

STARLETTER #64

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

March 1990

DOOMSDAY IS COMING!

Just in case you did not see Starletter #63, you should be aware that the long-awaited "Doomsday" edition of *Star Fleet Battles* will appear this summer.

The existing Volumes, Supplements, SSD Books, and Reinforcements packs will be combined and redivided into the various products of the new Captain's Edition of SFB. There will be a separate "Captain's Rulebook" for established players who only need the new rules and not the revised SSDs or counters.

Current plans call for the "Captain's Rulebook" to be available first, with the other products appearing at intervals over the following months. We hope to have this product by Origins, but there are simply too many variables in the equation to promise that. To simplify things, we HAVE decided that the Origins-90 tournament will use the existing Commander's rules. It wouldn't be fair to expect you to find all the changes that fast.

We are making every effort humanly possible to correct every mistake, goof, glitch, imbalance, and inconsistency in the Doomsday rulebook. But once that rulebook is published, it is going to be all but impossible to change anything in it. Unlike the current Commander's Edition (in which addenda was the norm rather than the exception), there isn't supposed to be any addenda for Doomsday.

If you think *ANYTHING* in the Commander's Edition is unclear, incomplete, or just plain "wrong", your last chance to get it changed is fast approaching. We are willing to at least look something over and see if maybe it really is wrong, but *ONLY* if we hear about it as soon as possible (right now would be fine). Use the following format to submit "Requests for Review":

Type on one side of 8.5x11 white paper. Put each rule you want us to look at (G23, F2, H7, etc.) on a separate page. For ships, put ships of one race on the same page. Give a brief justification for your Request, such as a comparison of the BPV of all of the CWs to request a change on any one of them. If you want a reply, include one stamped self-addressed reply envelope for every four pages of Requests. You don't have to ask for a reply, and we cannot guarantee when you will get one.

DELUXE F&E PREVIEW

Shown below are a few of the new and revised counters included in the Deluxe F&E game and conversion kit. (The actual counters have the silhouettes, of course, but it was a bit complicated to include them in this preview.)

DNG 12	3NVS 6 15-19	NCD (4) 7	< Feds Klingons>	3D5V 6 15-19	D5S ◆ 3-7	D6M ✦ 10
3CMV 6 15-18	TGT 4-8	MPFT P◆ 2-7	<Kzintis Roms>	SPF ✦ 7	3SPB 8 16-17	4CNV 12 30
PFW P◆ 4-7	4CV 6 23	DWS ◆ 4-6	<Lyran Hydrans>	3NCV 9 11-18	NSC ◆ 2-7	NPF P◆ 3-7
DD 5	BCH 12	3HV 6 20	<Gorns PDUs>	BDE 24 12	GRP 18 9	RGT 12 6

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On a space-available basis, Starletter will announce events of interest to SFB players, including conventions, PBM campaigns, local tournaments, club meetings, special store events, etc. ADB and TFG make no warranty as to the quality, dependability, reliability, or reputation of the items announced. Send your announcements to ADB c/o TFG. Please get them in as early as possible.

Readers should include a stamped self-addressed envelope when requesting information from one of the events listed here:

➤ LEHICON II, March 2-4 1990: Patrol Tournament (1st Prize \$50 TFG gift certificate), Beginner's Derby, Circle of Death, 500-point Demo Derby. Info from: Mike Griffith, LehiCon II, PO Box 1864, Bethlehem, PA 18016-1864.

➤ OWLCON, 9-11 March: Rice University. SFB Tournament.

➤ MONTGOMERY I, 16-18 March: SFB tournament at The Bookmonger, 1637 East Blvd, Stratford Square Shopping Center, 1/2 mile south of Montgomery Alabama on I-85 (east side of road). Telephone (205) 379-0700.

➤ ORIGINS: 28 June - 1 July, Atlanta Hilton & Towers. We presume that there will be the usual ADB-run tournaments, but arrangements have not been completed at press time. Info from: Origins 90, P O Box 47696, Atlanta GA 30362.

➤ GEN-CON: 9-12 August, Mecca Convention Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There will be official SFB events; details were not finalized at press time. Info from Gen Con, P O Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147.

➤ PBM Campaign, Star Fleet HQ, longest-running SFB campaign system. Send SASE for info to John Berg, 6122 North Artesian, IL 60659. On GENie, contact J.BERG11.

(R2.50) FEDERATION BATTLE FRIGATE (REVISED)

As the General War dragged on, the Federation eventually found itself in the same position as the other races. The "frigate" class was no longer adequate for many combat missions, being too easily destroyed by the more powerful cruisers being fielded. Other races, with weaker frigates, had faced this problem earlier and had solved it by fielding a "war destroyer class." The Federation reluctantly agreed to a similar option.

The Bureau of Ships solicited bids from shipyards in Y174, and two designs were eventually selected as the finalists. One of these was the *Ortega*-class war destroyer (see Starletter #63), the other was the battle frigate designed by Bath Rhodenum Works, builders of the *Burke*-class frigates.

The Battle Frigate was an attempt to pack 3/4 of the firepower of a war cruiser into a frigate hull. Like the *Ortega* class, it used three standard frigate engines to attain the required power and speed. The armament of three photons (also seen in the *Ortega*-class) was controversial, as Federation doctrine had previously mounted these weapons in pairs (with the sole exception of the police corvettes). The phaser armament was considered adequate for the mission.

The first FFB, NCC-471 *Marko Ramius*, was completed in Y175 and was involved (under Captain Syverson) in an extensive "fly off" competition with the *Humberto Ortega*. While the FFB was found to be adequate, it was judged to be too small to have adequate "growth room" for the future addition of new systems and the development of new variants. Even though the design had been rejected, a total of four FFBs were built as part of the original contract (NCC-472 *Gunter Prien*, NCC-473 *Yahachi Tanabe*, and NCC-474 *Joseph Enright*), and the FFB remained in production through the end of the war (in smaller numbers).

(SP1301.0) INTERCEPTOR TRAINING

Y176

by Gregg W. Dieckhaus, Missouri

After the Lyrans developed interceptor technology, they quickly put together a training program in an attempt to gain combat experience with this new technology. The training program consisted of matching a group of new recruits with a group from the original test crews. After several weeks of study, the Cadets were ready for their first mission: A raid on a Hydran convoy. Unfortunately for the Lyrans, they encountered a rather heavily guarded convoy.

(SP1301.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Hydran player and the Lyrans Player.

(SP1301.2) INITIAL SET-UP

HYDRAN: 1 x Hunter Frigate *Vehement*, 1 x Large Q-Ship with 2 x Stinger -1 fighters, and 2 x Large Freighters set up anywhere within three hexes of 1903, WS-III, heading C, speed 8.

LYRAN: Foremost 331st (Provisional) Fighter Squadron (Heavy): 6 x Lynx Interceptors, one each in the following hexes: 0127, 0226, 0327, 0429, 0529, 0629. All WS-III, heading A, speed max.

(SP1301.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed or captured or have disengaged or until turn 20 whichever event occurs first.

(SP1301.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SP1301.41) MAP: Use a floating map.

(SP1301.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: Lyrans INT have warp booster packs, Hydran Fighters and shuttles do not. There are no MRS shuttles or EW fighters in this scenario.

(SP1301.43) COMMANDERS OPTION ITEMS:

(SP1301.431) If using a variant with drone firing Interceptors, the escort and Q-Ship may be allowed T-Bombs as appropriate for their size classes.

(SP1301.432) All drones (if playing a variant) are "medium;" speed 20. Drone armed interceptors can be allowed up to their racial percentage of special drones. Escorts and Q-Ships are only allowed Type-I drones.

(SP1301.44) The Hydrans have the Fusion Refit (E7.5).

(SP1301.45) Hydrans may only disengage in directions A,B,C; Lyrans may only disengage in directions E,D.

(SP1301.46) Five of the interceptors are Green Crews, the sixth has an ACE Crew. The Lyrans player selects one of six Kzinti Drone counters numbered one to six to designate this Interceptor, and places it face down on the board where it can be examined by the escort player after the game or after an interceptor has performed an action that a Green Crew could not perform.

(SP1301.47) The ACE Interceptor can (unless it has been disabled or destroyed) never be more than three hexes away from at least two other interceptors. It can never be more than the third furthest Interceptor from any Freighter in the convoy. If these conditions are not met on any impulse then the Green Crews automatically "Lose heart" [See (SP1301.48) below] due to their teacher's timidity

(SP1301.48) Lyrans Morale: If the ACE crewed Interceptor is destroyed, or out of Warp power (disabled), the green crews might lose heart and disengage. On every turn after this has occurred before energy allocation roll a d6. If the result is a 1 or a 2, the green crews will immediately disengage. 1 is subtracted from the die roll for each Interceptor not counting the ACE that has also been destroyed or disabled. If at any time an unmodified 6 is rolled, the green crews will have held their ground, and no further rolls are made.

(SP1301.49) Any Interceptor that has lost all warp power and managed to repair one or two warp boxes still counts as disabled. If it repairs three Warp Boxes, then it is no longer disabled provided it also has at least one functional weapon (an empty drone rack does not count as a "Functional weapon"). [This is possible under (D14.32) and (D9.7) combined, but would take 11 turns and assumes the Impulse engine is intact.]

(SP1301.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: The Lyrans Player wins if he disables both the Large Freighters by destroying all of their warp. The Hydrans win by preventing this or by capturing one of the Interceptors.

(SP1301.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SP1301.61) Replace the the Lyrans with Klingons or the Hydrans with Kzinti.

(SP1301.62) Reverse the sides and use a Lyrans Convoy and Harbinger Interceptors.

(SP1301.63) Replace the entire convoy with two small freighters and a small Q-ship and a Gendarme, all fighters Stinger-1, and use only three Interceptors.

(SP1301.64) Replace the Large Q-Ship and both Large Freighters with three Large Armed Hydran Freighters.

(SP1301.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following Changes:

(SP1301.71) Replace large Q-ship with a Large Hydran Armed Freighter (favors Lyrans).

(SP1301.72) Allow Hydran to have 1 or 2 T-Bombs on the Q-ship, and/or 1 or 2 T-Bombs on the frigate (favors Hydran).

(SP1301.73) Replace Hunter with Gendarme Pol Corvette and two Stinger-1 fighters (Favors Lyrans).

(SP1301.74) Replace the Q-Ship's Fighters with Stinger-2s (favors Hydran).

(SP1301.75) The Green Crews are Average Crews for all purposes except (SP1301.47) and (SP1301.48) (Favors Lyrans).

(SP1301.8) TACTICS

HYDRAN: You have about four choices.

First is to circle the wagons, go slow, speed 5 or 6 with all shuttles deployed for extra firepower and all excess energy into ECM to make all of your ships harder for the Lyrans to hit. The Frigate will have to stay at high speed to keep the Lyrans from slowing up to use more ECCM (the Green crews only have 3 free points because of that one point of ECM they have to give you, being also short one point of power they only have 8 points to work with and anything you can divert from weapons gives you an edge).

Second Choice is to split up, move the Frigate and the Q-Ship to engage and try to hold the interceptors off till the Freighters can disengage by distance. This is really chancy as the interceptors may go around you to get at the freighters, and they are a lot faster than your Q-ship.

Third is to not slow up and hope that you can pound through their shields with long range fire and count on doing well with warp hits blowing off their engines by exploding their packs.

Fourth is to stop the convoy, use tactical maneuvers to keep bringing new shields around while you try to get the Frigate in behind them to pick them off.

In any case, you should NEVER overload the Fusions except with what batteries you have. A Lyrans seeing your Fusions drain into space is going to be very happy and 12 Gatling shots, 6 Phaser twos, 4 Fighter Fusions, and 9 total Ph-3s (counting the admin shuttles and the fighters) is not a lot to hold off the interceptors if they intend to turn away at range 4 from the convoy on their pass.

Finally, if you get a chance to put a BP on an interceptor, take it. Even if the Lyrans destroy it to keep you from capturing it the risk may be worth the elimination of one of the units. Always remember that mid-turn speed changes may afford you the opportunity to deal more damage than your enemy was expecting.

LYRAN: The Klingon Sabre Dance is your best choice. Do not come into range 8 for any reason except to administer the Coup de Grace since you really can not afford to overload the disruptors anyway, and your ph-2s will demand too much of your power if you fire them. If you really want to have the effect of an overloaded disruptor, just narrow salvo the two you have. Another point is that by not overloading it takes at least two Weapon-A hits to completely remove the punch of your interceptors on any single pass. Speed is critical or you may find yourself caught. Wear them down with concentrated disruptor fire on one target at a time.

Bend with his tactics, but always remember you have the initiative, not the Hydran. If they deploy the shuttles, it might be wise to try to pick them (and the fighters) off first. Do not waste shots on the fighters unless you are as certain as you can be that they will be destroyed, or the deck crews will simply repair them. Always remember the freighters are your goal, killing the Frigate and the Q-Ship will just be fluff, and a major embarrassment if you kill them and the Freighters escape.

Do NOT reveal which PF is the ACE if you can possibly avoid doing so. This essentially means that it should act in all ways as a green interceptor, but should probably avoid being in a conspicuous location which means being very careful of the constraints (SP1301.47) places on its location.

Try not to give the Hydrans too many chances to board one of your interceptors, as the loss is embarrassing and you really can not afford the time to divert your remaining firepower to destroy it. Watch for his mid-turn speed changes to try to catch you, but do not expect to get much value out of them yourself.

Remember, if you have to you can HET on battery power if things get "Tight", but you can only do this safely ONCE, and then only if you have provided yourself with Reserve Warp Power. Do NOT let yourself be tractoried or you can write off that Interceptor.

(SP1301.9) PLAYTESTER COMMENTS: This scenario showcases several interesting rules: Interceptors, Q-ships, and pilot quality.

PLAYTEST REPORT FORMAT

For your report to be useful, it must be typed (computer graphics are ok) and in the following format. Put each ship (or scenario, or rule) on a separate 8.5x11" page. List your name, address, and phone number on every page. List all playtesters who played the scenario or ship at least once.

REPORTS ON SHIPS

1. List the Race, Class, and Project (900-series) number.
2. What mission is this ship intended for? Is it suitable for that mission? Why or Why not?
3. How many times did you test the ship in one-on-one duels? What ships did you test it against? What were the results?
4. How many times did you test the ship in squadron or fleet battles? Describe the fleets or squadrons used. Did the ship perform its intended mission adequately?
5. Does the ship have any hidden flaws? Are power, speed, shields, and weapons appropriate? Is the Sensor/Scanner track typical for that race? Is the ship recommended for publication?

REPORTS ON SCENARIOS

1. List the title and SP control number (e.g. SP601).
2. How many times did you play the scenario? How many times did you play it to completion?
3. Is the scenario unbalanced? To what extent, and toward whom?
4. List any of these terms that apply to the scenario: fun, boring, predictable, stupid, silly, one of the best, just another scenario.
5. Is there a "trick key" that can unlock the scenario and cause it to fall apart? If so, describe it, how it happens, why that is bad, and what you suggest we do about it.
6. List any proposed changes you think should be made.
7. Should this scenario be published? Immediately? Whenever there is space? In conjunction with something else?

REPORTS ON RULES (Can be used for existing rules)

1. List the rule number and the issue of Starletter it was in.
2. Ask any questions about how it works or what it means.
3. List any conflicts with other rules.
4. List any game balance effects or changes in tactics that will be caused by this rule.
5. List any mistakes or typos you found in it.
6. Indicate anything that could be made more clear by an example or further explanation.

NEXT ISSUE OF STARLETTER

The next issue of Starletter will be mailed in mid-May 1990, bringing you more exciting material for the Star Fleet Universe.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscriptions to Starletter cost \$5 for six issues (one year) in the US, Canada, APO, and FPO. Issues are mailed by First Class mail. Overseas subscriptions are \$10 for six issues and are sent by Air Mail. All payments must be in US funds. All checks must be drawn on a US bank and have magnetic code numbers on the bottom. International Postal Money Orders are acceptable.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues #57 to date (four-page format) are available from the TFG spare parts department for \$2 each (US funds). Earlier back issues are not available. These issues include:

- #57: Revised rule (G7.9), Romulan RoyalHawk SSD, Playtest Scenario SP463 Tang-Chi (Kzinti fighters vs Klingons).
- #58: Revised SSDs for Gorn DD, Orion CR, Fed CVA; new SSDs for Klingon G1N, Lyran Bobcat-C.
- #59: Kzinti Combat Tug SSD, Playtest Scenario SP60 Battle of Adanerg, F&E rule (308.8) Starbase Incremental Damage.
- #60: Playtest Scenarios SP636 Mirror Image Monster and SP598 Mating Frenzy (dragons!), F&E rule (308.7) Formations, SFB Historical Scenario cross-reference grid.
- #61: Klingon F5W War Destroyer SSD; Playtest scenario SP502 Mothball Mutiny; F&E Playtest Rules Package.
- #62: Federation Battleship SSD, Playtest Scenario SP1061 Taste of Fire; F&E Micro-Scenario 1001.0 Last Link.
- #63: Federation War Destroyer SSD, Scenarios SP1211 Scout Report; Doomsday announcement; DF&E announcement.

TASK FORCE GAMES SPARE PARTS

Spare parts are available for all Task Force products. Contact Task Force at the above address for a price list. All TFG products are available by mail directly from the company. Write for a catalog.

SFB ON GENie

The very popular Star Fleet Battles bulletin board has been moved to the GENie computer network. Star Fleet is Category 10 on Page 805 Menu item #1. Ask your local computer dealer for info on how to register on GENie. The computer system provides overnight access to the staff and rapid answers to SFB rules questions. Available for downloading are new SSDs, rules, and scenarios. Ongoing discussions of new rules proposals give you a chance to express your feelings before the product is printed.

TASK FORCE GAMES
14922 CALVERT ST
VAN NUYS, CA 91411

