



STARLETTER #81

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

January 1993

\$2

**TASK
FORCE
GAMES™**

CAPTAIN'S LOG #11 AT PRINTERS

Incredibly, Captain's Log #11 has been completed and sent to press only six months after Captain's Log #10. With CL#12 set for August, this marks a shift to a semi-annual schedule.

NEW SHIP FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

(R4.T2) ROMULAN TOURNAMENT EAGLE: Those Romulan players who wish to explore the tactics of the older Eagle series of ships in a tournament environment might wish to consider this ship instead of the current Tournament FireHawk.

Note that this ship *does* have all three PPTs, *does* have 30-box shields all the way around, and *does not* have an NSM. Note that it *does* have the standard 5 batteries of tournament ships.

Use of this ship is not currently sanctioned. Tournament judges who wish to experiment with it in a sanctioned tournament must obtain permission to do so from ADB. Playtest reports from an unsanctioned tournament environment are most welcome. Some judges have run a separate "experimental" tournament among those players eliminated in the sanctioned tournament. This ship would be highly appropriate for such use. Such events are a good way to keep players busy, and those who no longer have a chance at a rated ace patch can at least feel like they are contributing to the development of the tournament system.

SCANNERS REPORT

- ★ CAPTAIN'S LOG #11: At the printers, release soon!
- ★ MODULE D3: BOOMS & SAUCERS contains the SSDs for all separated booms and saucers, and more. Feb 93.
- ★ CARRIER WAR is now set for March 93.
- ★ MODULE T: TOURNAMENTS is set for April 93.
- ★ MODULE S2: SCENARIOS #2 is set for May 93.
- ★ MODULE C3 (New Races) is set for Origins 93.
- ★ CAPTAIN'S LOG #12 is set for GenCon 93.

TASK FORCE NEWS

- ⊕ TASK FORCE UK is now open. European players can contact them at Task Force Games Limited, PO Box 5, Heanor, Derbyshire, DE75 7XL, England.
- ⊕ STARFIRE shipped December 7.
- ⊕ PRIME DIRECTIVE (SFB RPG) has been delayed so that we can pack more stuff into the initial product, but will still ship during 1993.
- ⊕ TIME LORD – THE DOCTOR WHO Role Playing Game has been shipped.

FEDERATION & EMPIRE

BATTLESHIPS FROM MODULE R5 (#81)

FED	ROM	KZINTI	GORN	THOL	HYD	LYR
BB 4 20	KCN 4 20	BB 4 20	BB 3 20	NBB 2W 20	MNR 9 18	BB P 20
BB 2 10	KCN 2 10	BB 2 10	BB 1 10	NBB 1 10	MNR 4 9	BB P 10

Construction uses the rules in (436.0) but non-Klingon races cannot begin battleship construction until Y174. As an experimental alternative to the die rolls in (436.0), a battleship costs 36 points, with a maximum of 9 points paid in each turn. A minimum of 1 point must be paid in each turn, or the total points paid to date for that hull is reduced by the result of one die roll. Rules for the Tholian Web Caster (W) are not available yet.

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.

➤ NORTHEAST WARS 1 (Mischief in the Mountains): 19-21 March, Sheraton Hotel, Burlington VT. Sanctioned SFB tournament with plaque for First Place. Other events. Info from Chris Meyer, Quarterstaff Games, 152 Church St, Burlington VT 05401 802-863-3666.

➤ HEXACON III, 19 June 93, Scottsdale AZ. Sanctioned SFB. Info Don Harrington, 3505 E Campbell Ave #14, Phoenix AZ 85018, or call (602) 956-1344.

➤ ORIGINS 93 will be in Fort Worth Texas 4 July weekend.

➤ GENCON 93, 19-22 August. Mostly RPGs, but does include the largest SFB event outside of Origins. Info from P O Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

➤ CON-DOR, 5-7 March 93, San Diego, Town & Country Hotel. Sanctioned SFB tournament. Info from PO Box 15771, San Diego CA 92175. Prime Directive Demo.

➤ TFG UK is looking for a few good men to demonstrate Star Fleet Battles in gaming stores throughout the United Kingdom. If you are an experienced Captains Edition player, and would like to run games in your local games store for us, please call Malcolm Luff at 0773-534363 or write c/o PO Box 5, Heanor, Derbyshire DE75 7XL for more info.

➤ ORCCON 16, 12-15 Feb, LA Airport Hyatt. Sanctioned SFB. Info: Strategicon, P.O. Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849

ASK KOMMODORE KETRICK

Exactly when do Swordfish drones fire? *Swordfish drones commit to fire during movement when their firing parameters are met. The fire is resolved in 6D2 Direct-Fire Weapons Stage. During the interim between commit and fire, the Swordfish could be prevented from firing by various means (e.g. turned off by special sensors) or distracted (e.g. by a WW) to a different target.*

Can I target a drone on an ESG field so that the explosion will damage the field? *Sorry, no. The ESG can't be targeted.*

STAR FLEET WARLORD

Task Force and Amarillo Design have contracted with the Agents of Gaming to run a Play-By-Mail campaign system based on Star Fleet Battles.

In the years after the Andromedan War, the various galactic governments authorized corporations (some government-owned, some private) to colonize and explore the Greater Magellanic Cloud. These corporations were allowed to purchase General War Surplus warships for "local defense against pirates." They quickly used them to make war against each other.

Star Fleet Warlord is a combat/economic/exploration game system. Players search for resources, then try to capture and hold them. (Some players find it easier to conquer another player's resources than to find their own.)

Want to give it a try, or just have a look-see? For a FREE rulebook (with no obligation to play), send \$5 for postage and handling to: Agents of Gaming, P.O. Box 31571, Dayton, OH 45431-0571. Or send E-mail to B.GRAW1 GEnie. You can call AoG at (513)256-2432 weekdays from 9-5.

(SP1411.0) THE CAPTAIN'S ROUND

(Y172) *by Tom Chartoff, New Jersey*

After years of abducting starships and their crews and pitting them against each other in the arena, the Masters grew bored. They had wanted to test the skill of the captains of the vessels, but soon found that a poor captain in a good ship could beat an average captain in a poor ship. In an effort to alleviate their boredom (and have something new to bet on), they developed THE CAPTAIN'S ROUND.

(SP1411.1) **NUMBER OF PLAYERS:** 4-6; each is the captain of a ship.

(SP1411.2) INITIAL SET UP

TERRAIN: The map is surrounded by a tournament barrier (P17.0).

FOUR PLAYERS: Set up one ship in each hex as follows: 0202 heading C, 0228 heading B, 4002 heading E, and 4028 heading F.

FIVE PLAYERS: Set up one ship in each hex as follows: 3828 heading F, 0628 heading B, 0204 heading C, 2201 heading D, and 4106 heading E.

SIX PLAYERS: Set up one ship in each hex as follows: 4229 heading F, 2229 heading A, 0130 heading B, 0101 heading C, 2301 heading D, and 4201 heading E.

In all cases, all ships will be speed 0, WS-III.

YEAR: Players must select a year for the scenario, as this will define available ships, refits, fighters, weapons, etc. Y172 is assumed if no alternative selection is made.

(SP1411.3) **LENGTH OF SCENARIO:** The scenario continues until only one uncrippled ship remains. If all ships are crippled, the scenario continues until only one ship remains.

(SP1411.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SP1411.41) **MAP:** The map is fixed; it does not float. No unit can leave the map except by being destroyed.

(SP1411.42) **SHUTTLES AND PFs:** The presence of warp booster packs (J5.0) on any shuttles will depend on the year in which the scenario is set. They were introduced for fighters in Y180.

(SP1411.421) If using the optional MRS shuttles, each ship will have one MRS shuttle.

(SP1411.422) No EW fighters will be used in this scenario.

(SP1411.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SP1411.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SP1411.431) Each ship can have the number of T-bombs allowed for its size class if the players decide to use this option. Each ship is also allowed two commando boarding parties, again if the players agree to their use. No other Commander's Option Items, other than those specified here and in (SP1411.421) above and (SP1411.432) below, can be used.

(SP1411.432) All drone speeds are available to the players subject to year set for the scenario. It is suggested that "medium," i.e., speed-20, drones are used.

Each drone-armed ship can have any number of special drones without regard to racial percentages if the players agree to their use. Since any given player may at any time be in the ship with the drones, this will not necessarily confer any player with an overwhelming advantage.

(SP1411.44) **REFITS:** If not using standard tournament ships, players will have to determine the refit status of the ships they choose to use subject to their availability in the year selected for the scenario.

(SP1411.45) **CAPTAINS:** The Masters are rearranging the captains periodically through the use of their powers. Captains are moved between ships at random while all the ships are placed in a kind of stasis. This way the advantages of any one ship will be nullified since any one captain might both command and face it during a single session. The following rules reflect this:

(SP1411.451) For each ship on the board at the start of the scenario, place another counter of that ship into a cup. At the start of each turn, including the first turn, before Energy Allocation, each player draws a counter from the cup. This is the ship he will command for that turn.

(SP1411.452) When a ship is destroyed, take the counter off of the board, but leave its double in the cup. The player who draws the double of the destroyed ship will sit out that turn (the first such player could run the charts for the other players).

(SP1411.453) After ships are switched, the old owner must inform the new owner of guards, PPTs used, drones available, etc. This information is privileged between the two commanders involved and is not revealed to the other players. A good way to do this is to record all such information on either the SSD or the Energy Allocation Form or both when you give these to the new captain of the ship.

(SP1411.454) If a ship is destroyed, all shuttles and fighters belonging to that ship are removed and no points are scored for them under (SP1411.5).

(SP1411.455) The following rules are not used: boarding party combat (except hit-and-run raids and guards), crew units, ship explosions, mutiny, cloaking devices, hidden T-bombs (even if rolled out a shuttle bay), catastrophic damage, ship separation (even by a Neo-Tholian ship), self-destruction, or critical hits.

(SP1411.46) **SUGGESTED SHIPS:** Use tournament ships. If you don't want to use tournament ships, these ships will work: Fed CC+, Klingon D7C, Romulan FireHawk-A, Kzinti CC, Gorn CCF, Tholian CC with web caster refit, Orion CA (photons in center option mounts, gatling phasers in the wings), Hydran Lord Marshal (6xStinger-2s), Lyran Bengal Tiger CC, WYN AuxBC (hellbores in the center option mounts and gatling phasers in the side options), ISC CA. Do NOT use any Andro ship.

(SP1411.47) **RESTRICTIONS:** This scenario cannot be played with less than four players. Andromedans should not be used unless all four ships are Andromedan, in which case there would be no point to the scenario.

(SP1411.5) **VICTORY CONDITIONS:** Players score points as follows:

Type of hit	Inflicted	Taken
Each shield hit	+1/4	- 1/4
Each internal hit	+1	- 1
Each excess damage hit	+2	- 2
Each shuttle or fighter destroyed	+1	- 1
Ship destroyed	+5	- 5

(SP1411.51) If two ships fire at the same target simultaneously, the ship closest to the target scores its damage first. If both ships are equally distant, roll a die; the player with the higher(est) result shoots last. (This is important in determining points.)

(SP1411.52) Damage scored by seeking weapons is credited to the owning player at the time of impact. (The player owning the seeking weapon at the time of impact).

(SP1411.53) Damage scored by shuttles/fighters is credited to the owning player.

(SP1411.54) Damage scored by mines is credited to the player owning the ship that laid it at the time of detonation.

(SP1411.55) The player with the highest net total of points wins.

(SP1411.6) **VARIATIONS:** The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SP1411.61) Switch the captains after Energy Allocation.

(SP1411.62) Roll a die after the Post Combat Segment of every fourth impulse. If the die is a 6, switch captains at that point.

(SP1411.63) Switch captains after the Post Combat Segment of every 16th impulse.

(SP1411.64) Replace the command cruiser/heavy cruisers with light/war cruisers, destroyers, or even frigates.

(SP1411.7) **BALANCE:** The scenario cannot be balanced since the captains are constantly being changed. However, if players note that a particular ship is winning often, they might subtract some T-bombs from it, or reduce the size of its plasma torpedoes, or take away some of its drones. The players must work this out for themselves.

(SP1411.8) **TACTICS:** Basically, try to make sure your seeking weapons will hit before you have to change ships. Think carefully before setting a ship on an unavoidable collision with a T-bomb or a lot of seeking weapons since it might still be your ship next turn. Keep the status of each ship in mind, and select your target carefully to get the maximum points for it. Generally, it is probably better to fire at a ship that is being fired on even if it is farther away because you may get more points from internals on that ship than from pinging the shields of a closer ship. Of course, the closer ship could blow your doors off, so be careful. When you have a strong ship and can hit a weak ship fast, do so.

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 © 1993 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 subs 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 Postal Money Orders are also acceptable. Send subscriptions to TFG, P O Box 50145, Amarillo, TX 79159. Make checks payable to TASK FORCE GAMES.

BACK ISSUES #57 to date available from TFG for \$2 each (US).

- #60: SP636 Mirror Image Monsters, SP598 Mating Frenzy (space dragons!), Historical Scenario Cross Reference.
- #61: Klingon F5W SSD.
- #62: F&E Micro Scenario 1001 Last Link.
- #73: Frax CC SSD, F&E Scenario *They Who Would Be King*.
- #74: Lyran CCX SSD and scenario, options for *TWWBK*.
- #78: Frax BB and Scenario.
- #79: Fed NCL boarding diagram & scenario. F&E ships.
- #80: Gorn Fast Carrier Resupply ship, Scenario. F&E ships.

All issues are in stock (and will be indefinitely), but this list includes only recent issues and those older issues containing material which has not been formally published.

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 or call GENie Client Services at 1-800-638-9636 (Voice Only). 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 on page 1020. 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.