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Starletters #47 to date contain JCF review items. SL #49 included the prototype (P16.0) Comet rules. #50 included the prototype Barracks and Armor rules. #51 had the prototype F&E Total War rules for Stasis Field Generators. These issues are available for 25¢ each and a stamped self-addressed envelope. Other back issues are not available; all of the material in those issues has been published in Star Fleet products.

Starletter is reprinted in the Canadian Wargamer's Journal.

ESTIMATED RELEASE SCHEDULE - STAR FLEET BATTLES 1988

Nexus #18 is in the mail. Captain's Log #6 (B-10 module) is nearing completion.

1988 (Spring and early Summer): F&E Total War, SSD Book #10, Captain's Log #7.

JOINT CHIEFS OF FLEETS: ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

Starletter has presented ongoing rules debates for public comment since #47. Your comments are welcome but must be typed and each case must be on a separate page (one page per case) with the case number and your name and address at the top.

CASE #87-002 T-BOMB BALANCE: It appears at this point that efforts to produce a T-Bomb system that could be considered a "standard" rule (rather than an option) will not bear fruit. The discussion of this case may result in new rules making all TBs placed by transporter non-hidden and basing the number of optional T-bombs you can buy on the size class of your ship. However, Jim Hart and Scott Rushing have made an interesting proposal (that transported T-bombs do not become active for 4 impulses) which could make a "standard" rule practical and the "optional" rule less unbalancing.

CASE #87-003 EMERGENCY DECELERATION: Response from players to this case has been strongly in favor of Universal Decel, and this will be enacted in the CL7 addenda and the eventual Doomsday Rulebook. Let's review the case, as this will be the last time it is listed. Back in 1979 we released the pocket game with the "Feds only" rule. What we didn't realize at the time was that a sizeable fraction of the gamers rejected it immediately as "phony" and invented the "universal decel" rule on the spot. As we moved on into the Designer's Edition and the expansions, opposition to "Feds only" grew. When we converted to the Commander's edition back in 1983, a survey showed that at that time a majority of players were no longer using Feds Only. We converted the game to "Universal" at that point. In a weak moment when the minority who wanted to keep "Feds Only" were howling with rage, we made the change a ship modification for a nominal cost instead of a rule, but all playtesting and rules balance for the Commander's Edition was based on Universal Decel, and the majority who preferred it continued to grow. (This caused various problems. ISC ships can get their PPDs to work on overload only if they have ED. The Web Caster is a devastating weapon if the enemy does not have ED. Both cases were designed and balanced with ED when originally published.) Finally, a little over a year ago, the formal change appeared in the addenda file and caused more howls of outrage from the minority. The JCF case began at that time in an effort to convince the minority party that we were following the will of the

majority. Since the availability of ED has a dramatic effect on game balance, some decision had to be made, and indeed already had been made in 1983, but the chaos of the (S3.3) system made it too easy to ignore the entire section. A handful of diehard Feds have complained that their feelings are being ignored, but that isn't really true. In any election, you have a winner and a loser. You can't have everyone who voted democratic pick up and move east while those who voted republican move west and have Bush be president of some states and Cuomo of others. You can't reverse the will of the majority because the minority don't agree. One final matter is the BPV situation. We do not plan on changing the BPVs of any ships as a result of this situation. The cost was never added to the Fed ships, and in any event is so trivial as to be safely ignored. It would hardly be worthwhile to change hundreds of BPVs by three points. One final point: ED is incredibly effective when using plotted movement. The 10% of players still using that outdated system may wish to dispense with ED (for all races) when using it.

CASE #87-005 WEB DAMAGE: Serious opposition to such a major change in the rules may prevent this case from proceeding. Debate continues.

CASE #87-006 LYRAN ENERGY CRISIS: The basis of this case is the chronic shortage of power on many Lyran ships. Acting Lyran Commander Byrd has proposed a refit for the CW adding two impulse engine boxes. Committee Member Crull has proposed a New Heavy Cruiser (basically a Jaguar conversion with a larger center section) with more power than the CA. Starletter reader Richard Wells theorizes that if the Lyran ships had more power they would spend it for EW; therefore, a couple of changes to the EW rules (e.g. a Lyran ship would ignore the ECM of a target which had just hit its ESG field) should solve the problem. Wells also suggested that a Lyran ship should be able to use part of the power in its ESG capacitors without being required to use all of it. The unused power would wait for the next 64-impulse ESG cycle. This would tie in nicely with the previous proposal by Steve Kay that ESG capacitors be allowed to hold up to 10 points. Wells further pointed out that bases have a problem; they cannot move out of range to recharge their ESG capacitors. He suggested that bases should have a special version of the ESG capable of holding more power and/or cycling faster. Reader Bort suggests returning to the original rule allowing an ESG to be activated 32 impulses after it was last deactivated rather than 64 impulses after it was last activated.

CASE #87-007 ORION ENGINE DOUBLING: A minor faux pas on the part of ADB. The cloak cost is already increased when engines are doubled.

CASE #87-008 ALLIANCE MAULERS: It must be made clear that we are not talking about historical ships, but non-historical (conjectural) ships that could be used by players who have captured or been given mauler technology in a local campaign. No historical scenarios or fiction would be printed for such ships. In a campaign, if a player obtains mauler technology, he must come up with an SSD to use it. Designing a new ship in the middle of a campaign can be a real problem. Who is going to design it? Who is going to approve it? With everyone playing in the campaign, who can make a fair judgement? Does the JCF have the obligation to create "fair" designs and make them available or are they just meddling with the game universe?

CASE #88-009 BATTLESHIPS: New Case. We have always said that the B-10 was the only battleship, and from a historical point of view do not plan to change that. However, the rules on building battleships in F&E, and the insistence of campaign players that they be allowed to build them, may have created a requirement for "official" BB designs. (As with Alliance maulers, designing a new ship in mid-campaign causes major arguments.) This is similar to the Fed PF situation. When ADB refused to release one, players designed their own and included the ph-G in it, forcing the release of an official but conjectural design sans gatling. As in the Alliance mauler question, any resulting SSDs will be designed by the JCF; no submissions are required or will be considered. Indeed, a full set of battleship SSDs is now undergoing playtest.