

STARLETTER #67

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 1990

TASK FORCE IN TEXAS

Task Force Games has returned to its birthplace of Amarillo, Texas. Task Force President John Olsen said in an exclusive interview that this would make production more efficient as the company and its printers would be in the same location.

Mr Olsen also said: "This will allow Task Force to get more work out of ADB. If the Two Steves don't meet their deadlines, or if they even mention the word 'addenda,' I'll ..."

(More of this interview next issue, if space is available.)

SCANNERS REPORT

★ CAPTAIN'S LOG #8 was delayed slightly when the artist didn't finish the cover (due to an illness), but it is on the press now and should be in stores soon. It is an 80-page special issue for \$9.95 (stock #5701). All of your favorite departments have been expanded (Why, Example, Battleforce, four entire pages of Term Papers!) and new ones have been created (Ask Kommodore Ketrick, Decisions of the Board of Proposals). There are nine scenarios, two fiction stories, more F&E material than ever before (including playtest counters for SCSs), and two new ships. Ask your store manager to get you a copy.

★ CAPTAIN'S RULEBOOK: Should appear in late October or early November. Stock #5500. \$49.95. Includes binder and rulebooks from Basic Set, Advanced Missions, C1, C2.

★ ADVANCED MISSIONS: Boxed expansion to Basic Set. Stock #5502. \$29.95. Should appear in November. (Old Volume II & III rules, except new races).

★ CAPTAIN'S MODULE C1: Lyrans, Hydrans, and WYNs. Stock #5601. \$14.95. 100 pages of rules & SSDs, plus counters. Should appear in November.

★ CAPTAIN'S MODULE C2: Andros, Neo-Tholians, and ISC. Stock #5602. \$14.95. 100 pages of rules & SSDs, plus counters. Should appear by December.

★ CAPTAIN'S MODULE S1: SCENARIO BOOK I is now in preparation. It will contain the best of the scenarios from Nexus magazine and the early issues of Captain's Log.

TASK FORCE NEWS

❖ MINIATURES: Task Force is considering a return of the Starline 2200 miniatures line to the stores. The challenge is to overcome the problems of the old line. The gamers said that 60 packs of ships were not enough to cover the hull types they needed, while the stores said that 60 was too many to carry. The solution TFG is considering is to have a dozen "fleet pack" boxed sets, one for each race (plus Federation carrier groups, B10s, and maybe a second Romulan pack). Each pack would have a DN, a tug, and an assortment of cruisers, destroyers, and frigates. Because the packaging of a miniature costs more than the miniature, you'll get more bang for the buck. The most popular ships would be offered individually in blister packs. Please take a moment to drop TFG a line and indicate your interest in miniatures and what new ships you think are needed.

❖ ART: Task Force plans to use a lot more art in future products. If you are an artist, drop us a line with samples.

HOW CAN I HELP ADB DO MORE PRODUCTS?

This is the most-asked question. It has one simple answer. Send in more playtest reports, reports that are properly formatted and represent detailed and careful playing. We have plenty of material, but the problem in getting it published is testing and evaluation. Those who prove they can do this with Starletter scenarios are often invited to take on more challenging tasks.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On a space-available basis, Starletter will announce events of interest to SFB players, including conventions, local tournaments, PBM campaigns, club meetings, special store events, etc. ADB and TFG make no warranty as to the quality, reliability, or reputation of any item announced. Send your announcements to Amarillo Design Bureau, PO Box 8759, Amarillo, TX 79114. Please get them in as early as possible.

Readers should include a stamped self-addressed envelope when requesting information from listed events.

➤ ORIGINS 91, 4-7 July 1991, Baltimore (Md) Convention Center. National Wargaming Convention, hundreds of events, thousands of players, 200 dealer booths. National SFB Championships are scheduled for this convention.

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

➤ TACTICON, 14-16 Sept, Denver, Colorado. Dozens of events including SFB. Info from Denver Gamers Association, P O Box 440058, Aurora CO 80044.

➤ LEHICON III: 21-23 Sept 90. SFB events include Patrol Tournament and Beginners Tournament. Info from Mike Griffith, LehiCon, P O Box 1864, Bethlehem, PA 18016-1864. Contact J.HAMMER1 on GENie for SFB tournaments.

➤ MILE HIGH CON, 27-28 Oct, Denver, CO. SFB events. Sheraton, 6th and Union, Lakewood. Info from 10360 E Jewell #95, Denver CO 80231.

➤ COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS XVI: 5-7 Oct 90, Albany NY. Info from Schenectady Wargamers Association, P O Box 9429, Schenectady NY 12309. On GENie, contact J.HAMMER1.

➤ ENCOUNTER 90, 2-4 Nov 90, Holiday Inn, Amarillo Texas. Info from Games Plus, P O Box 50513, Amarillo TX 79159. Events include Car Wars, Star Wars, Paranoia, Warhammer 40K miniatures, AD&D, SFB, etc.

WE NEED RACIAL BACKGROUND DATA!

We are planning to have a much expanded background section for all races in Modules R1, R2, R3, and R4 next spring. Rather than sit down and create this material ourselves, we thought we would ask for your suggestions on history, genetics, religion, culture, heroes, myths, home life, officer ranks, military careers, and so forth. Anything from fully-develop backgrounds to a few notes or comments will be considered, but all material must be typed (use the format for reports on page 4 of this issue) and submitted (to ADB) separately from other materials. If you wish a reply, include a stamped self-addressed envelope. (We might manage a brief evaluation, but remember that we are busy with Doomsday!) Submissions cannot be returned.

NEW SHIP FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

(R4.75) ROMULAN FLAMEHAWK: Designed to provide the Romulans with a heavy cruiser-sized mauler after the end of Falcon production (and due to the shortage of KRMs).

The FlameHawk is, like the SparrowHawk-F, a permanent conversion. It is subject to shock (just as soon as we write the shock rules!). As with the SparrowHawk-F, the batteries and warp engine on each side can only be used for that mauler, although of course the maulers can be fired simultaneously and the quarter-turn delay rule applies to the mauler power source, not the mauler itself.

Other data is the same as the FireHawk (e.g. spare shuttles). F&E: 10 + / 5. Replaces (or converted from) FireHawk.

NEW SCENARIO FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

(SP1021.0) ATTRITION ASSAULT

(Y176)

By John Ross, Montana

In Y176, Federation forces began driving a wedge into Coalition held space and separating the Klingons from the Romulans. At about this time, the Federation began redeploying bases in several strategic locations to support their operations. The Klingon high command wanted these bases destroyed but realized that base assaults were costly in terms of ships and played directly into the Alliance counter-ship strategy. This forced the Klingons to turn to their carrier groups to try to take the bases out with well-timed raids. It was thought that this would limit their losses in capital ships. The Klingons tried several things to make their relatively meager carrier groups worthy of base assaults, including the deployment of heavy fighters on carriers slated for base attack missions. However, the Klingons often made the mistake of attacking too many targets with not enough ships. These battles were often very close and resulted in a higher loss rate of carriers than the Klingons expected.

(SP1021.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Federation player and the Klingon player.

(SP1021.2) INITIAL SET-UP:

FEDERATION: BATS [see (SP1021.46) for special rules] with 1 HBM (6xF-18) in 3811, facing A, no rotation, WS-I.

LTT+ with repair pod docked to module #1 of the BATS, facing the module, WS-I.

2xF-S docked to modules #2 and #3, facing their respective modules, WS-I.

GS(CVL)+ (6xF-18, MRS-B) in hex 4201, heading E, speed max, WS-II.

KLINGON: D5V (6xZ-H, MRS-B), AD5, E4AB, enter turn 1 in any hexes between 0130-0116 inclusive, heading at option of the player, speed max, WS-III.

(SP1021.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to once side have been destroyed or captured, or have disengaged.

(SP1021.4) SPECIAL RULES:

(SP1021.41) Use a floating map.

(SP1021.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles have WBPs.

(SP1021.421) The MRS shuttles are deployed as indicated in (SP1021.2). These shuttles must still be purchased under (SP1021.431) if used. Players may disregard these if they do not wish to use those rules.

(SP1021.422) No EW fighters can be used in the basic scenario. If using EW fighters in a variation, one of the fighters on the carrier may be an EW fighter. If not using EW fighters, it is a standard fighter of the type.

(SP1021.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SP1021.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SP1021.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g. T-bombs, extra marines, etc.) up to 20% of its combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions. Note that whatever is spent here counts in the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.2) as victory points for the enemy.

(SP1021.432) All drones are "medium;" speed-20.

Each ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points.

(SP1021.44) The BATS has 35 box shields. All units have received the Y175 refit, and the GSC (CVL) has the AWR refit.

(SP1021.46) The base is in the process of construction. The Klingons are attacking the base at a critical period when the power couplings to many systems had been disengaged for fail-safe calibration. The AWR, cargo, ph-3s, ADD, bridge, shuttle, battery, hull, and all systems in the HBM are operational. In addition, one tractor in each module, the central scout channel, and one photon torpedo are operational. All sensors and scanners are operational, but each damage control box is treated as a "2." The shields are operational. Only operating boxes can perform functions, but non-operating boxes (e.g. phaser-4) may be damaged. Non-operational boxes may be activated by the standard repair procedures in (G17.0) as if they had been destroyed, and a destroyed non-operating box that is repaired is considered to have been activated. The repair tug can only repair the central core and the pod that it is docked to.

(SP1021.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: Use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.2). The BATS is worth its full economic BPV. The Klingons suffer no penalties for disengaging after they have destroyed the BATS.

(SP1021.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again while making one or more of the following changes:

(SP1021.61) The Romulans could attack the base. Use SparrowHawk-B (16xG-II), 2 x SkyHawk-EA.

(SP1021.62) Use 12xZ-V on the D5V.

(SP1021.63) Replace the Klingon force with a F5V (4 x Z-H) and an E4AB. Delete all units from the Federation force except the BATS, with the HBM and its fighters and one freighter. The freighter is a repair ship and performs the tug's mission.

(SP1021.64) Conduct the operation without fighters on the Klingon side. Replace the Klingon force with a D5L, MD5, and D5.

(SP1021.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SP1021.71) Change the D5V to a D7V.

(SP1021.72) Replace the freighters with armed freighters.

(SP1021.73) Add a D5B to the Klingon force.

(SP1021.74) Add an MD5 mauler to the Klingon force.

(SP1021.75) Assume the Klingon carrier group had fought in a previous battle (the CED step in F&E). Delete the E4AB.

(SP1021.76) Increase or decrease the number of operational systems on the base.

(SP1021.8) TACTICS:

FEDERATION: You have superior electronic warfare. The Klingon has few long-range weapons, so use your EW to protect your ships and your fighters. Concentrate your fire on the D5V and its fighters. The escorts alone cannot destroy the base if it has enough functional weapons and power systems to operate them. Have many wild weasels available, but do not overlook the advantages of a scatter-pack or two. Do not have your CVL stray too far from the base, or the fighters stray too far from their EW support platforms.

KLINGON: It will take several turns before the heavy weapons on the base become a threat. Try to get the LTT first, as its destruction will delay activating the base's systems and could give you that crucial edge in firepower. Engage and destroy the CVL and the Federation fighters before attacking the base. Once these units have been dealt with, you will hopefully have enough fire power to destroy the relatively toothless base over several turns. Try to preserve your carrier and the fighters since they are your best units with which to attack the base. Do not forget the possibility of trading some of the ADDs of the escorts for type-VI drones. These could be loaded into scatter-packs to help defend against both the Federation fighters and their drones.

PLAYTEST REPORT FORMAT

We encourage all SFB players to submit reports on new ships and scenarios. *We can't print new products without playtest reports.* Anyone can playtest; your first assignment is in this very issue! For your report to be used, it must be typed or computer printed on 8.5x11 paper. Each rule, ship, and/or scenario report must be on a separate page. Put your name, address, and a list of playtesters on every page.

If you include a stamped self-addressed envelope, we'll send you another assignment, or we'll tell you what needs to be improved in your report before you can do another one. More assignments are available on GENie; you can report via Email.

All reports should be sent to Amarillo Design Bureau, Post Office Box 8759, Amarillo, TX 79114 (or to ADB\$ on GENie).

REPORTS ON SHIPS

1. List the Race, Class, and Project (900) number.
2. What mission is the ship intended for? Is it suitable? Why?
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 it in fleet battles? Describe the fleets and results. Did the ship perform its mission?
5. Are there any hidden flaws? Are power, speed, and systems adequate to the mission?
6. Is the ship recommended for publication?

REPORTS ON SCENARIOS

1. List the title and the SP number.
2. How many times did you play it? How many to completion? We require at least two playings and prefer more.
3. Is the scenario unbalanced? If so, toward whom? How much?
4. Pick one: Fun, boring, one of the best, unworkable, average.
5. Is there a "trick key" that can unlock the scenario and cause it to fall apart? If so, describe it and how you solved it.
6. List any proposed changes, variants, or balance factors.
7. Assign Priority for publication: Immediately, soon, whenever, never, in a particular product.

REPORTS ON RULES

1. List the rule number and what product the rule is in.
2. Ask your questions about how it works or what it means.
3. List any conflicts with other rules.
4. Describe any changes in balance or tactics it causes.
5. List any typos or mistakes.
6. Indicate anything that should be added, deleted, or clarified.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

STARLETTER is written by Amarillo Design Bureau and published by Task Force Games. *STARLETTER* is Copyright © 1990 Amarillo Design Bureau. Subscriptions to *STARLETTER* cost \$5 for six issues (one year) in the US, Canada, APO, and FPO. Issues are mailed First Class Mail. Overseas subscriptions are \$10 for six issues 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. International Post Money Orders are also acceptable. Send subscriptions to Task Force Games. Make checks payable to TASK FORCE GAMES.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues #57 to date are available from TFG Spare Parts for \$2 each (US). These issues included:

- #57: Romulan RoyalHawk SSD, SP463 Tang Chi.
- #58: Revised SSDs for Gorn DD, Orion CR, Fed CVA; new SSDs for Lyran Bobcat-C, Klingon G1N.
- #59: Kzinti Combat Tug SSD, SP60 Battle of Adanerg.
- #60: SP636 Mirror Image Monsters, SP598 Mating Frenzy (space dragons!), Historical Scenario Cross Reference.
- #61: Klingon F5W SSD, SP502 Mothball Mutiny.
- #62: Federation Battleship SSD: SP1061 Taste of Fire; F&E Micro Scenario 1001 Last Link.
- #63: Federation DW SSD; SP1211 Scout Report.
- #64: Federation FFB SSD; SP1301 Interceptor Training.
- #65: Lyran Mountain Lion SSD; SP1311 Roar of the Golden Cub.
- #66: Kzinti Scout-Drone frigate SSD; SP70 Settle their hash

TASK FORCE GAMES SPARE PARTS

Spare parts are available for all Task Force Products. Contact Task Force for a price list. All TFG products are available by mail from TFG. Write for a catalog and price list.

SFB ON GENie COMPUTER NETWORK

Talk to the Star Fleet Staff directly by computer modem. Star Fleet is Category 10 on Page 805 Menu Item #1. Ask your local computer dealer or club for info on GENie. The computer system provides overnight access to the staff and the answers to your game questions. New SSDs, scenarios, and playtest modules are available for downloading. Join in ongoing discussions of new rules and ships, or propose your own. Weekly real-time conference with SFB staff. You can contact "TFG\$" or "ADB\$" directly via Electronic Mail on GENie.

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