

THE GREAT MACHINE

ISSUE 2 December 2003

STAR CONTROL





Wakey, Wakey, Hu-Nam!

Welcome to the Great Machine! This issue is being transmitted from beneath miles of sweet protective rock and machinery . . . though how I arrived here eludes me. I think it is because of that silly hu-nam Captain from planet undersafe. . . or othervolt. . . or whatever.

This issue contains COUNTLESS new ships designs detailing the battles from my own really scary and unsafe universe. These ships come from HUNDREDS of different authors, well, maybe not hundreds, but at least four! Also included is a new flagship for the United Federation of Planets, who are a people who love peace, MASS-DESTRUCTION CAPABLE starships, and the Prime Directive (which is not to be confused with the Spathi Prime Directive: "Run For Your Life"). We also have a sneak peak at a new race, the Nashani, along with their DEATH-DEALING defence fleet of doom. And some silly Hu-nams, Tyrel and Paul, provide advice in designing new fleets and ships. Though they have both forgotten the most important ship class: the heavily-armoured escape pod. Now I must hide. I fear the *Ultimate Evil* has followed me here, despite what Draal says, biding its time, just out of auditory and visual range, ready to pounce upon my soft flesh . . . AIYEEEE!

CAPTAIN FWIFFO,
SPATHI OF THE WORLD

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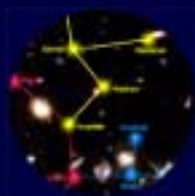
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The epic battles of the Star Control universe come to the Babylon 5 Wars game system.

Star Control II remains one of the most popular science fiction adventure games to come out of the golden age of computer gaming. In those days designers could not rely solely on eye candy to sell their product, VGA graphics only being so good. This required games to be rich in content and to provide a superior, memorable gaming experience. Star Control II didn't disappoint.

Unlike its predecessor, Star Control II focused less on the strategic aspect of the game but instead put extra emphasis on the story. To that end Star Control II took on a heavy RPG element, something that stands to its credit even so many years later. Rather than fighting

simple, repetitive "conquer the universe" campaigns, Star Control II immersed you in the Star Control universe. Although the arcade-style ship combat remains central to the game it is well supported by an intriguing cast of characters, places, and events that help to form the well-hung tapestry that is the Star Control universe. Who after playing the game all the way through doesn't come away from it with some sort of lasting influence?

The Star Control Universe

The Star Control universe began in Star Control I with the war between the Ur-Quan Hierarchy and the Alliance of Free Stars. The two

rival powers were fairly well matched, but the addition of new battle-thralls to the Hierarchy eventually tipped the balance of power in the Ur-Quan's favor. In the end the Alliance of Free Stars was crushed beneath the Ur-Quan's tentacles.

At the fall of each Alliance homeworld the Ur-Quan offered the conquered race one of two choices: become a battle-thrall and serve the Hierarchy or be trapped on their homeworld forever, shielded beneath the hellish red glow of a slave shield. Most of the defeated Alliance races opted to be shielded on their homeworlds rather than serve the Ur-Quan masters.

Star Control II begins with the return of members of a lost colony of marooned humans to Earth. The humans had the good fortune to discover an ancient Precursor factory facility which they used to build their new starship. The survivors arrived at Earth only to find that the Alliance lost the war and that the people of Earth are now fallow slaves of the Ur-Quan, trapped beneath a slave shield. Using the resources available from the local starbase, the rogue humans began exploring in search of a way to rebuild the Alliance of Free Stars and defeat the Ur-Quan. New alliances were forged and mysteries of the universe unveiled before the final showdown with the Ur-Quan's own Precursor relic: the Sa-Matra. This ancient battle station was destroyed by the New Alliance of Free Stars, putting an end to the brutal Ur-Quan Doctrinal Conflicts once and for all.

For more information on the individual races, story, and background of the Star Control universe, please refer to the Pages of Now and Forever website (<http://www.classicgaming.com/starcontrol/>) for a web-based version of the race backgrounds as first published in the Star Control game manuals.

The Alliance of Free Stars

(Excerpts From the Star Control II Manual)

The first Alliance race to become aware of the Ur-Quan threat was the sophisticated, crystalline race, the Chenjesu. In 2098 their ultra-sensitive HyperWave receivers began recording strange broadcasts, unshielded and strong, from the direction of the Cygnus star cluster. Soon after, the Chenjesu listened as the Ur-Quan brutally conquered the first race they encountered, the Umgah. By 2111 the Spathi had also been subjugated and the Ilwrath, one of the Chenjesu's closest neighbors, was near defeat. The Chenjesu realized that they needed help fighting the Ur-Quan and their ever-growing armada of battle thralls.

The Chenjesu's long-standing mutual defense agreement with the Mmrnmhrm became the basis for the Alliance of Free Stars. Soon the Yehat and their foster-species, the uplifted Shofixti, entered the Alliance. Following Humanity's induction in 2115, the Ariloulaleelay and the Syreen (unofficially) followed suit, bringing the Alliance to its final configuration, seven alien races united against a common foe.

The Ur-Quan slowly wore down the Alliance of Free Stars and all of its members eventually succumbed to the Hierarchy. Of the former Alliance powers, only the Yehat agreed to join the Hierarchy rather than be forced to live beneath a slave shield. They were the lucky ones. The Shofixti were destroyed during the war, their fleet sacrificing themselves to destroy an Ur-Quan fleet in their home system. The Arilou, too, disappeared after the defeat of the Earthlings.

The actions of the captain from Vela and his Precursor flagship helped to free the enslaved Alliance worlds and spearheaded the formation of a new resistance to the hierarchy. This young New Alliance of Free Stars was successful not only defeating the Ur-Quan Hierarchy but also in putting an end to the Ur-Quan Doctrinal Conflict by way of the destruction of the Sa-Matra battle station.

In the aftermath of the conflict the Alliance is struggling to rebuild after generations of war.

The Ur-Quan Hierarchy

(Excerpts From the Star Control II Manual)

The history of the Ur-Quan is largely unknown, save that they are an old race who have traveled the galaxy for thousands of years with a single motive: To find intelligent life and enslave it. Most Xenopsychologists agree that the Ur-Quan behavior indicates they suffered some kind of severe trauma, and are neurotically acting out their need to control everything by enslaving any intelligent species they meet. Most starship commanders who have faced the Ur-Quan in combat think the Ur-Quan attack and enslave simply because they are evil, hostile creatures who should be destroyed.



The organization of the Ur-Quan Hierarchy is simple and immutable: All alien races are inferior to the Ur-Quan. Battle Thralls, those other races who fight for the Ur-Quan, are granted the next highest status, and are permitted to maintain a small amount of autonomy. All other independent species are simply known as prey.

The Conversions

So why was the Star Control universe selected as the focus of this issue of the Great Machine? Star Control is one of the seminal science fiction computer games to come out of the industry and is remembered quite fondly by its fans. This can be attributed to the quirky setting and the epic nature of the Star Control II story. In many ways Star Control and Babylon 5 have a lot of in common. Both have intricate and carefully woven stories that can carry extraordinary dramatic weight, yet never fall into the trap of taking themselves too seriously. You'll laugh, you'll cry, you will run away screaming from a giant caterpillar. What is better than that?

Many people have tried their hand at converting the Star Control universe over to Babylon 5 in the past. Paul Brown's Star Control conversions were some of the first to be posted on the web. Others have certainly been developed, though most have kept them out of the public's eye. This issue brings these designs out into the light and provides a forum for discussing the different possible way to convert the same source materials into the Babylon 5 Wars game system.

No one conversion can ever be considered to be "correct" and this issue just gives you a smattering of possible interpretations of the ships of Star Control. Hopefully these

designs will get you thinking about your own Star Control conversions and help jump start your creativity.

Other Rules

The Star Control ships can be made to fit into the Babylon 5 Wars mold, but there are some differences in the technologies involved that should be noted beforehand. Some of these rules are in force for all of the ships in the conversion, while others are optional rules offered up to give players more playing options.

Jump Engines

The Jump Engines found on the Star Control ships are the emergency escape modules installed on the ships that could be activated in the game to allow the ship to leave an engagement. The Jump Engines in Star Control are not capable of moving multiple ships out of combat, only the activating unit, and do not form jump points.

The Star Control Jump Engines are activated as normal during the Jump Point Formation Segment of the Turn Sequence. Once the Jump Engine is activated the ship may not perform any maneuvers, fire weaponry of any kind, either offensively or defensively, or use any other form of special defensive system (self repair, shields, etc.). The ship will then exit combat during the Vortex Activation/Closure Segment of the same turn. This leaves the escaping ship extremely vulnerable on the turn that it leaves combat.

Like the Shadow Phasing Drive, jumping Star Control ships are destroyed if their Jump Engines take even a single point of damage during the turn that the drive is activated and the ship is jumping out of battle.

Ships that jump out of combat can end up in one of several locations. If the ship is within a star system the jump drive will only relocate the ship an indeterminate distance from its previous location. This is due to the interference of the local gravity well which Jump Engines cannot overcome. If on the edge of a solar system the Jump Engines will be able to push the ship through into hyperspace, allowing the ship to travel between the stars.

Optional Rule: Star Control as Ancients

Optionally, several of the Star Control races can be considered Ancient races. This option is most useful if doing a B5/SC crossover battle, and it is not recommended for purely Star Control battles.

The following ships should be considered full-fledged Ancients, including the addition of Advanced Armor, Advanced Sensors, and treating all of their weapons as Ancient-class: Ur-Quan Dreadnought, Kohr-Ah Marauder, Chmmr Avatar. The Chenjesu Broodhome should be given Advanced Sensors but none of the other modifiers. The Melnorme Trader, as the likely product of the ancient Mael-Num race, gains Advanced Sensors and its weapon should be considered Ancient-class, but as a merchant ship it lacks Advanced Armor.

Afterward

There are so many ships from the Star Control universe, it was difficult to get as many done as fill this issue. Because of this, several ships are conspicuously missing.

SUPER-MELEEE

Fleet Selection

Both players should agree on the point total for the game before selecting ships. The players should also determine whether they will be limited to only the ships of one of the three alliances (Alliance of Free Stars, New Alliance of Free Stars, and the Ur-Quan Hierarchy) or be able to choose ships from any of the Star Control races.

Once the point total and ship selections is determined, players can begin filling out their fleets with an amount of ships up to, but not over, the point total.

Setting up the Board

The SuperMelee game environment takes place on a fixed, wrap-around map that is the home to several terrain objects. None of these objects are optional, and all should be included on the map. These objects will be explained in detail below.

As a wrap-around map, any ship that moves off the map either voluntarily or involuntarily (such as due to damage) is not out of play as is usually the case when playing with fixed maps. Instead, the ship will automatically reappear on the opposite side of the map from the point it left the map. The ship's facing will also be reversed, though its speed will remain the same.

Planet

In the center of the map place a single 3-hex diameter planetary body. This planet has a significant gravitational impact on ships nearby and can often be used to give ships a gravitic assist, or 'gravity whip,' to help accelerate them and put them

in a better position to strike at their enemy.

During the Pre-Movement Terrain Effects Segment, all ships within five hexes of the planet will be pulled towards the planet at a rate of one hex per turn and have their speed increased by one. Ships within three hexes experience greater gravitic effects, being pulled two hexes towards the planet and their speed increased by two.

If a ship hits the planet it is not instantly destroyed. Each time a ship hits the planet it takes 30 points of raking damage to the facing side and is then 'bounced back' into the hex it was in before it hit the planet. It is entirely possible for a ship to stray too close to the planet's gravity well and find itself being forced to run into the planet, perhaps multiple times.

Asteroids

Place 1d6+2 asteroids on the map. Each of these asteroid hexes is treated as per the normal rules except that these asteroids will move across the board at a rate of one hex per turn. Each turn during the Pre-Movement Terrain Effects Segment the asteroids will move one hex in a random direction (as determined by a d6 roll). If one of the players' ships already occupies this hex they will take damage from the asteroids. Because of this it is a gamble to end your movement near an asteroid.

Placing Ships on the Board

Before play begins, players should determine how they will decide how reinforcements will be selected. The two options are either Player Selected or Randomized.

If the Player Selected option is chosen, each player can choose which of their ships will jump into combat after the destruction of their last warship.

With the Randomized option, each player assigns a number corresponding to a side of a d20 to each of their ships. After a player's ship is destroyed, a d20 is rolled and the ship matching the rolled value will be the next to enter the board. If none of the player's ships were assigned the value that is rolled simply re-roll the d20 until a valid number is rolled.

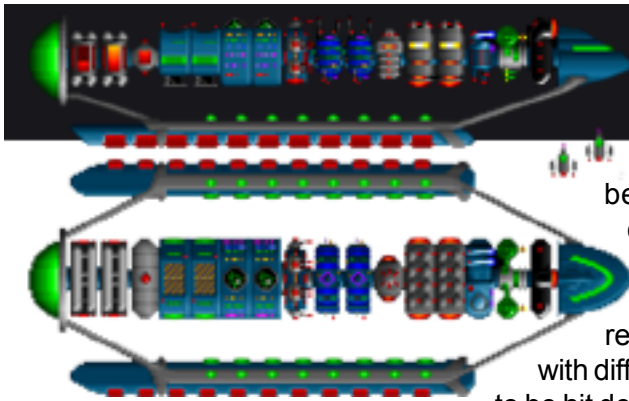
All ships enter the board using the Jumping into Combat rules found in the Babylon 5 Wars Rules Compendium. Some ships, such as the VUX, may have a bonus to their jump rolls to simulate their advanced status. Note that if you are using the Star Control as Ancients rules, many of the more powerful Star Control ships will gain Ancients bonuses on their jumping into combat rolls.

Determining Victory

Once one of the players has lost all of their units the game is called and the surviving fleet's player is the winner. You have defeated your vile enemy. Good job!

In the case of a tie, which is possible if the last two ships of both players being destroyed on the same turn, add up the point values of all of the enemy ships you have destroyed. The player with the most points in their 'kill pile' will win the tie. If the two totals are the same then the battle is a true draw and there is no winner.

* * *



Precursor Flagship

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Precursor Flagship is the signature vessel of Star Control II. As your character's personal flagship, it is the center of all of your operations. It is also the most modular and variable design in the game. The modular nature of the ship made it extremely difficult to convert over to Babylon 5 Wars, and even the current version makes a lot of compromises between the intentions and implementation of the Flagship's systems.

The vanilla Precursor Flagship whose price is listed on the ship control sheet contains no modules and is nothing more than the bare skeleton of the ship. It is up to the player to begin adding modules to the ship in order to give it extra functionality.

Modules

The Flagship's module slots are located along the spine of the ship. Sixteen slots in all are available. Four of these are specially marked and are typically reserved for weapon modules only. The arcs listed in these arcs show you what arcs of fire will be available to weapons installed in the modules. The forward and aft module slots fire only to the front and aft respectively, while the other two modules fire into other arcs. The rest of the slots can

be filled in with whatever other modules the player desires.

The modules are represented on the hit chart with different slots being available to be hit depending on the side being hit. If a module is hit the owning player scores damage at their discretion against the module's systems.

Modules are not destroyed with their associated structure but instead persist until the ship or all of the module's constituent systems are destroyed.

Fuel Pods & High-Efficiency Fuel Systems

These two modules generate the power that goes into the ship's Power Batteries. The Power Generators found in these two modules generate an amount of power equal to the value listed in the Generator icon.

Dynamo Unit & Shiva Furnace

These two modules types are the 'batteries' of the Precursor ship. The primary component of both is their Power Batteries, special power storage devices nearly identical to the Pak'Ma'Ra Plasma Battery. The major difference between the two is that Power Batteries can use their stored energy for any purpose, not just for thrusters or plasma weapons.

The energy stored in the Power Batteries is used to power all of the ship's weapon systems, which is its primary purpose. If there is not

enough power in the ship's batteries to arm the weapons the ship will not be able to fire.

The Batteries are replenished by the power generated by the Power Generators incorporated into the ship's fuel systems.

The Dynamo and Shiva are also the source of the Flagship's additional engine systems. I decided to place the engines here instead of fuel pods because they govern power creation, which would be the controlling factor in tactical maneuvering.

Storage Pods

The Storage Pod holds all of the ship's bulk cargo, such as the mineral resources gathered by your planetary landers.

Crew Pods

The living quarters where your crew spend their time. This pod has two passenger quarters and a small shuttle hangar, allowing the crew to ferry back and forth between the Flagship and the other ships in the fleet.

A.T.S. System

The Automated Tracking System module provides to-hit bonuses against enemy targets. Each of the OEW Sensor Pods found on the A.T.S. System provides 2 OEW points for your Flagship's use. These free EW points can only be used for OEW, not any other purpose. The addition of more A.T.S. Systems will allow the Flagship to be more accurate with its weapons fire.

Precursor Flagship (continued)

Weapon Modules

All of the weapons on the Flagship draw power from the Power Batteries. The amount of weapons the Flagship can fire every turn is limited by its power generation and storage capabilities. A fully tricked out Flagship is a menacing opponent.

Ion Bolt Gun

The Ion Bolt Gun is the basic weapon the Flagship can be armed with. The Ion Bolt Gun does very little damage, but its fast rate of fire makes it an effective weapon nonetheless.

Fusion Blaster

A more advanced weapon than the Ion Bolt Gun, the Fusion Blaster does more damage and has greater range. The Fusion Blaster trades the Ion Bolt Gun's high rate of fire for greater armor penetration.

Hellbore Cannon

The most powerful weapon that the Flagship can be equipped with, this deadly plasma weapon is on par with the primary weapon found on the Ur-Quan Dreadnought. The heavy damage of the Hellbore is balanced out by its high power requirement.

Point Defense System

This module incorporates point defense lasers like those found on other Earthling warships. Unlike other weapon modules, the Point Defense System can be mounted in any available module slot. As such the weapons on this module always use their listed arcs in preference to any stipulated by the target module slot. The more Point Defense Systems that are installed on the Flagship, the better it will be able to

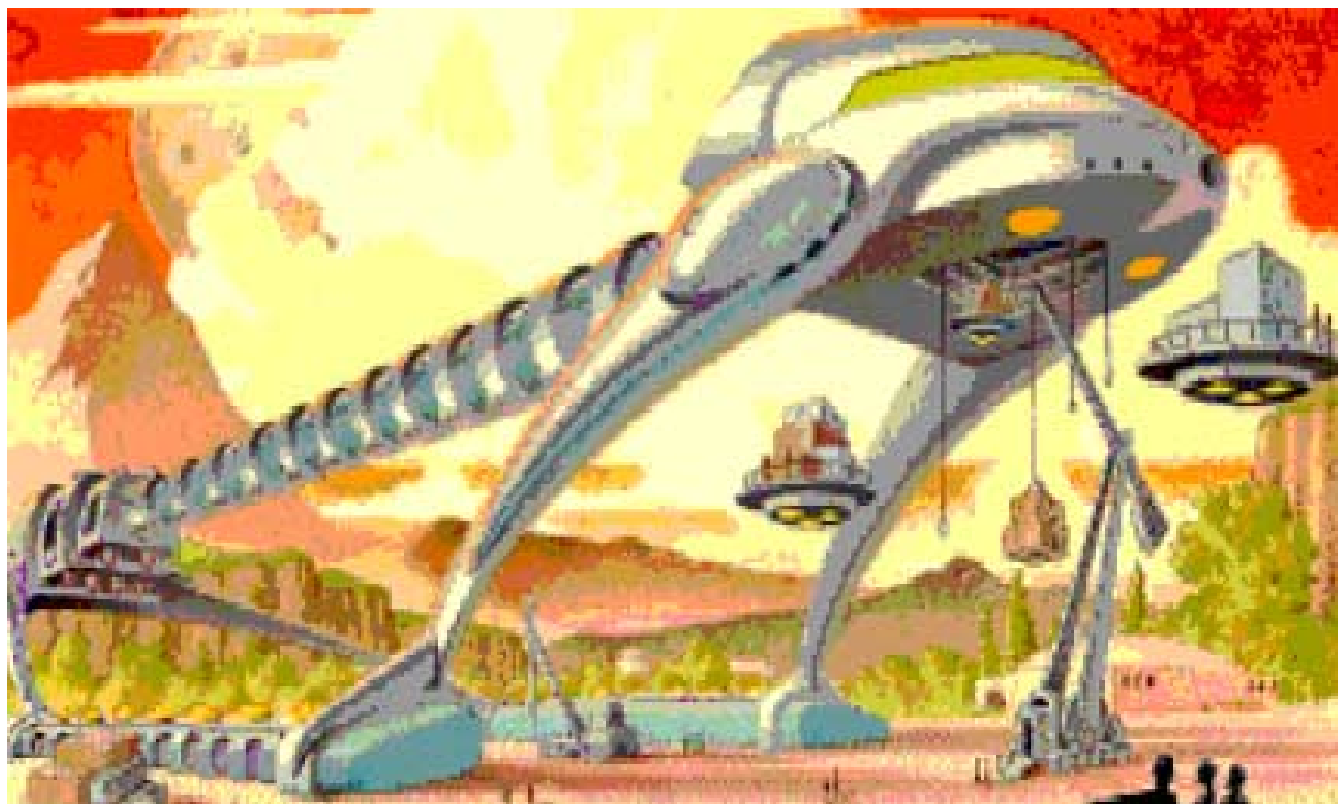
handle the threat of enemy weapons fire and fighter craft.

Thrusters

In addition to the ship's modules, the Flagship can also purchase additional thrusters to improve its responsiveness and speed in combat. Each thruster costs 50 combat points to purchase.

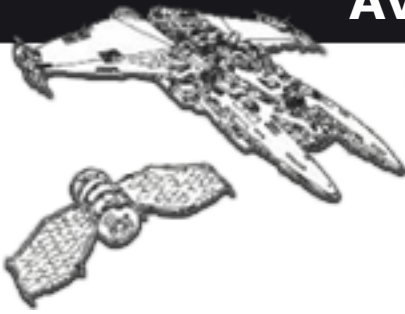
Destroying the Flagship

As with any other ship, the Flagship is destroyed when the last box of Primary structure is eliminated. A captain can greatly increase the resilience of his flagship by adding additional modules to the ship. These modules act to absorb more of the damage that would have impacted on structure, spreading damage around the ship and preventing the easy destruction of the ship's sections.



Chmmr Avatar

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS



DESIGN:

DAVID AINSWORTH

The main problems with modeling the Chmmr are the short range of its deadly laser weapon, and deciding just how deadly that laser should be. I've opted to make the laser particularly deadly, and added some interesting tactical options by splitting it into three separate weapons in three different sections of the ship. Between the cool-down requirement, and the need to shut down lasers to keep the tractor beam powered, it is unlikely that the Avatar will be able to fire all three of its lasers at the same target, but if it does, almost nothing can survive both turns of fire. Given the deadliness of the ship in SC, I'm comfortable with that.

The three Zap-Sats operate somewhat like Kirishiac orbitals, and provide effective defensive or offensive fire for the Avatar. Its vitality is represented by a huge block of primary structure, reflecting the Chmmr's amazing staying power. Of all the ships in SC2, the Avatar is perhaps best at beating multiple foes, though a ship like the Kohr-Ah Marauder can quickly strip it of defenses. (Note that the Kohr-Ah's FRIED system damages orbitals like the Zap-Sats separately from the main ship.)

Avatars are most effective in groups of two or three, which allows one Avatar to tractor an enemy ship

into a killing zone. Their short range is their major drawback, though if they turtle and run defensive fire they can force an enemy to get close and then blast him with the laser. Their high armor and structure means they can shrug off hits that would destroy a lesser ship instantly.

Chmmr Tractor Beam

The Chmmr Tractor Beam operates on different principles from ordinary tractor systems, and is capable of reaching out to extreme range and unerringly drawing an enemy ship closer to the Avatar. Roll the dice indicated based on the power provided to the weapon on the turn it is fired, and move the target ship that many hexes towards the Avatar. The target's facing remains unchanged, as do its direction of movement and any other special conditions (pivoting, rolling, etc). If two hexes are equally closer to the Avatar, the Avatar's owner chooses which hex the tractored ship enters. The target suffers all appropriate penalties due to being pulled through terrain, but will not ram under any circumstances unless tractored through an enormous unit's hex (in which case use the normal rules). The tractor functions even through solid objects like moons—no lock or line of sight is required, although the Avatar must be aware that the target ship is there.

If a tractored ship is pulled into the Avatar's hex and movement remains,

the Chmmr's player may shift its position within the hex relative to the Avatar. For example, if the Avatar is facing direction 3 and a Dreadnought is tractored into the Avatar's hex from direction 1, it can be repositioned as if it had entered the hex from direction 3 (i.e. placed directly in front of the Avatar) if any points of movement remain from the tractor beam.

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

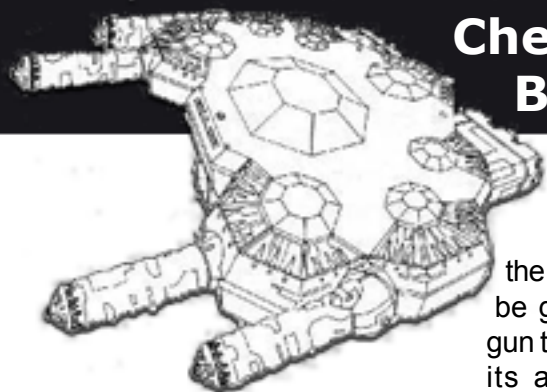
My version of the Chmmr Avatar is based on David Ainsworth's own design. The major change to the design is a slight reduction in abilities and reworking of some of the weapon systems. The ship is also slightly less massive, an attempt to make the Chmmr more of an equal opponent for my Ur-Quan Dreadnought

I opted to make the Terrawatt Laser the main weapon on the ship, downgrading the side lasers on David's design to a lighter model. My new Terawatt Laser does not automatically fire in sustained mode, but instead has a three-turn sustained option. The amount of power necessary to operate the

laser in this mode is the same as the total power requirement of the two other lasers. This allows the ship to still act like the ship from the game (one central, sustained laser weapon) while diversifying its armament and not putting all of the Chmmr's eggs in one basket.

* * *





Chenjesu Broodhome

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Broodhome is one of my favorite Star Control ships when it comes to the SuperMelee combat. It is very capable and strong, as should be expected from the Ur-Quan Dreadnought's analog. The ship might not be fast but it makes up for it by way of its fast firing crystal shards and highly annoying, power-draining DOGI's.

Photon Crystal Shard

I had many ideas for the photon crystal shard. My first idea was to have it have two different modes, one direct and the other indirect, with different firing properties for each. But after bouncing ideas back and forth between Paul Brown and David Ainsworth I came up with a new version based on some of their ideas.

The photon crystal shard acts a lot like a Narn Energy Mine, except that it is targeted on a unit, not a hex. If the weapon hits it scores full damage to the target and a little extra damage to all other units within a hex. If the weapon misses, the weapon instead scored as a proximity blast in a hex 2d6 hexes away from the intended target. This represents the weapon's potential to scatter when you fired it in the game, especially if you didn't target the unit well enough.

Crystalline Bolt

This weapon isn't in fact in the game, but I decided that it would be good to add a small defensive gun to the Broodhome to balance out its arsenal. They do very little damage are useful only at close range, but they do give the Broodhome some extra firepower to defend itself with in the event that its shard launchers are destroyed.

Absorption Crystal

I noticed that the Chenjesu had their absorption crystals called out on their battle information image from the game, but they have never had any impact on the game. I decided that it would be neat to add them to the Broodhome in some way so opted to add them as bulkheads for use in absorbing incoming damage. The absorption crystals function exactly as Gaim bulkheads and use all of the same rules.

DOGI's

Early on I made the decision that I did not want to add the DOGI's as replenishable munitions on the Broodhome. At first I created these units as simple fighter craft equipped with a downgraded version of the Burst Beam. However, after taking another look at the background information for the Broodhome, I found that those four prongs on the ship are actually the DOGI controller units.

This revelation got me thinking. I still liked how the DOGI's looked and acted as fighter craft, and I especially liked the parity of having the big ships of both of the Alliance and Hierarchy be carriers of a sort.

So I didn't want to change the fighter mechanic. But what did I get to thinking about when I started combining 'fighters' with a 'controlling device'? Hunter-Killers! Yes, I decided that having each of the prongs be an HK Controller and the DOGI's act as HK's would work beautifully. It would help to reign in the potential for abuse inherent with the DOGI's energy draining weapon. Additionally, since HK's have to start the battle in their carrier's hangar it would better replicate that none of the DOGI's are active at the beginning of a scenario.

The end result is an HK that seeks out the enemy target and saps them of their energy and shuts down their valuable systems. A swarm of twenty-four DOGI's (representing four of them from the game) is enough to bring most enemy ships to their knees, which is what I was looking for. The DOGI's have good armor but are low on structure, making it easier for the enemy to eliminate them. In fleet actions DOGI's will be especially vulnerable, as many ships in the Hierarchy fleet are well-equipped for taking out large numbers of small craft (the Umgah especially come to mind).

DESIGN: DAVID AINSWORTH

The Broodhome is a sluggish but tough ship, with an extremely long-range weapon capable of inflicting good damage on a direct hit, or splash damage from an indirect hit. It is also able to launch its shards rapidly at close range, potentially doing a great deal of damage and providing a fair amount

Chenjesu Broodhome (continued)

of defense. Its shards make it particularly good at killing fighters, which makes the Broodhome effective in crossover battles.

The Broodhome also possesses the annoying DOGI. These little spheres launch from the back of the ship, with up to four in play at any time, and they bounce off the enemy ship, draining its power and knocking it off course. I've erred in favor of modeling this procedure as precisely as possible, and the DOGIs should be appropriately annoying in gameplay. The Broodhome is a decent match for either an Ur-Quan or a Kohr-Ah, though its smaller volume of fire gives them a slight advantage.

Photon Crystal Shard

This weapon may be fired either at long-range (proximity mode), or short-range (pulse mode), although the proximity style of fire can be used at close range. The following mechanic for the proximity mode of the weapon is intended to simulate the "leading the target" quality in the SC game, coupled with the ability of the weapon to potentially strike a target other than the one intended. First, during the launch phase select a target hex and target unit. Do not announce either. After all movement is complete, during the ballistic weapons phase, trace a path of fire from launch hex to target hex. Any enemy ship in this path has a chance to be hit equal to its profile modified by EW, fire control, and range from the launch hex at a -1 per 4 hexes penalty. If a ship is struck on the way to the target hex, stop adjudication at that time. Damage is 36 points in standard mode, matter class.

If no ship is struck on the way

and the target ship is in the target hex, the weapon automatically hits, doing 36 points of damage in standard mode, matter class. If the target ship is not in the target hex, compute the hit chances as follows: profile facing target hex modified by EW, fire control, and range from the target hex at a -1 per hex penalty. If this roll hits, the weapon does 36 points in standard mode, matter class, to the target. This computation represents "leading" the target successfully during movement.

If the roll misses, the shard detonates instead. For every 2 points (or fraction thereof) by which the weapon missed the target, move it one hex away from the target and towards the selected hex. The shard detonates in the selected hex automatically, or in the hex it ends up in after adjustment. This detonation does 15 points of matter damage, flash mode, to all units in the hex of detonation, and 10 points of matter damage, flash mode, to all units in all adjacent hexes. In addition, any weapons fire passing through the detonation hex suffers a -2 interception penalty for the remainder of the turn (unless the weapon cannot be intercepted). The firing Broodhome never takes this damage, but all other units (friendly or enemy) suffer it. Note that this flash mode matter damage is adjudicated like an energy mine's explosion (so each blast does 15 or 10 points to all targets with no collateral damage).

Alternately, the weapon may be fired in rapid-fire (pulse) mode. In pulse mode, the Photon Crystals are launched at extremely close range in rapid succession, detonating almost as soon as they



leave the launcher. The detonations can clear a wide section of space near the Broodhome of enemies, and also serve to provide some defensive cover.

Roll using the normal pulse rules for purposes of hitting the target. If the shot misses, it scatters towards the Broodhome, moving 1 hex closer for every 2 points by which the shot missed (round fractions up). If a choice of hexes is available, the player of the targeted ship chooses the hex. The shots all detonate in the Broodhome's hex once that is reached.

If the shot hits, every pulse which connects detonates in the target's hex, doing 15 points of matter damage in flash mode to all units within that hex, and 10 points of matter damage in flash mode to all units in adjacent hexes. The firing Broodhome is immune to this damage but no other units (friend or foe) are immune. Any remaining pulses (up to the maximum of 4) detonate in the Broodhome's hex. (Note that if the Broodhome fires in pulse mode at an enemy unit in its own hex, it automatically connects with all 4 pulses... so keep your distance!)

Any weapon firing through a

Chenjesu Broodhome (continued)

detonation hex suffers a -2 interception penalty. Firing through additional detonation hexes grants an additional -1 interception penalty for each hex fired through. If all four pulses detonate in the same hex, weapons fired through that hex suffer a -4 penalty (or -1 for laser class weapons).

The Crystal Shards can be fired in interception mode—in this instance, all four pulses detonate in the Broodhome's hex, doing scatter damage as normal and providing full interception bonus for the Broodhome on that turn.

DOGI's

The DOGI generator, when fired, launches a DOGI (De-energizing Offensive Guided Interceptor), which will lock on to an enemy target and pursue it to drain its power. No more than four DOGI's per Broodhome may be in existence at once. Use the DOGI stats listed below for each individual DOGI (which are considered shuttle-class units). Since DOGI's have very primitive tracking systems, they can only be launched in the presence of enemy units, so no Broodhome can begin a battle with DOGI's in play. The "weapon" is fired during the weapons phase and the DOGI is immediately placed in the Broodhome's hex, moving at speed 0 and facing the rear of the Broodhome. (Note that if the Broodhome also fires its Shards in pulse mode they may strike and destroy the DOGI immediately upon launch. DOGI's are

not immune to photon shard bursts.)

Each DOGI generates a primitive form of energy draining field, which functions as follows:

ONCE during a DOGI's movement, when it enters an enemy ship or base's hex (fighters and mines are not valid targets), it may drain power from that unit. Use the ramming rules to determine if the attempt is successful. If the ram hits, the target unit immediately loses 3d6 power, subtracted first from any unused extra power, then requiring the controlling player to shut down powered systems immediately to meet the loss. (If multiple DOGI's are in play, keep track of "left-over" power from shut-down systems as additional DOGI's may drain additional power.) If sensors are shut down as a result of this power loss, the ship immediately loses all declared EW for that turn. There is no additional penalty if the victim cannot meet the entire power loss, although failing to cover the entire loss does require all 0 power systems to shut down for the rest of the turn. Power loss from a DOGI's drain lasts only for the remainder of that turn and has no effect on subsequent turns.

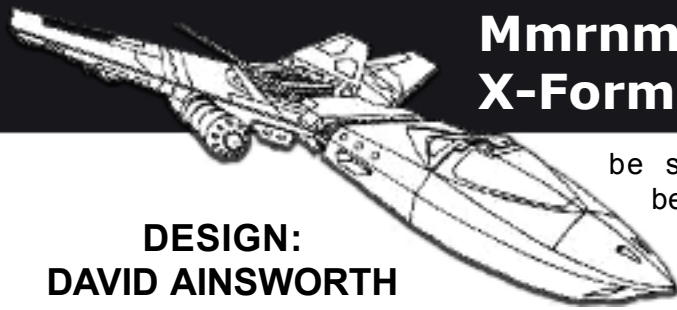
In addition, if the controlling player chooses, the DOGI can "knock back" the target ship in the direction the DOGI was moving when it entered the target's hex. Enormous units and stabilized units (OSATs, bases) are immune to the effect. Capital ships and HCVs are moved one hex in the direction the DOGI was moving, MCVs two hexes, and LCVs three hexes. [If you are using a vector-based movement system, add this vector of movement to the victim's current vectors.] If the DOGI performs "knock back," it is thrown d6+3 hexes in the opposite direction and its facing is randomly determined.

The DOGI's energy draining field is too short-range to interfere with weapons fire, but it does reduce the DOGI's profile as reflected in its stats:

DOGI—Jinking Limit 6 levels, Turn Cost 1/3 speed, Turn Delay 0, Accel/Decel cost 1 thrust, Pivot cost 1 Thrust, Roll cost 1 Thrust, Fwd/Aft Defense 6, Stb/Port Defense 6, Free Thrust 9, Initiative Bonus +15, Armor 2 in all directions, 15 boxes structure.

* * *





Mmrnmhrm X-Form

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: DAVID AINSWORTH

The Xform was actually easy to convert once I'd developed the basic concept, which was a ship which shifts portions of its side sections into its rear when changing from X to Y form. The change in maneuverability came from thrusters shifting from side to rear, and one set of weapons moved out of position opening a second up for use. The Xform lasers got a combined fire mode to reflect the sheer amount of damage which the ship can do over a short time, and the Yform missiles have a lot of range but do relatively little damage. As with the SC version of the ship, transforming from X to Y form costs you very little, while you have to delay firing the lasers when switching back to X form.

The Xform is pretty hopeless against fighters, but the Yform actually makes something of a good (if very slow) fighter killer. My conversion assumes the "missiles" are generated at the time of firing, and I wouldn't recommend allowing special missiles for the launchers.

X-Y form transformation: During the Weapons-based movement step of the movement phase, the Xform's player may declare that the ship is transforming (from X to Yform or vice versa). The transformation requires 12 power to perform, meaning that the Xform Lasers must

be shut down at the beginning of the turn, and that a DOGI or other power drain can render transformation impossible.

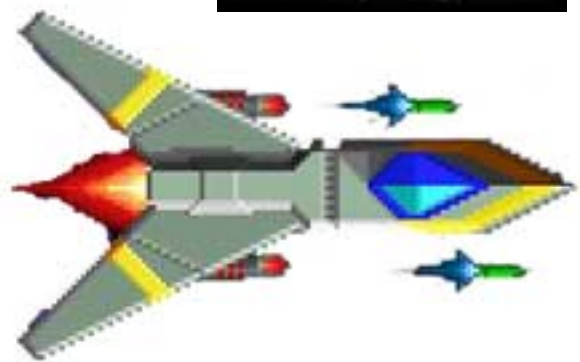
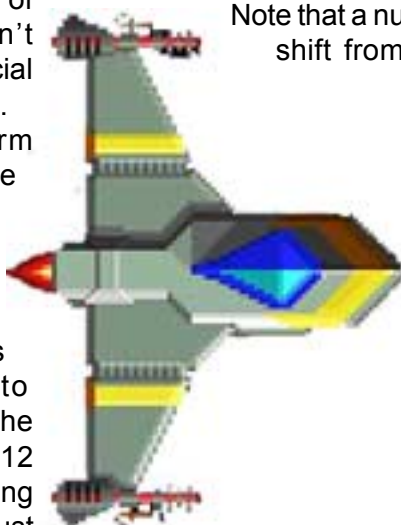
If the ship is still capable of transforming, it immediately shifts into the alternate form. If it was in Xform before the transformation, it may immediately accelerate 1 hex if it has enough thrust remaining (the thrust must still be channeled through a thruster as normal). If it was in Yform before the transformation, it may immediately initiate a pivot maneuver if it has enough thrust remaining (again, the thrust must still be channeled through a thruster). Obviously, the Xform cannot fire its lasers on a turn in which it changes form, and if it has already launched Yform missiles, the missiles receive no fire control bonus.

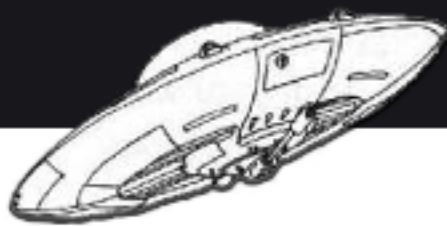
When in Xform, the missile launchers face into the hull and are not usable. When in Yform, the lasers cannot be fired though they may be shut down for extra power.

Note that a number of systems shift from the Primary to

the Aft hull in the change from Xform to Yform, as noted. If there is no Aft structure left, the ship can still transform into Yform so long as there is structure left on both wings. If one or both wings have lost all their structure, transformation is impossible. Structure on the wings is considered aft structure in Yform mode. In Xform mode, wing structure is interchangeable with primary structure but the ship cannot transform if only wing structure remains. (The ship's owner may decide where to suffer primary structure damage, spreading it across both wings and the main block as desired.)

* * *





Arilou Skiff

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Arilou ship is one that was easy to put together as the design is fairly straightforward. I gave the ship a pair of turreted lasers to represent the ship's main guns. I opted for the Vree turret primarily because the guns appear to be in a turret on the bottom of the ship. I made the lasers fast firing guns with an extra firing option. If the lasers are unfired on one turn they can fire at twice their firing rate on the next turn. This matches the way the Arilou Skiff seemed to fire off its laser bolts in the game.

Now, these lasers were supposed to be "auto-aiming" lasers according to the game. But how do you handle that in B5W? I decided that the best way to mimic the ability was to give the Arilou excellent to-hit modifiers. The auto-aiming lasers were given above-average fire control and I also installed a Hyach Computer to provide bonus fire control units for the ship to use. The net result is a ship that has an easy time hitting its opponents.

I went out of my way to make the Skiff more maneuverable than my other Star Control conversions. After replaying the SuperMelee I really thought that the Skiff deserved that distinction. I also remembered just how weak the Skiff was in the game. The ship just couldn't take much damage from its enemies before exploding. This is represented by low structure on my version of ship.

The headlights are something of a goofy addition to the hull. The original Skiff had them and even had them called out on the ship diagram. Given the humorous nature of Star Control I decided to go ahead and include the headlights on the ship. What purpose would headlights have on a starship? I decided that they were there to help the Arilou captain see better in the dark, gaining a bonus to hit. They couldn't have much range, so I limited their range to just five hexes.

The hardest thing to balance was the rules for the hyperdrive shunt. The shunt is the device that allows the Skiff to teleport across the map in order to avoid harm. I knew that I wanted to randomize the location a little bit so I went with a

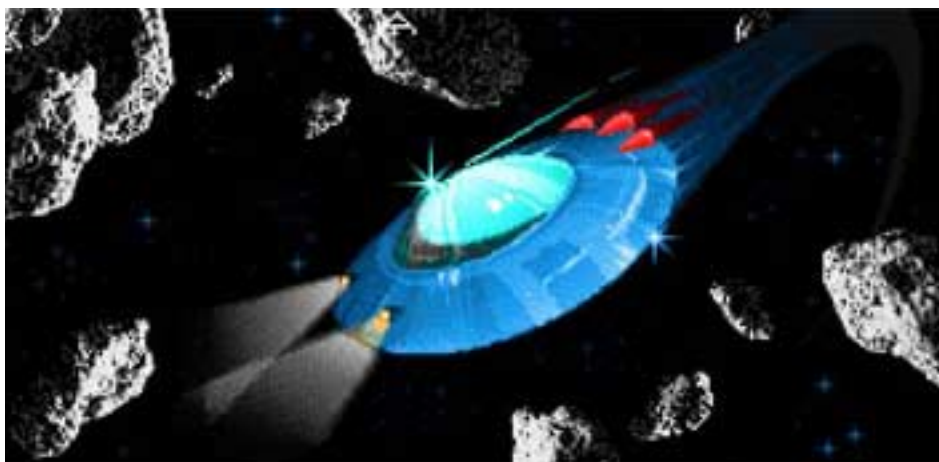
6d6 displacement in a random direction when the shunt was activated. I also tied the power cost of the shunt into the ship's jump delay. If the ship has completed its jump delay the hyperdrive shunt can be activated at no cost. If the delay hasn't been met, however, the ship has to pay an amount of power equal to the number of turns left in its delay in order to be able to activate the hyperdrive shunt. This limits just how often the ship can teleport, but an undamaged Skiff has enough power when shutting down the lasers and headlights to engage the hyperdrive shunt every turn if the player wants.

The last item of note on my Arilou Skiff is the QuasiSpace drive. This drive is capable of opening a portal into QuasiSpace, allowing the Arilou to escape into their home dimension. The QuasiSpace drive works just like a normal Star Control jump engine except for the ability to open a QuasiSpace portal. That means that, when activated, the Arilou player can decide whether or not they simply wish to disengage from the battle or if they want to completely vacate the dimension.

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

Having created an Arilou skiff several years ago, I decided that my newer version would follow along the same lines as the original. In that respect, it is very similar to the first incarnation but it also bears similarities to Tyrel's work. In fact my SCS is only a modification of his, as is clearly evident, though there are a few important differences.

The Quasi Space Drive



Arilou Skiff (continued)

remains the same, but the Hyper Drive shunt is slightly different. I've added a second set of rolls to make the jump a little more random instead of just one direction along one of the six hex sides. This would be more time consuming but it can be solved with a few different coloured dice. The shunt also does not use power, but rather the player must redirect thrust to the unit. This is not entirely accurate to the game, but what it does allow is for up to two jumps in the same turn and it allows the Skiff to attack the enemy immediately rather than being reliant on the laser weapon's power to operate.

The laser weapons themselves are modelled not as raking weapons, but rather pulse

weapons. Compared to the Vux or the Mmrnhm, the Arilou laser fire always seemed more staggered to me instead of a steady beam. The weapon has good firepower and decent fire control, though it is not as accurate as Tyrel's version.

Another change is a slight modification to the headlights. I made the firing bonus available to all friendly ships, to allow the Skiff to operate somewhat as a forward observer. And for fun, I gave Spathi a slight initiative penalty when in the headlights like scared deer on the side of the road.

The main difference is in the addition of an Inertia-Less Drive System. Simply put, the Skiff doesn't carry speed over from turn to turn.



Rather it just expends thrust to move one hex, or turn or what have you. For those of you who have played Battletech, its movement system is very similar to that of a 'mech (without terrain costs of course).

* * *



Syreen Penetrator

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Syreen Penetrator was an easy ship to put together, except for one detail: the Syreen Song. Except for the Syreen's special ability the Penetrator really is a pretty basic starship. It has a forward particle beam stiletto weapon (which I broke into two separate weapon systems for redundancy) and little else. In the game, the Penetrator begins with less than its maximum crew size. This is because the Syreen Song is used to capture the enemy's crew and put them to use on the Syreen's ship. I decided to average out the starting and maximum number of crew the Penetrator can have in

order to scale the ship against the other Star Control vessels.

This created a ship that was a rather weak capital ship, which felt very right. The Penetrator isn't a very durable vessel in the game unless it gets its crew built up, and a small capital ship can be very vulnerable to damage, more vulnerable even than smaller craft.

Using the Syreen Song to "steal crew" just doesn't work in B5W. The only way you could equate the two would be to have a sonic weapon device that destroyed the enemy structure, and that didn't make any sense. My solution was to have the Syreen Song be a special sensor function that EW could be applied to during a turn, similar to how ELINT functions are declared. The units affected by the Syreen Song, ships and fighters alike, suffer

from initiative and to-hit penalties that get worse the more turns they spend within the Song's area of effect. The penalties gradually lessen, removing one point from the initiative and to-hit penalties every turn, but the effects of the Syreen Song are cumulative. This represents the distraction that the Syreen Song causes and the degradation in performance caused by the Syreen's unnatural compulsions. The song does not adversely affect friendly crews as they already love the Syreen.

Another nice thing about handling the Syreen Song is this fashion is that it becomes a destroyable ability. If the Syreen ship's sensors are destroyed then the Syreen Song cannot be performed.

* * *



Earthling Cruiser

THE NEW
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DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

The Earth Cruiser posed a bit of a problem. It was a decent ship with respectable amounts of crew, and had extraordinary turning ability but all in all flew like a tub due to poor acceleration. Any of the true speed demons could fly rings around it, and while good against larger opponents, it had little chance if the starting distance was not sufficient to maintain its range. As with the Arilou Skiff I had made a previous version of the Cruiser in a far more ugly format. Though I hadn't played the ship, I felt that it definitely needed some work above and beyond a simple SCS update.

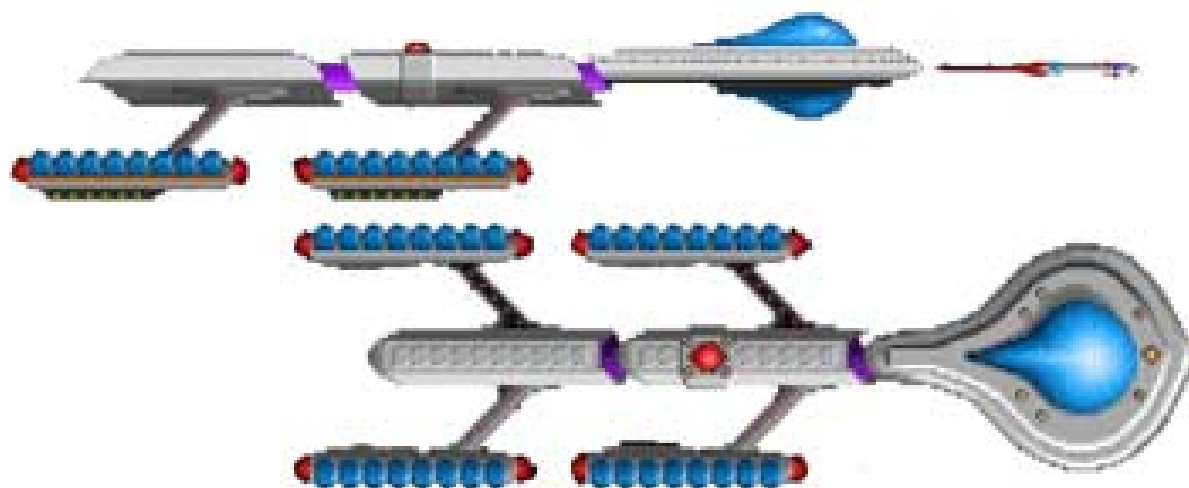
To solve the manoeuvring dilemma, I gave the ship poor acceleration and decent turning

ability and also gave it the agile designation. But not wanting to completely abandon trends set down in B5Wars, I also stipulated in the special rules that it could not make Snap Turns or skin dance. The Cruiser, effectively has a poor man's agility rating in that it can only roll and pivot like an agile ship. And I believe that is a good reflection of the ship's ability in the game, while not being too cheesy by having an agile HCV.

Weapons also posed some problems. The missiles were relatively easy with well established rules, I simply created a new missile rack, the Class-FF (Fire and Forget) and a new missile to go along with it that had the suitable range, damage and mode to reflect the ordinance used in the game. The laser defence grid was another problem altogether. Originally it was modelled as a series of small lasers akin to the Omega's SPBs but I felt this was unsuitable because the weapons in-game are not that effective versus ships. The grid fires one laser at all units in range, whether it be 12 fighters, 4 Orz marines or one ship. It would not

however fire 12 shots at one ship. The best way to simulate this without creating unneeded rules was to use the mechanics for the Narn Pulsar Mine. This weapon will only fire once at targets of opportunity, I simply expanded the weapon's ability to fire at ships as well. This does impose some limiting factors, such as what to do with EW and what options the player has, but I think it simply creates greater focus on manoeuvring and formations so it should hopefully be as fun to play. And lastly, I added a bit of e-web effect to the laser grid to simulate its ability to intercept. Due to the automatic nature of the Pulsar Mine rules, it can't be used for intercept.

* * *





Yehat Terminator

DESIGN:

DAVID AINSWORTH

My fundamental principle in designing my SC-B5W conversions was to try to preserve as much of the feel of the original melees as possible. I started with the biggest ships in order to get a sense of how much power the designs should have, and worked down from there. The basic assumption I made was that one B5W turn equals the time it takes an Ur-Quan Dreadnought to fire two shots, assuming enough of a pause between shots that the ship can recharge partially. I opted to preserve the weapons loads of the SC series, so my SC ships have fewer powerful, fast-firing weapons instead of more weapons with a slower RoF. Extra weapons mounts were added more to simulate actual RoF observed in game than to provide a backup system should one be destroyed. The emphasis is on a faster, make-or-break style of play which I hope captures the usually quick dynamic of SC melees.

The Terminator, like most SC ships, has two different systems—a

rapid-firing cannon whose shots do a fair amount of damage, and its shielding system, which while running renders the ship invulnerable. In the game, it is possible to run the shields alternately with your fire if you have good timing, but even if the weapons aren't used at all the shield will rapidly expend all your power and go down. So in my conversion, I opted to assume that in the default state, the Terminator only infrequently raises its shields, and that it's necessary to shut down the weapons in order to increase the shield's effectiveness. Even at maximum effectiveness, the shield doesn't provide invulnerability in this conversion, but that quality is far off the scale of B5W balance.

In game, the ship is fairly maneuverable but somewhat large, especially in its forward/aft aspect, so I've modeled that. To reflect the firing rate of the cannon, I've made it a pulse weapon, with decent damage and excellent fire control against targets of any size (except fighters). Structure size is decent (although the relatively small number of systems on my SC ships makes them slightly more fragile), and armor is average. The Terminator will have to rely on its maneuverability and initiative to flank an enemy and attack

from that angle, shielding on turns where this is not possible.

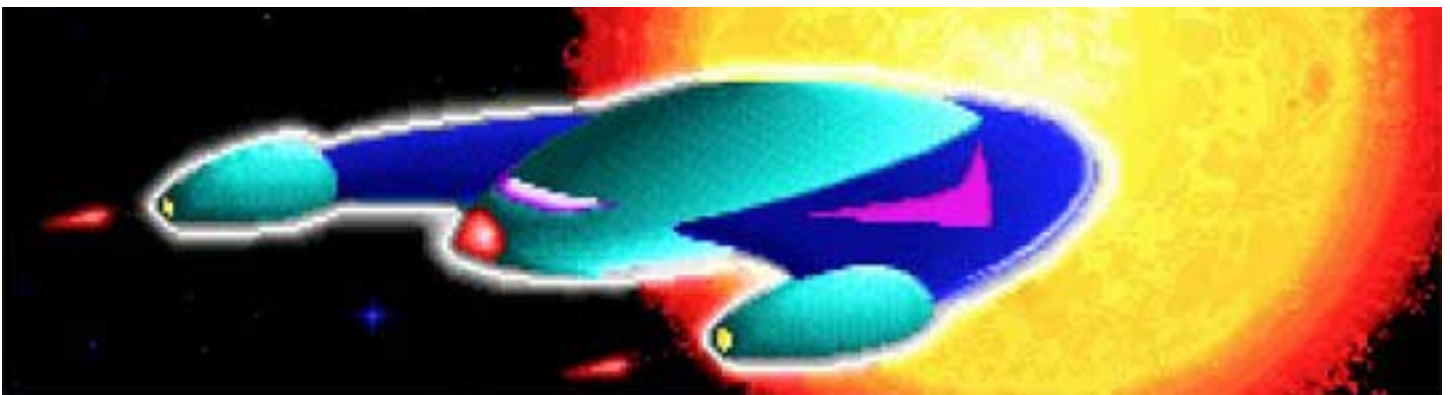
The ship's weakness against fighters will make it somewhat less effective in a crossover battle against B5 ships unless it is escorted by a more effective fighter killer like the Chmmr Avatar or the Chenjesu Broodhome.

Shield System

Consider the Yehat shield system an EM-class shield, which cannot be flown under by fighters or shuttles. The default power provides 2 points of shielding, lowering the profile and damage from incoming shots. Additional power will increase this to 4 points (for 6 power) or 6 points (for 12 power). *Optional rule:* To reflect the game more accurately, allow the Yehat player to shut down weapons and power the shields after initiative is declared but before EW is decided.

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Yehat Terminator is one of the more troublesome ships from Star Control when it comes to converting them into B5W. This is because the Terminator is one of the units that has an invulnerability shield which completely protects it from



Yehat Terminator (continued)

incoming damage when active. Invulnerability does not lend itself well to game balancing. The only way Star Control managed to pull it off was by making it cost prohibitive to maintain the shielding forever.

In order to model the Yehat high-energy force shields I ended up giving it an extremely effective shield system. These 6-point shields make the Yehat extremely well protected when the shielding is active, but with the system online it cannot arm but one of its pulse cannons. Now, in the game if the shields are up the ship can't fire at all, so why is my ship able to arm any weapons at all? That is a concession to the B5W power system. I still wanted the ship to be able to raise shields even if it had taken some damage to its weapon systems. This way the ship can lose some of its power-using systems and still manage to provide at least some shielding protection.

The rapid pulse cannons I split into two pairs of pulse cannons, each of them behaving much like the Minbari molecular pulsar. The rapid pulse cannons normally fire every other turn, but can fire once per turn for a reduced pulse count and no grouping bonus.

* * *



Shofixti Scout

THE NEW
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FREE STARS

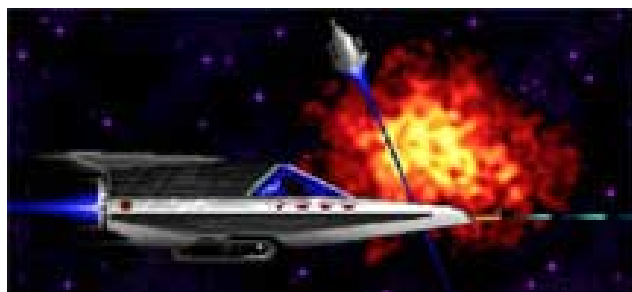
DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

The scout was a fairly easy ship to design. Just make it an MCV, give it some structure and a few popguns out the front. For the Shofixti I chose to give it a pair of the infamous Point Pulsars. Though many people object to these guns of the Dilgar war I thought they might be appropriate for the Shofixti. As the race is modelled around ancient Japan culture, one of the principles of combat is to strike where it hurts. Common media for instance depicts English Knights as people who hack and slash each other until one falls over, while a duel of Samurai involves one fatal blow to a vital area. Though the guns of the Scout do not allow for that fatal blow, they follow the idea of accuracy and causing the most damage to the target with minimal amount of firepower. Which is different than the Yehat principle of shoot, shoot, shoot until they blow up.

The real flavour of the scout lies in the Glory Device which destroys the Scout to damage nearby targets. I chose to model the weapon's damage using my structure conversion formula, but gave the explosion a sharp

drop off at range. If detonated in the same hex it will cause massive amounts of damage, but this damage should be split in four (or two) and applied to all sides of the sides of the ship. While ships one hex or more away will take all damage to one facing. The most important part of designing the glory device was to determine when it activated. I decided that there should be some preparation towards detonation and that the target should have a chance to kill the Shofixti before he blew himself to kingdom come. The Scout thus must take a few turns to arm the glory device, and this represents power being diverted to make the explosive reaction happen at its full potential. While at fully armed status, any damage to the device will cause it to detonate prematurely, destroying the scout and causing far less damage to nearby units. On the turn the Shofixti wishes to explode, the player will mark down this intention on the SCS in secret and later on in the turn after the fighters fire at ships segment, the ship will explode if it hasn't already been destroyed.

* * *



Pkunk Fury



DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Pkunk are my favorite race from Star Control. There is just something about those crazy birds that I find adorable. As such I have made several attempts over the years to create a good facsimile of the Pkunk Fury within B5W.

Gatling Mattergun

The gatling mattergun fires a stream of liquid metal at the target in an attempt to cause damage. The weapon is extremely fast firing but not very accurate, causing most of the weapon's shots to miss their intended target unless at close range.

Karma Generator

The closeness of the Pkunk to the spiritual navel of the universe (which they contemplate often) has allowed Pkunk crews to be especially adept at avoiding damage meant for their ship. The karma generator acts as the physical embodiment of the crew's spirituality. One Pkunk officer is always on hand to man the generator, telling others their fortune or reading their own horoscope. For some reason this seems to have a meaningful effect on the ship's performance, subtracting one from the ship's defense rating.

Death Blossom

The Death Blossom is a special Pkunk piloting maneuver that is used to get the drop on their opponents. Perhaps more importantly, the Death Blossom maneuver allows Pkunk captains to bring all of their ship's weapons to bear on a target.

The Death Blossom is very similar in many ways to a fighter combat pivot and is performed at the same step in the turn sequence. It costs six times the pivot cost of the unit to perform the Death Blossom, so the performing unit must have saved at least this amount of thrust during the movement phase in order to successfully perform the maneuver. Upon announcing the Death Blossom, the Pkunk player may then re-adjust the facing of the unit to any of his/her choosing. This new facing also becomes the unit's new direction of movement.

The speed at which the Pkunk craft pivots on its axis allows it to bring all of its weapons to bear on any nearby target. A unit that is performing the Death Blossom maneuver can fire all of their weapons as if they had 360° arcs of fire, but all weapons fire from the unit is at a -3 to-hit penalty as there is no time for the Pkunk to establish a better firing solution.

All Pkunk units capable of performing the coveted Death Blossom maneuver are so noted on their ship control sheet's special notes box. Only agile ships are capable of ever being able to perform such a maneuver, and the Pkunk are the only ones known to make use of this haphazard maneuver.

Pkunk Reinforcements

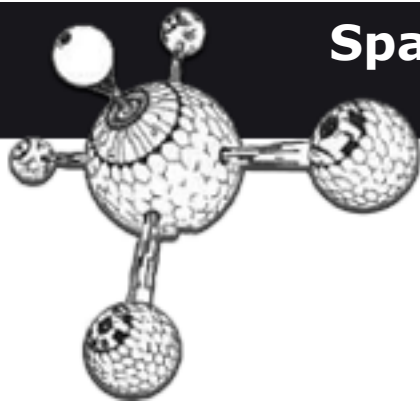
Through their divine knowledge of the universe (and affinity for Ouija Boards), the Pkunk always know when their brethren could be in danger. Because of this it is not uncommon to see additional Pkunk ships arrive to help their remaining comrades.

After the destruction of each Pkunk ship (but never fighters or bases) roll d20, adding +1 if the ship was a heavy combat vessel or +2 if the ship was a medium ship or light combat vessel. On a roll of 20+ another Pkunk ship of the same class arrives on the battlefield to avenge their fallen brethren. The ship is assumed to have all of its weapons charged, but its Jump Delay will be reset, as it just arrived in battle.

Many of the Pkunk's foes have found this Pkunk ability amazingly annoying and foregone the complete destruction of their species due to such inconveniences. The Pkunks for their part don't mind that they aren't being obliterated, and they are actually quite happy about it.

* * *





Spathi Discriminator/Eluder

THE NEW
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FREE STARS

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

The Eluder is a fairly straightforward design. It follows Vree structure rules in using a general hits chart and assigning all non-primary systems firing arcs to denote where they may be hit from. All thrusters, and weapons should be considered attached to the primary section and therefore will not be destroyed when the outer sections are destroyed. The outer projections, for the most part only soak damage. However before each game, each ship must denote the location of the primary crew projection. The C & C will be located in this section, and will be considered attached to that structure. Should that projection be destroyed, the C & C will also be lost. Included in the SCS is a diagram for the player to record its location. During the game, the C & C may also be hit on a roll of 20 for all fire coming in through the arc noted on the projection's structure.

Weaponry is fairly straightforward. The Punt Gun is essentially a Molecular Pulsar renamed and given the Particle Class. Rear armament is three ballistic launchers, which even though using a Class-R missile rack icon are considered to be torpedo weapons and therefore do not use ammunition but do use OEW. The Eluder is very manoeuvrable and well armoured, it should prove a good opponent for most ships.

DESIGN: DEMIURGE

The Spathi Eluder. The very name invokes high pitched screams of mind numbing fear.

True, the high pitched screams of mind numbing fear likely come from the Spathis themselves when they encounter anything that could remotely prove to be a threat, but it must be said it is a very convincing, very heart-felt mind numbing fear none the less. And for a race of inveterate (and invertebrate) cowards, they field surprisingly effective warships. Designed to do what Spathis do best. Run away.

The question becomes then is it worth it to follow them?

As with many of the Star Control ships, the Spathi Eluder doesn't translate directly into the B5 Wars system very well. The main characteristics of the ship are its maneuverability and its survivability, with weapons being designed primarily to deter pursuit. With its 30 crew in the SC2 system, it's one of the largest and hardest of the ships in its corner of the galaxy. Only 5 races field ships that can take more punishment than the Spathis, with 20 races fielding lesser ships. The Eluder is truly the battlecruiser of the Star Control universe, being a full 50% more resilient than cruiser equivalents such as the Yehat Terminator, Orz Nemesis, and the Vux Intruder.

Yet what the Eluder excels at is maneuverability. It is swift, agile, and can normally dictate the course of battle when forced into melee with the other powers of the Star Control universe. The best equivalent in earth history would be the armored

cruiser concept: a ship that sacrifices armament for armor and speed.

This made the first design question a pivotal one. Should the Eluder best be represented by an agile capital ship or as a large heavy combat vessel? To me that decision was ultimately resolved by its durability under fire. The Spathi should be able to survive considerably more damage than even a heavily protected HCV, especially in terms of structural blocks. And it should not be exposed to the vulnerability of the Primary section that HCVs must endure by their very design. So a Capital ship it must be.

As a ship designed to retire from potential combat and make anyone who decides to follow to closely regret the decision, the Eluder has a large initiative bonus for a capital ship. Its maneuverability and turn delay are reflective of its designed elusiveness, being the equivalent of most races HCVs. And it has a strong thruster arrangement to help ensure acceleration away from any threat vessels it might encounter. Finally, and often most importantly to Spathi captains and crews, the ship's hyperspace jump engine is the best its race can produce and has a very low delay time. As a race convinced that the Ultimate Evil is out there, proving its nefarious intent by constantly keeping just out of sensor range, a powerful and reliable jump engine is an absolutely crucial element. It can make the difference between being an ever-expanding cloud of dust or making that great leap home to the safe confines of Spathiwa.

The second major issue

Spathi Eluder (continued)

came down to scaling the firepower of the vessel. The Eluder main punch is its BUTT missiles (Backward Utilizing Tracking Torpedoes). The strengths of this weapon are decent rate of fire, firing salvos in groups of three missiles at max energy, and a good range compared to most of their enemies. After toying with the idea of representing the infamous BUTT with a class B rack but smaller warhead yield, I decided to scale the weapon as an individual Spathi creation as opposed to finding a direct B5 Wars equivalent. The second issue with the weapon was

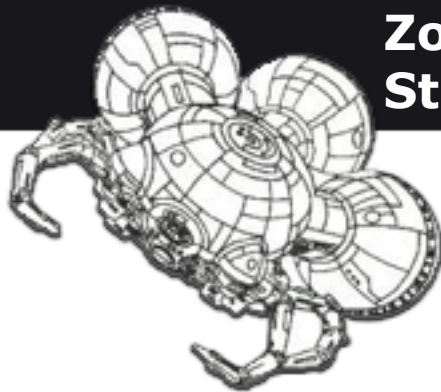
potential magazine depletion. The Spathi are the masters of the strategic withdraw, and often became involved in long running retreats against their enemies. As the Eluder in SC2 melee couldn't run out of ammunition, I decided to make the BUTT missiles based on an energy requirement as opposed to the normal missile ammunition track conventions. I also decided on a one every two turn fire rate, representing the need to energize their ballistics before fire. A couple of light particle beams for self defense and a pair of light pulse guns representing the rapid fire front gun rounded out the

armament for the ship.

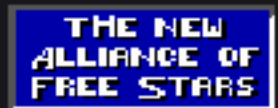
The Special Notes on the Spathi are optional, but I think represent the race well. Limiting an Eluder's ability to paint a target with full offensive EW seems a logical choice for a race totally devoted to their own continuing survival.

All in all the Eluder is well suited for its task of strategic withdrawal. And many an alien captain has paid the price for pursuing a Spathi ship electing to exhibit the better part of valor.

* * *



Zoq-Fot-Pik Stinger



DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

Another favorite of mine, the Zoq-Fot-Pik are a goofy bunch. Their Stinger warship is not particularly threatening, however. In converting the ship I made it fast and maneuverable, but just not armed well enough to be a major threat to the other Star Control races.

I originally armed the Stinger with antiproton defenders, but upon discussing it with some other players I realized that the Stinger's gun did have a 'scatter-fire' property wherein they would never hit the same place twice. So I went back to the drawing board and developed the antimatter scatter-blaster. This weapon is a

fast-firing antimatter weapon that does less damage than the antiproton defender but takes on additional shot per turn. These two shots, however, cannot be used to fire at the same unit nor can both fire defensively to intercept the same incoming shot. The two shots from the antimatter scatter-blaster can still both fire upon the same fighter flight, but they can't hit the same fighter. If only one fighter remains in a flight, then both shots could not fire on the flight.

The tongue attack required a little bit of retooling on my end. I had originally intended the tongue to be a ramming prow mounted on the front of the ship but, upon looking at some of the background material on the weapon, I found that it did its damage by venting super-heated plasma into the ship, not by way of the kinetic assault. So I synthesized these two options together and created the plasma injection prow. The weapon

has a maximum range of 0 hexes, so the target has to be in the same hex. Instead of scoring damage during the normal weapon fire stage it instead does damage during the Ramming Segment of the turn sequence. The prow does raking plasma damage to the target, promising that the weapon will be able to do some serious damage. Rather than rolling for damage, the amount of damage done by the prow is determined by the rating found in the prow's icon. For every point of damage the prow takes you subtract 1 from this total damage amount.

This makes the Stinger a very close-combat oriented ship, but with the potential of doing a lot of damage to multiple targets in a turn.

* * *



Utwig Jugger

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Utwig Jugger is the other Star Control ship that benefits (suffers?) from an invulnerable shield gimmick. With the Yehat I had a clear-cut method to convert over the shield mechanic, but the Utwig's shield operates differently. The shield's power requirement is fulfilled by a power pool that is unaffected by the use of the ship's weapons and only replenished by enemy attacks on the shield. If this shield energy pool is depleted then the Utwig ship cannot use its shields for the rest of the battle. This is a very hard mechanic to translate into the B5W system, and in the end I had to fudge it.

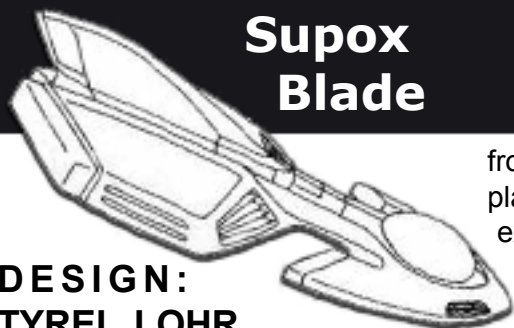
The oscillating absorption shields on my version of the Utwig Jugger hold up to four shield charges per unit. When a weapon hits the Utwig ship, the player may elect to use as many of these shield charges from any in-arc oscillating shields to absorb damage from incoming shots. Each shield charge subtracts an amount of damage equal to the Shield Factor from the incoming weapons fire, acting as an ad hoc Thought Shield similar to those used by the Mindriders. The decision to use these shield charges is made after the weapon has hit the ship but before rolling for damage. Power must be applied to a shield in order to replenish these shield charges, and a shield unit that uses all of its charges is offline for the rest of the scenario and cannot be recharged.

What this means for the Utwig Jugger is that it can put out a maximum of 72 shielding through the

forward arc without completely drying up their shield reserves. Though this does not equate to total invulnerability, it does reflect the ability to soak up a lot of damage before seeing degradation in shield performance.

One problem with this shield setup is that it allows the Utwig Jugger to fire while its shields are active, something that is not allowable in the game. I have decided not to incorporate any kind of limitation on this behavior, as it will likely only happen once during a battle. After the first turn of shield use the craft will be forced to shut down its weapons in order to apply power to the shield units to recharge them, lest they lose their shielding completely. It is simply a sacrifice I made in my conversion to make the ship more playable.

* * *



Supox Blade

THE NEW
ALLIANCE OF
FREE STARS

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Supox Blade that I put together is an odd little design. Because of how easily the ship was destroyed in the game I went with a large medium ship design. It has the bulk to take some hits, but crumples under concentrated fire (especially laser fire).

I always thought that the green "seed guns" fired from the

front of the Blade would make good plasma weapons. Because of their extremely fast rate of fire I ended up taking a Plasma Accelerator and chopping it down into a Light Plasma Accelerator. I then placed four of these weapons on the forward section of the ship. This gives it some pretty good firepower and replicates the fast firing bolts of the ship from the game.

Joining the ship's weapons on the forward hit chart is the ship's C&C. The Blade has a large solar dome where the Supox to bask in natural light and allow

photosynthesis to take place. The position of this dome is far forward on the ship, so I felt it was right for the C&C to be able to be hit from the front of the ship.

The Supox Blade was a very maneuverable ship, even more so after you take into account its special movement ability. The lateral thruster is represented in the primary section by a special thruster icon. For every two points of thrust channeled into the thruster the ship can be moved one hex in any direction except straight forward.

* * *

Orz Nemesis



DESIGN: DAVID AINSWORTH

The Orz is one of the smaller lethal ships in SC2, with its turret giving it a huge advantage in a game where most weapons fire only in a straight line directly forward. The “Go-Gos” are highly effective, and when they board an enemy ship in large numbers they frequently kill it rapidly. They also require a fair amount of fire to kill, compared with other “launched” units like the Ur-Quan fighters. The Nemesis itself has a long-range, 360 degree weapon and turns extremely well, although it has a few speed issues.

In converting it to B5W, I made a number of choices to preserve its tremendous deadliness. As an HCV with turreted weapons on the primary hull, it can take a great deal of damage and keep fighting. To reflect the ship’s increased durability if marines are still aboard, I had the space marines’ battle suits hang from the starboard and port sides, allowing them to take the hits for the rest of the ship if they’re still attached to it.

The marines themselves reflect the extreme effectiveness they showed against the toughest of foes in SC2. If large numbers of marines can board a single ship, they’ll overwhelm the crew quickly. (If you like, you can consider each “marine” to represent a small squad

of the little fellas.) Their biggest advantage is their ability to move from section to section, assuming the crew of the ship can’t hold them back, but they aren’t particularly discriminating when doing damage. Structure damage represents killing the crew and general mayhem, and the marines are very good at both. A Nemesis could well kill an enemy with marines alone... something which happens fairly frequently in SC2.

I chose to give the Nemesis an inadequate main thruster to reflect its speed problems. Unlike most ships, you can turn and sideslip quite well, but you won’t want to change speed very quickly.

Orz Space Marines

Orz Space Marines function in many ways like breaching pods, with differences as indicated below. They come free with the Nemesis. Ordinarily they hang on the sides of the Nemesis while in their battle armor—while in these spots they are eligible to be hit by incoming fire as indicated on the hit location chart. When they launch, they cease protecting the Nemesis with their bodies, but become dangerous weapons in their own right.

Orz Space Marines may be freely launched from the ship without any initiative cost to either the marine or the ship, but no more than one may launch from each side of the ship on a given turn. When returning to the ship they use ordinary landing procedures with all applicable penalties, as they must latch back onto the outer hull. A returning marine must land on either starboard or port side and the location should be noted

accordingly. Marines which survive the destruction of an enemy ship must dock to recharge—if the structure block associated with a docking position has been destroyed, no Marines may land there to recharge. If no such eligible spots exist the Marine cannot board another ship but may still ram an enemy if ramming is permitted. Recharging requires a Marine to be docked with the ship for one turn.

Space Marines in flight operate using the rules for breaching pods, and they attach to units using the same rules. Note the side of the ship the Marine attached to. There is no limit to the number of Marines which can board an enemy ship. Unlike breaching pods, Orz Space Marines actually enter the ship they board, and thus cannot be targeted by fire while they are inside. Any ballistic weapons tracking the Space Marine roll to hit normally but impact the boarded ship if they hit. [If using the optional SC-Ancients rules, allow Orz Space Marines to board Ancients with Advanced Armor.]

Once within an enemy ship, Orz Space Marines wreak a particular kind of havoc, destroying indiscriminately until brought down by weight of fire. Each turn following the turn of boarding, during each Marine’s spot in the initiative order, roll 1d20 on the following table with these modifiers: -2 if the Orz can ram, +2 if the defender can ram, +1 if the defenders are Narn or Gaim, -1 for each Space Marine attached to this section beyond the first. If the section of the ship containing the Marine is destroyed, the Marine may automatically move to an adjacent section (including the Primary). If the

Orz Nemesis (continued)

ship is completely destroyed, all Space Marines automatically exit without additional damage and with no initiative penalty. Space Marines do not voluntarily disengage.

Orz Space Marine Havoc Table:

Apply effects to the section where the Space Marine is located. No overkill applies to any of this damage. Ignore armor.

1 or less: 3d6+6 damage to section structure, 1d6 damage to a second (randomly determined) location. Space Marine may move to an adjacent section of the ship, including the Primary.

2-3: 2d6 damage to section structure, 1d6 damage to a second (randomly determined) location. Space Marine may move to an adjacent section of the ship, including the Primary.

4-5: 3d6 damage to a randomly determined location. Space Marine may move to an adjacent section of the ship, except for the Primary.

6-7: 2d6 damage to a randomly determined location. Space Marine may move to an adjacent section of the ship, except for the Primary.

8-11: 1d6+2 damage to a randomly determined location.

12-15: 1d6+2 damage to section structure.

16-17: 1d3 damage to section structure, 1d3 damage to a second (randomly determined) location. Defending player may force the Marine to move to any intact, adjacent section of the ship unless the ship is an MCV or LCV.

18-19: 1d3 damage to a randomly determined location. Roll

on the defense table this turn with a +2 bonus. Defending player may force the Marine to move to any intact, adjacent section of the ship unless the ship is an MCV or LCV.

20+: Orz Marine is somehow prevented from doing any meaningful damage this turn. Roll on the defense table this turn with a +6 bonus. Defending player may force the Marine to move to any intact, adjacent section of the ship unless the ship is an MCV or LCV.

Then roll on the defense table, applying the same modifiers as above. Orz Space Marines apply their armor to any damage received from this table.:

4 or less: No damage to Space Marine.

5-11: Space Marine suffers d6 damage.

12-15: Space Marine suffers 2d6 damage.

16-19: Space Marine suffers 3d6 damage.

20 or more: Space Marine is killed.

DESIGN: DEMIURGE

The Nemesis is one of the most respected of the Star Control ships. Having the benefits of flexibility in weapon design, one of the best secondary weapons in the game in the Orz Space Marine, combined with a good damage resistance and good maneuverability, the Nemesis more than lives up to its name.

Unlike the barely intelligible translations of the Orz language, the



ship itself was easily translated into Babylon 5 Wars terms. Many of the mechanics of the ship have already been explored with core rules in the B5 Wars system. This *sauce* definitely made me a *happy camper.*

The base hull design was quick to translate as a Heavy Combat Vessel.

The combination of good overall maneuverability with a middle of the road crew component made this an easy choice. The turreted howitzer also translated well, and its twin matter weaponry in a Vree style turret brings joy to the hearts of Orz captains who love to *dance*. While not an overwhelming fire capability, the twin howitzers would be an excellent way to strip off weapons from enemy ships clearing the way for the Orz boarding parties. And the 360 degree fire arcs of its main armament keep many tactical options open to the Nemesis captain.

A smattering of matter related secondary weapons help balance the Nemesis out in the greater Babylon 5 universe. I chose to give it some small potential in self defense against fighters and some intercept capability against missiles with the light blast cannons. The cannons as matter weapons seem a likely extension of the main Nemesis armament, representing logical capabilities the Orz would extrapolate in a universe where fleet combats are the norm.

The Orz Space Marines make up the final component of the Nemesis, and are largely

responsible for its sterling reputation. While the powered battle armor of the Space Marines is technically a one Orz operation, the best representation of them in the B5W system is the breaching pod. This seemed particularly appropriate considering that an individual Orz Marine in the original game could take a staggering 3 hits in space, or half the damage of an Arilou Skiff or Shofixti Scout. Once onboard the Space Marines can wreak considerable havoc, and should share the Gaim's +2/-2 modifier for boarding actions.

So what are you waiting for?
The Nemesis and its Marines await!
GO! GO!

* * *



Hello! I will say again for extra enjoyment. So much a fun game. Hello! Hello! Next I will *spit* *slow time* words to you for better *dancing*.

Do you know? Orz can *dance* very well. Now you are a *happy camper* and Orz can make *heavy space* ships for *dancing*.

Orz ships have the *GO! GO!*. Do you know? These are best for letting go near *heavy space* planet bodies. Then *GO! GO!* can going fastest to enter ships of the *other*. Then it is *happy time*.

STARFLIGHT

By Tyrel Lohr

In taking a look back at Star Control I would be remiss not to at least mention one of the more influential games in the genre: Starflight. Back in the days of EGA graphics Starflight game to our desktops and delivered an entire galaxy rich in detail, intrigue, and mystery. Starflight stands as a testimony to the type of epic story that can be told via the electronic story, especially when the developer's focus is grounded in the story and not the fancy graphics.

I was not lucky enough to play Starflight until it was ported to the Sega Genesis console system. It was one of the few games that I ever got for the Genesis, and I was not disappointed. As in Star Control, the player goes to numerous worlds spread throughout an expansive galaxy mining for resources, conversing with aliens, and trying to solve a dire mystery that threatens all life in the galaxy. Anomalous solar activity in the regions stars are threatening to cause violent solar flares, eventually leading up to the stars themselves going nova.

Starflight is one of the few games I have ever played whose dramatic conclusion actually sent shivers down my spine. The final revelation

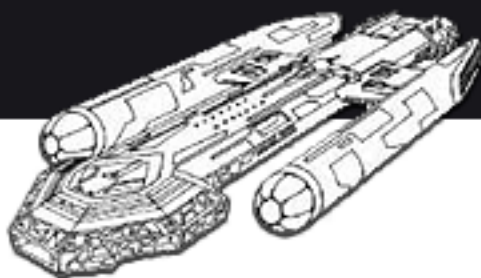
the crystalline mineral deposits that the races of the galaxy have long been mining and burning as fuel. In a last act of desperation the Ancients (called the "Crystal Few" by the enigmatic Minstrels) hoped to use the crystal planet to destroy the disease that threatened their very existence.

There are many gems to come out of the computer gaming renaissance of the early 1990's. Star Control is one, but Starflight is another. I would heartily recommend Starflight to any genre fan. Of the different versions I would recommend the Genesis version of Starflight, mainly because it is the one that I came to know and love and because it should be a fairly easy feat picking up a used console and game off of eBay. A VGA version of Starflight and even a sequel, Starflight II, were eventually released, though my knowledge of these is limited. I was lucky enough to pick up a copy of Starflight II in a bargain bin of a newly opened music and electronics store several years ago. Though I will likely never be able to play it I still rest easy knowing that I have a piece of the Starflight legacy in my possession.

Here's to hoping that sometime in our future we will once again see games of the same caliber as Starflight.



is that the Ancients, whose crystal planet is causing the solar flares that caused the fall of the Old Empire, are in fact



Ur-Quan Kzer-Za Dreadnought

UR-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN:

DAVID AINSWORTH

The Ur-Quan Dreadnought is a sophisticated and monstrously powerful warship, armed with deadly plasma weapons and the only fighters deployed by a SC ship. In the SC game, its only weakness is its somewhat limited speed and maneuverability. I've added the drawback of having weapons mounted in the forward section, making the ship prefer an oblique attack like the Narn G'Quan to protect its main guns.

A small armada of Dreadnoughts could face even the B5 Ancients on a strong footing. Each Dreadnought carries its own small armada of fighters and the ships are both durable and deadly at long or short range, though they cannot sustain the same volume of fire as a B5 ship.

Ur-Quan Fighters

The Ur-Quan operate autonomous fighters which they use to provide defensive screening against smaller enemy units, or to herd a foe into weapons range. These fighters employ a power source which provides a tremendous amount of thrust and weapons power at the cost of being very short-lived. Each fighter can take only four shots before needing to return to the Dreadnought to recharge. To facilitate recharging, each Dreadnought carries six

recharge rails on both starboard and port, which rapidly provide fighters with the extra power they require.

Once an Ur-Quan fighter is out of ammo, it must reload, either by landing in the hangar and spending one full turn of reloading (which refreshes all ammunition), or by landing on the reload rails. Landing and launching from the hangar follows all normal rules. Landing on the reload rails follows the same procedures as landing in a hangar (including the imposition of a -4 initiative penalty on the Dreadnought the following turn), but the automated systems on the rails allow the fighters to be both reloaded and launched on the following turn. (If an entire flight cannot be reloaded in one turn it must "land again" in order to fully reload.) Launching off the reload rails follows all normal rules for external fighter rails.

The rails themselves are damaged only if their location is rolled on the hit location table, but they are vulnerable to the rail critical (natural roll of 16-20 after the side structure takes damage). If this critical is rolled, only a single rail (of three boxes) is destroyed.

Ur-Quan Warp Pods

Star Control 2 established that the Ur-Quan Dreadnought employs a pair of massive warp pods which it uses to enter and leave hyperspace. For other ships in my conversion, I've simply replaced their individual systems with jump drives. The Ur-Quan Dreadnought gains an additional escape option, however.

Either warp pod, if intact, may open a jump point as a normal jump drive, and these points may be

maintained indefinitely so long as the Dreadnought remains within range of them. However, after a point has been opened, the full recharge period must pass before either pod can open a new jump point. Only damage to the selected warp pod counts for purposes of the Jump Drive critical hit.

Additionally, an Ur-Quan Dreadnought in extremis can initiate a "crash jump" into hyperspace. This action is declared during the Jump Point Activation portion of the game sequence. The Dreadnought immediately drops to 0 speed (regardless of its available thrust), and stops any pivots or rolls in progress. The ship cannot move or fire any weapons during the remainder of its turn, nor can it launch or land fighters. If the Dreadnought survives to the Vortex Activation segment, it immediately jumps into hyperspace, leaving no jump point behind. No ship or unit other than the Dreadnought may accompany it. Each point of damage to a Warp Pod causes a cumulative 1% chance that the jump goes wrong, which either means the Dreadnought is instantly destroyed, or goes out of control (the latter condition should be considered destruction unless you're playing a campaign). Add the total damage to both Warp Pods when making this calculation.

Ur-Quan frequently observe and coordinate their battle thralls, using a single Dreadnought, and when their thralls fail them, they simply warp into hyperspace instead of opening a jump point.

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

Ur-Quan Kzer-Za Dreadnought (continued)

The version of my Ur-Quan Dreadnought included with this issue is slightly retooled compared to my originals. Most of the core stats remain the same, though I have changed the weapons loadout to make it more inline with some of the other conversion ships created by other players.

The largest change for my Dreadnought is the downgrading of the secondary weaponry. Now, in the game, the Ur-Quan Dreadnought only has one weapon system: the Fusion Blast. Originally the ship had eight Fusion Cannons backing this weapon up, giving it a much more well-rounded, B5W ship feel. After some soul searching I decided that the potency and number of extra weapons went against the overall feel of the Star Control ships. So I scaled the Fusion Cannons back into lighter models and eliminated most of them. The extra firepower still gives the Ur-Quan Dreadnought a little extra close-range firepower, but nothing that detracts from its primary weapon.

Talking about the Fusion Blast, that weapon was fairly easy to find a B5W analog for. The Plasma Fuser used by the Pak'Ma'Ra has always been a good match for the Fusion Blast as far as its intended effects against enemy ships. In earlier renditions of the Dreadnought I used a vanilla form of this weapon, but with this version I went with a slightly modified version that is faster firing and has slightly more structure. I could have gone with a two gun system, similar to what I did with the Chenjesu, but it just didn't feel right to me.

The Ur-Quan Dreadnought's

arguably largest advantage in the game is its fighters. I gave the Dreadnought room for twenty-four of their heavy fighters. Each of the heavy fighters is armed with Light Fusion Cannons identical to those found on Minbari and Yolu fighters. This makes them ferocious fighters able to nibble apart the Alliance ships. The low structure for a heavy fighter, though, makes the Ur-Quan fighters vulnerable to enemy anti-fighter fire.

* * *



The Dnyarri's Psychic Friends Network

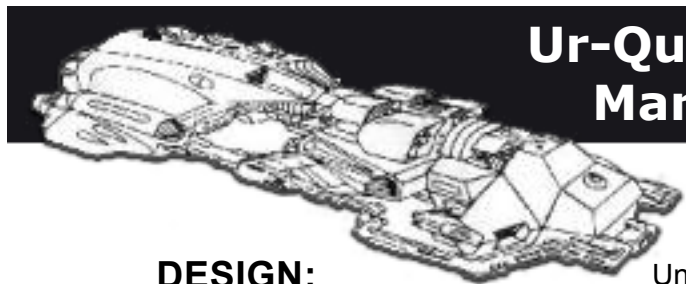
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Ur-Quan Kohr-Ah Marauder

UR-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN:

DAVID AINSWORTH

One of my favorite ships from SC2 (tied with the Avatar), and absolutely deadly. Unlike the Ur-Quan, the Kohr-Ah went around destroying entire races, using only their own ships, and I felt the design should reflect their ability to be deadly at long range or close up, as well as the immense tactical advantages of their spinning disc weapons.

The FRIED system sweeps space quite effectively within a short range, and provides considerable intercept ability. The tracking disc weapons allow the Marauder to stay turtled and make speculative shots, or develop a hard-lock and try to nail an enemy ship at extreme range. Multiple Marauders function most effectively, with the ability to build a "wall" of discs to restrict enemy movements, and the option of creating a FRIED killing-zone. Most importantly, a small Kohr-Ah fleet can simply destroy fixed defenses (OSATs and bases) with discs at 75 hex range with full DEW, and then sweep away any remaining mines with FRIED blasts, so homeworlds are defenseless once any ships in the area are destroyed.

The one potential drawback to my implementation of the FRIED system is that B5W fighters can engage the Marauder outside the range of the FRIED. Using discs defensively only slightly reduces that problem. For a cross-over battle, you may want to switch the FRIED to a -2 per hex range penalty with no maximum range, though the -12 per

hex damage penalty will make it ineffective at around 5-6 hexes.

Unlike most SC ships, if you're playing a "historical" battle the Marauder should only be accompanied by other Marauders.

Like the Ur-Quan, the Kohr-Ah carries a single shuttle which is big enough for the single thirty-foot commander of the ship to use as an escape craft.

Spinning Disc

Special rules—in the Ballistic phase, select a target hex and (optionally) a target unit for each disc launched. Announce only that a disc has been launched. After all movement is complete, during the ballistic weapons resolution phase, trace a path from launch hex to target hex. Any enemy ship in this path has a chance to be hit equal to its profile modified by EW, fire control, and range from the launch hex at a -1 per 4 hexes penalty. If a ship is struck on the way to the target hex, stop adjudication at that time. Only one ship can be struck by the disc in this way.

If no ship is struck on the way and the target ship is in the target hex, the weapon automatically hits. If the target ship is not in the target hex, compute the hit chances as follows: profile facing target hex modified by EW, fire control, and range from the target hex at a -1 per hex penalty. This represents the effects of "leading the target." If the target ship is missed, place a counter on the board in the target hex to mark the location of the spinning disc. Unlike the Broodhome, the Marauder puts its discs exactly in the

hex selected if it doesn't hit the target. On subsequent turns, the weapon will track the first unit which comes within four hexes of it during the turn. During the ballistics phase, roll a to hit chance for the disc using the following formula: Target's facing profile modified by the disc's fire control and range from the disc's current hex at a -2 per hex penalty. The weapon always hits if the target passed through the disc's hex during its movement. If the weapon hits, adjudicate damage normally. If it misses, move the disc d3 hexes towards the target.

Any interceptable fire which passes through an in-place disc suffers a -2 penalty. If the weapon misses because of this penalty, deal its damage to the disc. A disc may be fired at as a fighter-sized unit with a profile of 7. Each disc has 5 armor and 25 structure.

Discs are vulnerable to interception fire. In addition, any weapon used to intercept a disc which does damage, whose maximum damage is 30 points or more, will destroy the disc if it misses the target ship. Intercepting weapons which do less damage will not harm the disc.

Alternative Rule: Each intercepting weapon rolls a chance to hit the disc instead of granting its normal hit penalty, and deals damage to the disc if the weapon hits. Intercept-only weapons deal d6 damage per point of interception.

Each Marauder can maintain no more than eight discs at a time. Remove any in-place discs beyond this number. Destroyed discs do not count towards this limit.

Ur-Quan Kohr-Ah Marauder (continued)

For a very long battle you might want to institute some sort of ammunition limitation, but given that each Marauder has a total crew of one, I suspect there's plenty of room for extra discs.

FRIED system

When activated, all units in the Marauder's hex and adjacent hexes out to the maximum range are eligible targets (except the Marauder, of course). Destruction of FRIED launchers may create blind-spots—any units in a weapon arc not

covered by at least one FRIED launcher are immune to the attack, although the intercept capability of the weapon remains. The weapon does flash damage without collateral damage. Roll separately against each fighter in a flight. Any mines in the area of effect automatically take damage. (The Kohr-Ah developed the system originally to clear away such defenses around worlds they planned to strip of all life.)

On any turn the Marauder fires the FRIED system, it receives a -4 intercept against all incoming

fire. Laser-class weapons suffer a -2 intercept penalty, ballistic-class weapons a -6 penalty. Intercept penalties from overlapping FRIED effects (in cases where there are multiple Marauders) are not additive—count the penalty only once. These penalties are cumulative with the intercept from the disc weapon. Note that only the firing Marauder is immune to damage from the FRIED system, so an armada of Kohr-Ah should fly in an open formation if they plan to use this system.

* * *



Androsynth Guardian

**DESIGN:
PAUL
BROWN**

Designing the Androsynth was a bit of a challenge for two reasons. The first reason is because the primary weapon of the Androsynth is bubbles. The second reason because its special weapon is to ram the enemy, which in B5Wars is a very effective (and thus restricted) way to destroy an enemy ship. The Guardian also is problematic because in comet mode it accelerates to high speeds and degrees of manoeuvrability despite being fairly beefy with a good amount of crew.

Though I didn't much care for the ship myself in the game, the

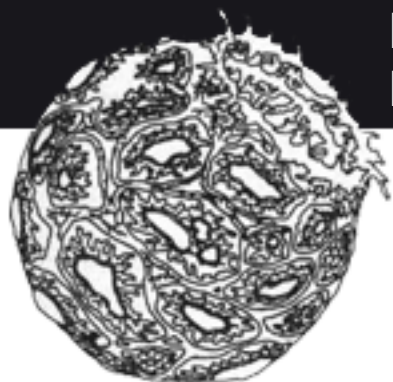
bubbles I've been told are fairly effective against some opponents. I decided to model their random attack vector style in two fashions. First I gave them a fairly inaccurate fire control rating which is especially problematic for a pulse weapon, but to alleviate this disadvantage those shots which first miss the target can also attack any ships which may have been nearby on the way towards the primary target. I figure that those crazy bubbles may not have hit the target because they already hit another ship in the path of fire. So when firing the bubbles, the Guardian first rolls for hits and pulse counts on the target and then rolls on each ship within 1 hex of the line of fire from the target to the firing ship, regardless of whether that ship is friend or foe. This procedure is completed until either all bubbles have hit a target, or there are no more targets for the

bubbles to try and hit.

Because ramming is so effective I chose to make the Guardian not actually ram an enemy, but rather project a field around the ship which it attempts to hit the enemy with by flying close to the target. Essentially, I've given the device a ramming factor and when the Guardian attacks a ship it hits that ship for an amount up to that factor. There is also a chance that something will go wrong, and the Guardian will in fact ram the enemy ship in which case it's treated as a standard ram which is still be bad for the enemy but is also bad for the Androsynth because they will also take damage. Comet mode, as a partial warp effect, also allows for increased manoeuvrability but at a specific speed. If the Androsynth is unable to hit the enemy with the thrust it has, tough luck.

* * *

**UR-QUAN
HIERARCHY**



Mycon Podship

UP-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

When I released my first version of the Podship using standard ballistic rules, the first and only comment I received was 'it doesn't seem to play like the Mycon in the game'. In order to simulate Star Control, I felt it was necessary to make additional rules for the Mycon. Or in short, the Homing Plasmoid would need to be modelled on the SFB ballistics instead of the B5Wars. The plasmoid has to be something on board, which can be shot at, and outrun if need be. Thus we have a new weapon class, the Tracked Ballistic.

Tracked Ballistics are fired and impact as normal ballistics, with the difference that they move and are tracked onboard with their own icon. In this way, they are similar to Hunter Killers. Tracked ballistics can be targeted and destroyed like normal units as the rules dictate, but the plasmoid has a slightly different set of rules. The plasmoid has a defence rating, a move rating and a damage total. This total represents its potential destructive force, intercepting fire can degrade this total. The plasmoid will autohit for full damage any unit whose hex it enters, because of that standard intercept procedures will not work (as there is no roll to hit). Instead, when the attacked ship is hit by a plasmoid it can use its defensive weapons to

degrade the damage total of the plasmoid. Each weapon will "inflict damage" equal to its intercept rating. Similarly, while in play weapons may fire at the plasmoid as a standard unit and instead of causing standard damage, will use their intercept rating. I feel that the weapon's ability to stop the plasmoid, rather than cause damage to it, is a better reflection of what an interceptor should do. This does not mimic the behaviour of the plasmoid in Melee, as stronger weapons reduced it more, but it does give the Mycon an added boost.

The plasmoid has its own automated control system, when launched the player picks a target and the plasmoid will move directly towards the target. The Mycon, may choose to send orders for a new target by directing 3 EW per plasmoid it wants to redirect. This is especially useful if the target of the plasmoid was destroyed last turn. If it was and the plasmoid was not redirected, move the plasmoid in the direction of the target's last position until it dissipates. Because the plasmoid has automated movement systems, the firing player does not have full control. Each time a plasmoid moves, both players take turns moving it one hex. Any hex is

valid to move into as long as it moves the plasmoid closer to its target. This allows for the opposing player to possibly move the plasmoid into the hex of a ship friendly to the firing player, causing some of the friendly fire we see in Melee. To help prevent this, the firing player may devote Tracking EW to a plasmoid. For each EW devoted to a plasmoid, the player may move the unit in lieu of the opposing player, starting from the beginning of the units movement. So if the firing player devotes three EW, he will move the plasmoid six or seven consecutive times before the opponent gets a turn. This allows the firing player to direct the plasmoid through friendly formations, but opens the Podship up to enemy fire.

The podship itself is a small capital using a non-standard hull format. Similar to the Drazi Stormfalcon, the Podship has no forward hits, only side and aft hits. The ability to repair itself was simulated by the inclusion of a structure self-repair system, as seen on Triad vessels. Though the Mycon are clearly not at the level of the Triad, it is fairly accurate in reflecting the game and allows for some fairness in that the Mycon cannot repair systems, only structure.

* * *





Umgah Drone

UR-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

The Drone has decent structure in the game but I always viewed it as a fairly small vessel. Using a structure formula I utilised for all my designs, I gave it low structure but a high amount of armour. This allows the agoraphobic Umgah to both feel encased from the big bad world, and to survive some retribution for their endless practical jokes. The main weapon I simulated using the same rules as an Antimatter Shredder except I limited the field of fire to a set selection of hexes

directly in front of the ship. The weapon can fire every turn, and imposes a -3 intercept to all fire passing through it. The intercept rating makes the Drone a fairly good screen unit, if enough of them are employed in front of other hierarchy vessels.

For the retro-engine I gave the Drone two *Tactical Warp Shunts*. Following the rules on the SCS, these allow the ship to move backward a number of hexes depending on the number of shunt points used instead of standard movement. Though the Drone comes out of the warp at speed zero, it can make the Drone an effective flanker and an unknown element in a battle. The shunts require power to be redirected

from the main cannon and/or sensors to recharge them. With power requirements, the shunt can be fully charged in two turns. Alternatively, the player may choose to better simulate the game and say that if the Antimatter Cone is not fired for two consecutive turns the shunts are fully recharged. This however does not allow for the possibility of partial charges, and a benefit I thought the Umgah would need to be more effective. Overall I think I've captured enough flavour to make it an interesting ship, but it's probably better suited for joint operations rather than comprising the bulk of a fleet.

* * *



Ilwrath Avenger

UR-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

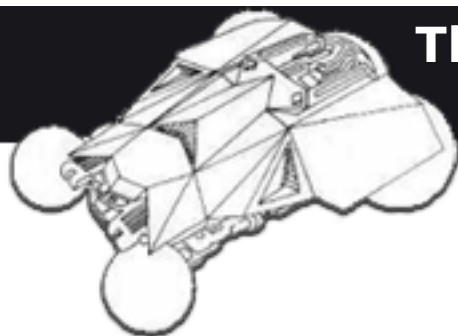
This version of the Avenger is a redesign of an older design that I had laying around on my hard drive. My original version used off-the-shelf weaponry from B5W, mainly because I felt that the Plasma Stream weapons were a good representation of the Ilwrath Hellfire Blast. Both weapons are plasma weapons that share similar properties, chiefly their streaming nature.

After looking at some of the other ships being developed for Star Control, though, I came to the conclusion that the weapon was not as good a fit as it could have been. So I reworked the Plasma Streams into area of effect weapons similar to the Umgah's Antimatter Cone. The new Hellfire Blast weapons fire at a specified target but all units between the firing ship and its target will also be subject to an attack from the Hellfire Blast. In all cases, roll normally to-hit against the unit, taking into account EW, jinking, and range penalties.

The Ilwrath cloaking device is handled differently than I have

handled cloaks in the past. Originally I was planning on using the cloaking rules from my Star Trek conversion, but decided that there had to be a simpler solution for the Avenger. When activated, the Ilwrath cloaking device provides a 10-point profile reduction and increases the ship's initiative bonus by +6. While cloaked the ship cannot fire any weapons or engage its jump engine. This solution helps to simulate the fact that, in SuperMelee, the location of the Ilwrath ship is always known to the opponent due to the zoom level of the ship, but firing at it is difficult.

* * *



Thraddash Torch

UP-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Torch is one of the harder ships to convert, just because of its odd abilities and equally strange appearance. My old version of the Thraddash ship was mostly incomplete, meaning I had to start virtually from scratch with this conversion. After playing the ship in SuperMelee I started to get a better feel for the ship and remembered why it was such a joy to pilot in the game.

Omni-Thruster

The first thing that I did was look at that the background fluff for the ship and see what design elements jumped out at me. The first thing that struck me as odd (and has for some time) is the “glow globes” located at each corner of the Torch. What purpose do these things serve? In the game they don’t provide any special ability, they are just part of the ship’s aesthetic. I wanted the globes to serve some sort of a purpose, so I decided to convert them into the Torch’s thrusters.

These new Omni-Thrusters function like normal thrusters, except that each Omni-Thruster actually functions as a combination of two different types of thrusters. Each of the Omni-Thrusters act as a retro/main thruster and appropriate side thruster and can split their listed thrust

rating in either of the two directions. This creates a ship that is incredibly maneuverable and very versatile. The thrusters are more vulnerable to fire, however, as all of them are on the outer section of the ship. A few good shots that remove the Torch’s Omni-Thrusters will cripple the ship’s mobility, making the Torch that much easier to destroy.

Missiles

In the game the Torch fires a single forward-mounted missile weapon. I decided to expand this armament, giving the ship a single Class-S Missile Rack for offensive operations and two Class-D Missile Racks for its defense. This gives the ship some punch, but not too much.

Plasma Afterburner

The hallmark of the Thraddash Torch design, the Plasma Afterburner is a fairly straightforward system on my design. Every two points of power applied to the Plasma Afterburner will create one plasma hex during movement. Plasma hexes are laid until the power is depleted, so all plasma hexes must be laid contiguously.

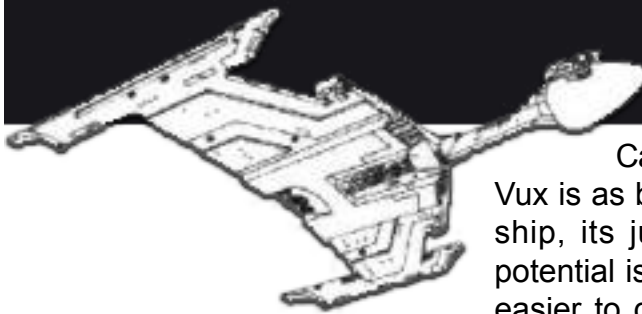
This means that the player cannot choose to lay a plasma hex in one hex, skip the second hex, and then lay another plasma hex in the third. The extra power required to fuel the Plasma Afterburner can come from any source, though it will most often be siphoned out of the ship’s two aft plasma batteries.

All fire that passes through a plasma hex receives a -2 to-hit penalty. Additionally, all ships that move into a plasma hex immediately take 2d10 plasma damage to their facing side. In the case of a unit that is stopped in a plasma hex (speed 0), the ship will still take 2d10 damage from the plasma hex. This can happen if the Torch lays plasma hexes over the top of the stopped unit.

Plasma hexes form during movement and persist for a complete turn before dissipating, disappearing after movement on the following turn. Because of this it can sometimes be in the Torch player’s favor to intentionally move their ship before other enemy units by lowering their initiative. This can help to ensure that their Plasma Afterburner can lay plasma hexes in the right spot to exploit other slower units that have turn delays left to be fulfilled.

* * *





VUX Intruder

UP-QUAN
HIERARCHY

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

After doing my Freespace conversions, I feel that I'm a little out of touch with the sense of balance in B5Wars. Some Freespace weapons in my straight-across conversion do such massive damage that they put the ancients to shame. So the Gigawatt laser on the Vux Intruder may seem to some be over the top. Here's however while I view the dilemma. The Gigawatt may have massive amounts of damage in one weapon, but the question to ask one's self is whether the sum total of damage the Intruder can do is better than any other ship's damage potential. The Whitestar for instance can do 200 points a turn with Molecular Pulsars alone, while I've destroyed fresh Omegas with Babylon 5's four Heavy Pulse

Cannons. So I believe the Vux is as balanced as any other ship, its just that its offensive potential is all in one basket. It's easier to disarm. And given the sustaining mode of the weapon, and the ships lack of manoeuvrability and the weapons narrow arc the Vux has little chance of hitting the same ship for all three turns. Unless of course its opponent handles like a pig already or has been crippled by Limpets, which is basically how the VUX should operate.

The Limpets were modelled to a degree on the limpet bore torpedo. I chose to make them simply little ballistic organic creatures that didn't increase the ship's mass, but rather clogged the target ship's thrusters. As an additional rule I gave the target the chance of removing the limpets by overthrusting the affected thruster, the downside of course being that they could screw up their thruster even more by overthrusting.

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

In Star Control, the VUX Intruder has always seemed to be an 'odd man out' design compared to those fielded by the other races. The Intruder is slow with abysmal maneuverability and a short-ranged laser weapon. The disadvantages inherent to the Intruder made the VUX sphere of influence into a veritable feeding ground where I could wander in and use my Spathi Eluders to plink the VUX to death without any fear of retribution.

Because of this I opted to make the VUX technologies some of the worst out of the ships that I did. Their weapons are advanced and good, but most of the rest of the ship's tech is pretty poor. Sensors I placed at 6EW, in order to keep the range of their main laser down. The Gigawatt Laser I put in as an auto-sustaining cannon capable of doing some good damage, but having a hard time hitting. I also added several Megawatt Lasers across the ship to give it some additional close-in firepower to the design.

The limpets I decided to handle by using the Limpet-Bore Torpedo from the Kor-Lyan with a slight modification to the weapon's rules. The normal Limpet Torpedo just deposits the explosive limpet to the hull, but the VUX limpets corrode the ship's hull and slow the ship down. I made the VUX Limpet-Cocoon Torpedoes do a small amount of damage to the target, representing the physical damage to the hull upon



VUX Intruder (continued)

impact, and gave it the special property that every limpet that hits the target increases all thrust costs by 1 thrust point. What this means is that each time you get hit by a Limpet-Cocoon your thrust costs will go up. A ship with an accel/decel rate of 2 would go to 3 after the limpet attaches to the hull.

The effects of the limpets are removed once the side they are attached to is destroyed. The limpets can move from section to section just like the Kor-Lyan limpets. Additionally, the general rules for the Kor-Lyan Limpet-Bore applies to the Limpet-Cocoon Torpedo except in regards to their effects on the target vessel.

After I created my ship I took note of something that Demiurge had done with this own design and added the +4 Jump into Combat bonus to my version of the VUX Intruder as well.

DESIGN: DEMIURGE

The Intruder is the perfect representation of the VUX race. Mean, offensive, somewhat slow, and definitely slimy!

A ship largely defined by its limitations, VUX technology severely lags behind virtually all other starfaring races in one of the most basic inventions in the galaxy, the thruster. With weak engines and even weaker thrusters, the VUX captain can often find himself totally at the mercy of faster ships that have long range armament.

However, to their credit (and to their Ur-Quan master's delight) the VUX have found ways to overcome this flaw. Without the ability to equal the grace and dexterity of their enemies in the

quadrant, they sought out ways to drag opponents down to their level.

The VUX Limpet was the result. A bioweapon which succeeded beyond their greatest hopes, the limpets seek out the heat sources of opponent's thrusters and embed there. Once there, it clogs the thruster, and enough of the parasites can easily overwhelm the capabilities of any thruster in the galaxy. Given enough time even the most maneuverable of enemies can be brought within the reach of their main weapon.

The second great breakthrough made by the VUX scientists was in Jump engine design. Realizing the need to close quickly with their opponents, they designed their engines to be able to place them more accurately near their targets. This is represented by their +4 bonus in jumping into combat. And this allows them a chance to use the Limpets to disable their opponents more immediately.

Once a ship was impaired, the VUX Laser could be used to its fullest capacity. The VUX Laser is

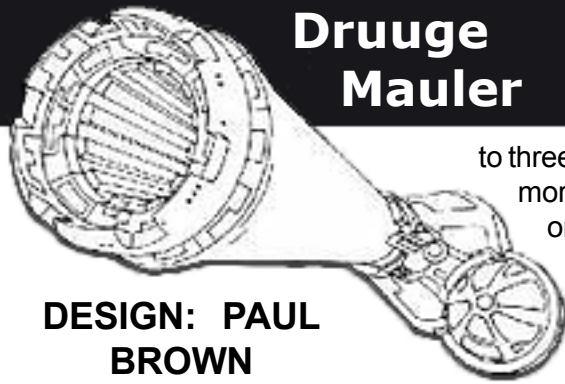
a powerful weapon if somewhat short ranged in the Star Control SuperMelee. Its vast energy reserve allows for an extremely long burst of fire, allowing a constant stream of fire for an amazing 40 seconds. This translates well into a Sustained mode of fire and a very quick fire rate of once every two turns. However, the laser doesn't have the range of most Babylon 5 lasers, and has a -1 per 2 hex range modifier. The combination creates a very dangerous short to medium range laser capable of pouring out more damage than those unfamiliar with the Intruder would expect.

The VUX have created a unique ship that flies differently than any other in the Star Control universe. By turning their weaknesses into strengths, the Intruder has become a worthy adversary to any opponent it must face in battle.

Just don't turn on the view screen if forced to parley!

* * *





Druuge Mauler

NEUTRAL

DESIGN: PAUL BROWN

The major problem posed by the Mauler was the special ability of converting crew to power. The conflict arises because B5Wars uses structure to simulate hit points, not crew. It wouldn't make much sense to have a ship lose structure to help recharge its main weaponry, not unless it's some form of horny space creature on a future episode of Crusade that digests its internals to rejuvenate its sex drive.

My solution is a two-fold process. But first I'll start with the Cannon. As the ship is essentially one big gun I didn't like the idea of simply putting the one gun on the front, or putting it in the primary and allowing it to be hit from other sections. Instead I made the weapon a two piece unit. One part, in the primary is the main section and includes all of the statistics of a normal weapon. The second piece is located forward, and serves to enhance the primary weapon by increasing its range. Both should be treated as standard weapons for purposes of critical hits, though range criticals scored against the Accelerator Coils can only reduce the weapon to -1 per 2 hexes. The gun also uses 'charges' to mark its current ammo loadout as with the Ballistic Torpedo or standard missile systems. The Kinetic Coil Gun uses a delay to determine how long it takes for one round to recharge. Its actual rate of fire can vary from one

to three shots per turn. If the gun fires more than one round in a turn, not only will accuracy decrease but the ship will suffer structural damage. The amount of damage is random and denoted on the SCS. This is to simulate the damage the ship receives through prolonged combat. One might ask "what kind of idiot would fly a ship that destroys itself in combat?" A better question would actually be, "what brilliant stroke of genius inspired a Druuge ship manufacturer to design and sell a ship which would need constant, costly repairs."

But those rules still don't quite capture the flavour of the Druuge. So to simulate the loss to crew I've added an option for the player to increase the rate of recharge for a price. Instead of throwing a crewmember in the furnace, the captain will simply divert power from non-essential systems like crew life support to the weapon to increase its recharge rate. With each use, the ship suffers initiative penalties as the surviving crew adjusts to their added workload and according to the chart, the ship may suffer additional problems. These problems arise as the ship's operation becomes less efficient with less crew, and standard procedures like damage control no

longer have people to carry them out. The captain, as crafty as he may be, cannot simply ask for 'manual control' and have a joystick pop out of the floor and fly without any penalties. After a certain number of uses, boosting the recharge rate is no longer possible due to damage suffered by the poor circuitry (more clever ship building practices).

The ship itself can be quite deadly. If it manages to hit three times in a round it has a good chance of crippling or even destroying most enemy ships. But due to the recoil problem, the ship may be somewhat hard to play without a larger or floating map board.

* * *





Melnorme Trader

NEUTRAL

DESIGN: DAVID AINSWORTH

The Melnorme were one of the more mysterious races in SC2, and all indications were that they had been the Mael-Num, an ancient race which triggered the original split between Kohr-Ah and Kzer-Za tactics, and then snuck away. If this ship represents one of their merchants, their warships are presumably pretty powerful (assuming they have any at all).

The Melnorme weapons were fairly unique in the SC series. The main weapon “powered up” over time, eventually reaching a large and highly destructive size, and while the weapon was charging it provided protection for the ship. The secondary weapon, the confusion ray, disabled the “special” weapon on the enemy ship and sent it tumbling out of control, spinning for a fair amount of time. Modelling these two weapons proved difficult.

For the main weapon, I opted for a gradually charging weapon which takes more and more energy to charge to the next level, primarily because I wanted to include two different weapons mounts on the ship to make the guns harder to strip away. I also wanted a way to model a few of the other firing options the ship has, including firing a charged-up shot followed immediately by a minimally charged shot, and quickly

firing many small shots. The former can be achieved by shutting down the Confusion Ray (which actually allows for two powerful shots, potentially), while the latter I implemented by including a pulse mode for the weapon. The high level of flexibility reflects, I think, the flexibility in the original SC ship.

As for the Confusion Ray, modelling its full SC effect would make it far too nasty, especially against ships with no gravitic drive, as a constant pivot which can’t be stopped would render maneuver virtually impossible. Nor is there a system way to model the inability to use the “second button” weapon. So instead, the Ray shuts down shield systems (including those on the Yehat and Utwig ships), drains a random amount of power (requiring weapons shut-downs), and provokes random pivots each turn which will reduce, but not eliminate, a ship’s ability to maneuver. I think the end result is plenty nasty, but feel free to add house rules to make it more effective if you’re only using ships with gravitic drives.

Power Blaster

Each power blaster is considered powered with 5 power as a default (meaning they provide 5 power when shut down, for example). During the power segment of each turn, each power blaster may be armed in a more powerful mode at the cost of the extra power as indicated. The power blaster must slowly increase in charge over the course of four turns in order to reach Red mode—extra power as indicated must be spent at the beginning of each turn in order

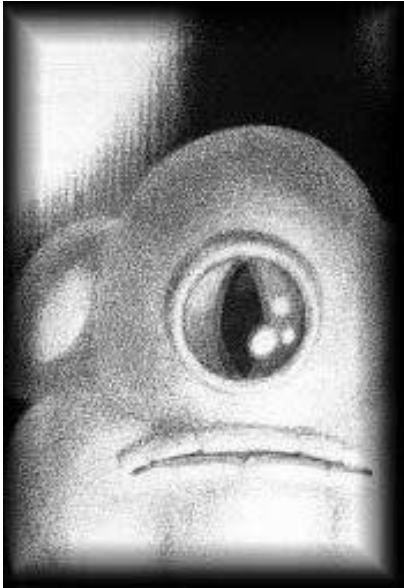
to increase the weapon’s power, and it costs 14 power to sustain at its most powerful level. If this power is not spent, the weapon must begin charging again from its basic Green mode. The weapons’ charge status must be announced to all opponents if it is Blue, Purple, or Red, but it is not necessary to distinguish between Green and Pulse modes. After the weapon fires at any arming level it will be returned to its Green mode (or potentially, its Pulse mode) on the subsequent turn. If the power blaster is fired in Pulse mode, it cannot rearm in that mode until the RoF delay has been met, but it need not be specially charged to fire in that mode.

While the weapon is charging, it provides a blanket reduction in the forward defensive profile of the Trader. This rating is indicated in brackets at each arming mode. Reduce the Forward profile of the Trader by this amount against all incoming fire. This effect is not considered interception and applies even against non-interceptable weapons. The weapon cannot be fired in intercept mode except against a ballistic weapon—if this is done, use the reduced forward profile against all incoming ballistic attacks, and treat that same number as an interception against a single ballistic attack, but the Trader loses its defensive profile bonus for the remainder of the turn. Apply only the largest rating if both blasters are charging at the same time.

Confusion Ray

The Confusion Ray scrambles the control systems of the target ship, disrupting a wide

Melnorme Trader (continued)



variety of systems. Any ship struck by a Confusion Ray suffers the following effects immediately:

- All EM or Gravitic shields shut down and must remain shut down for the following two turns.
- The ship suffers a power deficit of 2d6 for the following two turns (roll only once and apply the loss on both turns).
- The ship immediately begins a pivot (clockwise or counterclockwise, determine randomly). This pivot may be stopped normally during the ship's next movement phase. If the ship was already pivoting, it immediately begins to roll as well. If the ship was already performing both maneuvers, there is no further effect. Repeat this effect during the adjust systems phase of the following turn.

* * *



Slylandro Probe

NEUTRAL

DESIGN: TYREL LOHR

The Slylandro Probe I modeled as being a pretty "different" ship in B5W. It is a medium ship, but is treated in most ways like a light combat vessel. It does not have any forward/aft hits, just a single general hits chart. The Probe doesn't have any thrusters, either, instead relying on an engine that functions exactly as a LCV drive unit. This means it can vent its thrust in any direction it wants, as much as it wants. I felt that this was the best way to simulate the 'tumbling out of control' nature of the Slylandro Probe. I also gave the unit a fixed 1 hex turn delay, meaning that the Probe will be able to turn and change directions quickly. In the game the Probe seemed to be a very erratic unit, so I think that these maneuvering quirks will help to make the Probe unpredictable in combat.

I used several Vorlon systems when creating the Probe, as they were the closest to matching the Slylandro modus

operandi. The ship uses a low charge capacitor system that stores up power for use in firing its weapons. For weaponry the Slylandro has two Discharge Guns. These weapons score damage and have all the same stats as the Vorlon Discharge Gun, but also possess a special feature. For each point of damage done to the target by the Discharge Guns, the Slylandro's capacitor will be recharged by an additional point. This replicates the Slylandro's need to break down ships and asteroids in order to fully replenish its energy stock.

The Probe is also equipped with two Class-D Missile Racks. Paul Brown pointed out that the Probe's defensive systems were really supposed to be missile racks, but the Probe's programming instead led it to use the Discharge Guns that were originally meant for replication.

Because the Probe is unmanned I gave it a lower initiative bonus. Most of the other unguided or drone ships in the game, chiefly the Orieni HK's, also suffer this type of penalty.

* * *

UPDATE: Still looking for Bubbles. No good leads yet. Pranksters calling about 'shadows' need not reply.



**LOST: One Earth Dog
"Bubbles"
Last seen on Colony
in Quadrant 14**

Call Warleader G'Ruff



A Review of The Ur-Quan Masters Latest Alpha Release

By Tyrel Lohr

In August 2002, Toys for Bob, the original developers of the Star Control games, released the source code for a partial port for the 3DO version of Star Control II. Many Star Control fans quickly converged and set out to create a new build of Star Control II that would be readily playable on our modern computer systems. Renamed The Ur-Quan Masters in part to avoid copyright issues stemming from the Star Control name, this project found its

home (and hosting) as a SourceForge sponsorship.

The initial download of The Ur-Quan Master's current Alpha version didn't take long at all. Slightly less than one megabyte in size, this installer is used to install the core game onto your machine. Note that I did say the core game. During the installation process the executable begins accessing the Internet at which point it begins downloading over 120 MB of extra files, primarily voice files. Now, this makes the initial installer size a bit deceptive. My first installation simply didn't work because my firewall application (with a little help from a friend) blocked the program from accessing the

Internet. This caused the installation to complete unsuccessfully. So, in other words, though the installer is only 1 MB there is a lot more that has to be downloaded to make it playable. The final install of the game comes in at about 150 MB of hard drive size, sizably more than the original Star Control II install.

Overall the game is as we remember it. Some things have been changed, but not much. HyperMelee is much the same, though I did notice a few minor bugs in the HyperMelee fleet selection system, but nothing crippling, just annoying. Game play in HyperMelee mode runs smoothly without any signs of jerkiness or other problems

related to computer speed. Those looking to indulge in some nostalgic arcade space ship combat shouldn't be disappointed in the least.

The RPG side of the game is also much the same, though old hats will notice a few changes in how the game is setup. One of the first things that jumped out at me are the changed that were made to the 3DO version compared to the classic PC version. The elegant navigation menu buttons located in the bottom right hand corner are replaced now with a graphical interface that shows one menu option at a time. This is both annoying and cheesy and something that would definitely take a lot of time to get used to. Why replace it when it worked before? Being the old fuddy duddy that I am I blame you youngsters. Yes, you. In my day we had to have boot disks for every application and had to work our way through DOS uphill both ways to get them to run. And now you have to have bright, colorful buttons to do anything! Bah! Just kidding, but it is still annoying and makes menu navigation an exercise in frustration.

Otherwise the game is how we left it. Everything works more or less the way it did before. Now,



however, all of the strange aliens that you encounter talk to you. Yes, that extra 120 MB that you downloaded amounts to a speech pack in order to give extra life to the personalities you encounter. I am left wondering why they did it, though. Granted, the voice acting is good, especially for a volunteer project where too often you get Bob's crazy Uncle Ed to bark out lines for lack of any other warm bodies to sit in front of the microphone. However I found the addition of voice more distracting and irritating than useful. After only about a minute of dialogue I was about ready to strangle Earth Commander Hayes and blow up the entire lot of them in orbit of slave-shielded Earth. The Ilwrath captain you meet soon thereafter is not as bad, but it still can be annoying.

All in all is it worth the download? If you have access to a fast Internet connection on your

computer and were a fan of the game I would probably say yes. Even non-enthusiasts looking to see what all the fuss is about might also enjoy this Alpha release of the game. Be prepared for a fairly long download time, though. For the rest of you I would say hold off until they get to a later-stage Alpha before spending your valuable time downloading and installing The Ur-Quan Masters.

All in all I think the project members are off to a very good start. For an Alpha version it certainly is much better than one would expect. In short, for those that are dying to play Star Control II again and can't get the old version to install on their newer PC's I would recommend downloading it if for nothing else than the nostalgia value. I have to say it was refreshing to play some HyperMelee again, though I do have to warn you to read the manual first, as they have moved around the control keys! That or my memory is pretty bad. Little changes here and there, but still a very rewarding experience.

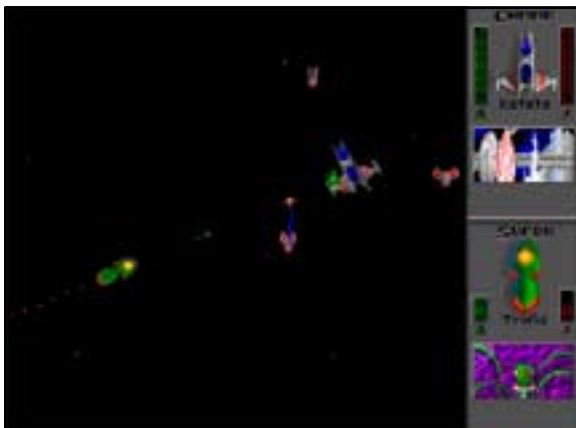
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Related Links:

The Ur-Quan Masters

SourceForge Project Website:

<http://sc2.sourceforge.net/>



David Ainsworth adds...

I want to note that the Ur-Quan Masters build offers a number of command-line switches. The present Alpha allows you to use either PC or 3DO menus and planetary displays, PC or 3DO music, and you can switch on or off the speech. For that matter, IIRC you can customize the installation and simply not get the speech pack at all, which cuts about 110 MB from the total download size. Doing command-line switches is a bit clunky but not that hard.

I agree some of the dialogue is excruciating, but some is quite good, especially the actress who does the Zoq/Syreen/VUX. Granted, that one section in the Syreen dialogue may get some odd reactions from friends and family if they're within hearing distance... ;)

The Nashani and the Free Worlds Confederation Sneak Peek

An Introduction to the Nashani and the Free Worlds Confederation

*By Erik Parzych &
Brendan Henry*

Group Commander Shol-Der Vor Otani hovered among the muted bustle of the flag bridge with a detached calm. While others around him had a myriad of tasks to carry out, his lot was to simply sit and wait for the plan to unfold. The display before him showed in unreal clarity the titanic Centauri fleet ahead, and his own much more meager force trailing in its wake. Commander Otani let his eyes drift from the artificial display to the artificial calm of the bridge, backlit by the swirling mists of hyperspace. One did not need to be empathic to sense the tension of the crew, but to their credit every one of them maintained an air of calm professionalism. It had been a difficult mission already by any measure; first lying in wait just off the beacon route in the dangers of hyperspace, and then stalking the Centauri battle fleet ahead of them. Yet, not one among the Nashani had faltered

to his knowledge, not aboard this or any ship in the fleet.

No doubt the scene would be different were he aboard a Medushaan warship at that moment. Now would be a time for heroic speeches and bold declarations among his Medushaan counterparts. Their ways were different to be sure, but Otani knew from long experience that his allies would do their part. Should he survive the battle to come, Otani would relish the memory of the Medushaan response to his plan. Stunned silence had transformed to a kind of savage glee right before his eyes. At long last, the Free Worlds stood prepared to take the fight to the Centauri, rather than merely survive their advances.

"Commander, Centauri force shifting from the beacon, current plot shows an intersect with the Essekyre primary." There was no need for Otani to acknowledge the report; the sensor operator was too busy to care anyway. Long digits touched the panel before the Group Commander, and the display changed to show new alignment of the Centauri forces. Should his own force be discovered shadowing the Centauri, Otani and every member of the fleet would die. But, the Centauri commander took no precautions to watch his rear or flanks, using his scouts to locate the Essekyre system and guide the force in-system and away from the jump gate. This was exactly what Otani had counted on; the Centauri commander was trying to surprise the Free World forces around Essekyre-3. With another touch of a control, a tight-beam communication raced through the Nashani formation, and every ship silently shifted to action stations. Once again the Group Commander was relegated to Grand Spectator status as the well trained officers and crew of the flagship sprung to their positions and locked themselves in. Otani too bound himself into his crash web, and summoned his flag captain.

"Velor, your crew has performed admirably no matter what may come." Otani sensed a momentary flush of pride from the Ship Commander, who simply responded with a solemn bow as his superior continued, "They

are in the finest tradition of the Confederacy, and the Elders will know their names." This time the response from the ship's captain was more subtle and just as sincere as he looked to his commander, "Sir, they are brothers and sisters to be sure, but it is your will which guides us all." It was Otani's turn to control his feelings, and with a nod to his subordinate he released the Ship Commander to make his final preparations.

Somewhere beyond the bounds of mortal sight, the Centauri force had created jump points and had begun to return to real space. The Nashani scouts reported to the flagship that they had fixed the locations of the jump points, and they relayed them to the fleet. The display in front of the Group Commander showed that not a single Centauri ship had lingered in hyperspace. There were certainly capable captains and crews among the Centauri, but their foolish commander had made another fatal mistake. In minutes, the best the Nashani had to offer would hurl themselves back into their own universe, and quite possibly to their deaths. Otani transmitted his final target priorities to his ships, and then just waited as the Nashani ships reached their positions.

"Commander, jump point forming bearing 010 relative. It is the Medushaan jump ship Chedmenos! Otani could not blame the sensor operator for his excitement, for this was the final signal telling the Nashani that the Medushaan had engaged the Centauri fleet, and all had gone to plan. The Group Commander strained forward in his crash web, "Command to all ships, transit now! Firing sequence Two." Otani himself could no longer contain his own excitement, but it mattered little among the swirling emotions of his bridge. Within seconds the fleet had opened eddies of light and had jumped back to normal space. At the core of Otani's force were the new heavy cruisers, like his flagship, the Halran. Armed with the newly deployed attack lasers, these vessels lashed out at the Centauri rear at a range only the enemy's battle laser could reply. The effect was immediate and devastating. Though few Centauri ships were destroyed outright in the initial salvo, many fell out of formation, and the entire fleet shuddered as squadrons wheeled to meet the new threat. As the Nashani ships closed and fired a second coordinated laser

barrage, Otani surveyed the battle as it was unfolding upon his display.

It was obvious that the Medushaans had slaughtered their enemy's fighters, as their own strikes slashed nearly unopposed through Centauri ranks. Behind the fighters the Medushaan attack ships and destroyers were pressing the Centauri as well, but suffering high casualties as they charged headlong into the enemy formations. Their efforts befit their nature as their small ships did damage out of proportion to their size. The Centauri formation had dissolved into shapeless chaos as ships were destroyed and others desperately attempted to reorganize. Group Commander Shol-Der Vor Otani made a solemn, personal vow to sweep the Essekyre system clean of every Centauri as he opened his command net, "All ships, close and fire at will. Priority targets are jump equipped vessels!" If any member of the bridge had taken the time to look at their commander in that moment, they would have seen a predator's grin that they might have expected from a Medushaan, not their tightly controlled commander. No one saw as the Nashani ships surged forward into the cauldron of fire.

* * *

Prologue

Lord Kallo Alarai wore an expression of smug satisfaction as he stared out at the swirling mists of hyperspace. Soon, the fleet that he commanded would emerge from hyperspace and smash once and for all the pathetic "Free Worlds" fleet. Just two days ago, the enemy had made their fatal mistake by attacking the intelligence gathering station in orbit around Essekyre-3. The base survived long enough to transmit images of Medushaan assault forces preparing for planetary assault, and showed that even the cowardly Nashani were present in force. No doubt, the Free Worlders hoped to capture the extensive industrial base of Essekyre, but that would take time as there was a sizable garrison defending the planet. They would not have that time, Lord Alarai had seen to it. His force had embarked at high speed as soon as word arrived. Other houses had been contacted for support, though they had not yet joined the main fleet. This

Star Control

was exactly what he had been waiting for, an opportunity to bring the concentrated might of his forces to bear against the enemy, and utterly destroy them. Lord Alarai would not postpone his destiny so that hangers-on could share his glory. He would be the conquerer of the so-called "Free Worlds", and the thought of the power and glory that it would bring him widened his smile even more.

He allowed his gaze to sweep the bridge of the mighty battleship Splendor of the Republic. For a moment, his gaze locked with that of the Royal Navy's "advisor", before the slug's eyes dropped back to a display. The stinking creature had dared to challenge his tactics before the fleet's senior commanders. Lord Alarai knew that the boy only held his position through the court connections of his father, but he would find himself executed for treason when House Alarai gained its rightful place.

A sensor operator announced to the bridge

that the fleet was upon the target systems jump beacon. Lord Alarai simply nodded. The "Free World" vermin had not shut down the beacon, but had likely massed their defenses there, hoping to catch the Centauri fleet as it transited into the system. But the fleet would bypass the jump gate, and use all of its jump capable warships to bring the entire fleet into the system, directly above Essekyre-3 behind the blocking forces and right on top of helpless transports. It would be a slaughter. The coward the CRN had seen fit to send him wished to probe the system with scouting forces to pinpoint the enemy before the main force arrived. It was just that kind of lack of initiative that pervaded the Republic, weakening it at every level. What was needed were bold, decisive strokes. Lord Alarai was the kind of leader the Republic was yearning for, one that would return his people to the glory that was rightfully theirs.

Lord Alarai was practically aglow with



exitement as the ship's captain announced that the fleet was preparing to jump into normal space. Today would be a day celebrated as the moment when the Centuari woke from their lethargy, to rule the galaxy! Lord Alarai trembled with excitement as the jump vortex burst into existence before his flagship and the fleet surged forward to glory.

The Free Worlds Confederation marks the point where the spinward expansion of the Centauri Republic finally ground to a halt. Though its borders would be tested several times over the centuries, the recession of the Centauri from the region, and the near crippling of the nearby Orieni would leave the Free Worlds as a power in the region.

The Free Worlds Confederation is a multi-racial endeavor between the Nashani and Medushaan races. The Confederation traces its origins back to the era just before the Centauri-Orieni War. Up until that time, the Nashani and Medushaan had seen a number of conflicts along their shared borders. The looming war between the two great empires of the age threatened to engulf and devastate the region. The Nashani believed that the only way to survive was for the two races to unite in the defense of the region. It would take great courage, diplomacy, guile and persistence, but in the end the Nashani and Medushaan would enter into a mutual defense pact. Nashani and Medushaan space would become known as the Free Worlds Alliance, as they were not to be under the sway of the great empires so nearby.

Back in normal space, the bridge of Splendor of the Republic became a blur of activity and shouts from crewmembers. Without warning, the universe became a boiling hell of destruction. The mighty battleship shuddered repeatedly and Lord Alarai found himself blinded by eye-tearing flashes of light. Mines! The fleet had jumped directly into a minefield! How could this have happened? The tremors subsided, and the ships sensors told the story, but Lord Alarai refused to believe. The enemy fleet was not where they should have been, in fact they were no where to be found. The fleet began reported their damage to the flagship, and it showed that the enemy had seeded the orbital region of Essekyre-3 with thermonuclear mines, which had done severe damage to the Centauri fleet. Still a powerful force, Lord Alarai's fleet had yet to

locate its prey.

All at once, there they were. Hundreds of Medushaan fighters began streaming towards the fleet from the planet's polar regions. Now knowing where to look, the Centauri fleet discovered that the entire Medushaan force had hidden itself here waiting for the arrival of their foe. Lord Alarai could appreciate their guile, for they were desperate, but it would not matter in the end. He ordered the fleet to form up and proceed towards the Northern pole. Interceptors were launched to deal with the enemy fighters, and the Centauri fleet prepared its weapons.

The CRN liason asked the sensor operators the location of the Nashani forces. Another breach of protocol to add to his list of charges. If they could not be found it was because they were cowards, and had left the system to be defended by the stupid Medushaan. If they were here, hiding as the Medushaan had been, they would eventually be found and destroyed.

The two swarms of fighters had nearly reached each other. Lord Alarai watched as the disciplined ranks of interceptors streaked towards the ragged line of assault fighters. The fleets fighters would cut through the medushaan fighters, and were fast enough to chase down the survivors before they ever reached the fleet itself. As if the medushaan realized this their fighters began to turn away. Even better! In a strern chase, the fine Centauri fighters would quickly overtake the Medushaans and dispatch them without reprisal. Suddenly, the display was alight with pinpricks of destruction. The retreating Medushaan fighters had dropped some kind of bomb in their wake and though far less powerful than the mines that had greeted the fleet, they vaporized whole flights of fighters as they detonated. Many Medushaan fighters were caught in the conflagration left by their compatriots in front of them, but many, many more Centauri fighters died before they could break off their pursuit. When the fires died away, the Medushaan fighters turned back to their course towards the Centauri fleet, their way now clear of opposition. This was a particularly dangerous situation for while the heavy forces that formed the core of the fleet were relatively intact, the screening elements had been severely degraded by the mines. The fight would still be won! Lord Alarai ordered his forces to press the

attack against the Medushaan forces now moving from the polar positions. The entire fleet would concentrate on the Northern force first, to destroy them before they could link up with the southern forces. The Medushaan ships came on eagerly.

Together, the allies would ride out the storm that was the Centauri-Orieni war, and in its aftermath they would find themselves cooperating even more closely to stave off the advances of a resurgent Centauri Republic. Through the years to follow, cooperation would grow into a true partnership as the pragmatic Nashani and fierce Medushaan closely integrated not only their defensive measures, but their expansions, their economies, and their societies to the point where they had become intertwined at nearly every official level. Despite this, the proposal that the two species form a cooperative government sparked intense unrest as both races had those whose own pride would not allow such a merger. Though this period would be difficult for both the Nashani and the Medushaan, their leaders stayed true to their goal, and in the end a government was formed in which both races would cooperate fully on external policy matters and on such internal matters as economic integration. In this the Free Worlds Alliance became the Free Worlds Confederation.

The Medushaan fighters arrived first, and as Lord Alarai had feared, they slashed through the Centauri capital ships, taking far fewer losses than they should have had the escort elements been intact. The few interceptors that had remained close to the fleet did their best, but many Medushaan fighters scored hits on the Centauri warships. No matter, they could not do enough damage to tip the balance. Finally, the Centauri warships had the turn to deal death as their lasers lanced across space to meet the onrushing Medushaan warships. Dozens of their ships fell out of the charge or became expanding clouds of debris, and still another wave of laser fire would lash out before they could bring their own weapons into range.

A voice from the bridge shouted that jump points were forming. Finally, Lord Brenna had joined the fray. Pity his forces were emerging too far from the planet to steal any of house Alarai's triumph. But wait, the ships coming through the jump points were not Centauri, but Nashani! More and larger ships than the Nashani

had ever shown before, but here they were. The Nashani had jumped directly between the Centauri and the jumpgate, leaving a covering force there while their main force challenged the Centauri rear. Victory was still within Lord Alarai's grasp, but he had to dispatch the Medushaan forces, before the Nashani could get their ships in range.

The northern force had been mauled, but still came on, and began to clash with the Centauri vanguard. The southern force continued to come on steadily as well, and now the long range laser fire of the Centauri ships was more sporadic, and the Medushaan ships began to break through despite their losses. Then the final bit of treachery struck home as the Nashani vessels began to pour fire into his fleet from a range which only the Centauri's vaunted battle lasers could reach them! Their armor weakened by the Medushaan mines and plasma weapons, the Centauri ships took serious damage from the initial bombardment. Lord Alarai did not know where to turn. Throughout his fleet ships began to die. His battleship shuddered as it was repeatedly scoured by plasma and laser. His flag captain screamed that the fleet must withdraw. Withdraw! The battle could be won! Here was the enemy they had thirsted for, and he would run away! Through the viewscreen, he saw a jump point open, but rather than the reinforcements he needed, it heralded the departure of the a squadron from his battle line. Strong arms snared him from behind, and a loud, clear voice rang through the commotion, to signal all ships in the fleet to retreat, by any means available. NO! How could this be! Lord Alarai twisted frantically to see his betrayer. The Naval Liaison. He reached for the ceremonial dagger kept at his waist but found its sheath empty. Defeated by disloyalty and cowardice, Lord Alarai slumped in his captor's grip. The royal court would hear of the treasonous actions this day, and entire houses would feel the wrath of his betrayal.

Today the Confederation has grown to be a regional power, with a position of strength recognized throughout much of the space formerly dominated by the Centauri Republic. Trade routes have been established with spinward factions, and contacts have been made as far anti-spinward as Babylon 5. Ever

mindful of security and stability, the leaders of the Confederacy keep close watch for potential trouble from all quarters. Of particular concern are rumors that the Orieni are rebuilding their forces for another crusade. Only time will tell whether the Free Worlds will remain so in the future.

Epilogue

The Centauri forces trapped at Essekyre were devastated by the combined Medushaan and Nashani forces. The Nashani concentrated all of the fire on jump capable Centauri ships, trying to keep the force from escaping. The Medushaan forces tore away at the big ships as well, gladly trading a handful of their craft for a single Centauri. Some Centauri reinforcements did jump into the battle, once by the jumpgate, once closer to the fight. The force which transited the jumpgate found itself heavily outgunned by the blocking force of Nashani, and was destroyed in short order. The other force quickly turned away from the battle and jumped away, suffering little damage before the allies could run them down. The Splendor of the Republic managed to jump out, and limp back to Centauri space. Instead of lingering to track down the remnants of the Centauri garrison and of the assault force that made it to Essekyre-3 the combined Medushaan-Nashani forces withdrew to their bases. Orbital strikes with thermonuclear weapons insured that little of value was left for the Centauri to recover at a later time, and that no organized force remained a

threat in-system.

Lord Alarai brought his claims of treason and cowardice directly to the Emperor. He was not aware however that a complete account had been made by his officers, and by the CRN before he ever spoke a word. The Emperor listened to the Lord's ravings, then had him quietly put to death. By imperial decree the entire matter was sealed, with the holdings of House Alarai going to House Rhys for their loyal service, and that of one Commander Leno Rys, Naval Liaison Officer during Lord Alarai's campaign.

* * *

The Nashani

Physical Characteristics

The Nashani are long-limbed, gaunt creatures as a result of their homeworld's low gravity. In fact, in an earth-standard gravity, they generally must use all four limbs for locomotion and find breathing very difficult. The Nashani embrace weightless environments such as ships and stations, and show no ill effects from prolonged zero-g living. In weightless environments, the Nashani are not only more comfortable, but they are quite nimble as well. Nashani bodies are covered in short, thick hair which varies widely in color from individual to individual, though there are some colors more common in certain families. Common colors for Nashani hair are gray, brown and fawn. The Nashani have long, flat faces with small noses and large, liquid eyes. Like their limbs, Nashani digits are long and thin, and very flexible.

The Nashani take a very long time to reach sexual maturity, and pregnancies are often difficult or even dangerous. This is because the pregnant Nashani must return to a gravity well equivalent to that of Nashan for proper development of the fetus. Many Nashani are unaccustomed to "normal" gravity, which leads to a great deal of physical stress on top of a long pregnancy. Despite this, the population of the Nashani is quite stable as females typically consider the birth of a healthy child to be one of the greatest accomplishments possible. Female Nashani have a relatively short span of fertility, and typically attempt to bear as many children as they can during this time. Those who survive multiple births to return to their former careers are always treated with renewed respect.

If there is one unique characteristic of the Nashani it is the fact that all are naturally empathic to some degree. Because of this the Nashani will often seem to be emotionless as they tightly control their own feelings. They will always consider emotions, theirs and others, very carefully when making any important decisions. There are those who believe that knowing how to play on another's emotions make the Nashani excellent motivators, and manipulators.

Government

The Nashani culture is centered on family groups, from immediate family to clans of thousands of members. Each clan has a well-defined hierarchy based on both seniority and achievement. At the head of each clan sits a council of elders, which sets makes important decisions for the family in matters such as business. Clan leaders then

appoint agents who represent their family in dealings with the other clans. The central government of the Nashani people is simply an extension of this system which treats the entire race as if it were one family. Each clan, no matter its size or power, provides representatives to the Grand Council which is the basic policy making and legislative body of the Nashani Confederacy. A huge body by necessity, the true power of the government is vested with those few Nashani selected from among their peers to serve on the High Council, which handles the day to day management of the Confederacy.

Society

As noted previously, the center of the Nashani existence is the family. The family provides each Nashani with an identity, opportunity, and direction in life. A Nashani's immediate family is always the most important thing in his or her life. Above the immediate family comes the clan. These extended families are all unique unto themselves, each with their own history and traditions. Each Nashani bears a certain responsibility to respect their fellow clan members, and adhere to the edicts of its leadership. Individuals committing crimes against clan or government are simply imprisoned and their assets frozen or confiscated. In the history of the Nashani there have been times when entire clans have been dissolved by the decree of the Grand Council, with their holdings dispersed to the injured parties. In these rare cases, members of the clan determined to have no part in the criminal acts were "adopted" by another clan, though they would lose any position of authority they may have had.

Military

There are two different levels of military service among the Nashani; clan service and service with the Free Worlds Navy. Nashani clans are permitted by law and custom to retain small forces to protect their holdings and merchant shipping, though few clans can absorb the cost of maintaining a large force of modern warships. Among the rigid hierarchy of clan life shipboard discipline is strict and crews are extremely formal, even by Nashani standards.

Those Nashani that serve in the Free Worlds navy are typically from lesser clans, or are lower ranking members of more powerful families. The Confederacy's navy prides itself on being built on a solid foundation of achievement rather than family or political connections. All naval personnel are expected to maintain very high standards at all times. Those individuals that do not meet the expectations set out by their superiors are quickly moved from shipboard duties to support roles, or removed from naval service altogether. Incompetent officers among the Nashani are almost unheard of, and exceptional officers are more common than in most other navies. It is very common for Nashani officers to retire from military service to assume a position of responsibility within their clan. It is also fairly common for some to serve relatively short stints with the Confederacy, and "retire" to a position with their family's naval forces.

The Nashani have no ground forces to speak of, though they do have security personnel in most civilian and military facilities. Though lightly armed, these forces represent a real threat to any attacker seeking to board and capture a Nashani

facility or vessel. Completely comfortable in zero-g and trained to use their physical abilities as assets, these Nashani use speed and dirty tricks to repel boarders. In times of war, these troops could be used in commando-style raids.

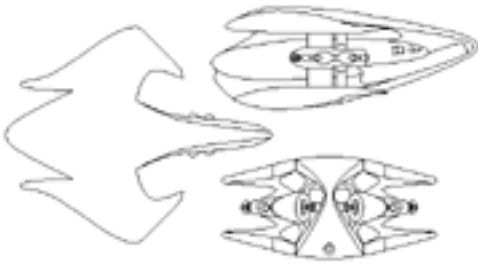
Foreign Affairs

As a founding partner in the Free Worlds Confederacy, the Nashani obviously have a great deal of contact with the Medushaan. The relationship between the Nashani and the Medushaan goes beyond close allies to working partners who consult each other on a daily basis as part of a cooperative government. All other diplomatic contacts are conducted through the Free Worlds Confederacy, though it must be noted that the Nashani have had a great deal of business contact with other species. Under the umbrella of the Free Worlds Confederacy, the Nashani have been expanding their diplomatic contacts with other races in recent years. It is interesting to note that a delegation from the Free Worlds did visit Babylon 5, though it is unclear what, if anything, might come of the foray.

Technology

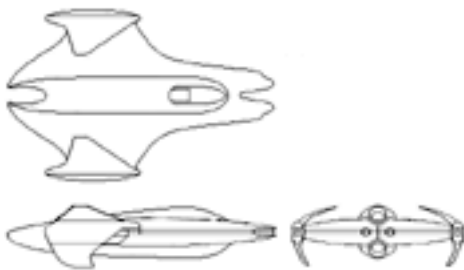
The equal of most young races in most areas, the Nashani do possess several advanced systems. Though they are not a particularly inventive race, the Nashani are extremely adept at analyzing the technology of another race, recreating it and adapting it for their needs. Early contact with such advanced races such as the Orieni and the Centauri gave the Nashani a tremendous technological base in a relatively short time, and advantages that they work hard to maintain.

Ships & Fighters



Ana-Shi-Class Command Cruiser

The largest dedicated warship operated by the Nashani, and the rarest. The Ana-Shi represents the best technology available to the Nashani. Armed with an array of attack lasers, ballistic lasers, and defense lasers, the command cruiser is also equipped with the new laser combiner, as well as gravitic shielding (also a new Nashani advancement). In addition to its fixed weapons, the command cruiser carries a squadron of interceptors for its defense. The Command cruiser is not intended to be risked in direct combat. Rather, it is to act as a fleet/task force command ship both for Nashani and mixed Nashani/Medushaan forces. The command cruiser is equipped with a jump drive.



Otani-Class Battlecruiser

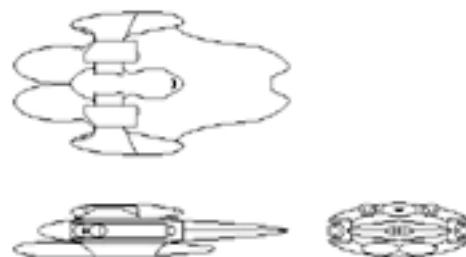
A pure fire support platform, the Otani is typically only encountered in large formations, and is not intended for solo actions. A long-range sniper, the battlecruiser mounts six attack lasers and 2 laser combiners, all of

which are in the forward arc. For close in defense, the battlecruiser also has 8 defense lasers, and they are arranged so that several may be fired through a combiner to add to the forward offensive firepower if desired.



Ten-Sha-Class Combat Cruiser

Another new(er) design currently deployed in relatively small numbers. A very aggressive ship by Nashani terms, the combat cruiser mounts attack lasers and ballistic laser launchers to pack a good offensive punch. The primary armament is supplemented by 2 gauss snipers. The Ten-Sha also features a single laser combiner in the forward arc, and 6 defense lasers. Intended to be the new "ship of the line" for the Nashani fleet, it is unlikely that the Ten-Sha will reach such widespread service soon.



Keewa-Class Escort Cruiser (Base Hull)

The most commonly *seen* Nashani warship (but not the most numerous). Typically used to protect convoys and to patrol Nashani controlled space, the escort cruiser

is a fair combatant, though not up to the standards of most galactic power's cruisers. Like most ships, the Keewa is at its best at long range with its armament of attack lasers, though it lacks the ballistic lasers and laser combiners of larger ships. The escort cruiser somewhat makes up for this as it carries 12 interceptors for fleet/convoy defense, and as a result is often deployed much like a light carrier when operating in larger formations.

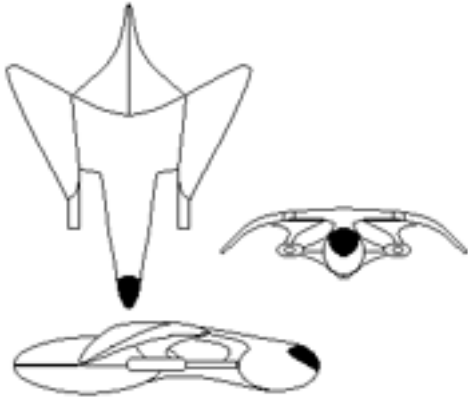
Teg-Sha-Class Scout Cruiser (Keewa Variant)

Using the same hull as the escort cruiser, it is very difficult for a foe to pick the Teg-Sha out of patrol or screening formations until they actively use ELINT capabilities. A fair if somewhat limited scout, the Teg-Sha retains the attack laser armament of the escort cruiser which do make it useful if forced to fight. To make room for the specialized ELINT gear and a jump drive, the scout cruiser does have to sacrifice the ability to carry fighters, but this is considered a reasonable trade-off. Scout cruisers are surprisingly numerous in Nashani service. The Teg-Sha is equipped with a jump drive.

Hatoga-Class Patrol Corvette

A newer vessel designed to replace the aging and limited Nehann Based primarily on the Centauri Haven patrol ship, the Hatoga is small, relatively mobile and inexpensive, while carrying a useful armament. Many believe that it is too fragile, and because it is not as agile as its Centauri inspiration, unable to effectively avoid enemy fire. As a result, the Hatoga has seen limited service in somewhat smaller

numbers, primarily with smaller clans.



Wen-Shar-Class Light Fighter

Because of their somewhat frail physiology, Nashani do not make very good fighter pilots, and as a result they do not deploy a sizable fighter force. The Nashani are smart enough to recognize though, that the fighter is the best defense against other fighters. As a result, the Nashani only operate one fighter, and it specializes in the role of Interceptor. Armed with fast firing lasers, fast and nimble, the only drawbacks to the design are its lack of durability (it's a light fighter) and the lack of durability of the pilots (resulting in poor drop out ratings).

TECHNOLOGY

Attack Laser

The main Nashani offensive weapon. Developed from examples of both Centauri and Orieni technology acquired over many years. The attack laser is similar to the commonly seen heavy laser developed by the Narn, with the exception that the Nashani preferred to go for longer range over sheer power. The lower damage potential is not seen as a shortcoming by the

Nashani as they are more comfortable with finesse over brute strength.

Defense Laser

A short range, rapid fire laser primarily intended for defense against fighters, ballistics, and matter weapons. The defense laser can fire offensively, but its low damage yield and short range (trade-offs for its high rate of fire) means that it is generally better served as a defensive system.

Advanced Defense Laser (A.D.L.)

The Nashani have long had difficulties dealing with attacking fighters, even though their ships mount many defensive lasers. Though an accurate and efficient system, the standard defensive laser lacks the punch to deal with heavier fighters, and has range sufficient for close in defense only. Many experiments had been conducted over the years to improve the abilities of the defense laser, but none bore fruit until the introduction of a few recently-discovered alien technologies. The Advanced Defense Laser was developed from the same research that would later produce the impressive laser combiner. Like the combiner, the system merges laser beams (in this case two) into a single beam with greater range and power. Unlike the more powerful combiner system, the ADL cannot be switched between merged and unmerged beams, nor can additional beams be added to the two already combined within the system. This makes the whole assembly much less bulky and complex than the combiner. On the down side, the system is very power hungry as there are essentially three functions happening simultaneously.

This has severely limited the usefulness of the weapon, and to date it is deployed onboard only one hull, the purpose-built anti-fighter No-Las escort.

Laser Combiner

A dynamic new system developed to grant much greater flexibility and effectiveness to Nashani laser weapons. This is a very new system and is seen on only a few hulls at this time. Basically, the laser combiner is a gravitic focusing device which literally pulls together 2 or more laser beams creating a single, powerful shot. The system is far from perfected, and the Nashani were still trying to work out the bugs even as the system was beginning to see widespread use. The laser combiner is effective with both attack and defense lasers. When using the Combiner with attack lasers, no more more than 3 beams may be combined.

Gauss Sniper

Developed by the Nashani from the Orieni Gauss Cannon, the Gauss Sniper has much greater range than the Orieni weapon, or even the centauri Matter Cannon. The Gauss Sniper is not as accurate as the Matter Cannon, but it gives even smaller Nashani vessels the ability to hit targets at long range.

Ballistic Laser

The ballistic laser is the Nashani answer to the ballistic weapons employed by other races. Though not as powerful or as flexible as some weapons, the ballistic laser relies on components which are tried and true, and the Nashani are comfortable using it without fear that they can be "cooked-off" in their launcher by a single (un)lucky shot. The Nashani ballistic laser is identical in function

to the weapon developed and used by other races, though the parallel development is merely coincidental.

Gravitic Shields

The Nashani have recently discovered and replicated gravitic shield technology from an unknown source. To date, the system is very rare as it is power hungry and complex. Undaunted, the Nashani are aggressively developing the technology and hope to field an improved version fleet-wide within decades.

* * *

About the Project

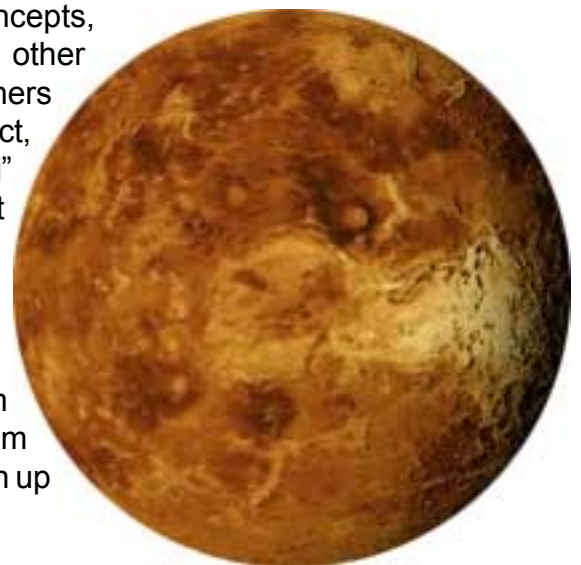
The seeds of the Free Worlds Confederation were planted in late August of this year when Sandworm 508 asked on the B5Wars.net forum if anyone knew anything about the Nashani and the Medushaans. These races appeared on the far spinward side of the Wars of the Centauri Republic map, and there was little mention of either of the races in that supplement. A few people threw out what little was known, and it soon became apparent that nobody had thought about the races as anything but names on a map. From that point on, a couple of people started to throw some ideas around, myself included. I have always been one of those people who lurks around waiting for the "next new thing" to be posted by the likes of Tyrel, Hyperion, Mr. Bax, and all those others that have enriched the B5 universe. I had come up with a few ideas here and there but had never

followed through with any them.

This time things were different, and within days my co-conspirator, Brendan "Jal" Henry, and myself had developed the basics of the race. Within a week we had a rough draft covering about 1,000 years of Nashani history. It was at this point that we decided that our original desire to develop the Nashani and the Medushaans simultaneously was a bit ambitious, so we turned our full attention towards the completion of the Nashani. Little did we know that we were in for a couple of months of fleshing out, compromising, and several re-writes. Along the way we cluttered the Internet between the US and the UK with our drafts, concepts, thoughts, arguments, and other ongoing silliness. A few others would take part in the project, especially Charles "Danesti" Haught who did some great work producing ship control sheets from our ship silhouettes and rudimentary data. We even got some words of wisdom and encouragement from Tyrel as we worked to finish up our project.



Stay tuned for more releases relating to the Free Worlds Confederation. Erik and Brendan are already busy working on their next project: the Medushaans!





A Second Attempt at Modeling one of the Federation's Fiercest Starships

By Tyrel Lohr

Trying to fit the ships and technologies of the Star Trek universe into the Babylon 5 Wars game system has always been a battle between capturing the flavor of the Star Trek universe while keeping them both fun and playable in the game. Of the ships in the conversion, the Federation Sovereign Dreadnought is one that sticks out as being less than perfect in this regard. The ship is strong—too strong—and last year's Star Trek movie has raised some questions over whether or not the Sovereign's current incarnation fits the available background.

With the Sovereign we just don't have enough good, hard facts to go off of. We have some good illustrations released by the studio to help determine the capabilities of the ship, but the Sovereign has continued to change and morph in each of its theatrical presentations. The changes made to the Sovereign for *Nemesis* are especially troublesome. It also remains a problem that we have rather limited screen evidence of the Sovereign's capabilities. With the *U.S.S. Enterprise-D*, *Deep Space Nine*, or even (god help us) *U.S.S. Voyager*, we have several years worth of evidence to help get a balanced view of just what the craft are capable of. It is important in gauging a ship's abilities to see it operating in both good and bad situations. Oftentimes the hero ship will be able to survive anything by character shields alone, but there are some instances where we actually get to see what they are

capable of when they are forced to the breaking point. Being a movie-only ship type, the Sovereign hasn't been put in any extremely bleak circumstances. At the beginning of the movie you know that everything is going to be just fine, and you never get that sense of urgency that can be created in select episodes of a television series. When you've got an entire season you are sure to find at least a few writers who are willing to rock the boat, but on a movie project it is typically about maintaining the status quo of the franchise and little more.

When I first designed the Sovereign I did not have many reference materials available. There was little to no information about it on the Internet at that time, and my own recollections were fuzzy at best. I had seen *First Contact* so I had some idea of what the Sovereign was supposed to be able to do.



Image comparison graphics from Ex Astris Scientia (www.ex-astris-scientia.org)

However, I had avoided *Insurrection* like the plague (as a result of *First Contact*), so I didn't know quite how the ship interacted with the equally mysterious Son'a craft from that film.

So the first rendition of the Sovereign Dreadnought was more a caricature of the Sovereign's strengths. Robust, heavily armed, and better than anything else in the Federation fleet, this version of the Sovereign, whose incarnation remained as the official conversion model until now, was a total monster. I designed the ship upon request from some fans on the Babylon 5 Wars Forums and had fun creating the ship control sheet for it, which was part of the problem. I had *too much* fun doing it. Fun in the "ha, ha!" sense of the word. I just created stats based on the scant notes that I could dredge up off the 'net and made it a large step better than the Galaxy and didn't really look back. In fact, it was a long time before I really sat down and played with it. I had pointed it as a monster, but it was in fact even more powerful than I had previously given it credit for.

So why the sudden decision to "re-imagine" the Sovereign Dreadnought for the Star Trek Conversion? The decision to revisit the Sovereign was mostly prompted by the SCS for the remaining late-TNG era super ships of the other major powers, namely the Klingon Negh'Var Dreadnought and the Romulan Norexan Warbird. The Negh'Var Dreadnought has existed since near the beginning of the conversion and was severely undergunned and underpowered compared to the Sovereign Dreadnought. This long felt awkward, the Klingons being the more aggressive race between the two and their ships in the conversion tended to be larger and more durable

than most Federation starships. The final nail in the coffin was the Norexan Warbird. Comparing the Norexan to the Sovereign I quickly realized that the two ships that should be at least roughly equal in firepower were nowhere close. As it stood a single Sovereign could easily take on two Norexan Warbirds and have every chance of winning. This didn't sit well with me.

With the decision to similarly re-evaluate the Intrepid class, I decided it was time to bite the bullet and go forward with taking another look at the Federation's new flagship cruiser and, in the process, build a better Sovereign.

Getting My Grounding

For the purpose of redesigning the Sovereign I need a baseline unit to reference in order to make sure that my design decisions are in fact sound. There are numerous TNG units that I could pick from, but the best bet (and safest, too) is the Galaxy Command Cruiser.

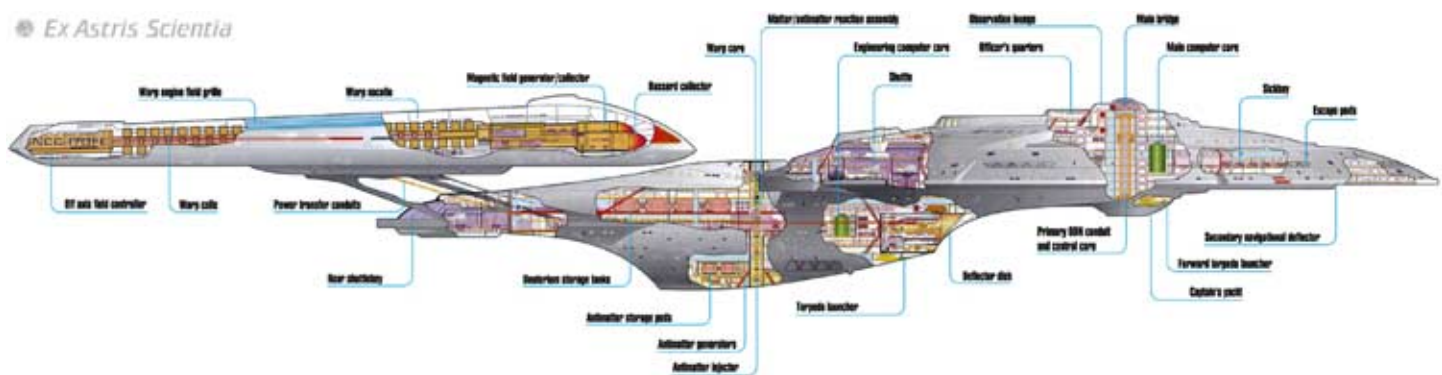
The granddaddy of them all, the Galaxy Command Cruiser was the first ship to be converted over into my Babylon 5 Wars Star Trek conversion. Because of the amount of show evidence surrounding the Galaxy it is also one of the ships whose capabilities have the most grounding within the context of the show. As measuring sticks go that makes the Galaxy the best for purposes of other TNG era craft.

Ship Size

One of the biggest gaffes to be made on the Sovereign Dreadnought SCS was the amount of superstructure it has compared to the Galaxy Command Ship. In my early research I found information that made it seem that the

Star Control

Ex Astris Scientia



Sovereign was much larger and bulkier than the Galaxy, so I gave it a slightly higher ramming factor than the Galaxy's. I have a very simple and unscientific spreadsheet that I have used since the beginning of the conversion that approximates the ramming factor of each of the Star Trek units. It uses length as the primary determinant, balanced by a durability modifier to represent a ship is more stout than others. There is no doubt that the Sovereign is longer than a Galaxy but comparatively smaller in profile. Because of the now evident size difference the two ships should have had a greater disparity in sizes, but they didn't. Now, the more advanced ships in the conversion tend to have more structure than older ships of the same size, representing advances in armor and production materials, but even this doesn't help to balance out the discrepancy.

In a size comparison, the Sovereign seems situated somewhere between the Excelsior and Galaxy as far as relative volume and size are concerned. It is therefore possible to estimate at least a ballpark number by averaging the ramming factors of the Excelsior and Galaxy. The ramming factor of a unit is one of the best ways to approximate the size of units in Babylon 5 Wars, and in this case it might at least let us know what kind of value to be expecting for the final ship. The ramming factors of the

Galaxy and Excelsior are 270 and 170 respectively. When averaged this gives us 220. Not a bad number, and puts us solidly in the Capital Ship size bracket.

Now that we have a round number, let's start looking at other Federation ships with a ramming factor close to 220. One of the more notable ship types from the show that is close to that is the Ambassador Heavy Cruiser, weighing in at a lean 200. Comparing the silhouettes of the two ships it does not seem unlikely that they may have the same amount of raw structure. The Ambassador's profile is larger, but the advancements in the Sovereign's construction would probably help to make it just as resilient in battle. So it seems that we are very close to the right number.

What about the Nebula? It has a ramming factor of 220 on the nose. The ship is quite a bit larger than the Sovereign and undoubtedly has more internal volume. But, again, remember that there is 14 years separating the two classes, and a lot happened in those 14 years, namely the Borg invasion and the battle at Wolf 359. Overall it seems a nice fit, so a ramming factor of 220 seems reasonable for the Sovereign. It will make the Federation dreadnought light and sleek, but obviously still loaded with firepower. Hmm... a Federation ship

that is undersized but overflowing with firepower. Sound familiar?

In the end we do have to stop and think outside of the conversion whether the selected size makes any logical sense. In this case I think it does. Sure, the Sovereign might not be as large as the Nebula, but I think the Federation have made enough scientific advancements after the Borg attack to make it plausible. The number of systems this ship will end up holding will also more than make up for any lack of structure much the same way that the large number of systems on the Oriani motherships allow them greater staying power in combat.

Phasers

With the Galaxy class I used the Star Trek Technical Manual as my primary reference for most of the ship's stats, including the number of phasers as that publication listed a definite number of phasers for the ship. Some of the phasers on the ship were then paired up several of the phaser mounts on the ship so that each heavy phaser represented two individual phasers. Players will find that these combined strips on the Galaxy generally occur at locations where two phaser strip segments exist on the ship model, one above and one below. The two long forward phaser strips on the saucer section of the Galaxy are represented by the four forward

heavy phasers spread between the forward, port and starboard ship sections. Finally, the two medium phasers on each side of the Galaxy represent the ventral phaser strip while the aft heavy phaser represents the four small phaser strips on the aft section of the ship.

Now that my scaling decisions in regards to our baseline craft are a little more apparent, it is time to begin taking a look at how the Sovereign's own weapon systems line up, and what kind of weapons we might end up with.

Let's begin with the Sovereign's largest set of three saucer mounted phaser strips. One of these strips is mounted on the dorsal side of the Sovereign and the second two are ventral, arcing along the leading edge of the lower saucer section. The phaser strips on the Galaxy are much bigger, though the phasers on the Sovereign are supposed to be of an improved model so they should be afforded some credit. Either way, I would say that they would best be served being converted over as less powerful over all than the Galaxy's own large phasers strips. Three heavy phasers sound about

right, each representing one of these phaser strips.

Given how they are positioned on the ship I was very tempted to give these heavy phasers very wide firing arcs, but eventually decided against it. The arcs on the existing Sovereign's heavy weapons seemed good, so I left them with 180° arcs covering the forward arcs.

Now we have the other saucer-mounted phaser strips. Of these phaser strips, four of them are fairly good sized while the other four are much shorter. In this instance, I think the two pairs of dorsal phasers, one short and one long, would be best represented on the ship as a heavy phaser each mounted on the sides of the ship with hemispheric arcs. This would allow them to fire into the normal firing arcs (more or less) while not being added 1:1 to the SCS. Often you have to combine weapon mounts just to keep the SCS sane and in line with the rest of the ships for a race. The AOG Warlock is a perfect example of having to do this.

The two smaller ventral phaser strips become medium phasers, each firing in hemispheric arcs to port and starboard. Individually these weapons might not be able to warrant that kind of extra firepower to the Sovereign, but we do have another ventral phaser strip on the stardrive section that will be hard to place. Is it part of the forward, side, or aft structure blocks? Or is it a primary mount? It is better to just group this strip with several of the others, allowing us to make those two ventral phasers into full-fledged medium phaser mounts.

The two dorsal phaser strips nearest the bridge become side mounted but aft firing weapons, mainly because we don't have any other phasers assigned to the region and we know that the ship should be able to fire into these arcs. The phasers could be grouped together as a single medium phaser or instead be applied as two medium phasers. With the ventral phaser strip on the stardrive section also able to fire to the rear of the ship, I think I will go with the two medium phasers for the sake of simplicity



and redundancy. Additional phasers will be added to the *Nemesis* version of the Sovereign, but that will be discussed later.

Why have these two medium phasers fire in such a comparatively narrow arc of fire? There are several reasons for this. Firstly, their positioning on the hull seems to limit their inherent firing arc. Secondly, a smaller arc on these weapons will help to mitigate their impact on the ship's overall performance so that we don't end up with another monster. Lastly, I have found some notes during my research that a weapon blindspot existed on the aft section of the Sovereign before the *Nemesis* upgrades corrected it. Given the 2D nature of *Babylon 5 Wars* this can best be integrated into the design by making it harder for the ship to concentrate fire into the rear firing arcs.

This leaves our new Sovereign with the following beam armament: five heavy phasers and four medium phasers. How does this compare to the good ol' Galaxy? Well, the Galaxy has five heavy phasers and two medium phasers. The Galaxy Heavy Command Ship variant deployed during the Dominion War has this same weapon mix, which makes quite a bit of sense. If you don't have enough Sovereign Dreadnoughts to help shore up the fleet's heavy combat ship quota, wouldn't you upgrade the venerable Galaxy to the same approximate weapon mix in the beam category?

And what about the official tech stats for the Sovereign? They say the Sovereign has twelve Type-XII Phasers. If we follow the same "two phasers per heavy" rule, we come up with our Sovereign having fourteen phasers. A little above the official amount, and we could always drop two of our medium phasers to

reduce the number of phasers a bit, but I think the additional phaser mounts on the ship help to balance out that the phasers are both stronger and more plentiful than before. It is also worth noting that the more mounts on the ship the harder it is to totally knock them out, something that the Sovereign does deserve.

The old Sovereign had ten heavy phasers and four medium phasers. Whoa. What a difference a day (or several hundred) makes, eh? The new beam loadout on the Sovereign is much more sane and better compares to existing Federation starships.

Photon Torpedoes

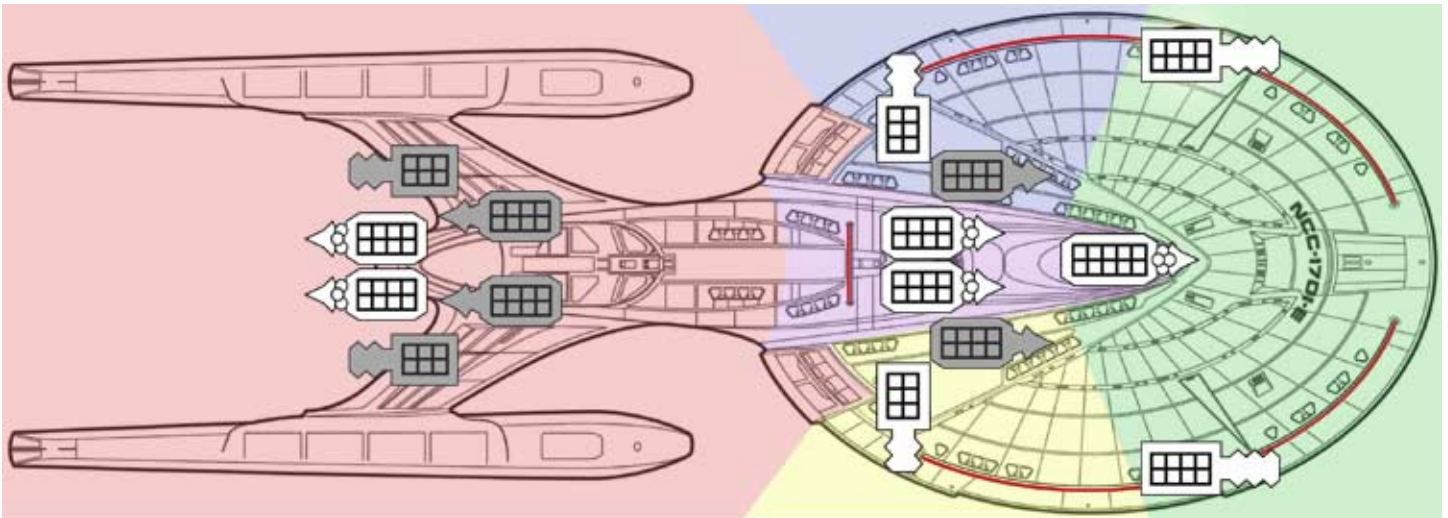
The photon torpedo disposition of the Sovereign is a point of much heated debate despite the screen evidence that we do have for the ship. Many maintain that the ship is equipped solely with the new quantum torpedoes, yet in *Nemesis* Worf clearly states that they have "run out of photon torpedoes." If this was early in the deployment of quantum torpedoes I would say it was an honest mistake, but the Federation was recently at war and during the period of aggressions quantum torpedoes were readily available. In the first few engagements the old habit of calling quantum 'photons' would have persisted, but would have been curbed in order to report correctly to the command staff the type of munitions being used for future reference in determining their strategy. Additionally, some studio design illustrations also have many of the torpedo tubes specifically called out as photon torpedoes.

Because of this evidence I am leaving the Sovereign Dreadnought with a primarily photon

torpedo armament. Remember that the player still has the option of using the quantum torpedo upgrade on the ship's launchers to purchase the more advanced munitions type.

Now that we have got that out of the way it is time to start looking at the number and placement of the Sovereign's torpedo tubes. Some sites credit the Sovereign as having "the most powerful photon torpedo armament in Starfleet." Personally I feel this is more a side effect of the 'whiz-bang, lots of guns' mentality that often crops up in sci-fi where the biggest ship is made so overwhelmingly armed in comparison to the other pre-existing ships that it boggles the mind. The Sovereign is to *Star Trek* what Tim Earl's Warlock was to *Babylon 5*. In either case the stats for the ship are over the top in some instances, and I believe that this is one of them.

This situation of ever escalating ship abilities doesn't help in the arena of torpedoes. The current incarnation of the ballistics rules in *Babylon 5 Wars* have been the topic of much debate since they were released along with the rest of Second Edition. Their notorious 'first-strike' ability allows them to knock out weapons—or sometimes even entire ships—before they can fire. This is usually not a problem with settings where ballistics use is comparably mild. *Star Trek* is not such a beast. The widespread use of torpedoes, particularly photon torpedoes, can have an unbalancing effect on the game. The *Star Trek Conversion* implemented range penalties on most if not all of its ballistic weapons, with the range penalty equal to -1 to-hit per the maximum range of the weapon divided by ten (rounding all fractions up). In other words, a ballistic weapon with a maximum range at launch of 50 hexes (the photon



torpedo) would have a range penalty of -1 per $(50/10) = 5$ hexes. This makes long range ballistics attacks less likely to hit and, in the case of antimatter-based photon torpedoes, less damaging when they do hit.

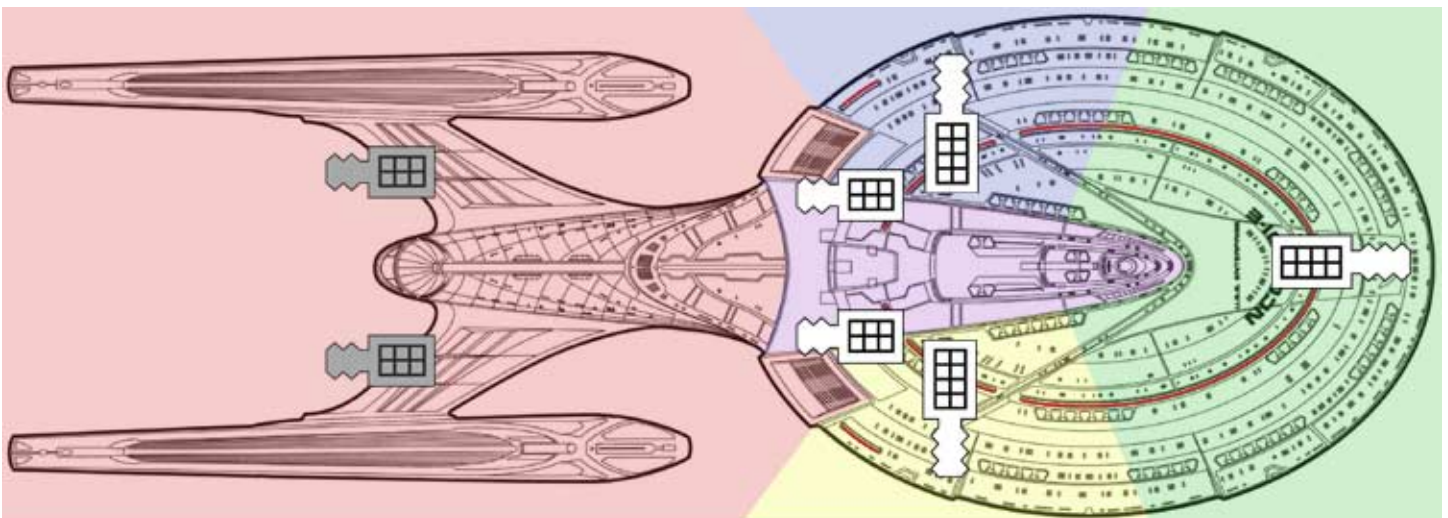
Because of their propensity for abuse, the ballistics in my Star Trek ships have to be watched very carefully. There have always been several checks and balances at work with the implementation of the different torpedo weapons, but it still is an issue when you just have so many ballistics on the board. Practically every ship carries a torpedo of some type, and in the case of the Federation almost every ship has at least two of them in any given arc. So balancing the Sovereign for game play while still

matching the onscreen evidence can be a precarious tightrope to walk.

The largest of the Sovereign's torpedo tubes is the forward launch bay located just above the navigational deflector. This torpedo launcher is faster than other comparable launchers, firing even faster than the tubes on the Galaxy. In the past I just used the same two advanced torpedo launchers to mimic this ability. However, I have come to consider that perhaps it is time for the Federation to begin demonstrating a new form of torpedo system that would better match this "quantum torpedo turret" more readily.

After much deliberation I came up with a heavy advanced

quantum torpedo launcher system. This up-rated version of the advanced quantum torpedo can hold four quantum torpedoes, one better than the advanced torpedo system, with a rate of fire twice as fast as a standard photon or quantum torpedo launcher. After some additional research it also seems that this photon launcher on the Sovereign seemed to be the only one solely stocked with quantum torpedoes, so I decided to arm it solely with quantum torpedoes at no additional cost. The unimaginatively named heavy advanced quantum torpedo is a much better weapon than existing Federation torpedo weapons, but much larger and harder to incorporate into smaller hulls. Note that the addition of an additional



torpedo slot in the launcher is a mixed blessing. Yes, you will be able to fire four torpedoes in a single salvo as compared to the normal three-torpedo burst, but the normal torpedo firing penalties apply. So those four torpedoes fired from the heavy advanced quantum torpedo will all suffer a -4 to-hit penalty just for being fired in that fashion.

Why give the Sovereign such a big advantage? My sources suggest it for one thing, and it does make sense given the evidence and general direction the Federation has been going. It is also one big weapon that can get knocked off like any other weapon. The heavy advanced quantum torpedo is both more vulnerable to damage and suffers from greater firing penalties, yet benefits from great flexibility due to the higher rate of fire and one extra torpedo.

In addition to the main quantum torpedo tube, the ship has four additional torpedo tubes, two facing forward and two facing aft. These tubes are burst types like those found on other modern Federation starships. This creates a rather massive quandary for me to overcome. Personally, I think the Sovereign ship would be much more reasonable with these torpedo tubes being replaced by standard photon torpedoes, the type that does not hold multiple torpedo shots. This would limit the insane firepower of the ship, and sometimes you have to forcibly reign in the power gamers of the world so that they simply can't exploit something. Unfortunately, this goes against the flavor of the ship and the demonstrable evidence on the Sovereign's torpedo capabilities. So, against my better judgment, I am placing a total of four advanced photon torpedo launchers on the ship in the facings stated above.

The downside to this torpedo mix? It means that a Sovereign Dreadnought will be able to fire a first turn forward volley of ten photon/quantum torpedoes, four at a -4 to-hit penalty and another six at a -3 to-hit penalty. Given the sensors of the Sovereign this means that it can likely obliterate many targets in a single opening shot. This is still over the top, but the one consolation is that taking out the single heavy advanced quantum torpedo will cause a major disruption in the Sovereign's forward torpedo firepower. I also limited the arc of the large tube so that it will be harder to bring them all into play, helping to retain some semblance of sanity.

Ablative Armor

The way that I handle ablative armor in the conversion has been a major sticking point for quite some time. Originally I simply gave ships equipped with ablative armor a greater amount of structure and higher armor values. With the release of the Defiant, however, there were many players that simply did not like this solution. Instead, they opted for a version that used Gaim bulkheads to simulate the effects of ablative armor. The bulkhead-equipped version of the Defiant became the de facto version of that ship, but other vessels that utilized ablative armor continued to use my own standard. This is one of the leading causes of the Sovereign being as nasty as it is.

Over the last year, there have been more than a few individuals that have asked why the Sovereign and its stable mates don't have ablative armor bulkheads. So, at this point, I think it is safe to assume that is what people prefer and that it would be the best way to go.

So just how much ablative armor should be installed on the Sovereign? The Defiant Heavy Escort has six 3-point ablative armor segments, so this should be used as a starting point. If we assume that the amount of ablative armor on a ship is tied to the size of the ship (or, in other words, its ramming factor), then the Defiant has an ablative armor ratio of $(6 * 3) / 60 = .3$ ablative armor boxes per ramming factor. If we multiply this value against the 220 ramming factor of our new Sovereign we end up with 66 boxes of ablative bulkheads spread over the ship's five sections, or about 13 boxes of ablative armor per section. If we further assume that they will be spread in equal sized ablative segments, then each section would have somewhere in the neighborhood of four bulkheads of four boxes each. This seems reasonable enough, and would further help represent the sheer resilience of the Sovereign when compared to other older starships.

Shields

I left the shield systems on the Sovereign alone as I felt that aspect of the ship was not broken in any way. I really like the concept of the Sovereign as the first Federation ship with fully reinforced and redundant shielding, making it one step above the rest of the ships in Starfleet. The strength of all of the projections has always seemed appropriate, too, so it will be staying.

Hangar

After taking another look at the ship I noticed that there really are two different hangars on the Sovereign. The primary hangar remains where it was on the Galaxy class, seated up on the rear end of the saucer section, but another aft

hangar is located in the aft section of the ship. Before I just lumped all of these together, but I have separated them with this version of the ship. The overlooked after hangar is now located on the aft section of the ship.

Warp Engines

The warp engines remain largely the same on the new Sovereign, though I have taken a cue from the Sovereign and Akira and made the warp engines part of both the aft and appropriate side sections. The warp engines just seem to poke out into the side profile too much to not get hit. The fact the aft section isn't particularly stout also means that making the warp engines part of multiple sections will increase their survivability, something of great importance to the survival of a Sovereign in combat.

Nemesis Weapons Upgrades

The version of the Sovereign seen in Nemesis has many modifications made to it compared to the Sovereign we saw in *First Contact* and *Insurrection*. Aesthetically, the hull structure near the ship's impulse engines has been modified to make the saucer transition more smoothly to the engineering hull and the warp engines and their pylons have been slightly tweaked. Combat-wise, the new Sovereign also received a comprehensive weapons refit, making the ship that much deadlier. Four small phaser emitters and four new photon torpedoes were added to the ship.

The new aft phaser strips cover the weapon blindspot existing in the previous Sovereign, an important and valid improvement over the existing design. I have

integrated these as two additional medium phasers, both mounted on the aft hull and firing into rear hemispheric arcs.

The four new torpedoes, two forward and two aft, provide the Sovereign with even greater torpedo firepower. These were added as standard photon torpedoes so as to mitigate the effect of their addition as much as possible. With these new torpedoes added to the Sovereign it becomes an even more nightmarish ballistics platform, but unfortunately that is what the ship stats say. Remember that the Sovereign's structure blocks are quite a bit leaner now, so it should be much easier to de-fang the Sovereign and remove those nasty torpedo launchers in one fell swoop.

The Nemesis weapon upgrades are represented on the SCS as a standard class refit upgrade, raising the cost of the ship to its original point cost.

Finishing Touches

While putting the finishing touches on the Sovereign I made a few changes to the stats as discussed above. I upped the ramming factor slightly to represent the increased durability of the design, in large part due to the higher armor values and amount of ablative armor on the ship.

Since the ship became smaller I also decided to give the Sovereign a small maneuverability break, reducing its turn cost to 1 x Speed from 4/3 Speed. The smaller ship should still be able to turn decently, and the new turn speed still allows it to turn twice at speed 6. The odd thruster arrangement was kept the same, too. The Sovereign, like the EA Nova, has a higher combined thrust rating on the main thrusters than free thrust. This is

meant to encourage Federation players to shutdown their weapons (torpedoes, anyone?) in order to purchase some additional thrust in order to pull off some more amazing feats of maneuverability.

Conclusion

Is the new Sovereign any better than the old one? In some ways it is much better. It fits the canon evidence better and seems a more reasonable approximation of the Sovereign's abilities. The downside is that the new version is more ballistic heavy than the last, something that has to be taken into consideration.

The real answer to that question lies with the fans.

* * *

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A Call to Arms: Designing Your Race's Ships and Fleet Structure

By Tyrel Lohr

Where is a good place to start when designing your new race's fleet structure and ships? That is a very difficult question, as the past week has shown. That is how long I have spent typing away at pages of notes for this article. And it is all a jumble, so much so that I have started over from scratch.

What does this tell you? It should say that race design is an extremely complicated process that is hard to boil down into a sequential list. There are a lot of things that you should do, and a lot of things you could do. It all comes down to just how much detail you want to go into with your new race or universe.

Putting Things in Perspective

Let's first put everything into perspective and get our grounding. This means deciding on a time and place to concentrate on for the purposes of our fleet development. I have found it most effective in the past to look at my race's history and decide which conflict had the most lasting impact on their military or political status. For the Circasians it was the Chouka War, for the Courata the Ingalli War. Most races will have one conflict of some import that changed their *modus operandi* and helped to guide their future military development. It is that

conflict that we need to find and analyze.

Now, this conflict doesn't need to have involved open hostilities. Cold wars can have just as much or more impact on our race's military development as any other. Long-term perceived threat development can lead to all sorts of interesting and possibly even unexpected advancements in ships and technologies.

Think about the conflicts and reread your race's historical background (you did write up their back history, right?) and pick one out. The biggest war the race fought isn't necessarily the most influential. Therefore don't pick that 'war to end all wars' in which your race participated unless it really did serve as a nexus.

Won't you be my Neighbor?

Once we have selected the conflict it is time to examine our race's neighbors. This will determine just who all there is that the race could be in conflict with or would be worrying about during the war. It is very important to know what the other races are up to during the war.

The best way to handle this is to think about and record what each of your race's neighbors was up during the span of the conflict. The most important part of this list is to write down the reasons why the race did not become involved in the conflict. Most of your neighbors should have some reason for not having gotten involved in the conflict. Some may be fervently neutral and opposed to the war, some may be too far from the war front to intervene

on either side, or the race may simply not have the capabilities to do something even if they wanted to. There is also the potential that one of the neighbors did try to take advantage of the situation by attacking your race, but were repelled by your forces.

When looking at any new race I tend to determine their *conflict races*. A conflict race is one that your race has viewed as an opponent or threat during their development. These races can have an important influence on the development of fleets and technologies. This is because our races will tend to attempt to mitigate or eliminate any advantages that their particular conflict races have while exploiting their disadvantages.

When detailing the other races involved in the conflict, either those that were directly opposed to your race or the various other surrounding neutral nations, it is a good idea to run through the race design in order to establish some cursory background materials for them. You never want to create two-dimensional races because they will end up detracting from everything else that you have created. Giving them at least some realistic motivations and background material will act to inject some personality, making the race more interesting and memorable. You'll be happier in the long run, trust me.

Now, when doing background material for these surrounding powers, you don't have to go to the same lengths as you did with your own race. Your race's primary opponent should receive at least as much fleshing out as they did, but for the others the detail level

can be far less precise. As a rule of thumb, every race that is developed off of another should have half the level of detail put into them during the development stage. So we will put a lot of effort into our race and its opponent, half that amount of detail into each of their other historical enemies, and a quarter of the effort into the enemies of these other races.

You should have realized at this point that the process of creating new races to set up as your race's opponent can lead to a domino effect in the race creation department. In order to get a truly three-dimensional enemy for your race to fight you will have to go through all of the same steps, including defining *their* conflict races as a part of the creation of their historical background. From each of those conflict races you can then go in-depth and track their history and the powers that they fought wars with. At some point you just have to say enough is enough and quit generating new races.

So what elements are important to incorporate into the racial summaries for these neighboring powers? I like to incorporate a short timeline of their development, from the beginning of their interstellar age up to the time of our selected conflict. One of the most important questions to ask is just how they managed to achieve interstellar technologies. In some universes the development of FTL drives is easy enough for any race to develop. In others, Babylon 5 being one of them, FTL capabilities are something that is beyond the understanding of younger races and requires that the younger race acquire it from some alien source, either from the aliens themselves or their artifacts. If the FTL technology was procured from another alien

power it would indicate that at least an amiable relationship existed between the two races.

I also like to record some basic notes on the types of weapons that they have. This will be very important when we (finally) start putting together the technological development charts for our race. Weapons technologies will tend to filter down and become widely available within neighboring empires, so if Race X has a Light Particle Cannon it can be assumed that there might have been opportunities for Race Y to also field the weapon.

The Conflict Itself

Now that we have met your neighbors (and, yes, one of them spilled grape juice on your Imperial carpets!) it is time to draw up a more detailed timeline of the war that we are going to be developing your race's fleet structure for. Look at the background history and start breaking down the course of the war. The best way to do this may be to go with weekly or monthly progress notes showing the major engagements, when systems were lost, and what backdoor politicking was happening along the way. This will make it easier to plan out any kind of special tech advancements or ship designs that would have appeared during the course of the war.

War is one of the greatest stimuli for military development. This is especially true in Babylon 5 Wars where the level of detail owes itself to demonstrating the large leaps in technology compared to the smaller ones. There isn't much room for showing slightly better computer systems that provide marginal improvements in command and control abilities. It is the major changes and technological

advancements that are easiest to represent in the game. During the war your race will be learning from the engagements with the enemy and developing and adopting new systems to counter your enemy's advantages.

Not all advancements are necessarily perfect, however. Too often players decide that all of the new systems developed by their race have to be better than their existing hardware. To a point this is true, but there is a lot of room for introducing "failed weapons" into your background. Not every new technology is going to work. Some will have innate problems that will limit their effectiveness. Normally these weapons would never see production status, but the desperation of war can sometimes force inadequate hardware onto the frontlines. They may be tweaked and fixed at some point, but for awhile they are unreliable. These types of systems can be easily represented by either creating new interim weapon systems (stepping-stones from the old version to a newer, more stable version) or by applying Unreliable Ship rules to the weapons, such as Weapon Misfirings.

So now that we have the outline of our conflict it is time to get down and dirty and look into designing our ships and fleets.

The Fleet Structure

The first thing to do is determine what kinds of ship classes were operating at the beginning of the conflict. It is at this point that we determine just what types of ships our race operates. Some races will be predisposed to operating certain types of units and not others. Some races have battleships and dreadnoughts while others instead

focus on building heavier heavy cruisers. Some races have a preponderance of small frigates and destroyers while others instead rely on larger light and medium cruiser designs to fill this niche. Some races, too, will operate few, if any, fighters. If a race operates lots of fighters they will probably have large carrier designs. If they field fewer fighters they may have no carriers whatsoever.

With my Escalation Wars races I tend to compile a short list of 10-12 prominent ship designs available at a certain era. Looking back at my Circasian notes, I separated their ship development into several different sections, each covering one of their major time periods, and compiled a list of the designs I thought they needed. The Chouka War period included only the core designs that I knew that they were operating. This included the Kolanis Cruiser, Tormin Light Cruiser, and Moshesta Frigate. The core units are really the designs that we are most interested in. We can always add specialist hulls later on as needed to round out our forces..

So what type of fleet units will your race use? I tend to like to play around with the fleet structures of my races. I especially love trying to buck the norm and find new, different fleet structures that fit my race's personalities. The Bintari Federation for one is a race that uses absolutely no fighter units in their fleet. The Bintari never really considered fighters until they ran into the K'Thonn. What was their response to seeing the effectiveness of K'Thonn heavy fighters on their ships? The Bintari didn't all of a sudden jump on the fighter bandwagon but instead just improved their anti-fighter defense systems. The Bintari were also one of my races that used a

preponderance of heavy combat vessels as the designs were relatively cheap to produce compared to larger capital ships.

When putting your fleet together also consider logistics. The larger your race's empire the harder it will be to maintain a strong supply chain. This means that ballistic-heavy races will experience more logistics-related issues as their empire gets larger. This can have ramifications in their fleet structure. Their fleets might have a large number of logistics ships and military freighters, or else might actually integrate these efforts into their fleet. Imagine a missile-heavy race like the Kor-Lyan that actually integrated their logistics functions into their mainline warships? This race would be trading overall combat abilities for greater strategic performance. Interesting possibility, no?

Let's take a more detailed look at each of the ship classes that we might find in our order of battle:

Battleship/Dreadnought: The terms battleship and dreadnought are often used interchangeably, but that really isn't the case. Using the handy website HyperDictionary.com, a battleship is defined as a "large and heavily armoured warship" while a dreadnought is defined as "battleship that has big guns all of the same caliber." You will notice that most of the ships in the game that are called dreadnoughts, mine included, are technically not dreadnoughts. Depending on how closely you want to stick to the actual definitions you may wish to stray away from the use of the dreadnought classification. But the word 'dreadnought' is just so cool we have to use it, right?

When deciding if your race uses any battleship hulls you should first look at how long they have been

in space and just how much economic power they have. A weak or poor nation will likely not have a good battleship, if they have a battleship at all. Battleships are usually restricted to more powerful nations that have the resources to spend on large warships that are costly to build and equally expensive to maintain. Also remember that one race's battleship is another's heavy cruiser.

The word of caution I have is to avoid giving your race a battleship just because you like big honkin' ships with big honkin' space guns. Some races just don't warrant a battleship.

Pocket Battleship: As above, this term refers to the lower-tonnage battleships built from 1925 to 1930 to conform to treaty limitations on ship sizes. Within the context of Babylon 5 Wars a pocket battleship is a ship between a heavy cruiser and a battleship with properties of both. It really isn't a term that should be bandied about indiscriminately, though, and there should be a good reason for it being used.

Battlecruiser: A ship with the speed of a cruiser and the weapons of a battleship. Wet-navy battlecruisers made sacrifices in armor to reduce their mass, allowing them to achieve their speed advantage. In Babylon 5 Wars there isn't much of an analog to this kind of trade off within the existing ships. Several races operate battlecruisers, but have they little to do with the traditional nomenclature.

The deployment of battlecruisers falls into the same category as battleships. The more affluent nations may operate such cruisers, but few of the less powerful nations would. Now, there is the possibility that some nations might

use battlecruiser hulls as their own “pocket battleship” design, seeing it as a cheap alternative to larger battlewagons.

Strike Cruiser: This ambiguous ship designation is used in Babylon 5 Wars and elsewhere but does not have a strict definition. Most strike cruisers in Babylon 5 Wars are heavy cruisers designed for more solitary missions aimed deep into enemy space. These ships often have organic fighter support and the firepower of a traditional heavy cruiser.

I personally try to avoid this designation when at all possible, just because of its nebulous nature, that and I think that many people see the term as a means to create a pseudo-battleship on a cruiser hull.

Heavy Cruiser: A heavy cruiser is typically the mainline warship of most powers, acting as the workhorses of the fleet. Heavy cruisers are larger than smaller cruisers and destroyers but smaller than battleships. Most races will probably field some sort of heavy cruiser hull if they wield any real military power at all.

Medium Cruiser: A designation not used very often in Babylon 5 Wars, a medium cruiser is more commonly referred to simply as a ‘cruiser.’ These ships are cheaper than heavy cruisers and are comparatively lighter and less well armed. They generally make up for these disadvantages with improved speed and/or maneuverability.

Light Cruiser: The light cruiser is cheaper than other cruiser types, a fact that makes the class extremely common in the fleets of lesser nations. The low operating and construction costs allow these

less powerful nations to field a suitable number of cruiser hulls for power projection purposes. Many new and developing races rely on light cruisers just because of their relatively inexpensive nature compared to larger cruiser hulls.

Destroyer: HyperDictionary defines a destroyer as “a small fast lightly armored but heavily armed warship.” The use of the term in Babylon 5 Wars is much broader than this. Destroyer units are typically heavy combat vessels ranging in size from ships barely large enough to be heavy combat vessels all the way up to ships as large as some navy’s light cruisers.

The list of different flavors of destroyers that exist in Babylon 5 Wars is quite extensive. Battle destroyers, war destroyers, heavy destroyers, fast destroyers, and many more can be found floating about in the different fleets. So how should you use the term? I say use the term however you see fit. If you are striving for correctness stick with a smaller ship with decent armament. But remember that in the Babylon 5 universe we have the Omega Destroyer, so you could use it for anything and still have a scapegoat!

Frigate: In Babylon 5 Wars a frigate is a warship smaller than a destroyer whose classification usually falls into the medium ship category. Historically, though, a frigate has been classed as a warship larger than a destroyer and smaller than a cruiser. So the use of the term frigate can cover about anything.

The frigates in the game make up the smaller warships in the race’s navies. These ships are often used for escort duties, providing valuable support to the larger, more

expensive cruisers and battleships. Most races will have some type of frigate in their fleets, though some may forego frigates in favor of destroyer designs.

Corvette: Corvettes are smaller than destroyers and are meant as escort ships within the fleet. They are highly maneuverable, a necessity for dealing with other enemy small ships, including fighters. Corvettes can fall into several sizes, though I would say medium ships and light combat vessels are the most common.

What about the Olympus Corvette? The Olympus is really more of a destroyer unit, so just chalk it up to the same wacky EA naming system that gave us the already mentioned Omega Destroyer.

Gunboat: Now this ship type is one that isn’t represented much, and when it does it usually isn’t within the correct context. A gunboat is a small craft meant primarily for short-range patrol duties, such as those carried out by local defense agencies. The coast guard ships of space, gunboats are probably best represented as cheap light combat vessels, or potentially even by super-heavy fighters.

Some of the ships that are called gunboats get the name simply because they are quite literally boats with guns. The White Star is often called a gunboat, though it is more of a destroyer design.

Fighters: Here the game mechanics take over. So far in the game we have ultralight, light, medium, heavy, and super-heavy fighter designs. It is up to you to decide which types of fighters, if any, are available to your race.

Within the game there are several distinct fighter doctrines in play. The EA favor their heavy fighter designs. The Centauri make heavy use of interceptors, based on their experience with the Orieni. The Drazi use fewer fighters, with a mix of interceptor light fighters and gigantic super-heavy fighters for anti-ship duty. The Shofixti...er... Cascor use hoards of light fighters due to their throwaway population.

So there are a lot of different doctrines to refer back to, but which works for your race? That is really up to you. What kind of fighter use does your race's personality seem to lend itself to? What did you envision their fleet structure looking like? Some races may not even need fighters, or make sparing use of them. For others it might be their primary weapon.

Carriers: As part of our fighter discussion you can think about the carrier usage of your race's navy. A carrier is a unit that carries small craft, such as fighters. Most of the carriers in the game are either dedicated or strike carriers, bringing four or more flights of fighters into battle. Some races, notably the Narns, assume a casual carrier attitude towards fighter deployment, opting for integrated, organic fighter support throughout their fleet.

The types and models of fighters your race uses will determine what types of carriers make sense as part of their naval forces. I find the concept of large fleet carriers appealing and have went out of my way to experiment with the practicality of using such designs in Babylon 5 Wars. One of my Escalation Wars races, the Loturians, will be fielding a purely carrier fleet that relies entirely on their fighters for their offensive punch.

Deciding upon what types of ships your race will have available going into the war is something that you will undoubtedly spend a lot of time considering. There have been several ship designs that I have either dropped or relocated to new time periods after considering their ramifications on a conflict.

If you are struggling to decide just what your race should have, I recommend that you take an approach similar to how AOG dealt with the League races. Pretend that you only have six unit slots in your imaginary supplement to fill with ships from your race. What six key units are the most important to your fleet? What designs form the center of their military and would be the ones players would rely on the most? This approach can be very effective for prioritizing ships and finding the gems of your fleet.

Designing Your Ships

Now that we have your fleet structure decided on it is time to start taking a look at designing your actual units. Unfortunately there isn't much specific help that I can give you, other than pointing out a few valuable strategies you can use while assembling your fleet.

Select a point of reference. It is important to find existing Babylon 5 ships and races that share similar design traits to your own new race. The EA, Narn, Centauri, and lesser League races are probably the best to refer to in determining what is and isn't appropriate. High-structure races, those races that field incredibly durable ships, should pay extra attention to the ships of the EA, Narn, and Hyach. Low-structure races should instead take a look at the characteristics of ships fielded by the Centauri, Abbai, and Brakiri. The

same goes for other ship criteria. Usually there will be one or two races that are quite similar to your own in ship design methodology, so you should continually refer back to this race's ship when building your own to make sure they make sense.

As far as general units to refer to, there are several that I use as general baselines. For cruisers I like to refer back to the Omega, Hyperion, G'Quan, T'Loth, Primus, Avioki, and Atrimis; destroyers it is the Artemis, Olympus and Demos/Vorchan; and frigates it is the Tethys, Haven, and Sho'kos.

Don't be afraid to buck convention. A lot of the ships for the game tend to go along certain, predictable paths. The "six heavy weapons on battleships" convention common on AOG ships is one of these. Don't be afraid to mix and match different design philosophies and ship traits as appropriate to your race. This is your race, design them any way you think is interesting. The more different a race's ships are on the surface without the addition of funky new rules the better the chance that someone will find them interesting.

Don't overdo the weapons. It is easy to get carried away when you are deciding how many weapons your ship has mounted on its hull. A lot of people go nuts by adding too many weapons to too small a ship. It is a good practice to go back and compare the number and size of the weapon mounts on your ships to the Babylon 5 ship that you think is its closest relation. If your ship has twice the number of weapons of the other ship you know you might need to re-evaluate your ship design.

Check your thrusters. Make sure that your ship can turn and accelerate/decelerate as you intended. It is one of the more

common mistakes that can be made, and you will often find yourself sitting down to play a battle and realizing that the ship can't do what you intended it to when you were designing it.

No primary structure in the primary hits of medium ships! Yes, check your hit charts to make sure that you didn't put in or leave out a system that is on the ship, and that all of your to-hit numbers are listed (only once) on the hit charts. I have done this countless times, and it is one of the most common problems. It is always good to go through and double check the charts after you get the ship done. Count through the numbers and make sure you have all of them covered.

Primary mounted weapons: be careful. Do be careful when you are putting weapons in the primary sections of ships. If it makes sense due to the physical location of the weapons on your ship then go for it. The Hyperion Heavy Cruiser is one ship that I have no problem with in regards to primary-mounted weaponry. But I have seen variants of the Hyperion with Heavy Lasers in the primaries. This is sick and wrong. Light weapons, yes, perhaps even the occasional medium, but please never commit the heinous crime of putting a heavy weapon in the primaries!

Don't be afraid to incorporate flaws. One of the problems with gamers is that they inevitable end up min/maxing to a certain degree when it comes to new ship designs. Flaws or limitations on your ship hulls give them flavor and are more realistic than a ship that has no disadvantages whatsoever. Now I don't mean make your ships crippled along the lines of the Hyach anti-fighter problem, but having small nagging things that were

forced upon the engineers due to expediency or cost can add an extra flair to an otherwise unmemorable design.

Afterward

I could go on forever with this, so I am going to end my commentary here. There is so much that you could do when designing a new race's fleet. I will leave the rest up to your best judgement.

Before closing, I wish to take note on a few issues that I think might be of interest while you are putting together your fleets:

Ramming Factor

The ramming factor of a unit is the sum of its total structure boxes and armor. This is easy to figure on fighters, but can take some time to count out on the larger ships. It is important to note that the ramming factor of all units except for fighters/shuttles are, with few exceptions, always rounded to the nearest ten. The only exception to this rule that I can think of at the moment is some smaller OSAT designs that have very little structure.

With ships and bases, the ramming factor is commonly rounded either up or down according to how structurally sound the ship is. If the ship has a less rigid hull you should round down, while if it is stronger than normal it should be rounded up. Some ships have a ramming factor that is 10-20 above or below the "actual" level. This is done to indicate that the ship is more/less massive than the statistics would indicate.

When deciding if you want to add or subtract from the unit's ramming factor the best thing to think about is how much the ship will crumple in a ram. If you think the ship will shatter apart easily, then

going with a lower ramming factor would be a smart thing to do. If the hardy ship will hold together better you are safe adding a little bit more.

Ship Availability

Repeat after me: "There is no such thing as Limited Deployment or Restricted Availability." The correct terms for the ship availability levels are Unlimited Deployment, Limited Availability, and Restricted Deployment. Why didn't AOG keep everything standardized instead of flip-flopping on the terms? I don't know.

There are a lot of AOG ships that have errors on what restrictions go along with the two fleet availability limitations, leading to some players just making up willy-nilly values in the parenthesis. For the record, Limited Availability is ALWAYS 33% and Restricted Deployment is ALWAYS 10%. Okay? And all ships based off a ship that has one of these two deployment limitations inherit it. So if you have an Uncommon variant of a Limited Availability ship it counts for both the variant limitation and the 33% fleet point level limitation.

Design Recommendations

Just don't have any good ideas for unique races, weapons, and the like? There are a lot of good resources out there that you can and should look into that can provide with some interesting ideas for new twists on the existing game system.

One of the first systems that I would recommend people take a look is Starfire. I don't know that much about the newest version of Starfire (Galactic Starfire), but the old 3rd Edition Revised is an excellent breeding ground for system development. I found the novels themselves to be a fairly good read, and the supplements provided a

wealth of possibilities for new weapons and systems.

For those interested in getting a little of extra information on Starfire and ideas for new races should check out Steve Walmsey's Rigellian Diary, a campaign game history. The campaign is on its 161st Turn and always makes for a good read and can help give you ideas or inspiration when you need it most. You can find the Rigellian Diary at <http://www.starfireassistant.com/>.

Other good resources to check for design ideas are computer games, especially older ones that made people actually think about what they were putting together. The old Master of Orion game is a prime example of a game that had an interesting tech system with interesting weapons technologies that can often come in handy for new Babylon 5 Wars races. I am sure all of us probably have some of these old game manuals laying around, so we might as well put them to good use. You do remember what manuals are, right? Those pieces of dead tree stained with ink that used to come with games when they had big boxes? Yeah, I thought you did.

* * *



News from the Front

New Babylon 5 project moves ahead

November 30, 20003

JMS has reported that one of the Babylon 5 projects in the works has advanced to the next stage in development. More information on the project will not be available until late-January 2004. Also, plans for two additional DVD sets seem to have been greenlighted, bringing the TNT TV movies and the Crusade series to DVD next year.

Below is the relevant sections of the JMS report:

On the B5 front, there has been something of rather substantial proportion that's finally gone from talk to money, such that I'm now working frantically to meet some deadlines, but there's nothing I can say about this until after January 15th, probably closer to the end of that month.

The only thing I can say is that phase one of the new project is a go, hence the furious writing schedule at this end of things, which is why I've been silent until deciding to kick up some dust on the political discussion. I've been writing my little brains out.

I know the immediate result of this will be speculation, but if we could keep that to a low roar on the nets to avoid precluding anything, that would be a wonderfulness. But trust me: I wouldn't go on about something in this way if it wasn't a significant development. Just trust me on this one for a bit and hold fire until further word.

(Longtime followers of the various news groups know that an eep means that something significant has happened, but that I can't talk about it...the eep is just a way of saying, on the QT, that something has, indeed, happened and it's real, not just speculation or maybe-gonna-happens. So on that basis, you may consider this an eep.)

And on the topic of fans for a moment...I'm happy to mention that we've included a thanks to Steve Grimm (Lurker's Guide) and our resident moderator Jay Denebeim on the Season 5 DVD. Just a way of saying thanks for years of help and support.

Oh, yeah...and next year you can expect two new DVD sets that a) include all of the TV movies in one package (with commentaries from me on "The Gathering" and "In the Beginning") and b) package all 13 of the Crusade episodes into one box.

jms

For more information on this news, check the jmsnews.com website. The site archives all of J. Michael Stracynski's newsgroup postings, making them available for quick and easy viewing.

THE DRAWING BOARD

Species Design - Part 2

"Intricacies of Conflict"

By Paul Brown

Last month I went through a brief description of how to start your own homebrewed race. The premise was to not start with a race, but rather a conflict and develop those two or more races from that conflict. Now that you've got the basis for each race created, the real meat of your race is born through their technology and fleet capabilities. In this article, I will examine some of the approaches to designing and creating the heart of your race, new ship designs.

As someone who likes to plan things out and holds great value in continuity, the first thing I'll do is break down the designing into a few broad categories. These categories are not set in stone, but rather are used as general guides towards designing your ships. Their purpose is to aid in your creation process and to make your fleets more believable. So the categories we'll use are technology, general fleet size, doctrine / characteristics and finally, everyone's favourite, racial flavour.

Technology is perhaps the single most important part of fleet design. By determining a rough level of technology, you set parameters for all aspects of ship capabilities such as sensors, thrust, abilities (gravitic drives, mass sensors), and weaponry. The easiest way to determine their level of technology is by comparison to those races already in print. It's easy if you have

some grasp of each race's abilities, but it may become tiresome if you don't and find yourself looking at all of the races and becoming familiar with them for the first time. So if you wanted a low-tech race you might determine that your race is somewhere between the Hurr and the Earth Alliance ; you don't want them to suck too badly, but they shouldn't be too powerful either. Or maybe you're designing an advanced race and you settle for something between the Centauri and the Minbari or Hyach. The easiest thing to derive from this tech level is what the sensors of your race will be, as sensor values are fairly predictable with any given race. There is not a wide amount of variation.

The next category we'll look at is fleet size. 'How is this important?' you may ask. The size of your race's fleet is not extremely important in and of itself, but what it allows for is to help you better gauge some of the latter categories. What is important here is the context of the race. Depending upon the size of the fleet, it may create some general trends in doctrine and technology. You don't need a quantitative description such as 'my race has 200 front line ships, and 300 auxiliaries with another 100 in mothballs,' though those are acceptable. You can simply give a qualitative description such as, 'they have a big honking fleet, booya!'. The size of the fleet can also help determine the race' resources, essentially what they are able to build and maintain. But some general trends are that bigger fleets will have more variety in both ship design and ship armament, such as the Earth

Alliance or Narn Regime. Whereas a smaller fleet will have less individual designs and may focus or specialise on one type of armament, such as the Kor-Lyan or Hurr. These are of course not set guidelines, a small race with a small fleet may have less stringent building practices and so every ship that comes off the line is slightly different. One example would be the Gaim who have no ship building capacity of their own, and so rely on a plethora of second-hand hulls to make up their fleets. On the other hand, a larger race like the Minbari may specialise in one type of hull such as the Sharlin and use it for most of the offensive fleet operations with secondary hulls acting mainly as support. The type of conflict can also help to guide the fleet level. Is your race involved in an epic struggle, or is it merely a speed bump for another race' ascension to dominance? All in all, both fleet size and technology should help you to better determine the next category, fleet doctrine.

Fleet doctrine is a multifaceted category that encompasses several different meanings. The first meaning is to essentially determine how your race' fleet is composed. Basically you want to determine what they build, and why. Take the Minbari Federation: assuming that most of their hulls are Sharlin Warcruisers they have chosen the route of 'jack of all trades' and rely on a strong, multipurpose hull to handle most situations. The Sharlin has good anti-ship armament, good anti-fighter armament, heavy fighter support and strong hull integrity to take a beating from almost any opponent. A Minbari can take a fleet of Sharlins into a battle and could be

unconcerned where their specific fleet would be poorly suited against an opponent, because the Sharlin can handle most opponents equally well. Another race may have a more combined arms approach, a good example would be the Centauri. When the Centauri are at their best they don't just have one or two types of hulls, but rather a mixture of different hulls all performing different tasks. One individual fleet may have Primus or Centurions for long range support, Vorchans and Demos Warships for close in attacks and flights of Sentris and Maximus or Haven escorts providing cover against enemy fighters and smaller ships. A fleet of this nature can handle most opponents equally well, though it may be ill-suited towards specialised fleets. A specialised fleet may be for instance a few Yolu warships. If the Yolu don't take fighters, the Sentris and escort ships are forced into an attack role, but the higher armour on most Yolu ships would make those attacks ineffective. In a similar fashion, a Centauri fleet with a lack of anti-fighter support may find itself overwhelmed by an opponent such as the Cascor who relies on large number of fighters to do most of the attacking.

Another guide would be to determine how your race deploys fleets on the strategic level. Basically how this serves as a guide, is that the larger the size of the fleets which are deployed, then in general the more reliant on combined arms those fleets may be. Fleet deployment isn't only about fleet strength, it's about fleet cohesion. By determining the smallest, effective fleet that your race will utilise you can help yourself in designing the fleets. Now the fleets that are deployed won't all be the same either. You may have general battle fleets, small

strike fleets and so forth. But the bottom line is, the smallest fleet your race deploys should be able to operate effectively on its own. If it cannot, then either your ships are ill-designed or your fleets are too small. As a general rule of thumb, the smaller the total fleet size (as determined in the last category), the smaller those individual fleets or battle groups will be able to operate. With only a few ships and a large territory, even that of a single system, your ships should be able to operate effectively in small groups.

The last thing to consider in doctrine is the tactical aspect of your ships. Or in plain terms, how do your ships fly and fight when you're playing B5Wars. Does your race rely on large lumbering vessels like the Minbari or the Grome, or do they rely on small vessels in hunter-killer packs to swarm enemy ships like the Drazil or the Drahk? And based upon the strategic and fleet wide doctrine, what ships do they operate? Do they rely on one jack of all trades vessel, use a combined arms approach or use an extremely specialised approach where ships need to support each other in adequate numbers to perform at top efficiency? I'd be wary of the last type, as it can limit you to playing larger games. It's perfectly fine to have a fleet which cannot operate except when grouped in large numbers but generally for the playing experience you want to avoid that if you can as not everyone will get to use those size of fleets. But using a mix of jack of all trades with a few specialised ships is acceptable as well. By determining their tactical doctrine you can help set the foundation of your ship designs. General ideas such as armour values, weapon arcs, manoeuvring capabilities and so forth. A race which uses pack tactics for instance may have

smaller manoeuvrable ships which have somewhat restricted arcs requiring each ship to cover one another from enemy fighters and so forth.

The final category to consider is racial flavour. Now flavour can vary from general aspects of design to silly gimmicks or quirks that your ships have. In general though, you should try to keep the flavour consistent throughout the fleet. This also leads to such things as the creation of new technology aside from weapons. Some examples of what I would describe as good, non-gimmicky racial flavour would be the Centauri glass-jaw syndrome of having weak fronts or high-concentration of weapons on their fronts. Another would be the placement of jump engines or other components exterior to the primary such as the aft and fore placements in the Centauri and the Yolu. Or the dual-engine technique employed by the Dilgar. And also the high concentration of primary components on the exterior as we see in the Streib Collector. Another example would be unusual ship-layouts such as those of the Drazil or the Vree. Now, some acceptable racial flavour would be what I would describe as simple and logical additions to basic ships. Some examples are the Minbari Jammer, Hyach Computers, shield systems on the Abbai or Brakiri, and so forth. It's entirely personal opinion, but I view this as acceptable because those changes are in place for the sake of describing the race, not for the sake of distinguishing that race from anyone else, which is a separate category that I would describe as racial gimmicks. Basically silly systems or rules created simply for the sake of making a race different. I believe that there are other, more realistic ways

of distinguishing a race than that. But those gimmicks would include, but are not limited to the Ipsha Power Systems, ship of the month Ch'Lonas armour system, the original Radiation Cannon, possibly Grome 'connecting-struts' and so forth. Some people may think that these comments are unfair, but most of the League-2 races in my opinion have some gimmick problems. If you believe that racial flavour has to be based on gimmicks or exceptions to the rule, then look at the post-League 2 Orieni and what a masterfully designed race they are. The ships of the Dilgar War or the Wars of the Centauri Republic are what people should aspire towards, not the problematic ships of League-2.

Now let's recap. First we started with determining technology, an all-encompassing topic which helps to shape our race. Then fleet size which is a general determiner for the race's capabilities and helps in the following categories. Which leads to fleet doctrine, which you can demonstrate on fleet-wide, strategic and tactical levels. That is to say, determine what your race builds, how those ships are deployed and how those ships fight together. And finally we have racial flavour to determine trends and potentially new technologies throughout the plethora of ship designs. Altogether, this should give you a general guideline to designing new ships.

Now most ship designs these days are based upon silly human designations. If you follow this route, there are a few time periods to draw upon in which different designations fill different roles. Here are a few examples:

In the age of sail the primary ships of combat would be Frigates, those are the big boys that are feared and respected. But as time progressed into World War 1, the

frigate moved to a much more supporting role. Instead it was replaced by names such as Dreadnought, and Cruiser. World War 2 brought fleets based primarily on ships such as Destroyers and Corvettes to do a lot of the work, with Cruisers doing a lot of the fighting while ships such as Battleships and Dreadnoughts saw limited deployment. But as we progress into the modern area, fleet makeup is based around Carriers with many smaller countries relying on Destroyers and once again Frigates as the main combatants while larger ships such as Battleships have fallen completely out of favour. Basically there is a lot of room for wiggle. In B5Wars we've seen a few different methods, but essentially the Cruiser tends to be the main workhorse save for some exceptions like the Omega Destroyer which seems to follow the Star Wars "Star Destroyer" route. Another universe, like Freespace 2, has unusual designations where Destroyers and Corvettes are the largest ships while Cruisers are little more than escorts. But whatever you pick, stick with it. As long as you're consistent, people don't have a lot of room for complaining. But basically I'd try to place your ship designs into one of a few categories. First you probably want a primary warship, a middle ground ship usually designated a Cruiser or Destroyer or even just 'warship', this will serve as the core of your battle fleet. This ship can be equally tasked with both peacetime and wartime duties. Above or apart from that, you have dedicated warships such as larger Battleships and Dreadnoughts or just ships optimised for combat. These ships like the Ka'Toc Destroyer may be fielded in smaller quantities during peacetime but can be called upon quickly in times of war. Below the Destroyer/Cruiser

you have smaller support ships, like Corvettes and Frigates which serve as escorts or light patrol ships. Basically in peacetime these ships are used for duties that aren't worth sending a real warship for, such as anti-piracy. And aside from those categories you have specialised ships like Scouts and eLint vessels which typically are not deployed alone but always in concert or support of other ships. But keep in mind these are all broad categories and can be expanded upon if required.

Now, just to bring it all together I'll give you a few quick examples. Let's say we have a modest sized fleet which is designed to operate effectively at all levels of deployment. The primary ship is a Destroyer class, designed as an HCV which serves as a 'jack of all trades' ships. It may have a few anti-ship weapons, some fighter defence and maybe even some fighters of its own. Deployed in smaller numbers are support ships such as Corvettes and Missile boats that supplement the firepower of the Destroyers, or help eliminate any weaknesses it may have. Aside from these ships there are limited numbers of dedicated warships, specifically Dreadnoughts and Heavy Cruisers which are only deployed to hotspots or during wartime. In peacetime these ships serve only as morale boosters and deterrents to would-be invaders.

Another example would be a vulnerable race with a small fleet and only a small amount of territory to guard. Because ships often operate in groups of one the main ship is a large Cruiser or even a Dreadnought which can handle itself when outnumbered and against a variety of opponents. The race's technology isn't great enough to design smaller self-sustaining vessels so they rely

on larger vessels for adequate deployment times and logistical support.

You can even intentionally design flawed races. Let's say a major race ends up in conflict with a rival race. In order to win the war, that race decides to specialise their ships for combat against their main opponent. Regardless of the outcome of the war, the fleet of that race is now specialised for one type of combat. Should they come up against another race which uses a different doctrine they may find themselves ill-suited to combat the new aggressors. Or a race may have a large, combined-arms fleet but in a war of attrition some of the pieces of the puzzle may be lost and the remaining fleet finds themselves ill-equipped to deal with the ongoing threat. Let's say for instance that a race which fields larger carriers to support large fleets has those carriers targeted by an opponent. With enough losses, the race suddenly finds itself without fighter support because those rare carriers cannot be everywhere at once and the opponent which may field fighters from many different ships can now exploit those 'flaws'.

There's a lot of things that one can do. One last thing to keep in mind is not to think of your fleet or ship design as static, but rather as fluid and ever changing. If your race is centred around a conflict, extrapolate how that conflict affects the choices your race has made and the choices they will make in the future. Well-designed ships and SCS are one thing, but to have a story and character behind that fleet and those ships is something on an entirely new level. And that's where those ships become interesting.

Stay tuned next issue for some more ideas on designing races.

* * *

IN BRIEF...



More Andromeda Ships Uploaded

James Cunningham has uploaded several new ships to the Andromeda Wars Yahoo Group. This includes the new Nietzschean Leviathan Roused Cruiser.

URL:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/androb5w/>

Showdowns-11 In the Works

Steve Cross and Renaud Gagne are hard at work on their followup supplement to THE GREAT CRUSADE. Titled Showdowns-11, this supplement details the other powers and forces operating in the modern Orieni sphere of influence, including the Rogolon Dynasty.

The developers expect a mid-December release date for Showdowns-11.



VBAM Escalation Wars Campaign Underway

A new PBEM campaign has started! Managed by Tyrel Lohr, the campaign is set in his Escalation Wars B5W setting. Fans should look forward to some interesting battle reports and campaign stories to come out of this campaign.

The campaign will place extra focus on player interactions and exploration in addition to warfare. The campaign is using the Victory by Any Means campaign system, still in playtest.

URL:

(Escalation Wars)

<http://www.escalationwars.com>

(Victory by Any Means)

<http://vbam.firenebula.com>



Attention Centauri Males:

Just get a promotion? Need to wear your crest a little higher for your new place in society? Are you not sure what product will make the cut?

Try *Noble Essences* hair gel. The choice of rich, incompetent ship captains everywhere. Rumoured to have been used by Emperor Jeflo the VII. It will protect your hair from zero gravity, vacuum and whatever else space has to throw at it.



Ask Zathras!

By David Ainsworth

Hello, peoples! Draal has asked Zathras to do many things, always very busy. So now, Draal gets idea to let *other* people ask Zathras questions... questions that will mean Zathras must do more work to get answers. If Draal did not *have* Zathras, Draal would not have *time* to get ideas. But maybe if Zathras answers lots of questions from you, Zathras will not have time to do tasks for Draal, and then Draal will not have other ideas which mean more work for Zathras. So Zathras is happy to answer questions. Ask about rules, tactics and strategy, new races, even television show. Zathras is trained in problem analysis, and what Zathras cannot figure out, he will ask of Zathras, or Zathras, or perhaps even the elderly Zathras, although he is very bad tempered and has threatened to push Zathras off a bridge several times. Zathras thinks he would have done it but Zathras knows that *he* would have to clean up the mess. Dead Zathras very messy, yes, very, tch-tch-tch-tch-tch...

Oh, and when even Zathras cannot answer, we will ask Draal. Draal will not know answers either, but he is very good at *not* answering questions... much better than Zathras.

Please do not ask Zathras questions like "How many angels can dance on head of pin?" Zathras does not know, and Zathras does not care. Probably Draal would want Zathras to clean head of pin after angels are finished. With tiny toothbrush. So that if angels come back for next dance, they would not slip and hurt themselves. Draal very considerate in that way. He always have Zathras bend over backwards to help others. But, at least it is a *job*.

Zathras has heard several questions already about maneuver called "pivot." Rules are pretty clear but many peoples *very* confused about special cases, tch-tch-tch-tch... Draal say to Zathras once that so many people wonder about pivoting that it make his head spin. Zathras thinks Draal tried to make a joke. Draal should leave hard work to professionals.

Zathras knows much about pivoting, and rewrote the rules to try to cover all circumstances. Here is copy of what Zathras wrote. Probably it is even more confusing, but nobody ever listens to Zathras anyway.

Pivots

When a ship wishes to change its orientation while retaining its original direction of movement, it can use a **pivot** maneuver to do so. While pivoting, a ship rotates about its center in a controlled manner, rotating one hex facing per turn, while moving in a different direction. EXCEPTION: Agile ships may pivot more than one hex facing at a time—see below for details. See the Rules Compendium (RC) for information

on the thruster pairs required to start or stop a pivot.

Like rolls, pivots have two thrust costs listed, one to start the pivot, and one to halt it. Trust for pivots must be equally channeled through a pair of thrusters as indicated in the RC, with any extra point of thrust applied to either thruster at the player's option. EXCEPTION: Agile ships list only one thrust cost for pivots. If an agile ships wants to pivot, it pays the listed cost per hexside and makes its entire pivot instantly. In effect, agile ships pivot the same way that fighters do, except that they pay a higher thrust cost per hexside and must have the appropriate thruster pairs available.

Once a ship has started a pivot, it is considered to be **pivoting** in the chosen direction until such time as it halts the pivot. Halting the pivot requires paying the listed cost in thrust through a thruster pair opposed to direction of the pivot (so stopping a Clockwise pivot requires a Counterclockwise thruster pair). The pivot may be halted on the same turn that it is started, or on subsequent turns. EXCEPTION: Since agile ships pay a single thrust cost to complete a pivot, they are never in the process of pivoting and they do not pay to halt a pivot. One consequence is that agile ships do not require an opposed thruster pair to halt their pivots.

A ship may pay to start or stop a pivot at any point during its movement. The moment a ship starts a pivot, it rotates 60 degrees in the desired direction. If the ship remains pivoting on subsequent turns, it rotates an additional 60

degrees in the direction of the pivot at the beginning of the Movement Step of the combat sequence. A ship may only pivot a single 60 degree hexside in a turn, and thus can only pay to start one pivot per turn. EXCEPTION: Agile ships.

While a ship is pivoting, it cannot make any maneuvers except for emergency rolls or slides (see the RC), and may not launch or land fighters or shuttles. EXCEPTION: Ships with gravitic drives may accelerate or decelerate by spending thrust through thrusters aligned with their direction of movement. They can also turn. Ships with gravitic drives may either turn into the pivot (see rules below) OR they may make a standard 60 degree turn off their current direction of travel. In the latter case, the ship remains pivoted (and pivoting) relative to the new direction of travel. Note that the ship may make a “backwards” turn as well (see moving in reverse).

If a ship stops a pivot, it is no longer pivoting but is now considered to be **pivoted**. A pivoted ship is facing a different direction from its direction of travel, but is not in the process of pivoting. A pivoted ship may fire weapons without penalty so long as it did not pivot on the turn of fire. A pivoted ship remains limited in the maneuvering it can perform. It may perform a roll maneuver (since the ship is not pivoting this is not considered an emergency roll), or slide. It may not accelerate, or decelerate unless it has a gravitic drive (see previous paragraph). EXCEPTION: A ship facing in the precise opposite of its direction of travel is considered to be moving in reverse, and follows all rules and restrictions for reverse movement.

A pivoted ship may turn, but it must turn “into” the pivot. There

are two cases of turning into a pivot: forward turn and reverse turn. Since a pivoted ship which is moving directly opposite its facing can be considered moving in reverse, and a pivoted ship which ends up facing its direction of movement is simply moving normally, a pivoted ship with movement restrictions is either facing one hexside off its direction of travel (a 60 degree pivot), or two hexsides off its direction of travel (a 120 degree pivot).

A pivoted ship which is pivoted 60 degrees may turn into the pivot by spending the normal turn cost. It must turn in the direction of the pivot (one hex clockwise if pivoted clockwise, for example). When the ship turns into a 60 degree pivot, its facing remains the same but its direction of travel now matches that facing. For example, a ship travelling direction A and pivoted in direction B which turns into its pivot will be facing and travelling in direction B. A ship pivoted 120 degrees may turn into the pivot but must make a reverse turn. The procedure is the same save that the ship is considered to be moving backward, and the ship must turn in the direction its aft faces. For example, a ship travelling direction A and pivoted in direction C must turn into its pivot in reverse, and will end up travelling backwards in direction F while its front continues to face in direction C. EXCEPTION: A pivoted ship with a gravitic drive may retain the pivot—the difference between its direction of movement and its facing—when it turns, and it may turn into or away from the pivot.

Agile ships may make a turn while pivoted (since agile ships pay a single cost to start and stop a pivot, they are never in the process of pivoting). They must turn into the pivot in the direction they are facing. (Presumably, an agile ship could also turn into a pivot in reverse—

travelling in reverse in the direction its aft is facing.) The cost for this turn is figured as if it were a snap turn. An agile ship with a gravitic drive may ignore the facing reset, turning into the pivot while retaining its facing relative to its direction of travel. For example, an agile ship with a gravitic drive travelling direction A and facing direction C could turn into the pivot and end up facing and travelling in direction C, or could ignore the facing reset and end up travelling direction C and facing direction E.

Some ships are not permitted to pivot. These include bases (which use rotation instead), and many commercial vessels which can't take the stress. A ship which cannot pivot has a pivot cost of “N/A” in the Pivot Cost section of the ship's datacard. This differs from a pivot cost of zero, which represents a ship that can pivot at no thrust cost.

An agile ship which pivots still suffers the 3 weapons fire penalty during the turn it pivots (but never more than 3 from the pivot, however many hex sides it pivots), and cannot launch or land fighters during that turn.

* * *

Have a Question? Ask Zathras!
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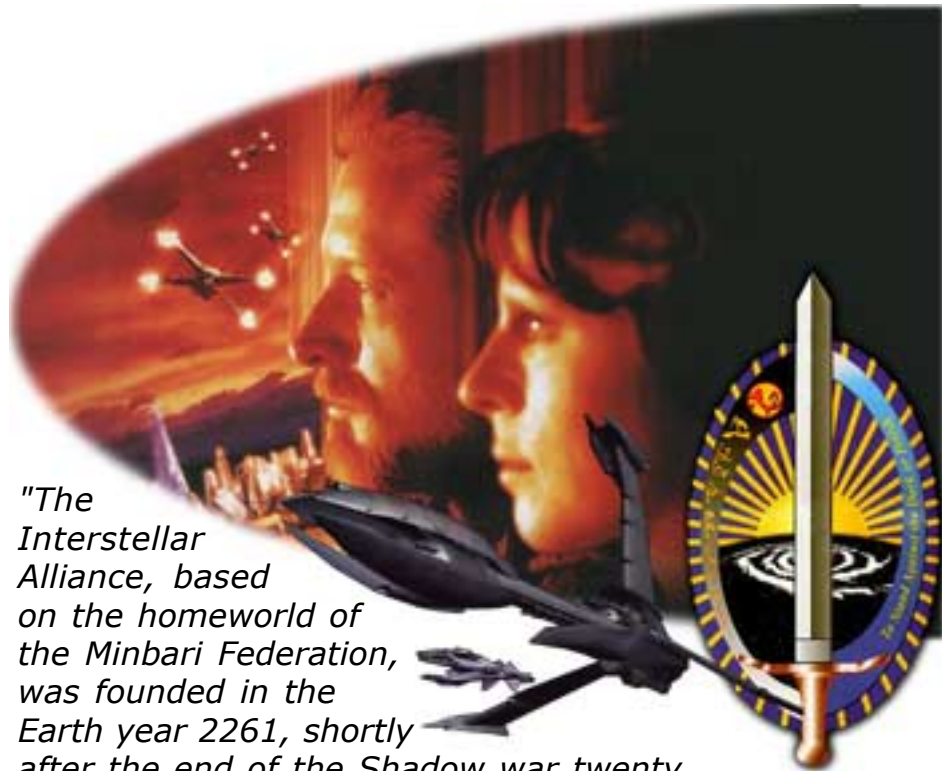
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Coming Next Issue...



"The Interstellar Alliance, based on the homeworld of the Minbari Federation, was founded in the Earth year 2261, shortly after the end of the Shadow war twenty years ago. Twenty years of history. Those of us who survived have seen it all, and those of us who understand have been waiting and dreading the arrival of this day."

-- Michael Garibaldi, "Sleeping in Light"

Next month The Great Machine will take a look at the ships of the Babylon 5 races developed after the formation of the Interstellar Alliance. What new and wondrous ships and technologies were developed by the powers following an unprecedented period of peace?

Be sure to have your voice be heard by submitting your own advanced designs to The Great Machine! Send all submissions to submissions@firenebula.com along with some background and rationalizations. They might appear in the next issue!

Submission Deadline: December 20, 2003