

Report from GenCon Indianapolis 2007

By Jeff Laikind

Although GenCon Indianapolis is one of the largest game conventions in the country, *Star Fleet Battles* has not been able to maintain a tournament there. However, there are enough players interested playing squadron and free-for-all games that Mark James and Jeff Laikind have been able to keep an active presence with *Star Fleet Battles* miniatures scenarios. Altogether, almost 40 players entered *Star Fleet Battles* scenario events.

There appears to be an audience for *Federation Commander*, if anyone is interested in running that as well. ADB, Inc., is willing to provide prize support for such an event; contact Steve Cole.

Six scenarios were run in 2007, with the squadron actions in the mornings and free-for-alls in the evening. All of the scenarios were played on 56 x 45 hex miniatures map with an elevated support. Mark provided excellent miniatures, as usual all of the scenarios.

RALLY POINT X-RAY

Thursday morning of GenCon had "Rally Point X-Ray" with 12 players. This scenario has damaged Coalition and Alliance ships arriving in random locations at the same ringed gas giant to rendezvous with repair freighters that are hidden in the rings.

In one corner of the map, a Klingon F5W and FWC tangled with a Kzinti DW and DWL. The Kzintis managed to destroy the F5W, and the surviving FWC ran to link up with larger Coalition ships.

In a second corner, a Romulan SKA and a Lyran DWA fought a Federation DWA and Gorn BDD. The Federation DWA made the mistake of using all of its phasers to destroy Romulan plasma torpedoes, only to be destroyed from behind by the Lyran DWA. Meanwhile, the BDD's plasma torpedoes damaged the SKA, which ran into the rings. However, the SKA eventually found the Alliance repair freighter.

On the other side of the map, a Tholian CWH and Kzinti BC ended up facing four Coalition cruisers: the Lyrans with a CCH and a CW, and the Klingons with a D7B and a D5. The other Alliance cruisers, the Federation CB and NCL were too far away on Turn 1 to make an initial impact. The Kzinti BC damaged the Lyran CCH, but was the pair of Lyrans managed to destroy the Kzinti. Meanwhile, the Tholian CWH fought the Klingons, damaging the D7 in exchange for damage to itself.

On Turn #2, the arriving NCL nearly destroyed the D7 before turning into the rings, where it eventually found the Coalition repair freighter. The Tholian was finished off by the D5, before the D5 was itself lightly damaged by the nearly ineffective Federation CB. The CB ran off, but was hit by the Lyran cruisers.

The Coalition repair ship was destroyed by the Fed NCL and Kzinti DWL, while the Lyran DW and Romulan SKA dealt with the Alliance repair ship.

Overall, it appeared that the Coalition had an advantage when the scenario ended on time.

THE FOG OF WAR

Friday morning's scenario was "The Fog of War", which was "One Corner of Hell", from *Captain's Log #26*, with regular warships replacing the carrier groups. Gorn and Romulan fleets, each at Weapons Status 0, proceeded on a collision course in an Ion Storm with 10 point gravity waves. This scenario ended abruptly after Turn #1, when several of the Gorn players had to leave. Interestingly enough, one of the Gorn players perfectly simulated the junior bridge crew in charge of his ship when he launched two plasma torpedoes that were almost immediately hit by a gravity wave and lost 10 hexes worth of warhead. "I didn't know it would do that!"

GET THE JUGGERNAUT

Saturday morning was a highly anticipated scenario: Get the Juggernaut. This scenario was run as a "demolition derby." Each player chose a side, Alliance or Coalition, and then randomly drew a card indicating either a cruiser or a pair of smaller ships to fly. For example, the Federation combinations available included a CAR, an NCL, a DD+ with an FFG, an National Guard GCA, and several other ships. If a player's ship was crippled, he had the option of immediately disengaging or continuing until destroyed. When a ship was destroyed or disengaged, the player received a new draw to start at the edge of the map on the following turn. There were over 40 Galactic ships available to fight the Juggernaut.

Two planets were located off the floating map, one for each side, as targets for the Juggernaut. The two Galactic sides were operating under an informal cease-fire, which could be broken at any time. To add to the possibilities, each sides ships also included Tholian and Orion ships, that were "neutral": the ships were supposed to attack the Juggernaut, but could attack ships from the other side without breaking the cease-fire.

Oh, and the Juggernaut was a movement cost 2 behemoth, with a forest of Phaser-4s, 6 Shriek missiles, a handful of T-Bombs, and a 200 point rotating shield. Ron Brimeyer, who had originally requested this kind of scenario, was asked to run the Juggernaut and given several weeks to prepare for the event.

Ron maneuvered the Juggernaut skillfully. He went after Alliance initially and hit a couple of ships, and then turned into the Coalition. After tweaking a couple of Coalition ships, Ron turned back toward the Alliance. The Alliance players weren't able to get together a good strike force, and attacked piecemeal, losing several ships. On the other hand, the Coalition managed to get a decent group of ships together for mutual support.

Toward the end of the game, several of the Coalition players realized that their fleet was in better shape than the Alliance, and attacked the Alliance. Two F5s attacked a Federation GCA while a pair of Romulan BH's attacked a Fed DD. Meanwhile, some players, including Orion LR and DW and the Klingon LD4, LF4, and D5 remembered to kill the Juggernaut. Mary Deike, commanding the LD4 and LF4 received a \$5 ADB gift certificate for scoring the most internals on the Juggernaut.

Altogether, the Juggernaut took out 12 ships, including several of the cruisers, while taking only 22 internals. In

hind sight, a smaller, move cost 1.5 Juggernaut may have been a better size.

CANISTERS OF CONVENTION CARNAGE

The free-for-all scenarios in the evenings were well attended and went very well. The Thursday evening scenario was Andy Vancil's "Canisters of Convention Carnage" which can be found on the discussion board www.starfleetgames.com/discus if you want to look it up. Based on previous experience, the original 104 canisters were expanded by another 52 cards. Twelve players ran standard tournament ships through an asteroid field, picking up canisters that contained victory points, items, map altering effects, and ship altering conversions. The contents of the canisters ran from good to bad, including such things as a Moray Eel, Legendary Weapon's Officer, expanded firing arcs, and turn mode H.

Tim LaRoche was awarded \$10 in ADB gift certificates for scoring the most points.

A couple of amusing things happened in the scenario. One of the new cards turned the map into a nebula for 16 impulses, which is when the Andromedan Krait managed to cascade itself to death. Another player dropped a "Pulsar in a Can" and attempted to run away from it, only to realize that a different card's effect "Sucks to be You" caused him to act as a black hole and drag the pulsar along with him. Fortunately for his ship, a temporal glitch jumped the clock to the end of the turn and the pulsar ultimately had no effect.

GIANTS AMONG MEN

Giants Among Men, the classic big ship game originated two decades ago by the Dayton Star Fleet Council, was played on Friday night and had 14 players. This scenario pitted two Battleships (Federation and Klingon) and 12 Heavy Battlecruisers against each other. The BCHs are assigned as Good, Evil or Neutral, but their alignment is drawn randomly and secretly after the positions are determined. Neutral BCHs receive no points for damaged to BBs, and are supposed to outscore the Good and Evil BBs.

Highlights from the scenario: Early on, the Frax BCH launched a flight of drones, headed generally toward the B10 and a Seltorian DNL. As the drones passed the Seltorian, the DNL used its labs to identify their targets. The B10 immediately demanded that the DNL reveal his information "or else." Grudgingly, the information was revealed, but the Seltorian turned out to be Evil, anyway. Role playing is essential in this scenario. The Andromedan Exploiter and Klingon C7 also turned out to be evil, and quickly linked up with the B10 and the Seltorian, which the Federation BB foolishly attacked by itself.

The Federation BB came under attack by the combined Evil forces, including a Federation BCG that crept up and blasted it at range 2. It finally fell to an overrun by the Andromedan, and blew up, filling the EXPs rear panels. The full panels proved to be the Andromedan's undoing, as the Good LDR CCH attacked it, and caused a panel cascade, blowing it up.

Elsewhere on the map, the Neutral WYN BCH spent almost the entire game chasing a Tholian NCH, which also turned out to Neutral. The Neutral Romulan KR cloaked

out Turn #1, and spent much of the game hiding, before unclocking to savage the FRAX.

Ron Brimeyer, commander of the LDR CCH, was awarded \$10 in ADB gift certificates for first place in points, and Tim Longacre's Andromedan gained \$5.

ASSASSINS

Saturday night was Assassins, which is also known as Bounty Hunter or Assigned Target. The number of players was smaller than usual, possibly because of the draw from the Juggernaut earlier. Each player used a Heavy Battlecruiser or equivalent from the Giants Among Men scenario. The center of the map had a black hole, but on Impulse #17, the map became completely wrap-around for all purposes (including fire).

Mark James flew one of Ken Burnside's playtest ships, a Nicozean CA. Although it appeared at first to be much less capable than the other ships, it turned out to be more than any single ship could handle by itself. Jeff Laikind flew a Seltorian DNL, which had the misfortune of being targeted by the Andromedan EXP. Once it displaced behind the Seltorian, the gig was up. The DNL decided to exit early by attacking its own target, the LDR CCH, which blew it up.

Other interesting highlights included the Klingon C7 conducting *five* hit-and-run raids on the Lyran BCH, destroying a Disrupter and three ESGs. The LDR managed a mutual kill with the Romulan KRW (a D7W upgrade of the KRL). The LDR almost killed the Romulan, but instead, 120 points of Romulan plasma and Romulan fire blew up the LDR, which took out the Romulan with its explosion. *Payback is a BCH!*

CONCLUSION

All in all, everyone had a good time, and should be looking forward to GenCon 2008.