

Chapter 4: The Streib Collectors

The Streib are a mysterious, xenophobic race about whom little is known. Their homeworld (if, indeed, it actually is their homeworld) is located well off the normal jump routes, within an area of hyperspace that is difficult to navigate. Apparently fearful of other races, they rarely venture forth except to gather information, despite their high levels of technology. If they were more aggressive, they could be quite a threat to known space.

Despite their xenophobic tendencies, the Streib have left their world on at least several previous occasions. During each foray, they sent at least one lone ship on a mission to gather specimens and test the defenses of races both far and wide. During the most recent such mission, they kidnapped pilots of Narn, Earth, Abbai, Vree, Brakiri, Kor-Lyan, Torata, and Yolu fighters as well as crews from freighters and other unarmed craft. In a previous attack, they reached as far away as Centauri, Minbari, Hyach, and Ipsha space. Though these are the only documented excursions in recent times, other strange disappearances over the years could also be attributed to Streib "survey" missions.

Though it is obvious the purpose of these missions is to gather information on possible enemies, no one knows if this is as a prelude to invasion or merely some sort of attempt at self-defense. It is also not known if these attacks are organized by some sort of government or if they are the acts of fringe groups within their military, or even if the Streib have a military in the traditional sense. Either unable or unwilling to open lines of communication (and thus join the galactic community), the Streib apparently wish to remain completely independent and unassociated with any other race. This makes them a dangerous wild card, as they might surface again at any moment to "investigate" anyone traveling through space near their world.

Physically, the Streib resemble the Vree, and it may be that the two share a common ancestry. Perhaps one is a lost colony of the other, or maybe one fled the other for some unknown reason and formed its own splinter group in a different part of

space. Or, knowing their penchant for meddling, it's possible the Vorlons are responsible for the existence of the Streib as we know them today. No one knows for sure, and the Streib certainly aren't talking.

Technology

What actual firepower these mysterious people mount on their warships is unknown, as the only Streib vessels anyone has ever engaged in battle are the "collector ships." These surface without warning to carry off pilots and crews for whatever experiments their scientists see fit to pursue. Though powerful and dangerous, they are designed more for the purpose of capture, not outright combat. If engaged by naval warships, they typically run away to seek less powerful targets. Fortunately for them, the Streib have highly advanced jump technology, enabling them to open vortices rapidly. In addition, they have ways to "look through" the hyperspace barrier, enabling them to detect likely targets as well as dangerous fleets before jumping in on top of them.

On the collector vessels, the Streib mount a variety of electromagnetic weapons that can disable fighters and ships alike, leaving them open to capture and examination. They do not leave them without firepower, however, as each operates at least a couple of powerful heavy weapons.

Improved Blast Laser

Class: Laser Mode: Standard

This device is apparently a recent development and is more powerful than the original weapon of a similar name (now in use on Hyach vessels). Its primary improvements lie in its damage rate, which, considering the fact the weapon scores damage in standard mode, is considerable.

Medium Burst Beam

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Special

The Streib have been using electro-burst beam technology for centuries, preferring it over nearly every other method to aid in the capture of enemy fighters. The medium burst beam is a step above the standard burst beam now used by the Narns (who seem to have developed it entirely on their own). In addition to the listed advantages in range and rate of fire, it also has the following benefits (which operate exactly like the similar effects used

by the standard burst beam except as noted):

If the targeted system requires power, it is deactivated for two turns. Jump drive delay times are reset and add +2 to their rearming time. If an EM shield protects the target ship, it absorbs this effect instead of rolling for hit location.

If the system does not require power, it suffers a critical hit at +6 on the die.

If structure is hit, the ship loses 2 points of power.

Fighters hit by this weapon take 1d6 damage and automatically drop out, except for super-heavy fighters. If a super-heavy fighter is hit, it takes the damage and rolls an additional 1d6. On a roll of 1, the fighter drops out. On a roll of 2 or 3, the fighter takes 2d6 additional damage, ignoring armor. Otherwise, there is no further effect.

Heavy Burst Beam

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Special

This is the ultimate extension of electro-burst beam technology, and is seen only rarely. Getting hit by one of these things can seriously degrade your ship's performance. The following effects will be caused depending on what is hit:

If the targeted system requires power, it is deactivated for three turns. Jump drive delay times are reset and add +5 to their rearming time. If an EM shield protects the target ship, it absorbs this effect instead of rolling for hit location.

If the system does not require power, it suffers a critical hit at +10 on the die.

If structure is hit, the ship loses 4 points of power.

Fighters hit by this weapon take 2d6 damage (ignoring armor) and automatically drop out, except for super-heavy fighters. If a super-heavy fighter is hit, it takes the damage and rolls 1d6. On a roll of 1 or 2, the fighter drops out. On a roll of 4-6, the fighter takes 3d6 additional damage, ignoring armor.

Dual Burst Beam

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Special

Contemporary Streib ships apparently no longer use single burst beams, but have upgraded each single beam into a dual-mounted turret. The resulting weapon operates like a standard burst beam except that it fires twice per turn. The Streib have also made improvements in the weapon's fire control, as noted on the collector ship's control sheet.

Burst Pulse Cannon

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Pulse

This modified burst beam fires a series of electro-burst bolts in pulse form. This device is particularly useful in knocking flights of fighters out of the sky, but it can also erode a ship's combat firepower by repeatedly deactivating systems and draining power. Each pulse of the cannon acts like a standard burst beam, with all the attendant effects.

Electromagnetic Wave Disruptor

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Special

This device is the sole defensive device employed by the Streib. It puts forth a shower of particles and hits them with an electromagnetic wave, thus disrupting the attack of any incoming weapon except lasers.

In the basic mode, the EM wave produced by the device provides a -3 defense rating against any two incoming shots (from any source), or a -6 rating against any single shot. However, by providing an additional 4 power to the weapon, a further -3 can be earned for defensive purposes. This can be combined with another intercept rating of -3, or used individually. What's more, there is no limit (other than available power) to the amount of energy used by the device for this purpose. The only restriction is that no more than -6 can be applied to any single incoming shot. Thus, for example, if 8 extra power is put into a given EM wave disruptor, that device could apply -3 to each of four incoming shots, -6 to one and -3 to each of two shots, or -6 to each of two shots. However, the player could not apply -9 or -12 to any one incoming attack.

The EM wave disruptor can also be used in offensive mode. There is no delay between switching modes (the decision can be made at the time fire is determined). The device earns 1 shot for every -3 intercept rating normally available (i.e., with no extra power it can fire twice, with 4 power it can fire three times, and so on). If it hits a fighter, that fighter drops out (super-heavy fighters are not affected). It has no effect on ships and does not cause any sort of damage.

Critical Hits: The first time a "Range Reduced" or "Damage Reduced" critical is scored, the device loses one of its two basic -3 intercept ratings. It can still, however, add more power to buy more.

Thus, 4 power will allow the player two -3 intercepts or one -6 intercept.

Light EM Wave Disruptor

Class: Electromagnetic Mode: Special

This defensive device is used only on Streib breaching pods. It has no offensive mode and cannot use more than one -3 intercept shot per turn. However, it is blessed with a decent firing arc (for a shuttle) and is often the only reason a Streib breaching pod has a chance to reach its target.

Mass Sensors

The Streib use an advanced sensor system (backed up by heavily stealthed probes) that enables them to sense targets in normal space. This provides them an opportunity to “get the drop on” an unsuspecting enemy. Often, the only way to trap them is to set up an ambush near some sort of terrain feature such as an asteroid or small moon.

If a scenario calls for a Streib ship to jump into the scenario, the opponents must place all their units first and determine their position, heading, speed, and size category (capital, HCV, etc.) of unit. (They do not need to reveal the specific class of vessel or fighter, nor must they report on any hidden units or units located on the surface of planets or asteroids.) The Streib can then form a jump point anywhere on the map, and enter at their leisure, with a -5 bonus on the “Jumping Into Combat” table in Showdowns-2. Historically, if a Streib collector detected any sort of fleet (even a convoy of a large number of freighters) it would simply avoid the encounter, rather than risk itself in battle against naval forces. This makes the Streib a difficult opponent to face, and an ideal one for use as a raiding element in campaigns.

Starships & Fighters

Collector Ship

Special Deployment Rules

The most commonly encountered Streib ship, this asymmetrical vessel is a threat to even a large group of fighters. Able to pop out of hyperspace anywhere it chooses, and disable fighters with a phenomenal array of burst beams in various sizes,

it is rightly feared. Though it cannot score tremendous amounts of damage on starships, it can quickly disable them by draining power over several turns, using its EM wave disruptors to avoid incoming fire.

The collector ship is actually fairly small, but is of the capital ship class by virtue of its capabilities. Among these, it boasts an amazing suite of armor capable of shrugging off shots from most low-tech weapons. The greatest threat comes from plasma and matter guns, which it will go out of its way to block with EM waves. Lasers, which it cannot intercept, can also cause it problems if their rakes should strike the same system multiple times in the same volley. If hit by a sustained mode weapon, the collector ship will do everything it can to avoid the second turn of incoming fire.

The collector ship holds as many as six breaching pods, and its cost includes 9 Marine contingents as standard equipment. It can buy more up to the limits listed in the breaching pod rules.

The Streib Collector Ship and much of its technology is based on proposals and playtests by Jim Click, as well as the B5 episode “All Alone in the Night.”

Breaching Pods

The Streib collector ships do not use shuttles, but instead employ a small flight of breaching pods, each of which cost 50 points. These have the statistics shown on the control sheet. Streib pods do not suffer thrust loss from damage. Their main advantages come from their speed, light EM wave disruptor, and incredible levels of armor.

Streib Scenarios

This section provides several different types of scenarios involving the Streib Collector Ship. These can be played in any order, and in fact represent several appearances of the Streib over the past century.

The Wrong Target

In one of their early forays, the Streib sent a collector ship through what is now Centauri space. Though they gathered numerous specimens, they were all the same race—Centauri. Eluding pursuit,

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they expanded their search wider, looking for more variety. Unfortunately for them, they found it.

Set-Up

Minbari: Morshin near the center of the map, any facing, speed 6. This ship is fully loaded with Tishats, with one flight already on the map "on patrol."

Streib: Collector ship, fully loaded with breaching pods, begins the scenario off-map. After seeing the Minbari ship's location, he then jumps in using the Streib arrival procedures.

Special Rules

The Minbari ship is mildly surprised by the arrival of the Streib, and can only launch one flight of fighters per turn (reduce the hangar rating from 12 to 6 for this scenario's purposes).

The Streib have not yet developed advanced burst beam technology at this point in history. Replace the heavy burst beam with a medium burst beam, and change all dual burst beams with standard burst beams. Also, delete two boxes from the reactor, and leave the power curve as listed.

Victory Conditions

The Streib win if they capture at least one fighter and survive long enough to escape through a jump point. The Minbari win by denying this opportunity to the Streib.

Historical Result

The Streib destroyed the Morshin and captured several fighter pilots, then fled. Unfortunately, they stopped at several other Minbari outposts on the way out of Federation territory, leaving the Minbari a perfect path to follow back to the Streib homeworld. The Minbari sent a large fleet there and punished the Streib by destroying their ship and several orbital installations, then issuing a stern warning against further "collection" missions (which the Streib ignored).

Fishing Trip Gone Awry

The Streib have made several forays into League space, not all of which were successful. On one early occasion, they tracked a squadron of fighters as it departed a base on a training mission. Unfortunately, their mass sensors were not yet developed enough to identify the size of these fighters, which were early models of the Drazi Sky Serpent.

Set-Up

Neutral: Place combat buoys numbered 1 through 6 in 0805, 0820, 2208, 2223, 3605, and 3620. These are "practice targets" the size of OSATs, with 36 structure, defense rating 10, armor 4 and ramming factor 8. Each has a single standard particle beam with a 360-degree arc. During the Combat Step, it will fire at the nearest unit (rolling randomly if more than one unit is at the same distance) within 3 hexes. This weapon can only be destroyed if the buoy is destroyed or deactivated.

Drazi: 12 Sky Serpents without missiles or navigators. Each rolls 1d6 at the start of the scenario, and must begin within 5 hexes of the respective buoy, facing at the player's option, speed from 5 to 10.

Streib: Collector ship arrives on turn 1 using the Streib arrival procedures (i.e., after waiting to see where the Sky Serpents are).

Special Rules

The Drazi fighters have been undergoing combat practice, making close range firing passes at the buoys and attempting to avoid return fire. For each Sky Serpent, roll 1d6. If a 1 is rolled, the fighter begins play with 1d10+6 damage.

This is a fixed map. Any unit that exits is assumed to have disengaged.

Optional Rules

Replace two of the Sky Serpents with Fanged Serpent command variants, but delete one of the other fighters (assume it was destroyed or dropped out before the combat begins).

Victory Conditions

The Streib win by destroying, disabling, or capturing all of the Drazi fighters. Forcing them to disengage counts as disabling them (they can be tracked down later). The Drazi win by defeating the Streib, either by destroying it or forcing it to depart.

Historical Result

The Drazi lost several fighters while attempting to regroup, but once they did, they inflicted severe damage to the Streib ship using their heavy guns. The Streib began thinking about retreating, but were unable to form a jump point quickly enough and were destroyed. By the time Drazi ships were able

to arrive in the area to examine the debris, it had dispersed enough that no identification was possible.

Braving the Mines

The Streib had little luck in Brakiri territory, finding it relatively well defended (and fighters rarely without their carrier). Finally tiring of searching for fighters on patrol, they jumped a presumably undefended defense outpost.

Set-Up

Neutral: Jump Gate in 4230, facing center.

Brakiri (Pri-Wakat): Alykent Guardpost in 2215, facing random. Place 18 Rehsa-P, 12 Rehsa-C, and 6 Rehsa-G mines anywhere on the map, recording their location secretly. The Brakiri player has 100 points to spend on enhancements for these mines (enhancements only; additional mines may not be purchased).

Streib: Collector ship enters through a jump point on turn 1, anywhere on the map, using the Streib entry procedures. This ship is fully loaded with breaching pods.

Special Rules

At the start of each turn, roll 1d6 and add this to a running total. On the turn in which the total equals or exceeds 25, the jump gate opens and two Ikortas arrive, moving speed 4. Erase the running total at this point and start again on the next turn. Each time 25 is reached, two more Ikortas can arrive; there is no limit to the number that can appear in this scenario.

The Streib ship is not permitted to fire at the jump gate or prevent its operation in any manner.

Victory Conditions

The Streib win based on the number of worker groups they capture from the Brakiri base. They can do this by completing a successful "rescue" mission using their breaching pods. Since the base is filled with workers, and not enough guards can protect them all, the Streib receive the -3 "unguarded" bonus when attempting this mission. Each breaching pod can only carry one captured work group at a time, so once it has collected one, it must return to the ship and drop off its captive before it can return.

0 groups captured: Total Streib loss.

1-4 groups captured: Major loss.

5-6 groups: Minor loss.

7-8 groups: Draw.

9-10 groups: Minor victory.

11-12 groups: Major victory.

13+ groups: Total victory.

Historical Result

The Streib blasted through the mines, disabled the base's guns, and began capturing crewmen. When the Ikortas arrived, they were forced to maneuver and took more mine damage, retreating after capturing 11 worker groups.

Fish in a Barrel

In their most recent attack, the Streib sent a collector ship through the territory of several League races, looking specifically for small groups of fighters on patrol. In nearly every case, they swooped in and captured their targets before the opposing pilots knew what hit them. The only time they were challenged was against the Pak'ma'ra, whose plasma weapons could penetrate Streib armor. The unexpected arrival of a carrier did not help matters.

Set-Up

Terrain: Small moon, radius 5, centered in hex 2015.

Pak'ma'ra: Resh'kas'u light carrier in 2615, facing down, speed 4. 12 Por'fa'tis fighters in 0115, facing down and right, speed 6.

Streib: Collector ship in 1518, facing up and left, any speed. This ship has just arrived through a now-closed jump point.

Victory Conditions

The Streib win by capturing at least one Pak'ma'ra fighter and destroying or disabling all other enemy units. The Pak'ma'ra win by rescuing any surviving fighters and escaping through a jump point or any other means of disengagement. Note that as soon as the last fighter is destroyed or disabled, the Pak'ma'ra ship is free to depart. If the carrier is destroyed or disabled, the fighters can attempt to disengage, but not until then.

Historical Result

The Streib began disabling fighters almost immediately, ignoring the carrier at first. When the Resh'kas'u opened fire on the collector ship, it was pummeled into submission. The remaining fighters tried to flee, but were tracked down and destroyed or captured.

The Hunter Becomes the Hunted

The Llorc reacted differently than most other races did to the Streib. In Llorc society, items can be taken at any time, but are always returned upon request. Thus, when the Streib captured several Llorc fighters, the Llorc did not see this as an insult or act of war, but simply asked the Streib to return them. When the Streib ignored their requests, the Llorc sent a fleet to ask again.

Set-Up

Llorc: Erlorra Raiding Cruiser, Turlisk Jump Carrier anywhere along the left edge of the map, facing and speed at the owner's discretion. Both ships are carrying a squadron of Lellat-B fighters.

Streib: Collector ship in the center of the map, facing bottom right, speed 8.

Map: This battle takes place in hyperspace.

Special Rules

The Streib can attempt to escape the Llorc by opening a jump point to normal space. If this is done, the Llorc are permitted to follow on the ensuing turn. Simply overlay a new map over the existing one, placing the Streib ship onto the new map and the Llorc onto it when they arrive later. If the Streib survive long enough to recycle their jump engine and escape back to hyperspace, they are considered disengaged (as the Llorc engines will not recycle quickly enough to follow).

Victory Conditions

The Llorc score a draw if they destroy the Streib ship, but win a victory if they disable it. (The Streib ship will self-destruct if disabled, but the Llorc will be able to recover more valuables from the wreckage that way than if they had to chop the ship into pieces with their guns.) The Streib can win only by successfully disengaging.

Historical Result

The Llorc managed to critically damage the ship, but it still escaped, adding insult to injury by capturing another fighter during the process. The Streib ship was not seen again in Llorc space.

Last Stand of the Streib

During their most recent information-gathering foray, the Streib made the mistake of capturing a well-known Earth Alliance officer. This drew the attention of both the EA and Minbari, who sent forces to investigate. These tracked the Streib back to their homeworld, where they surprised the collector ship as its crew examined their new acquisitions.

Set-Up

Streib: Collector ship in 0115, speed 5, facing up.

Earth Alliance/Minbari: Jump point forms in 0130 on the first turn of the scenario. An Omega Destroyer arrives at the end of this turn, speed 4, facing up. 12 Starfuries are in its hex, plus 12 more are in the bay. The ship is accompanied by one Minbari combat flyer.

Map: The top edge of the map represents the start of the Streib planet's atmosphere (thickness-1). Any unit moving off this edge will be considered within this atmosphere.

Special Rules

The Streib ship is tactically surprised (see Showdowns-1), beginning at the start of turn 1. It has a full complement of breaching pods, but these cannot launch until turn 3 due to the surprise situation.

Historical Result

As seen on TV. The Omega started things off with a volley of laser fire, and Starfuries began making passes on the Streib ship. When it "spaced" its prisoners, the Omega opened up on its previously damaged side, destroying it.