swarmed about it, struggling to set in place a camouflage mesh against the wind.

General Franklin, wearing bulky bodyarmour but carrying only his personal computer, was surprised at the heat. He wondered how his heavily laden soldiers would cope.

The command vehicle was a completely different world. It was totally quiet. Cool. And there was only a hint of dust on the floor. So far.

"What do we know?" Franklin's voice was firm and level.

"We have four operations underway," the lieutenant colonel replied. "One involves securing a nearby crossroads and two are recons of our area. Our deepest penetration so far is just over one hundred kilometers. We've dropped a spotting team on a mountain overlooking the Matok plateau."

Franklin nodded. "Take me there."

Lieutenant-colonel David Stott's face whitened. "But they've only just..."

"I know, David," Franklin interjected. "But I have to see this place for myself. Now."

The subordinate nodded.

General Franklin sat strapped into the observer's seat of the Frigga as it skimmed low over the rocky landscape. Overhead was the protective presence of two Valkyrie Gunships.

Franklin craned his head, peering out the

armored canopy to see what he could. He was surprised. All of the Sh'lassen military briefings had told of only minor clashes with the rebels. But the destruction on the landscape below told him a different story. On every road was a burnt-out truck or tank. Every bridge was destroyed. And here and there were the charred remains of aircraft.

The desert had been turned into a graveyard.

General Franklin did not fail to note that most of it was surplus Earthforce technology... proud veterans of the Dilgar War reduced to nothing more than junk littering the countryside.

The Frigga flashed low over a town. He counted six wrecked armored vehicles on its outskirts. The town itself had been virtually destroyed.

Gradually the signs of habitation, and combat, grew less.

The rocky ground was gradually giving way to sand dunes. Not a pleasant place for a tracked tank, Franklin observed.

A warning buzzer screamed into the cockpit.

The pilot swore, dropping the Frigga even lower between the dunes. "SAMs."

Out of the corner of one eye, Franklin saw something small and metallic flash overhead. Then another.

A voice crackled through his headset. One of the escorting Valkyries. "Source, volcanic outcrop. Range, thirty clicks on a zero-three-zero. Engaging."

"Negative, Charlie one," replied Franklin's pilot. "We have a package to protect. Maintain position."

The VTOLs raced to open the range with the volcanic outcrop. No doubt the rebels had set up a mobile AA launcher there. No doubt it would not be there much longer ... thus the Valkyrie pilot's eagerness to engage.

"It makes no sense. They shouldn't have had a lock on us at this range." The pilot seemed confused.

Franklin frowned. He also knew the specs of that SAM launcher system. The pilot was right. But, if the missile was directed to the general area of a target, it could acquire a target with its own sensors....

General Franklin looked over his shoulder.

"Higher, go higher!" He barked.



"What?"

"Dust, man! We're kicking up a dust trail! It's a god-damn signpost pointing exactly to where we are!"

The pilot looked shocked.

General Franklin was thrown back in his seat as the Frigga's nose jerked upward.

"Sorry, sir. I didn't think of that."

Franklin remained silent. We all have to think outside the box, he reminded himself.

Fifteen minutes later, after some seat-of-the-pants flying through jagged valleys, the Frigga flared and landed on a rocky outcrop. The escorting Valkyries took up positions hovering at either end of the canyon.

Out of the dust emerged several GROPOS. The look of shock on their faces at the sight of General Franklin was almost laughable.

"We're here to pick you guys up," Franklin bel-lowed over the wind. "After you've shown me what you've seen."

A fresh-faced young lieutenant nodded. She leaned forward to shout into Franklin's ear.

"It's just over that ridge. We've set up opticals and multi-spectrum analyzers. But they won't last long in this dust."

Franklin nodded, beckoning the young lieutenant to lead the way.

It was a short but difficult climb. He was not in as good a shape as he had been. By the time he reached the top of the ridge, he was drenched in muddy sweat.

The recon team was busily packing up and heading down the hill to the VTOL. But several remote-operated units were being left behind.

Franklin went to step up onto the crest, but a firm hand held him back. The concerned frown of the lieutenant greeted his irritated look.

"General, you'd be too exposed on the ridge-line." She nodded towards several boulders. "Stand between those. They won't see you."

Franklin nodded, embarrassed at forgetting such a basic military precaution.

He stepped up to the boulders and took his first look at the plateau.

"General, see those peaks to the north?" shouted the lieutenant.

Franklin nodded.

"Artillery sites. They have a clear field of fire over the plain to the west. So do the peaks to the south. That makes it a real kill zone. And the mountain ranges to the north and east are impassable to everything - including VTOLS."

"That leaves the south, lieutenant."

The female officer shook her head. "There are canyons through there sir, like we were told. Intel tells us the area is mined and the canyons heavily guarded."

General Franklin stood there a long time.

He eventually forced himself to look away.

Sheridan was right: Matok really was a death trap.

OPERATION SUDDEN DEATH: AIR STRIKES

ORBITAL BOMBARDMENT: Nova Dreadnought

Political conditions and Interstellar treaties limit the use of space-based bombardment. However, the EAS Schwarzkopf will stand ready to use its medium lasers for pinpoint strikes against armor and bunkers.

AIR STRIKES:

SA-26S Thunderbolt:

Type: Heavy Fighter - Bomber (space & atmosphere)

Crew: Two - Pilot w/ Bomber

Length: 15.54 meters

Mass: 52 metric tons

Power: One Micro-Fusion reactor, two Fusion Batteries

Endurance: Six hours

Accel: 1 km/s

Agility: Class A

Weapons: One Linked unidirectional 40mm pulse cannons, Fusion missiles.

Defense: 5.6 Centimeter re-enforced armor.

Notes: This is the first operational deployment of the type.



THE TARGET: Fortress Matok

Very little has been revealed by the Sh'lassen government about this heavy fortification. What is known is that it comprises of a reinforced central half-dome structure, surrounded by a five-sided wall. At each juncture in the wall are twin defensive towers.

Weapons are known to include pulse and plasma varieties. Garrison strength is unknown.

GROUND SUPPORT:

Valkyrie Gunship

Type: Attack VTOL (space & atmosphere capable)

Crew: Two - Pilot and weapon systems operator.

Weapons: Cyclone pulse cannon, yellow jacket missile system, Hammer anti tank missile system

Notes: This campaign will be a major test for the type. The lack of access to Sh'lassen airfields prevents the deployment of standard atmospheric strike aircraft. This, and the limited availability of the Thunderbolt, means the Valkyrie will have to conduct strike missions in tandem with its ground support operations.



Dust Demons versus Ground Pounders: an unequal fight?

BACKGROUND:

THE Sh'lassen Triumvirate has long been associated with the Earth Alliance as a client state, receiving funding and equipment from the Earth Alliance in an attempt to keep them from falling under Narn or Centauri domination.

Although Earth Alliance (EA) troops are not stationed in the Sh'lassen system, EA advisors are present and help train the Sh'lassen military. The EA has also provided most of the equipment the Sh'lassen military uses. Much of this consists of older equipment, though small numbers of more advanced Frigga VTOLS have been purchased by the Sh'lassen government. Despite EA advisors and equipment, the Sh'lassen military remains poorly trained and disciplined. Large-scale conscription is relatively unpopular with the populace, who need their sons on their farms in order to eke out a living. Supplies and maintenance are limited, and most formations remain at a low level of readiness.

Over the past few years much of the populace has risen up in rebellion against the government. High conscription levels are unpopular, and some units have had upwards of 50% desertion rates. High tax rates by the government to support the purchase of EA weaponry and services are driving much of the population into even deeper poverty. Most telling, however, are the efforts of the Sh'lassen government to eradicate the traditions and customs of the Akdor people. Most Sh'lassen commoners are strongly resistant to any efforts to alter the way they live.

The rebellion started small. Military units raised from the more religious areas of Akdor began to mutiny en masse. Although quickly put down by units loyal to the government, many still escaped to the hinterlands, and joined up with local peasant groups that were organizing along family and clan lines to fight back against the government. Ambushes of government convoys and military installations soon followed. In response to these attacks, the government



GROPOS

By ALEX ROBERTS

increased their already strong suppression of the people, beginning sweeps that razed villages within one days march of main roads, power plants, or any other objective considered important to the government.

The tens of thousands of casualties caused by these sweeps, mostly civilian, served only to encourage the populace to join the rebels. Assaults and ambushes on Sh'lassen forces became more common. Understaffed, the Matok fortress fell to a quick foot based rebel attack, assisted by a number of turncoat officers of the military who disabled much of the fort's defenses just minutes before the attack commenced.

By April of 2259, the situation had reached a crisis point. The Sh'lassen government's hold on the planet was tenuous. However, their agents had learned that much of the rebel's leadership was ensconced in the old fortress of Matok. A nearly impervious fortress, the rebels felt that no force, either Sh'lassen or other, could successfully assault them.

The Sh'lassen government made desperate pleas for support to the EA government. Offering whatever the EA wanted, including bases and support for whatever forces the EA wished to station on Akdor. The EA finally agreed, and dispatched the 366th Infantry Division to Akdor. The EA had decided, based on Sh'lassen intelligence, to make a quick strike against the fortress of Matok, killing or capturing the rebel leadership, and hopefully ending the rebellion then and there.

NEW SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mountain Specialists: Troops with the designation mountain specialists are trained and equipped to deal with difficult mountainous ter-

rain. They may treat steep hills and any elevation changes as open terrain for movement purposes. In addition, any Mountain Specialist stand enjoys a +1 to any close combats that occur in rough terrain or on hills or mountains.

Cost: 15

Mujahideen: Literally "a fighter of the faith", the term has become used for many fanatical religious guerillas in the centuries after it first came into use in the Middle East of Earth. Mujahideen guerillas are not ordinary guerillas. They are willing and happy to become martyrs to their cause, though this does not necessarily mean they will throw down their lives for naught. However, they will fight on eagerly through wounds which would fell a normal man. Troops designated as Mujahadeen add +1 to any morale or pin checks. Thus, they only fail on a 1, not a 1-2.

Cost: 35

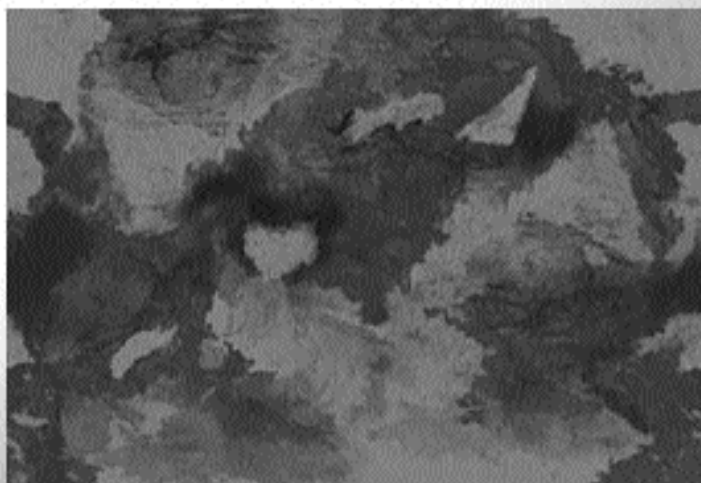
NEW EQUIPMENT

RAM Launcher: RAM (Rolling Airborne Missile) launchers are a new development of the EA R&D department. They are designed to intercept incoming missiles and destroy them. Although the concept has been around for centuries, it has been difficult to design one fast and reliable enough for close battlefield support. The RAM launcher does not function as normal Anti-Missile Fire or Active Defenses. If any enemy missile is fired at a target that is within 10" of a RAM launcher, the RAM launcher can choose to intercept. This must be declared before the to hit or damage dice are rolled. Roll a d8 for the RAM launcher. On a 6-8, the missile is intercepted and has no effect. If it was a missile weapon with a multiple ROF, the ROF is reduced by one. Each RAM launcher may only choose to intercept one enemy missile per turn. The RAM launcher may intercept missiles in a 360 degree field of fire. It cannot affect enemy units.

The RAM launcher is unfortunately not per-



AKDOR: THIRD PLANET IN THE SH'LASSEN TRIUMVERATE



PLANET AKDOR:

Size: 1.27 Earth standard.

Orbit: Layer 5, the outermost habitable planet in the Sh'lassen system.

Planetary Year: 1.82 Earth standard.

Time to jumpgate: Two days.

Moons: Two non-atmospheric, high orbital captured asteroids.

Orbital Stations: None

AKDOR GEOGRAPHIC SURVEY:

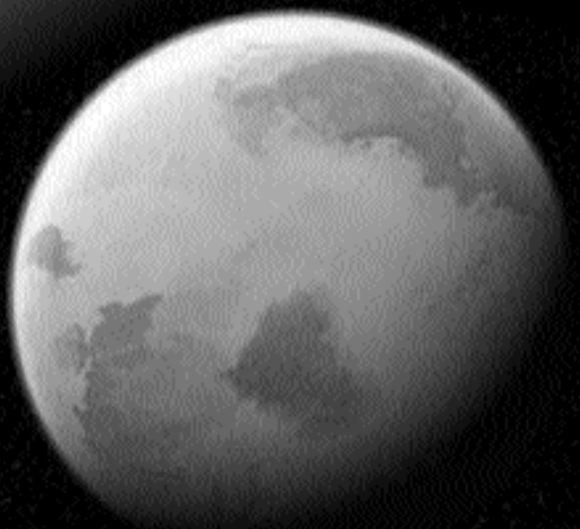
The planet is very old in habitability terms. Its once vast oceans have mostly dried up and its atmosphere has thinned considerably.

The ancient continents have been heavily wind eroded, turning them into hot, rugged mountain highlands.

The old seabeds are cooler and the weather much less extreme.

High soil salt content and low rainfall makes agriculture difficult.

Population centres tend to be clustered in the north and south polar regions - with mainly mining and private settlements elsewhere.



fected. The quick rotation and high speed loading and firing often causes the system to break down or even explode. On an intercept roll of 1, the system has broken down. It is effectively destroyed, and may be removed from the game.

The RAM launcher functions as per the normal Turret rules. Because they are completely automated, they only have one cost.

Anti-Missile fire and Active Defenses function normally for all units.

Maser Rifle: Another new design by the EA R&D groups, Maser is an acronym for Microwave Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. A Maser converts radiation into amplified microwave energy. Rather than shattering bones and ripping flesh, the Maser essentially cooks its target, boiling eyes, brains, and other organs until they burst, and melting and frying body parts. Needless to say, watching ones comrades literally cooked alive is not a pleasant experience.

Any enemy DVD unit successfully hit by a Maser must make a morale check immediately, regardless of whether or not a morale trigger was reached.

EA FORCE LIST:

Due to the speed of deployment, a very small amount of heavy lift capacity was available to the EA forces deployed to Akdor. Because of this, heavy armored formations may not be chosen for missions on Akdor. There are some small numbers of SP artillery available, however. The initial force commitment from the EA was the 366th Infantry Division, dedicated to a surprise strike on the Matok fortress and sur-

rounding area. The below troop list encompasses the 366th Infantry division and attached support units.

Further EA divisions were moved to Akdor after their initial engagements with the rebels. Future conflicts between the EA and remaining rebel forces on Akdor can use any troops specified in the EA Sourcebook.

Only the following EA units may be used during the initial engagements on Akdor, with the noted restrictions.

Regimental HQ

Battalion HQ

Air Cav Company. (May purchase up to 2 Air Strike support elements at 100 points each. These may not exceed the normal support element restrictions [i.e. if you have a limit of 2, and you buy 2 Air Strikes, you may not purchase any further support elements.]

Garrison Company (No outer sector units available.)

Special Forces Company

Mountain Company (See below, all non specified rules as per EA Sourcebook)

In addition, all companies may choose the following support units. They are still limited to their normal number of support elements allowed. Also, companies are not restricted to the normal "no repeats" rule if they choose to purchase multiple air strikes. This is due to the EA control of the air over Akdor.

Special Akdor Campaign Support Elements:

RAM Launcher Turret

(x1) -/30/-/

Maser Rifle Infantry

(x2) 18/36/54/62

Orbital Support

Random: 205

Pick: May not be chosen by companies. Regimental and Battalion HQ units may pick as per the listed costs.

[Note that this is a special option for companies, as Orbital Support is not normally allocated to the company level. However, the need for more close air support forced EA commanders to put Orbital Support at the beck and call of company commanders as needed. However, what they get may not always be what they wanted.]

Mountain Company TO&E:

The 366th Infantry division contains a number of companies that are trained and specialize in fighting in mountainous terrain. This is one of the reasons this division was selected for the assault on Matok, as much of the terrain around the fort is difficult and mountainous.

Contents: 1 CG, 4 PLT

1 Command Group

2-4 Unlimited Platoons

Options

0-2 Support Elements

Command Group (Mountain Specialists)

1 Standard Infantry

2 AT Infantry

Cost: 39/63/86/122

Unlimited Platoons

Infantry Platoon (as per Garrison Company Inner Sector Infantry Options, all units Mountain Specialists [add +15 per platoon])

Support Elements (May choose up to 2 options below, repeats are allowed for Air Strikes)

1) Air Strike



Cost: 100

2) Sniper (Mountain Specialist)

--/25/35/50

3) Recon Team (Mountain Specialist)

Sleipner X 1

4) Recon Team X 1

41/67/92/133

SH'LASSEN GOVERNMENT

FORCE LIST:

The vast majority of the Sh'lassen government forces are foot troops. Equipped with EA equipment, they are organized on a similar basis to the EA. Numerous Sh'lassen military formations have defected to the rebels, along with their equipment. Thus, the forces below may be used both by the Sh'lassen government as well as rebel forces. Sh'lassen rifle companies that have turned rebel are still subject to the special rules of Sh'lassen government troops. Although they have switched sides, they remain poorly motivated and supported, and less motivated than clan based rebel formations.

Special Rules: The troops of the Sh'lassen government follow the stats and equipment for EA troops as listed in the EA Sourcebook, with the modifications below. Although some armored vehicles are available, the majority of the Sh'lassen forces are limited to foot marches for deployment. Trucks and trains are sometimes used to shift large troop formations, but these are rarely if ever committed to battle.

DVD Troops:

Discipline = -1, Close Combat Rating = -1

DVA Troops:

Target Die = 1 lower type (eg d8 becomes d6)

Sh'lassen Rifle Company: Use the Garrison Company per the EA Sourcebook on page 40, with the following changes.

1) All troop and vehicle costs are -10%, round down.

2) Air Strikes cost 150 points. If a thunderbolt is rolled, reroll until another type of unit is selected.

3) Add the Limited Platoon Choice of Thor (4 tanks)

4) Outer Sector Units increase from (0-1) to (0-3) [This allows the majority of special units to be mounted in Baldurs]

5) Add the Support Element choice of Frigga (2)

AKDOR REBELS FORCE LIST

The rebels have been fighting the Sh'lassen government for some time, and have become very experienced in the art of the ambush. Although from time to time they will defend important villages or other facilities, they much prefer to ambush Sh'lassen government troops, and fade away into the mountains before an effective response can be mobilized.

Few rebel formations are alike. The majority are formed along traditional clan lines, with each family providing what men and equipment they can. A large proportion of the populace supports the rebels, and when they arrive at a village the peasants often provide whatever food and support they can.

The Rebel Assault Group formation allows

players to recreate a typical rebel assault group.

Rebel Unit Descriptions:

Truck: Fast, cheap, wheeled vehicles are typically used by better equipped rebel formations to move troops around Akdor.

Foot Infantry: This unit is what the majority of the rebellion is composed of. Although some groups have managed to buy or capture more typical modern military equipment such as EA PPG rifles, most use older equipment purchased from Narn arms sellers or manufactured indigenously.

Weapons: Assault Rifle

Command Infantry: These are units equipped as per normal rebel infantry, but with better communications equipment, allowing them to direct artillery strikes.

Weapons: Assault Rifle

Special Rules: Self Ordering, Forward Observers

RPG Infantry: Rebel infantry equipped with anti-tank equipment. Usually simple RPG's are used, with shells smuggled in from Narn space.

Weapons: Assault Rifle, RPG

Recon Team: Rebel team armed with standard assault rifles, but equipped with binoculars and communications equipment to allow their functioning as spotters and recon elements. They are often more experienced and better trained, and are very skilled at finding the perfect place and time for an ambush.

Weapons: Assault Rifle

Special Rules: Self Ordering, Do not have to maintain cohesion, Forward Observers.

Akdor Snipers: Rebels armed with long range sniper rifles.

[Use standard foot infantry stats, but equip with sniper rifle instead of assault rifle.]

Weapons: Sniper Rifle

Special Rules: Self Ordering, Do not have to maintain cohesion.

Mortar Team: These teams consist of 2 mortar crew and a simple indigenously produced mortar. Although not as effective as typical modern remote control turrets, they are still capable of providing important artillery support during rebel attacks. If moved by truck they take the space of 2 infantry stands.

Weapons: 80mm Mortar

SAM Infantry: A very small number of man portable SAMs have been smuggled on to Akdor, purchased from Narn weapons dealers. Although not as effective as modern ADA, these SAMs have been responsible for downing a number of Sh'lassen government VTOLs.

Weapons: SAM

Dual Pulse Laser Team: Typically used to defend what few fixed installations the rebels have, such as Matok, the dual pulse laser is an AA weapon also purchased from the Narn and smuggled on to Akdor. These are not the most accurate weapons, and certainly cannot compete with such equipment as the EA Uller, but they are effective in their own way. Each emplacement consists of a tripod mounted dual pulse laser, manned by a two man team. Thus, they are a DVD unit, as the death of the crew effectively destroys the weapon.

If moved by truck they take the space of 2 infantry stands.

Weapons: Dual Pulse Laser

Rebel Assault Group:

All units have the special abilities Mountain Specialist and Mujahadeen. The cost for these abilities are built into the costs listed below.

Contents: 1 CG, 2-4 Platoons

1 Command Group

1-4 Foot Platoons

0-2 Maneuver Platoons

Options

0-2 Support Platoons

Command Group

0-1 Truck

Cost per Truck: 8/16/24/32

2 Akdor Command Infantry

Cost per stand: --/18/27/40

Foot Platoons (1-4)

2-4 Akdor Foot Infantry

Cost per stand: 9/18/27/40

0-2 Akdor RPG Infantry

Cost per stand: 11/22/33/45

Maneuver Platoons (0-2)

1-3 Trucks

Cost per Truck: 8/16/24/32

2-4 Akdor Foot Infantry

Cost per stand: 9/18/27/40

0-2 Akdor RPG Infantry

Cost per stand: 12/22/33/45

Support Elements (0-2)

A) Motars (2)

Cost for 2: 24/48/72/100

B) Dual Pulse Lasers (2)

Cost for 2: 26/52/78/105

C) SAM Infantry (2)

Cost for 2: 28/56/84/110

D) Mobile SAM Infantry

2 x SAM Infantry

1 Truck

Cost for unit: 36/72/108/140

E) Recon Group

2 Akdor Recon Teams

1 Truck

Cost for unit: 25/50/75/105

F) Sniper

Cost: --/25/50/80

G) Choose any one platoon following the restrictions for the Sh'lassen government units. This platoon follows all the special rules for Sh'lassen units, including those for DVD and DVA Troops. Support or command elements may not be chosen. Only Inner Sector or Limited Platoons are allowed. Add the Mujahadeen ability. Total cost as per the EA Sourcebook +10%. This represents formations of rebels with captured equipment.



Breaking down Hell's Gate



Frontline scenarios

By **DIOGENES**
and **ALEX ROBERTS**

MATOK is more than just a fortress. It is a fortress that sits in the middle of a traverse sand-dune plain high within a mountain caldera.

These mountains are a natural wall.

To the north of Matok, they are impassable rugged peaks. It is a similar story to the East.

The west is more open, but tall mountain cliffs bracket this space on either side. Matok's designers placed artillery positions on these unscalable cliffs - reachable only by VTOL aircraft. Combined with Matok's own defences and an interleaved network of pillboxes, the western approaches are exposed to a withering "kill-zone" of crossfire.

The southern ranges are lower, but no less rugged. Here several giant canyons were carved by water flowing from the mountain plateau millennia ago.

The depth of these canyons shields their floors from the gun emplacements in the fortress and in the mountains - creating a "shadow" in the protective artillery zones.

To compensate, Matok's builders fortified "choke points" within these canyons and scattered dense fields of mines at their entrances and exits.

It was one of these "choke points" that General Franklin decided was the weakest link in Matok's defensive necklace.

The Rebels' Dilemma

At one point near the source of one ancient canyon sits an old volcanic plug known by the locals as Hell's Gate. Fast-flowing water had struggled to erode a canyon through narrow channels on either side of this hard-rock plug before reaching softer soil below.

The result was a natural fortress. The tall vol-

canic plug overlooked both the canyon floor and the plateaus on either side.

On top of this plug Matok's builders placed heavy pillboxes overlooking both approaches and mortar emplacements on the flanks. But, more significantly, they carved an interlocking network of caves through the plug itself and in the canyon walls on either side. These caves lead to small "firing holes" from which snipers can fire over all approaches.

troops can make Hell's Gate impassable.

General Franklin's Dilemma

Political and humanitarian considerations prevent fortress Matok's destruction by naval bombardment. Too many families traveled there to evade persecution and the Sh'lassen government wants its defence headquarters back.

Therefore, Matok must be taken by GROPOS and armor. But neither have any chance of surviving the western approaches or being airlifted into the plateau itself.

Whittling down the mountain artillery emplacements by air strikes and orbital bombardment has proven to be a much slower process than anticipated. Dust storms often obscure the targets and fighters have found the plateau to be a cauldron of anti-aircraft fire.

General Franklin needs a breakthrough - and fast.

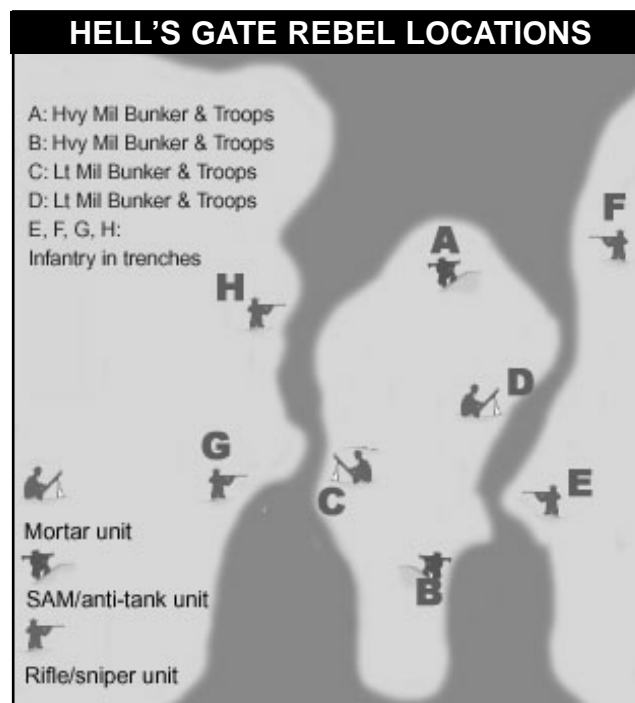
Since the Matok revolt, the southern canyon fortresses have been undermined. The rebels' confidence in the invulnerability of Hell's Gate has caused them to divert troops from there to strengthen other outposts.

Hell's Gate remains a formidable challenge. But the reduced number of defenders has, according to intelligence, left the flanking trench networks undefended.

If Hell's Gate falls, the canyon will provide a secure highway for tanks and armored personnel carriers to move onto the southern edge of the Matok plateau. It would also provide a safe approach for Valkyrie VTOLS to attack the fortress itself.

Here the enemy artillery cover is less than elsewhere. And General Franklin has been assured that an intensive naval bombardment by the EAS Schwarzkopf would detonate the minefields.

Franklin's decision was to deploy air cavalry units to assault the cave network and the volcanic plug itself. Air and VTOL support will be a vital support component. Naval bombardment is not an option for fear of bringing down the canyon walls.



Finally, the plateaus on either side are lined with trenches linked to the cave network in order to resist any airborne assault.

Unfortunately, Rebel numbers are not sufficient to man all the defences around Matok. Forces have been diverted from Hell's Gate to the mountain artillery emplacements and weaker canyon approaches. Not all of Hell's Gate's defences can be manned.

The local rebel commander has to distribute his forces in the most effective manner possible - confident in the ability of the fortifications and caves to provide protection and hiding places.

He knows even a small force of determined



OPERATION SUDDEN DEATH: ASSAULT ON HELLS GATE

B: High-altitude para drops of troops onto the canyon highlands. Objectives include trenches and artillery emplacements.

A: Rapid troop deployment from Earthforce Frigga assault VTOLS is the only viable means of assault.

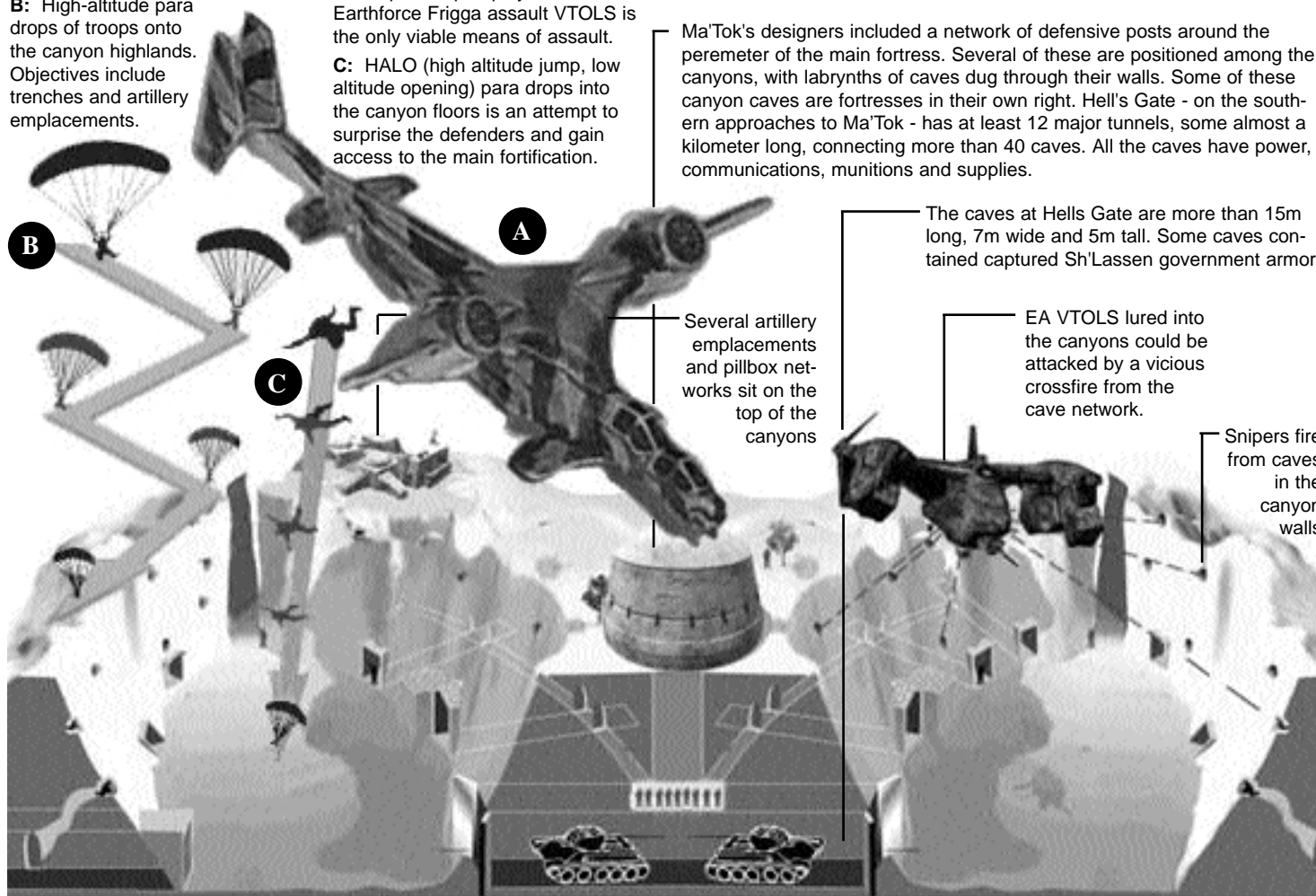
C: HALO (high altitude jump, low altitude opening) para drops into the canyon floors is an attempt to surprise the defenders and gain access to the main fortification.

Ma'Tok's designers included a network of defensive posts around the perimeter of the main fortress. Several of these are positioned among the canyons, with labyrinths of caves dug through their walls. Some of these canyon caves are fortresses in their own right. Hell's Gate - on the southern approaches to Ma'Tok - has at least 12 major tunnels, some almost a kilometer long, connecting more than 40 caves. All the caves have power, communications, munitions and supplies.

The caves at Hells Gate are more than 15m long, 7m wide and 5m tall. Some caves contained captured Sh'Lassen government armor.

EA VTOLS lured into the canyons could be attacked by a vicious crossfire from the cave network.

Snipers fire from caves in the canyon walls



Map:

The light brown area is steep hill, while the dark brown area is flat ground. This should be played on a 6'X4' board, with the bottom (south edge) being 4'. The central light brown area is essentially a small mountain.

Advanced Rules in force for this mission:

Spotting, Reverting to Hidden Status, Recon Aircraft

Deployment:

Rebels: Deployment is as per the map. Each unit detailed below in the force list is deployed on the matching point on the map.

Earth Alliance: Enter anywhere along the South edge of the board, up to 2" in.

Rebel Forces

All units begin the game hidden. All units not in buildings are considered to be in trenches.

Bunkers:

Point A: Heavy Military Building (Bunker)

Point B: Heavy Military Building (Bunker)

Point C: Light Military Building (Light Bunker)

Point D: Light Military Building (Light Bunker)

Clan 1

At point A: command Group - 2 Akdor Command Infantry - Veteran, Heavy Military

Building (Bunker)

At point H: 1st Unit - 4 stands Akdor Rebel Infantry, 2 stands Akdor RPG Infantry - Veteran

At Point A: 2nd Unit - 1 Sniper - Veteran

At point A: 3rd Unit - 2 SAM Infantry - Regular

Clan 2

At point F: Command Group - 2 Akdor Command Infantry - Veteran, Light Military Building (Light Bunker)

At point E: 1st Unit - 4 stands Akdor Rebel Infantry, 2 stands Akdor RPG Infantry - Veteran

At point D: 2nd Unit - 2 Mortar stands - Regular

At point B: 3rd Unit - 2 SAM Infantry - Regular

Clan 3

At point B: Command Group - 2 Akdor Command Infantry - Veteran

At point G: 1st Unit - 4 stands Akdor Rebel Infantry, 2 stands Akdor RPG Infantry - Veteran

At point C: 2nd Unit - 2 Mortar stands - Regular

At point B: 3rd Unit - 2 Dual Pulse Laser stands - Regular

Earth Alliance Forces

309th Air Cavalry

Command Group - 2 Valkyries - Veteran

1st Platoon - 2 Valkyries - Veteran

2nd Platoon - 2 Frigga, 2 Anti-Tank Infantry, 1

EF-449 Remote, 5 Standard Infantry - All

Veteran

3rd Platoon - 2 Frigga, 2 Anti-Tank Infantry, 1 EF-449 Remote, 5 Standard Infantry - All Veteran

4th Platoon - 2 Frigga, 2 Anti-Tank Infantry, 1 EF-449 Remote, 5 Standard Infantry - All Veteran

5th Platoon - 1 Sliepnier and 1 Recon Team - Veteran

Supporting Elements

1 Airstrike

1 Reconnaissance Aircraft

Victory conditions

Given the urgency of this mission, the victory conditions are relatively simple. There is a 12 turn time limit on the game.

Rebel

Total Victory: Prevent Earthforce troops from occupying or destroying Hell's Gate.

Defeat: Lose Hell's Gate.

Earthforce

Total Victory: Capture or destroy Hell's Gate (to capture or destroy, the EA player must eliminate all enemy troops on the board).

Defeat: Fail to capture or destroy all of Hell's Gate.

(Details on the Rebel weapons can be found in the attachments folder)



Valkyrie Down



By ALEX ROBERTS

OCTOBER 3, 2259

MOG, AKDOR

THREE Months have passed since the military intervention by the Earth Alliance on Akdor. Despite the assertions of the Sh'lassen government, the rebellion on Akdor has not ceased with the fall of Matok and the death of many of the rebel leaders. Others survived, hidden in remote villages, while yet more rose up to take the place of their martyred comrades. The Earth Alliance is now fully committed to the pacification of Akdor, as it remains an important strategic position near both the Narn and Centauri borders.

On the morning of October 3, 2259, the Earthforce Joint Operations Command (JOC) on Akdor received reliable information that several high level members of rebel clans were meeting in an old hotel in the city of Mog in order to discuss strategy. Several attempts had been made by the Sh'lassen government over the years of civil war to clean out Mog, a hotbed of rebel activity. All had ended in failure and massive casualties. Earthforce, however, planned a quick in and out with special forces coming in by VTOL, capturing the rebel commanders, and linking up with a fast moving vehicle convoy that would take the troops and their prisoners out of the city before resistance got organized. It would all be over in under half an hour. Many such missions had been pulled off in the last few weeks, over different areas of Akdor. This would be a cakewalk like all the rest.

Just after 3pm local time, the troops dropped in around the target building. Elite Special Forces squads took control of the building and captured all of the important rebels inside. Other squads moved out to the 4 corners of the block, providing security for the strike team. 5 Frigga and 2 Valkyrie held position over the target site, providing heavy firepower wherever needed. Mobs of people began to gather, many armed and eager for Earthforce blood.



Frontline scenarios

Over the radios bad news began to filter in to the troops around the target site. The locals had organized far faster than had been expected. Barricades were thrown up in front of the ground convoy, forcing them to take alternate routes. Until the convoy arrived, the soldiers at the target site were on their own. For every Akdorian killed, 5 more sprang up in their place. Kids as young as eight picked up guns dropped by their dead countrymen, and opened fire on the EA troops. Things were beginning to look bad. And then came the call none had ever expected, certainly not on this mission.

"Valkyrie Six One is down."

"Repeat"

"Six One is down."

SPECIAL RULES: For morale and orders purposes each Earth chalk is treated as a platoon. For the rebels, each mob that arrives together on a board side, including the initial placements, is treated as a unit. The six EA VTOLs are considered one unit, but do not have to maintain unit cohesion. The prisoners have been subsumed into the EA infantry stands.

Map:

Refer to the Valkyrie Down Map in the Attachments folder. Game should be played on a 4X4 board.

EARTH ALLIANCE PLAYER MISSION:

Everything has gone to hell. Your pickup is way behind schedule, and taking heavy casualties of their own. Although you've managed to hold off the mobs so far, more and more locals are showing up by the minute. To top it all off, one of your support VTOLs has gone down. You've

seen what happens to Earth soldiers after they've been captured by locals. You're sure as hell not going to allow that to happen on your mission.

Objectives:

- 1) Rescue the crew of Valkyrie 6-1. They've crashed just northeast of the target site, and you have confirmation from satellite that they are alive.
- 2) Hold out until the relief convoy reaches your location.

Troops:

Chalk 1:

3 Stands Veteran Special Forces Troops

1 Frigga

Chalk 2:

3 Stands Veteran Special Forces Troops

1 Frigga

Chalk 3

3 Stands Veteran Special Forces Troops

1 Veteran Frigga

Chalk 4

3 Stands Veteran Special Forces Troops

1 Veteran Frigga

Assault Team

4 Stands Elite Special Forces Troops

1 Stand Elite Sniper

1 Veteran Frigga

Support Team

1 Veteran Valkyrie Gunship

Recon Aircraft available every turn guaranteed

Spy Satellite

Notes: Air Strikes and Artillery are not available. They were not expected to be needed on a mission such as this.

At Crash Site

1 Stand Veteran Standard Infantry

Deployment:

Refer to notes on map. Each city block is approximately 12".

AKDORIAN REBEL PLAYER MISSION:

For months these Earthers have been on your planet, flying around in their VTOLs like they



own the place. And now they come into your backyard and capture your leaders? This outrage will not stand. Grab your weapons and kill the infidels!

Objectives:

- 1) Kill as many Earthers as is possible.

Troops:

Mob 1:

- 3 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels
- 2 Regular Stands Akdor RPG Team

Mob 2:

- 8 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels

Mob 3:

- 3 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels
- 1 Regular Stands Akdor RPG Team

Mob 4:

- 6 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels

Mob 5:

- 3 Veteran Stands Akdor Rebels
- 2 Veteran Stands Akdor RPG Team

Mob 6:

- 8 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels

Mob 7:

- 3 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels
- 2 Regular Stands Akdor RPG Team

Reinforcements (d10):

- 1-5: 8 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels, 1 Regular Stand Akdor RPG Team
- 6-8: 6 Regular Stands Akdor Rebels
- 9-10: 3 Veteran Akdor RPG Teams

Deployment:

Refer to map for initial placements. At the end of each turn 1-5 roll a d10 and refer to the reinforcements chart. Those troops immediately appear anywhere on a random edge of the table. Use a d4 to decide the side, and the rebel player may place them anywhere along the edge of that side.

GAME CONCLUSION: By the 8th turn the EA reinforcements come storming in on the south side of the board, routing or killing most of the rebels and rescuing what remains of the strike force. The game is over. Now refer to the victory conditions.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

Earth Alliance

Total Victory: Save the crew of Valkyrie Six One. Also lose no more than 1 VTOL and 4 stands of infantry.

Marginal Victory: Lose no more than 2 VTOLs and 8 stands of infantry.

Akdor Rebels:

Total Victory: Kill all ground troops and down at least 2 VTOLs.

Marginal Victory: Kill at least 8 stands of infantry and down 1 VTOL.

Examining Earth's war machine

Review: GROPOS Earth Alliance

By ALEX ROBERTS

What They Say:

The Earth Alliance grew to power rapidly after defeating the Dilgar. This growth, however, has not been without its share of pain. Some years after the Dilgar War, a misunderstanding led to the near destruction of the Earth Alliance at the hands of the Minbari. More recently, the Alliance was ravaged by the most vicious civil war in their history. This book brings to life the people of the Earth Alliance and the machines of war they employ. Inside you will find;

- New Infantry types, including the elite Special Forces
- VTOLs such as the Magni Heavy Lifter and Valkyrie Gunship
- The Frey MRLS, a vicious artillery piece that can lay waste to large areas
- Company organization charts for armor, Air Cav, Special Forces, and more

Presentation:

The book itself is similar in format and layout to the core GROPOS rulebook. On the cover is a very nice CG image showing Earth Alliance troops dismounting from a VTOL as enemy fire impacts around them. Although the book is in black and white, similar to other recent AOG supplements, there is quite a wealth of art - both of line drawings and sketches of scenes, as well as beautiful CG images detailing the various units covered in this supplement. There are several nice CG scenes that were not included in the core rules.

The book itself is a bit short, at 48 pages, but reasonable considering the nature of the supplement and the amount of material needed to be covered for each race. The only major disappointment was in the paper itself. It is of a lower quality than the regular paper used for AOG supplements, giving the book an appearance of being shorter than it usually is, as well as not seeming as sturdy as other supplements. The paper is, however, similar to that used by other game publishers, and, according to AOG, this was an unfortunate accident on the part of the printer. All future books will be back to the regular 60# paper familiar to readers of their Showdowns and Variants books for B5W.

Game Material:

In regards to contents, this book covers everything that could possibly be needed for an

Earth Alliance GROPOS player. Every unit is covered (including the ones from the core book), and some omissions from the core book, such as close combat ratings for infantry with their unit stats. There is a huge variety of new units, ranging from heavy tanks such as the Rail Gun armed Odin, to air defense artillery, Special Forces, and one of the most awaited units for GROPOS, the VTOLs featured in the B5 episode "GROPOS".

Each armored unit has a very nice looking CG graphic, in the same vein as those provided in the core rules.

Special rules are also given, including the chameleon suits used by Earth Alliance Spec Ops Infiltrator infantry units.

Air Support assets are covered, and charts are given detailing the specifics of all the Orbital Assets the Earth Alliance could bring to bear, from Artemii to Warlocks.

For campaign enthusiasts, transport capabilities are also covered in this supplement, detailing the exact carrying capacities of every Earth Alliance vessel capable of moving troops through space.

Finally, detailed organization charts are given for each type of Earth Alliance formation from Regimental and Battalion headquarters through Armored, Air Cav, and even Special Forces companies. Several "real life" units are also detailed. These org charts include the 112th Armor Company, 416th Mechanized Infantry Company, 270th Armored Cavalry, and 414th Air Cavalry.

Additional background on the Earth Alliance history and military actions are provided at the front of the book.

Conclusions:

Although it may appear to be a bit short, and there are some issues with the paper used, the information given within is very enjoyable to read and covers a wide range of forces organizations and unit types that should satiate any Earth Alliance GROPOS player and provide others several good evenings of studying. In all, this book is a worthwhile purchase for GROPOS players, especially any who want to field the forces of the Earth Alliance, and a good addition to the GROPOS line.

In Harm's Way

Pitting a tiny Gaim task force against a Centauri fleet



Frontline scenarios

SHORTLY after the Gaim strike on the unfinished Centauri base at Sin'talith at the end of the WoR, the Gaim pulled back to begin fortifying their homeworld fearing reprisals from the Centauri. However, fortunately for the Gaim, a change in the political winds brought about a similar change in policy, and the Centauri forces were to be brought home to secure their current holdings. However, not every Centauri commander agreed with the policy, and one in particular decided to secretly bring his powerful task force into Gaim space and wreck whatever defences and ships they could find.

On the fringes of the Gaim system near a large asteroid field a listening post picked up the incoming Centauri forces and alerted the Queens just before being destroyed. Unfortunately, the only forces nearby were composed of mainly light and medium combat vessels, but if time was taken to gather a larger force, the Centauri would pass the field and reach open space where they could slip away again. Even if caught in open space the superior range and sensors of the Centauri ships would prove devastating. The Queens communicated their will to the small forces nearest the attack and instructed them to stop the Centauri at all costs, the good of the Colony was at stake. The Centauri progressed through the asteroids slowly, picking their way along as the Gaim had planted a number of mines throughout the area for just such incursions. So it was that just as they approached the end of the field, the Gaim made their move.

Forces:

Gaim: 5 Slyach Frigates 10 Rafa packet torpedo Gunboats

Centauri: 1 Octurion Battleship 2 Primus Battlecruisers 1 Centurion Attack Cruiser 2 Altarian Magnus Destroyer Leader 2 Altarian Destroyers

Setup:

Setup the two maps along short edges to create a long map. Along the top 1/3 of the map randomly distribute 40 asteroids. Gaim player may then secretly place up to 30 P-1 Proximity

*This is a short scenario based on the John Wayne film of the same name- in the movie a Japanese task force centered on the battleship Yamato is closing on US forces, all that is there to stop them are a few destroyers / light cruisers and some PT boats. The bigger ships attack while the Japanese are coming through a minefield, hoping to hurt them while they're busy with the mines, but they are quickly wiped out under the heavy guns of the Yamato and her cruiser escort. Once the group clears the minefield the PT boats move in and attack with torpedoes, and, despite being nearly wiped out, manage to do enough damage to force the enemy to turn back. **ALEX KETTLE'S** scenario of the same name seeks to see what success a determined B5W player can have under similar circumstances...*

mines and 15 P-3 Proximity mines anywhere within the asteroid field, mines may not be placed outside the field. The Gaim player then places his forces anywhere on the bottom half of the map, due to the minefield, Gaim forces are not permitted to enter the asteroid field. The Centauri player may place his forces anywhere along the top edge of the map and must proceed through the asteroid field, this is the safest route through so this is the way they must go. If at any point the Centauri player loses 1/2 his forces or the Octurion is destroyed he must withdraw and the battle is lost.

Victory:

Centauri: The Centauri forces must exit the side of the map opposite their entry unless withdrawing. Victory: destroy all enemy ships and escape the area with at least 1/2 of your cruiser force intact including the Octurion - It was a tough battle but you've come through, now for payback. Total Victory: destroy all enemy ships and escape the area with all ships intact - the puny bugs have been crushed, now they will learn the true might of the Centauri Republic! Loss: Battle is lost if 1/2 of the Centauri cruisers are destroyed OR the Octurion is destroyed - Horror! The Gaim ambush has crippled your fleet you don't have enough to continue the battle, nothing left but to slink back and face your punishment.

Gaim: Victory: Drive off the Centauri by any means, any result in which the Centauri lose is a Gaim victory - Mission accomplished, the Queens are safe once again. Loss: Any success for the Centauri causes a loss for the Gaim - Disaster, you have failed your Queen, and the pain of failure is unbearable as you slowly die in the vacuum of space.

Historical:

As the Centauri fleet passed through the minefield, all the ships took minor hits from mines, and one destroyer was lost when it moved past an asteroid into a small cluster of them. As the force closed on the edge of the field the Gaim frigates opened fire at long range, trading fire with cruisers in the desperate hope of scoring a hit serious enough to force the task group back. Unfortunately the powerful Centauri Octurion and its escorting cruisers made short work of the frigates, leaving the group of gunboats on their own. Starting their runs while the Centauri weapons were recharging they ran in past the destroyers to fire their torpedoes. Scoring several hits on the escorting Cruisers they turned away to make another pass losing 2 to yet more long range laser fire. The next pass started as the tiny gunboats sped in on the cruisers, hoping to force the Centauri to withdraw. This time the gunboats launched their torpedoes and followed them in, hoping to do some damage at close range while the cruisers intercepted the incoming torpedoes. Despite taking serious losses on the way in, the tiny gunboats concentrated fire destroyed one cruiser and finished off another one, crippled from the last pass. The Centauri commander, realizing the heavy damage his flagship had already taken, and the loss of two of his precious cruisers, immediately opened jump points to run his fleet for home. All hopes of revenge were gone, all that was left was to try and save his family's honor. For the Gaim, they had succeeded beyond the Queens' wildest hopes, the Centauri task force had been turned back, and basking in the pleasure of a successful mission for the Queens, they headed back for repairs.

* * *



By **MATT PLONSKI**

HYPERSPACE

HYPERSPACE RAPIDS

D20 Roll Hyperspace Rapid

- 1-4 No Hyperspace Rapid Present
5-20 Hyperspace Rapid Present, roll on Rapid Direction and Rapid Strength tables.

D10 Roll Rapid Direction

- 1 From direction 1 to direction 4
2 From direction 4 to direction 1
3 From direction 2 to direction 5
4 From direction 5 to direction 2
5 From direction 3 to direction 6
6 From direction 6 to direction 3
7 From left to right
8 From right to left
9 Roll again, ignoring 9-10. Rapid is in resultant direction for D3 turns, at which time roll on the Hyperspace Rapid chart again, accepting any result.
10 Roll again, ignoring 9-10. Rapid is in resultant direction for 1 turn, at which time roll on the Hyperspace Rapid chart again, accepting any result

D20 Roll Rapid Strength

- 1-3 1
4-6 2
7-9 3
10-11 4
12-13 5
14-15 6
16-17 7
18 8
19 9
20 10

HYPERSPACE WAVEFORMS

D20 Roll Hyperspace Waveform

- 1-10 No Hyperspace Waveform Present

Random Hyperspace Terrain

The following section may be used in any game of Babylon 5 Wars to generate a random area of Hyperspace. Roll once on each of the following charts:

- 11-18 Hyperspace Waveform Present, roll on Waveform Orientation table and determine Waveform Origin
19 Two Hyperspace Waveforms Present, roll once for each Waveform
20 D3 Hyperspace Waveforms Present, roll once for each Waveform

D10 Roll Waveform Orientation

- 1-2 From direction 1 to direction 4
3-4 From direction 2 to direction 5
5-6 From direction 3 to direction 6
7 From left to right
8 From right to left
9 Roll again, ignoring 9-10. Waveform is has resultant orientation, but only extends outward 2D10 hexes from Origin Hex.
10 Roll again, ignoring 9-10. Waveform is has resultant orientation, but only extends outward 2D6 hexes from Origin Hex.

Waveform Origin Hex:

Depending on how your hex map is numbered, this may vary. The most basic method is to roll a D100 (percentile dice) for each dimension, re-rolling any number out of range. The Waveform passes through that hex in its Orientation, usually off of the board edges unless otherwise specified.

HYPERSPACE WHIRLPOOL

D20 Roll Hyperspace Whirlpool

- 1-15 No Hyperspace Whirlpool Present
16-19 Hyperspace Whirlpool Present, roll on Whirlpool Orientation table and determine Whirlpool Origin
20 Two Hyperspace Whirlpool Present, roll once for Whirlpool Orientation, and twice for each Whirlpool's Origin

D10 Roll Whirlpool Orientation

- 1-4 Clockwise Rotation
5-8 Counterclockwise Rotation
9 Re-roll, ignoring 9-10. Waveform(s) are in resultant orientation for D3 turns, after which it switches orientation.
10 Re-roll, ignoring 9-10. Waveform(s) are in resultant orientation for D3 turns, after which it dissipates.

Whirlpool Origin Hex:

Depending on how your hex map is numbered, this may vary. The most basic method is to roll a D100 (percentile dice) for each dimension, re-rolling any number out of range. The Whirlpool Singularity is in that hex rotating as determined above. It will block line of sight through that hex.

When a vessel is expelled from Hyperspace due to a 9-15 result on the Hyperspace Whirlpool Singularity Effects table (see Rules Compendium), it is considered to be at a Sufficiently Far Away location in normal space. The vessel may return to battle assuming that it has sensors capable of determining its location and a properly charged Jump Engine.

Pride or Propaganda?



By GARETH SMITH
Damnation
gamersmith@eircom.net

A kind of magic

The Earth Alliance Warlock Advanced Destroyer: A ship that people either love - considering the pride of Earthforce - or hate - calling it either cheesy or a bang-o-matic not worth the points you spend on it. Everyone focuses on the two Heavy Particle Cannons it carries. Whilst the HPC are certainly a big part of what makes the Warlock one of the few proper battle-cruisers in the B5Wars universe, it is the overall package that makes the Warlock into such an effective ship if handled properly.

Power

The Warlock shares the general EA trait of having large power reserves. This is actually its key strength. Want to guarantee a hit with the HPC? Well you can put up to 14 points of EW behind the shot. Want to manoeuvre as well as a Centauri cap ship? Then get yourself enough thrust to leave a Centurion in your dust. It is in power management that you stretch the limits of the Warlock's base capabilities beyond what the SCS gives you. As an example, while closing it is a simple matter to power down the 8 Standard Particle Beams and one of the rear arc Interceptors to buy enough power for 1 extra point of sensor. Or you could have powered down two of the MPLA, or two Railguns, or one fired HPC and an SPB. It is the flexibility of the Warlock in power distribution that sets it apart from other EA ships. Most of the weapons have quick recharge cycles but short ranges. During the closing phase of the battle they often have little use, so switch them off to buy you thrust and/or EW. The ability to make use of power management will be limited by your opponent's capabilities at any point in time. Shutting down the SPBs against an Ion Torpedo heavy fleet will not be a good idea.

A little help from your friends

No Warlock should be fielded without its fighter complement. Like all big ships it's vulnerable to the wolf packs. To stop them the Warlock has its weapons on the way in, and once the close battle begins, its fighters. In fact, in some situations the Warlocks only role in the battle is to eliminate any anti-fighter escorts and then sit there being the hardest target it can be while the



Warlock Advanced Destroyers: The controversy continues

fighters do the main damage. Without its fighters the Warlock will get hacked to death by an HCV/Med wolf pack. Yet such packs are vulnerable to heavy fighters, especially if a defending Haven or Halik got toasted by a HPC on closing, or was on the receiving end of a couple of missiles.

The Guns

The capabilities of the HPC on the Warlock give it the frightening ability to destroy enemy cap ships at range, something EA ships are not normally capable of. Take a defence 15 target at range 42 with 10 DEW. If you power off the SPB, rear railguns, side and rear MPLA and rear interceptors you can generate 13 EW. The maths to hit are DEF 15 - 10 DEW - 14 Range - 3 Intercept + 6 FC + 13 OEW = 7. Not a great number, but this is against a turtles opponent. If the opponent were firing back at you a lot of that DEW would go. Even a 5 point OEW lock and the to hit number has become 12. That is a number you could fire on. If the ship is intercept light then maybe it's 14. And anybody who makes a full OEW lock will get what he or she deserves. Note that in a tournament game you will have started at about 42 hexes apart and then closed the range on the first round.

The zero range for the HPC (The range at which your to hit number is equal to the target's defence number) using its base EW is 45 hexes. An Omega's Heavy Laser has a zero range of 33. A Centauri Primus has a zero range of 56. The Primus can boost its EW to 11 giving it a zero range of 60. Buying 13 EW the zero range for the Warlock goes to 57. This gives the Warlock a chance to retaliate effectively against long range fire. With boosted EW of 13 the zero range of a Medium Laser would be 32, a railgun would

be 30. Against a defence 15 target you can get a to hit number of 10 at range 40. This allows the Warlock to fire its secondary weapons at ranges most vessels would not bother.

General Tactical Notes

Keep the front towards the enemy as long as possible as its defence number is 4 lower than the side. Also with all the non-rakeable systems on the front you can absorb more damage there than on any other location. You will get shot at, so fire the front weapons when you get ok numbers, not good numbers then power them down. A weapon fired on a 10 to hit is worth more than a destroyed weapon that would have been fired on a 15 if it had only survived to next round. If this is the last round you reckon you can get away with a full OEW lock and the numbers are positive, fire the medium lasers and railguns. They can then absorb hits you no longer care about on weapons you never intended to fire again. Keep your side out of arc to avoid hits on the L-racks. Missile magazine detonations are only a 1 in 20 chance but it is a bad way to lose a ship. Take hits on the LH racks first if you have to, to prevent that possibility. The other main reason to keep the sides out of arc is to avoid losing the standard particle beams, which are both your main fighter point defence system and the backup interception weapons to the Mark-II interceptors.

Where feasible don't close on round one to allow your fighters to get downrange. Do a shuffle on the first round. At speed 5, turn to move up the map edge on round one and turn again in the 5th hex of movement back towards the enemy. Deploy your fighters in the hex the Warlock will end up in and move them straight down the map at a higher speed. This helps them

get down range and around the enemy to help limit their EW options. Full OEW or DEW whilst there are 24 heavy fighters hovering around is a bad idea. Going full CCEW whilst there are unfired HPC on the map is also a bad idea. Note that pulling a shuffle against the Narn if they brought E-mines will be a bad idea...

Even when victorious, the Warlock will take a pounding, losing at least one facing. Few and far between will be the battles where this does not happen. Get used to the fact. The worst thing you can do, and this is a general principle, is be afraid to take damage. Being afraid colours your thinking too much and can cost you the battle before you actually roll a die.

When to use

The Warlock is such a big points drain on a force, some thought needs to be taken as to when to field it. In 3500 point battles, if your opponent allows you pass the single ship restricted deployment restrictions, it can be quite effective. At this point scale and conditions of play, it is not possible for an opponent to put enough ships on the table to detonate a Warlock from range, unlike the Warlock, which is quite capable of killing any one ship on round one of a game. Load up with 12 Starfury and 12 Thunderbolt and a few special missiles to cover its weaknesses and it can do well. Its biggest problem will be wolf packs. In this circumstance go for cripples not kills. Most wolf packs will be light on fighter defence so pick off the main fighter defence elements with the Warlock's fire, turtle down and send in the fighters. One slight edge that happens more often than not against HCV wolf packs is that as long as you get a reasonable initiative roll, one or more of the HCV will be moving before you. With more rolls on your opponent's side he has a better chance of getting a bad roll. In order for the wolf pack to function they need to stay together, so the movement of one ship will often point to the probable movements of the wolf pack for this round. If they split up, hammer the isolated units with your fighters. If they stay together, manoeuvre the Warlock to take advantage of the fact. Be sure to make the most of any initiative advantage you gain.

In a 10000+ point fleet it can be a flagship. It is an attention getter and people may well go to some length to try and get rid of it. Go to 14 DEW and suddenly you have a ship with a front defence of -3. A fleet can still generate enough firepower to kill it if it really wants to but it will require an excessive amount of firepower to do it. Alternately, it may be ignored for this reason, in which case a time will probably come later in the battle when there are not many heavy weapons left unfired and the Warlock can lock a target up and fire in relative safety.

However, in the gap between 3500 and 10000 I wouldn't field the Warlock. Fleets will quickly gain enough long-range firepower to be able to kill it in one volley without the supporting units being able to carry on the fight without it. Or if they don't go for the Warlock then they can pick off the supporting units leaving the Warlock badly outnumbered. To be honest, in a fleet engagement I'd probably bring the Poseidon before a Warlock as it provides more benefits to an EA fleet as a whole than the Warlock.

Octurions are incomplete without a legion

COMMENT:
By REID HUPACH

YES, I hear you all booing and hissing. The bad boy of the Centauri fleet is not always a popular choice for many players to include in a fleet. Now before I go any further I will clarify that in my opinion the Octurian is a Fleet Flagship, not a ship which should be used in all scenarios the Centauri fly in. In its role as a Flagship it excels.

Now some people will compare the Octurian to the other dreadnaughts of the big four and wonder why the Centauri would have it. It's under gunned by comparison, it's no faster, its EW isn't that much better and it has all sorts of rakeable systems all over it. Ok, it isn't the perfect ship.

Where the Octy has an advantage is that it is the one ship in the Centauri navy that can take a lickin' and keep on tickin'. The armor values of the Octurian are a huge improvement over the rest of the Centauri fleet.

As I said, it is a great flagship, meaning that it should be surrounded by a full complement of escort and specialty vessels. It has good firepower at all ranges and rarely needs help from other ships to fend off fighters. The broadside of three Battle Lasers will make most opponents feel the pain at long range. With the aid of a scout loaning OEW the Octurian can punch holes in enemy capitol ships at ranges that they cannot even hope to hit at. So at longer ranges it is one of the best sniping vessels in the game.

At medium range the several Matter Cannons on each side will strip the systems off most ships. Up close the Octurian has more than enough Twin Arrays to eat through most ships. Taking all that into account the Octurian, if played properly, will destroy most other ships in detail.

As for fighter capacity the Octurian can field 24 Senti fighters, these will of course give the Octurian or the fleet good interception ability for either fighters or ballistics. For all these reasons the Octurian is one of the best ships.

Tactics of course will change with your opponent, one that I like to use to keep my opponents at a distance is to move at an



Assault Laser Octurian

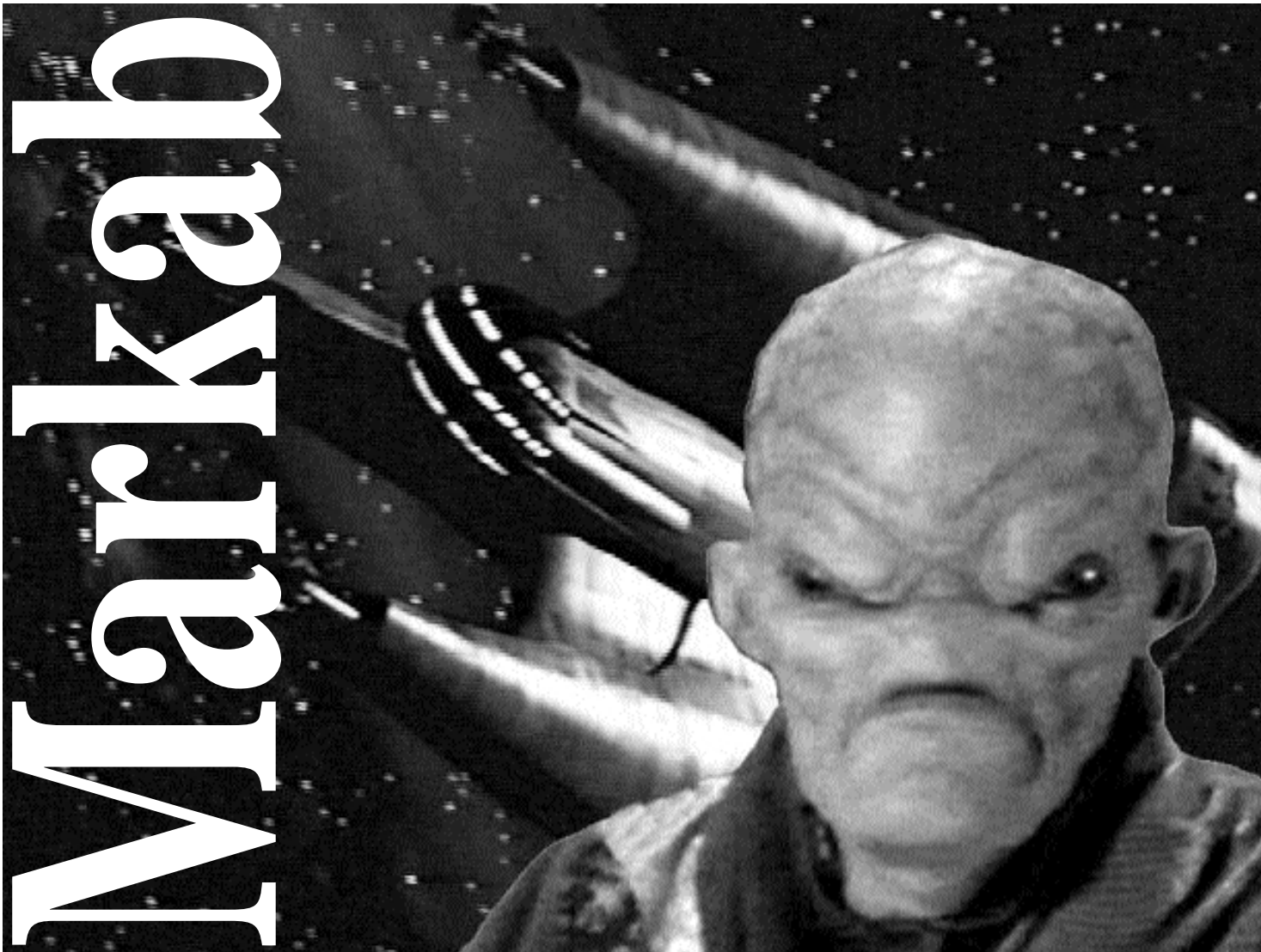
Shortly after the Earth-Minbari war several members of the War Council wanted to create a more "reach out and touch someone" type of ship. The hope was that against the EA, which has ships that fight best at up close range, this new ship could stand off and cripple ships at a distance and take little or no damage back. After looking at several designs it was decided to convert an Octurian by replacing all the Matter Cannons with Assault Lasers. This gave the Octurian much greater long range potential with faster recycling weapons than the enemy. After several tests it was decided that although the design had the desired effect, it would not be prudent to totally switch over to this design. A few of the Laser Octurians were built, they are assigned to almost all the fronts of the Empire, they are still much less common than the regular Octurian.

(B5W SCS in the attachments folder)

oblique angle. Fire my lasers on turn one, roll on turn two, stop your roll on three, fire, roll again on four, stop, fire, roll again. By doing this you not only bring your lasers to bear for firing quicker you also present different sides as targets so you don't end up with one side blown away and one side untouched. This increases the survivability of the ship and increases damage potential.

My other great hint for an Octurian is always bring along a scout, to loan OEW at long range, then loan DEW when the enemy starts to get close.

Well those are just a couple of reasons why the Octy is one of the deadliest ships in B5.



THE DILGAR Invasion was, aside from the Shadow War, possibly the single most important event of the first half of the 23rd century. Tempered by this crucible of terror, the League of Non-Aligned worlds came out of the fighting individually weakened, but stronger as a whole. The Markab played a key role in the fighting of the war, as it was their policy of Holy War (Jihad in Earth terminology) against the Dilgar that propelled the Earth Alliance forces, however unwillingly, onto the offensive. The Markab are an integral part of many of the actions fought during this period of upheaval.

Distinctive Weaponry:

The Plasma Wave: This was, and indeed, still is, a minor terror of a weapon. A ballistic weapon, dealing both plasma damage and flash damage, the Plasma Wave is both a good stand-off weapon as well as a close-in slugger.

Scattergun: The Scattergun is another nasty bit of tech, especially if you're on the receiving end of it. Reminiscent of a Twin Array on amphetamines, this weapon is the bane of fighters, and in numbers can scrape a few layers from a moderately armoured capital ship as well. The fighter-mounted version easily doubles and sometimes triples the attacks a flight of Droftas may make.

The Stunbeam: Some players might question the usefulness of this 'weapon', and whether it is worth the bookkeeping necessary to use it. To a Markab captain, this question need not be asked.

*The Markab, converted for Fleet Action by **KEITH FRYE**. This article is based on Unofficial conversions using Richard Bax's Excel worksheets. While the author feels he has remained faithful to the source material, it is possible that AoG will in the future release versions of significant difference for official B5FA purposes. Go to <http://www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa/markab>*

Similar to the Minbari Shock Cannon, the Stunbeam plays merry hell with an opposing ship's systems, temporarily shutting down thrusters, sensors and weapons, and possibly causing a ship to fall out of command.

(Stunbeam in FA: use the Minbari Shock Cannon from MEMA, with the effect being only temporary and lasting only for the next impulse.)

Design Principles

The Markab Fleet was based around four principle designs. The heaviest elements were composed mainly of the Shafab-class Heavy Cruiser. The Romak-class Frigate filled the fleet's escort/anti-fighter role. The Mafka-class Transport Cruiser and Martoba-class Patrol Cutter supported the battle line. In addition to these, the Talafat Scout, Mantaka Assault ship and Martova Police Cutter round out the Markab forces.

The Shafab Heavy Cruiser is best employed as groups of three - to concentrate the firepower of the Plasma Wave. Keep them within one hex of each other, so the Scatterguns are able to provide

mutual fire-support.

The Romak Escort Frigate should be kept in the rear area until the enemy (usually the Dilgar) launches his strike/superiority fighters. The fast frigates should then attempt to intercept the enemy fighters and take them down with Scattergun fire. Avoid engaging flights flying escort, and indeed, stay away from even enemy light ships - their main guns will atomize this tiny frigate.

In reference to the Martoba, the term Patrol Cutter is really something of a misnomer, the vessel being more of a light cruiser than an escort. Twin Medium Plasma Cannon, twin Plasma Waves, and a Particle Cannon provide this ship with a nasty mid-range punch, and the respectable maneuverability allows the Martoba to harry the enemy's flanks.

The Talafat Scout is something of an anomaly. Large for a scout ship, it is obviously an exploration cruiser, and it carries no offensive weaponry. A flight of Droftas and level I ELINT makes this a useful ship to add to a command squadron and its large amount of structure gives

it more staying-power than most scout-class ships.

The Markab fleet, with its reliance upon Plasma Cannon, Plasma Waves, Stun Beams and Scatterguns, is a short-range muscle fleet. Without dedicated carriers to protect, the Markab are free to close in and launch fighters within easy strike range. Supported by scattergun fire, the Drofta fighters present a genuine danger to their enemy equivalents.

Racial Psychology

A word on the Markab mentality; it has been AoG's policy to compare the Markab to the medieval warrior-monk societies, but a close examination of the B5 episode "Confessions and Lamentations" suggests more of a Ultra-Calvinist mentality. Implicit belief in the favour of God and pre-destination, with an almost sanctimonious tenacity displayed in the face of the Drofta plague, suggests more the stoic Scottish Covenanters of the 17th century than the Knight Templar. In our view, the Markab are soldiers who serve under the watchful eye of a committee of religious advisors, who interpret omens, enforce the theocratic policies of the Markab Church/State, and assure their flock that they fight in the favour and grace of the Almighty. In any event, attempting to define an alien race by Terran comparison is faulty at best. The Markab are who they are, or more accurately since the plague, were who they were.

Modeling the Markab

At the time of writing this piece, there is no indication that AOG will be releasing Markab ships in the B5FA scale within the next six months. As a dedicated miniature gamer, I simply can't accept this, and decided to search the Internet for other manufacturers who make a miniature that will serve until official Markab ships are released.

[Editor's note: Per AOG they have every intention of doing the Markab, but first are planning on releasing minis for the Hyach, Cascor, Abbai, Pak'ma'ra, and Dilgar, which will take some time.]

Romak Escort Frigate: GZG (Ground Zero Games) "Full Thrust" line # FT202 - Lenov Scout ships. File down the front to 'blunt' the ship and bring it into scale with FT204.

Shafab Heavy Cruiser: GZG FT204 - Novgorod frigates. If you'd prefer a bulkier version, try FT205A - Volga Super Destroyer.

Mafka Transport Cruiser: GZG FT207 - Beijing B Escort Cruiser (a little larger than an EA Omega.)

Martoba Patrol Cutter: Starguard SA-6 Ralnai Fighter (Note: while listed as a fighter, this is a larger scale miniature, nearly an inch/25mm long. There are five in a blister.)

Drofta Medium Fighter: GZG FT621 - Cameron Heavy Fighter. Uncannily close match.

Ground Zero Games products are available in the USA from Geo-Hex: www.geo-hex.com
Starguard products are available from Reviresco: www.tin-soldier.com

Who wants some minis? Making custom miniatures

By ALEX ROBERTS

EVER desperately want a Babylon 5 miniature but know that Agents of Gaming will never make it? Depressed over the cancellation of the Full Scale miniatures line? Have a few friends who feel the same way? Now there may be an alternative for you.

Agents of Gaming is now offering a custom casting and molding service for those people who want to get together and commission miniatures that they themselves either do not have the time to make or perhaps feel would be unprofitable for them to produce.

Here's the word from Agent 1.

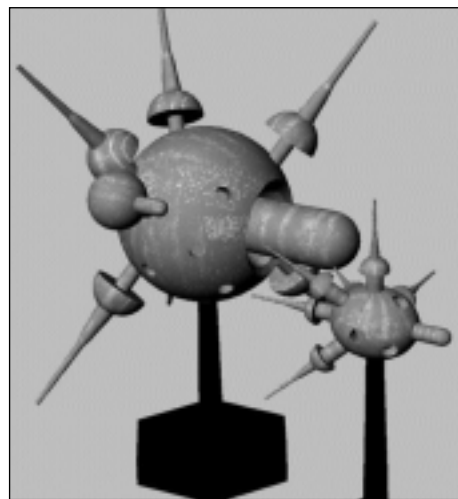
1. You can either pay the sculptor or make a 3-D model yourself. A sculpture will cost about \$800 and you have to give us art in four views. A 3-D model requires that you make the design in Rhino or a convertible STL format. This option is cheaper and you know you'll get a mini that looks precisely like your art. Prospective 3-D modelers can check out Rhino on their web site, and download the software demo for free (but it only makes 25 saves before you have to buy it). All files must be watertight. No surface texturing--all textures must be built into the model. Ask for details.

2. If you send a Rhino file, we will print it when we have free printer time. The cost is \$15 per print hour. Any modifications to the file that are required to make it print properly will be billed at \$30 per hour (I doubt more than one or two hours would ever be needed; we'd send it back before undertaking that much work on it). A mini the size of, say, the Omega will probably take 20 print hours. The taller it is, the longer the print time.

3. You will have to pay for all molds. A slot in a master mold costs \$20, and a production mold costs \$50. (You'd only need one production mold for a custom run.) These molds will be inserted into our schedule when we have time. We won't bust our release schedule for a custom job.

4. Once we have the molds, you can then buy as many of these custom figs as you like at a cost based on how much metal they require. This will be at wholesale costs, because we won't have to package them. You CANNOT resell them. Doing so is a violation of our license and more copyright laws than you can shake a stick at. The first time we see one of these babies on Ebay, that will be the last custom mini we ever do.

5. We reserve the right to make limited quanti-



ties available for sale at cons or as mail order. If we do, you'll get a share of any proceeds. Don't get ideas of becoming rich from this. I seriously doubt more than 20 or 30 would ever sell this way. I'm just putting this clause in here so you know we aren't trying to steal your efforts. Absolutely no sales of custom minis would be made to stores, mass markets or distribution.

6. We cannot do anything not in our license. NO EXCALIBURS!

Obviously, it would not be to your advantage to try to do this on your own. Even a reasonably small mini would run you at least a few hundred dollars in 3-D print time, and molds add another \$70. Your best bet is to find people like yourself, one of whom knows computer modeling, who want to go in together on a design. If you had 20 people in a coalition who wanted a ship, and it cost \$500, that's only \$25 each for the production costs. Considering that you'll get the end result minis at wholesale, this would be very affordable if you each bought 4 or 5 ships.

-Agent One

Already a number of players are organizing to produce Ancients miniatures. Costs haven't been exactly devised yet, but the more people that go in the lower the cost. If you are at all interested, post a note to express your interest on the Custom Ancients thread in the miniatures forum over at:

b5wars.agentsofgaming.com, or send an e-mail to Matt Plonski at mplonski@nc.rr.com.

First up are the Kirishiac. Check out the images along with this article for an idea of what the first miniature will look like after being moulded and assembled.

B5W Tactics:

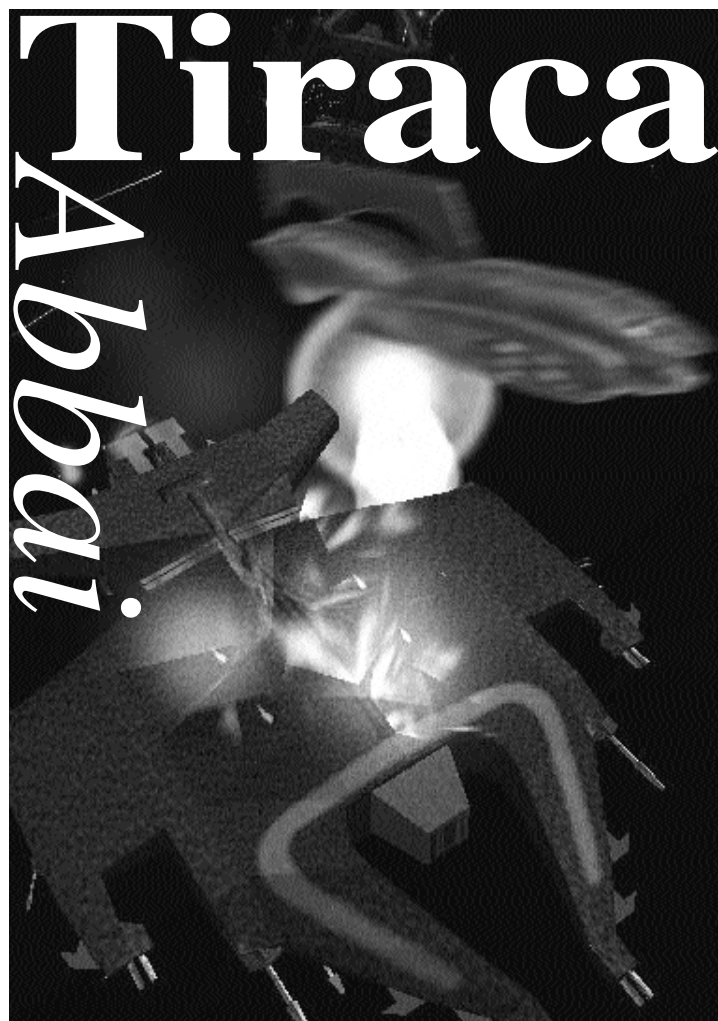
By SCOTT McGAFFIN

THE Abbai are a peaceful, aquatic people who use their technology for defense and to help others. But faced with the onslaught of the Dilgar war machine, they created one of the most potent attack ships in existence. This essay will cover the capabilities and potential tactics for the Abbai Tiraca Attack Frigate and it's Bisaria Escort variant.

WEAPONS

Because the role of the Tiraca is to attack, it is outfitted with the largest weapon available to the Abbai: the combat laser. The combat laser is somewhat of an 'iffy' weapon. Unlike its heavy laser and battle laser cousins, it functions solely in piercing mode. While this gives the Tiraca the ability to damage a target's primary systems without having to destroy the facing side first, it can also make it extremely difficult to destroy a ship. When attacking a capital ship the damage gets split into three parts. One part goes to the facing side, one to the primary and one to the opposing side. Against opponents with lots of systems per side, the amount of damage is small enough as to not harm the target too badly. Against other medium ships the piercing weapon is actually worse as some of the damage is lost. To offset this the combat laser right away can damage primary systems. Which, with a bit of luck, can make the Tiraca extremely potent. An Abbai player does not have to worry about chewing through a facing side but can immediately start to damage critical systems like sensors, C & C and the most dangerous of all, the reactor. It's quite a nice feeling when your 450 point Tiraca destroys a 1000 point dreadnought with a couple reactor hits. Another plus to the combat laser over the heavy laser is the faster recharge time and slightly better fire control versus smaller opponents.

For the Tiraca the 'iffy' nature of the combat laser isn't as important as it would be to a regular line unit, such as the Lakara Cruiser. For ships that move in and generally stay in close, like the Lakara, the poor ability of the combat laser to strip weapons off a side can be disastrous. For the Tiraca it is not a problem, as Tiraca tactics should be to race in, fire the combat laser, and race out to recharge. Once recharged, it can then come in for another pass. This is due to the fact that the Tiraca is a small ship and cannot take the same punishment that a capital ship can; therefore it



can't linger around.

This then brings us to the quad array. The quad array is essentially two twin arrays in one mount and should be used just like a twin array would. The only difference is it overheats if it fires three or more shots. On the turn it's first fired this isn't a problem, but on the turn after it is. The more shots that are fired, the greater the likelihood of serious critical damage. This is another reason why Abbai ships in general should try and keep away from their opponents, to give the quad array a chance to cool down. For the Tiraca this goes hand in hand with the firing of the laser. Race in, fire, then leave. On the turn following the firing of the laser, try and let the quad arrays cool down. If there is intense enemy fighter coverage on the battlefield, consider not firing the quad arrays at the laser's target, but keep them ready for any fighters that approach too close.

The Comm Disruptor (only available on the Bisaria Escort variant) showcases the Abbai's advanced communications technology. This piece of equipment is used to reduce a target's initiative and EW on the following turn in which it is hit. The Bisaria used in conjunction with the Tiraca can be a deadly combination. The Bisaria hits its target, reduces initiative and EW

and the next turn the Tiraca hits the target with the combat laser. With a reduced EW the target will be easier to hit and can be hit from further away. Being installed on a small, fast, maneuverable hull like the Bisaria, it is easier to use and should follow the same general attack principles used for the combat laser on the Tiraca. The only problem with this tactic is that for the Bisaria to be effective, it has to be closer to the target unit, due to the higher range penalty of the comm disruptor.

ARMOR & SHIELDS

The Tiraca/Bisaria has average armor for a medium vessel and is only slightly less armored than the Abbai's main ship-of-the-line, the Lakara Cruiser. Like all medium ships, the Tiraca can't take much punishment. As stated before, the Tiraca can not linger around its intended target, especially if it's a much larger and better-armed vessel. There is a phrase used in SFB that fits this ship perfectly: speed is life. Unlike most medium vessels (with the exception of the Whitestar), the Tiraca has shields. Not only does this make it harder to hit, but also it increases the durability of the Tiraca. The front shields are quite powerful in fact; rivaling those used on the Lakara. The rear

shields are somewhat weaker, so a player should always try and keep his front towards his opponent. The key problem with the shields is not the shields themselves, but the shield generator. The Tiraca's shield generator can only power two of the four shields at a time. Be aware of where you are moving, and where your enemy is potentially going to be. A good shield tactic is to power the front shields, race in and fire the laser on turn one. On turn two, power up the rear shields instead of the front shields, then race out to recharge the laser.

One of the key pieces of Abbai defensive technology is the particle impeder. Any defensive EW put into an impeder can be used to increase the intercept rating against one shot and it can also be used to passively lower the ship's defensive rating against all shots coming within the impeder's arc. Also remember that the particle impeder is one of the very few pieces of technology available to anyone that can actually intercept laser fire. One way to use the impeder, is if you know where your enemy is going to be (per chance due to the effects of a comm disruptor), channel all defensive EW through the impeder that's in arc (remember to keep that impeder facing the enemy). You'll have your defensive EW and if you end up intercepting a shot, it will have a large interception penalty imposed on it.

MANEUVERABILITY & SPEED

One of the key assets of the Tiraca/Bisaria is its speed and maneuverability. A good motto for the Tiraca/Bisaria is: speed is life. As outlined above in the combat laser paragraph, race in, fire and race out. Repeat as necessary. Without overthrusting the Tiraca is able to turn at an impressive speed of 33! To further enhance its maneuverability (and survivability); the Tiraca has agile ship status. Use it to keep a stronger shield or EW-loaded particle impeder facing the enemy.

CONCLUSION

As you can see the Tiraca is indeed a very dangerous ship. An Abbai fleet should definitely contain at least a handful of these ships. A Bisaria variant or two should also be added to further enhance the Tiraca's (and for that matter, any other Abbai ship's) lethality.

This image shows one of the mammoth Oran rings. These rings allow for the rapid transfer of cargo from one part of the system to the other. However, they are only suitable for solid or liquid bulk-type cargoes such as raw or refined ores. Humans cannot survive the forces they would be subject to if accelerated and decelerated through these arrays.



The ships in this image include a Powell-class Heavy Cruiser and two Razorback strike fighters of the United States.

B5, Fleet Action II and Turning Point: Separate universes, same system

"Okay, let me try to explain FA2 as simply as I can. But first, some terms.

"Turning Point" is the title of the new universe we are creating. It is not a game, it is a background. In the Turning Point Universe (TPU), Man has conquered the solar system, but the old nations are still around. The United States, European Union, Nippon Empire, Russian Federation, and other groups control resources and colonies in the system, and fight one another for dominance.

"Fleet Action 2" refers to the game itself. It will be very much like FA1, but without the Babylon 5 connection. It will use a new type of unit datacards, and a more generic set of rules that will theoretically work in any number of space-based backgrounds, such as TPU and B5, or anything else we choose to pursue a license for.

The plan at the moment is to publish FA2 in the Spring. The TPU backstory will be included in the book but will be separate from the mechanics. Simultaneously with this release, we also plan to publish a Babylon 5 supplement for FA2 that includes all the races and as many ship stats as we can stuff into a single book. There will also be further B5 supplements as needed, based on demand, the number of miniatures we have to make ships to match, and other factors. In addition, further TPU supplements will be created



US STRIKE FIGHTER:
This image is of a United States Razorback class strike fighter. These fighters are equipped with both stand-off and close-in anti-ship weapon systems.

that advance the TPU storyline, provide new units and rules, and so forth. It is probable that the initial rulebook will not include ships and data for every race in the TPU, simply for lack of space, but that these will appear in the supplements to follow.

FA1, as it now stands, will not have any more books made for it, but we will continue to support it online, with ship sheets, rules and races. And, of course, the miniatures will continue to appear as they have been doing (i.e., we will still make Babylon 5 FA miniatures). We will continue to sell books and miniatures for FA1 as best we can.

Babylon 5 Wars is still going strong and will continue to do so. We are still making rulebooks (hey, two more just went to press this week), and this will continue. While we have stopped making new full-scale minis, existing ones will continue to be available, and of course you can use FA-scale minis in your B5W games, as the vast majority of our players already do.

GROPOS will continue to be supported. We intend to produce Maxim-based ground rules for the TPU as well.

I think that just about covers it all."

- Agent One: Bruce H. Graw

In defense of the homeland, there is no such thing as retreat

Coordinated by: CHRIS NASIPAK

The year is 2230. The Dilgar War is raging at its height. A Dilgar assault fleet is headed towards your colony planet, and intelligence indicates that they are lead by a single huge squadron of no less than six Mishakur dreadnoughts, with only a few light escorts and their integral fighter squadrons.

You have only a scattered handful of ships to call on to defend against them, none of them very large. However, it's the Dilgar, and you're not going to go down without a fight. You may even be able to borrow a ship or two from nearby allies to help.

FLEET SELECTION RULES:

- 1) You have 5,000 points to spend.
- 2) All units purchased must have an In-Service Date of 2229 or earlier.
- 3) No more than 1 capital ship may be in your fleet, it may not be a dreadnought or battleship.
- 4) You may select one hull from each of your "neighbors", with accompanying fighters. A "neighbor" is defined as a race that (on the map provided in the Dilgar Invasion book) can be reached from your space in a single jump. No more than 2,000 points may be spent in this way. Generic "Raiders" are everyone's neighbor.
- 5) All ships must bring at least 50% of their assigned fighter complement.
- 6) You may include minefields and OSATs in your battle force, but not starbases.
- 8) Your objective is to kill or cripple as many Mishakurs as possible before they reach your planet's orbit.

THE SCENARIO

Dilgar Colony Assault

In the early years of the Dilgar War, before the Earth Alliance entered the fray and began to push them back, the Dilgar assaulted dozens of planets. Many times, far too many times, all that was available to defend these planets was a handful of ships. Rarely did the Dilgar face an

enemy potent enough to throw them back outside of a racial homeworld.

This scenario recreates one of those desperate, last-ditch struggles.

FORCES

Defender: Choose 5,000 points of units following the rules in the solicitation above, or choose one of the posted Battle Forces.

Dilgar:

Pentacan Lead:
1x Mishakur - D DNC
2x Mishakur DN
1x Athraskala CG
1x Ochlavita DD
24x Thorun

Pentacan Battle:

3x Mishakur DN
1x Athraskala CG
1x Ochlavita DD
36x Thorun

Pentacan Escort:

1x Ochlavita-D DDL
1x Ochlavita-L DDL
1x Ochlavita-E DDE
2x Jashakar-E FFE

SETUP

Place two standard maps, long side to long side. The map is fixed, it does not float.

The defender may set up his forces as he pleases, anywhere outside the xx01-xx10 rows of map A. On turn 1, the Dilgar may begin entering, one Pentacan every other turn, from map edge A. They may begin launching their fighters on the turn before they enter.

The Dilgar objective is leave the map in direction D, at a speed no greater than 6 hexes per turn. At this point they will be in range of the planet and can begin the bombardment.

Called Shots are permitted. The defender is permitted to ram.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Victory Points are awarded based on the number of ships the defender kills or forces to disengage before they can begin bombardment. Units which leave map edge D at speeds greater than 6 hexes per turn are unable to enter orbit and burn up in the atmosphere. They are considered kills

Mishakur - D: 4 points

Mishakur: 3 points

Athraskala: 2 points

Other Dilgar vessel: 1 point

Dilgar fighter: 1 point per 12 fighters destroyed.

Points Victory Level Achieved

0 - 8 Total Loss: The colony is utterly destroyed.

9 - 16 Strategic Loss: The Dilgar bombard the colony, but are driven off by a later counter-assault that takes heavy casualties.

17 - 22 Moral Victory: The Dilgar are able to bombard the colony, but cause little damage before being driven off by the counter-attack.

23+ Total Victory: The Dilgar retreat in disgrace

Possible variants:

- Place an field of 20 asteroids across the map between the xx30 row of map A and the xx10 row of map B

- Delete the Escort Pentacan for a faster battle (and a bit of a sporting chance for the defenders)

- Replace one Mishakur with a Mishakur-B Supercarrier and its fighters

Thank you to everyone who participated!

SUBMISSIONS

Centauri Defense forces:

(Bernhard Lackner)

Phalanx OSAT x16 4000

Ekos-A DEW mine x20 480

Raji 16 x65 520

5000 points

Tactical situation analysis:

The Dilgar have a point advantage of between



2:1 or even 3:1 depending on the number of escorts and the variants of the fully loaded Mishakur DNs. (Beware if they have a supercarrier!) They also have a tactical advantage because they know that the defender has to destroy the DNs at all cost and will act accordingly.

Conclusion:

No "fleet" of ships for 5000 points could survive the onslaught of the Thoruns not to mention the Mishakur or both of them. Maneuvering is not an option so stationary defenses are the only option (I can see) to defeat the DNs. They don't have to pay for fancy flying around so you get more bang for your bucks - something you will dearly need.

The OSATs have an excellent range and sport 32 battle lasers, enough to kill one or even two DNs in a single volley depending on the EW. And they present such a vast number of targets that killing them efficiently becomes a problem. The mines have one sole purpose - keeping the Thoruns at bay and slowing the Dilgar down so that the battle lasers can fire more often.

Deployment:

16 OSATs form a tight cluster of 4 OSATs in adjacent hexes.

The EKOS-As are arranged in 4 groups of 5, 3 hexes away from the satellites forming a rectangle.

The greatest number of proximity mines should be deployed in a semicircle targeting fighter class craft, 5 hexes away from the satellites facing the enemy deployment zone to shield the OSATs from a direct approach from the Thoruns. A smaller number should lay scattered around or in the deployment zone to confuse and slow down the enemy targeting anything that comes near. And some mines should be deployed closer to the satellites guarding the back door.

Brakiri Corporate Red Line

(Scott McGaffin)

1 Avioki CA- 685 pts.

5 Antoph CL- 2350 pts.

1 Thentus FF (Narn)- 425 pts.

5 Tokrana OSAT- 1000 pts.

18 Rehsa-P Proximity mines

10 Rehsa-C Captor mines

For the Brakiri to survive they must keep a large distance between themselves and the approaching Dilgar. Because of the sheer size of the attacking Dilgar force, the Brakiri do not have much hope of survival. As a result, they must cause as much damage as possible to make the Dilgar victory extremely costly. Concentration of firepower is vitally important. The tactics for this fleet is simple: retrograde. Range must be maintained. Because of the operational range of the graviton beam and the grav cannon, the Brakiri should outclass the Dilgar at long range. The mines should be setup in a zigzag pattern, so that no matter where they go the Dilgar will hit them. Put the Captor mines closest to the Dilgar, so that these will be the first mines the Dilgar are hit by. This could (hopefully) have the effect of slowing the Dilgar down to look for more mines.

Because the graviton pulsar didn't exist at this time, this force is largely ineffective versus fighters. The Thentus will have to be relied on to deal with most enemy fighters. The Brakiri ships should be kept close together so they can combine their firepower to deal with enemy fighters.

Kor-Lyan Counter Assault

(Kris Pugh)

6 x Axor Assault Frigate 1500

24 x Ailan Breaching Pods 960

36 Kalti Intercept Fighters 1656

36 x Fighter Heavy Missile 360

36 x Fighter Dropout Missile 360

72 x Dogfight Missiles 144

Total 4980

Tactics

Each Axor Frigate carries its BPs into the fray escorted by a flight of Kaltis. The fighters' job is to engage any Thoruns that attempt to attack the frigates. The frigates will launch BPs and close with the Mishakurs attempting to attach. There are two possible routes, one is to attach two Axors to each of 3 Mishakurs, along with BPs and try to take control of the ship! Once control has been won, the newly captured Mishakurs will ram the surviving ships until they have been destroyed, backed up with the surviving Axors and BPs. The other more risky strategy is to try to take control of all 6 Mishakurs at once, and add them to the Kor-Lyan Defense forces! The Kaltis will engage any Thoruns that approach, and if able will launch the FH missiles into the Mishakurs, trying to remove a side, so as to make any boarding attempts easier, the FD and dogfight missiles will also have some use against the Dilgar due to their low armour ratings.

Some of the Marine contingents delivered may be sent on a Wreck Havoc mission, hoping to damage/destroy critical primary systems. With their boarding bonuses, this may be a good way to weaken the Mishakurs before attempting to take control of them.

Drazi Defenders

(Dean Caruna)

96x Type-FF Mine

96x Star Snake

The Drazi have been experimenting with their new mine the special Type FF fighter bay mine. They have set up a field of these mines around one of their main planets as a test bed to see the survivability and maintenance needs of such a field over time. Of course every mine has to have a StarSnake within with a pilot for testing. Whaddya know the Dilgar just happen to attack this planet and the Drazi fighter pilots who are bored out of their minds this time jump for joy and launch their fighters to attack, racing towards the Dilgar fleet at breakneck speeds.

Tactics: Several flights peel off to deal with the Dilgar Thoruns... enough to deal with them handily. The rest of the fighters attack the Mishakurs one at a time and destroy them with massed fighter fire.

B5 DVD series in trouble?

A RECENT chatroom discussion with Warner Bros. regarding their DVD plans briefly touched on their B5 plans. When asked whether any work had been done on preparing Season 1 DVDs, the reply was negative. Warner said: "We will evaluate the first release's reception and hope it's great. Because if the DVD performance does not improve upon the VHS performance from a few years back, it will not continue." It appears the studio, like Sci Fi Channel, is playing the "safe" game and waiting to judge the level of fan support. But the news was not all bad. The discussion mentioned that, if the release was to go ahead, it might be in a boxed set.

- www.b5lr.com

Sci Fi Renews Farscape

THE Sci Fi Channel has announced that it has renewed its hit series Farscape for two additional seasons of 22 episodes each, ensuring that the show will have a total run of at least five years. The series is currently slated to finish its third season in January 2002, with season four debuting later that year.

Sci Fi president Bonnie Hammer said:

"Farscape is not only the most ambitious original series on basic cable, we think it's one of the best-written shows on television, period. It's no wonder that it's the top-rated series on Sci Fi for three years running." Farscape has nearly doubled its audience since its launch in March 1999, and Hammer credited the show with attracting not only new viewers, but also more female viewers. Nearly three-quarters of the new viewers who have tuned into the show have been women.

"Farscape has truly extended the boundaries of science fiction programming, reaching out to a new generation of fans across all age groups, male and female alike," said Juliet Blake, president of Jim Henson Television-U.S. "I know the exceptional cast, crew, Jim Henson's Creature Shop, and our partners at Hallmark and Sci Fi are thrilled to bring fourth and fifth seasons to our loyal fans and to new audiences worldwide."

- www.scifi.com

Weaver may revive Alien

ACTRESS Sigourney Weaver said she has been in talks with director Ridley Scott about making a fifth Alien movie. The star could reprise her role as Ripley in the Alien films which have been huge hits since Oscar-winner Scott made his first in the late 70s. There had been rumours among movie buffs that she could return in the role. In an interview for a Channel 4 documentary Alien Evolution, Weaver said: "We'll have to see how the elements come together."

- www.news.bbc.co.uk

BABCOM

www.robertshome.org/babcom

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

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New Battlestar scrapped?

THE stage and sets have been built, scripts are in the can and computer animation begun.

But, only weeks before filming was due to begin, Rupert Murdoch's Fox network has suddenly lost interest in reviving Battlestar Galactica. Why?

They believed their own propaganda. Bryan Singer ("X-Men") was lured away from the "Battlestar Galactica" television movie as producer/director - leaving behind co-producer Tom DeSanto (also of X-men fame).

Apparently, Fox was banking on Bryan Singer to work his "X-Men" magic on "Battlestar." Now, he's been drafted to fix the mess Fox has turned X-Men 2 into. In Fox's mind, Singer's move equals automatic failure for Battlestar and redemption for X-Men 2. Get it?

In the past week, the "Battlestar Galactica" production offices in Vancouver, British Columbia has shut down.

The Los Angeles office is still open, although not for long. Money and time are running out.

Fox considers X-Men 2 as a bigger money-spinning proposition, and reportedly offered Bryan Singer received a lot of dough to save the directionless sequel.

Singer's departure was a major blow. Now there are so many legalities and issues in place that the show can't be moved or sold to another network.

If Fox abandons it altogether in the next two weeks, "Battlestar" is dead.

"Battlestar" was going to be a very large production. They had hired an accountant for the construction department. (Bear in mind: Most shows only have one accountant for the whole production.) The budget was rumored at \$10 million, too.

Sketches of the new Viper pilot helmets have been seen, with different colors and a similar style. The Vipers were redesigned somewhat,

but remain futuristic and deadly as ever. And there are several new types of Cylons that we won't see unless the production happens.

One Cylon has a Roman gladiator type of ridge and a large mouth guard. It sounds weird, but those who have seen it say it totally works. The Cylons in general are said to look more villainous and evil than ever before.

Rumor says the original Battlestar model owner was approached, although the special effects folks will settle for a CGI version along with other rag tag fleet ships we know.

What now?

All that is left is a fan-based petition. DeSanto and the BattlestarGalactica.com web site are asking fans to sign petitions to support the show. Apparently, he's working his butt off to save the show -but Fox needs more convincing. And fans are the key.

- aint-it-cool news



This awesome picture of two Bin Tak's and their escort of G'Quans featured on the cover of October's Dreadnought edition of Babcom.

The picture, by Holger Barton, captures the power and majesty of this excellent Agents of Gaming impression of a Narn Dreadnought.

It is this month's Babcom background screen and can be found in the Attachments folder accompanying this edition.

I found it while browsing through Holger Barton's webstie - Babylon 5 - the place to be (www.tptb.de). He probably used the 3d computer meshes found on www.eon3d.com.