

STAR FLEET BATTLE FORCE

EXPANSIONS ANNOUNCED

After two years of rumors, plans, and disappointments, ADB Inc. announced at the GAMA Trade Show that it is working on and plans to publish a series of expansion packs for SFBF.

Based on a concept suggested by Andrew Palmer, each expansion will sell for \$9.95 and will include 33 cards. Of these, a number (usually 24-27) will be new ships, while the others will be "special cards" such as the existing Klingon Mutiny, Organian Ceasefire, and similar cards. It will be possible to play the game by simply adding one (or more, or all) of the expansions to the existing deck, or by replacing some of the special cards with new ones, and some of the existing ships with new ones. You could include (or leave out) the carriers or commando ships to suit your individual taste. It won't really be possible to use the expansions without the original game deck.

The plan is to print the cards for these expansions as one single huge sheet, and divide that sheet into three (or possibly four) different expansion decks. The plan is to release these cards this fall (one deck per month), but we must warn you that we have a lot of new product lines to start, and it is anything but clear which ones will be ready for release and, of those, which would have the highest priority. We certainly cannot release all of the planned new product lines this fall; that is simply too much for the design crew, production budget, warehouse crew, and distributor chains to handle. (While this isn't the place to discuss the other product lines, which are described in detail in the Command the Future article, we will note that these include more GURPS products, the "swordfight books," Star Fleet Aces, and the "secret" project.)

STAR FLEET CARRIER FORCE

This will be one of the first two expansions, and will include additional carriers and (more importantly) new "escort class" ships for all of the races. (Some unresolved design and playtest issues prevent us from telling you right now if the Hydran and Lyran and ISC carriers will be in this product or *Star Fleet Invasion Force*.)

Escorts will have a special rule, in that each escort will be assigned to one of the carriers. You cannot target the carrier without first destroying the escort (or the two escorts) assigned to that carrier. This will give carriers a greater role in the game (approaching their place of honor from *Federation & Empire*).

Some of the special cards in this deck might include Ace Pilot, Advanced Weapons, Jammer Pods, Multi-Warhead Drones, FCR (allows a follow-up attack), and perhaps Plasma Racks or other defensive systems as a refit card.

This product would make the game system much "livelier" since more ships could attack without using cards. To balance this, we might allow ships to "buddy up" with both ships able to fire weapons at the incoming fighters. Several new rules regarding fighter attacks and defenses are under consideration.

STAR FLEET INVASION FORCE

This expansion will include the Lyrans, Hydrans, and ISC. These ships will use the existing drone, disruptor, and plasma cards. Some have asked why the Hydrans won't get their fusion cards and the Lyrans won't get ESG cards, but the reason is simple arithmetic. With the original mix, there were 14 (out of 36) ships that carried disruptors, and the 52 weapons cards included 8 disruptor cards. If you add more ships *and* more weapons, the disruptor ships would be a lower percentage of the ships, and the disruptor cards would be a lower percentage of the total weapons cards, and the game would stagnate as your odds of drawing a

card that matches your ship would drop by 50%.

The prevailing theory is that these races will get nine cards each, including the six classes from the original *Star Fleet Battle Force* box, plus an extra carrier and two escorts. That may change, however, as we complete the playtesting phase of the project.

The Hydrans were presented in *Captain's Log #25* and the Lyrans were in *Captain's Log #27*. Keeping with the tradition of adding a race in odd-numbered Captain's Logs, this issue we present the ISC. Most of their weapons are obvious, but the PPD can fire any plasma torpedo, and doubles the damage from a Plasma-S or Plasma-F. A PPD can fire a plasma-F at long range. An ISC ship (other than the DD and FF) can fire two plasma-Fs at fighter squadrons from each of its plasma-F icons.

Andy Palmer's suggestion that we include some kind of reference card in the deck to show what weapons a PPD or an ESG can fire and under what restrictions will almost certainly be implemented. It is not clear what special cards would be included in this expansion deck, but we have many to choose from. You can pretty much bet that Andromedans will be one of the special cards.

STAR FLEET STRIKE FORCE

This expansion is to include the planet and base cards done as a playtest draft earlier, along with commando ships for all races. We may also include SFG ships and maulers, as well as drone bombardment ships and web casters.

Special cards in this pack might well include terrain cards. You could, for example, play an "asteroid" card which would make drone attacks harder but web caster attacks easier. A Legendary Navigator card would allow you to steer clear of these problems. A Legendary Marine card would be an obvious inclusion.

STAR FLEET EXTREME FORCE

The fourth expansion will be like a Spanish Pinata. Full of goodies and about as likely to smack you in the head as you are to get a good whack on it.

Some of the possible contents include fast ships (able to get to close range on your main body, the second row of ships), X-ships (all kinds of special rules), scouts (electronic warfare), PF Tenders (the universe turns bloody), heavy battlecruisers (the free sample Fed and Klingon BCHs have been very popular), and of course there are dozens of other classes and types in the *Star Fleet Universe* for us to pick from. One suggestion was to include modular HDW ships and allow players to select which modules they are using when the ship is deployed.

GENERAL NOTES

It is probable that these four expansions will have to last fans of *Star Fleet Battle Force* for a couple of years. It might seem more logical to release the expansions one at a time, every three months, over the course of an entire year, but the problem is that the cards are incredibly expensive and once they are in the warehouse we need to get them into the stores. One pack a month is probably about the best we could expect.

Given that these four must all be printed at the same time, the BBS has been especially active in proposing new cards and special rules. There are a lot of ideas floating around that could end up in one of these four expansions, although at this point we cannot nail down which ones are more likely or which product they would be in. We might include a space monster (or two) in each product, or put several monsters into one of them. We might include a few more standard weapon cards to re-balance the deck and we might even include a couple of new weapons. Many have proposed espionage cards that let you find out what is in your opponent's hand (or steal some of his reserve cards). Refit cards could improve (or radically change) a given ship in mid-game. An FRD card could (like the base cards) provide additional repairs. A commodore card might allow two or three ships to combine their attacks (making it easier to generate a ship-killing strike). Many

have asked for a T-bomb card and a hit-and-run raid card. Minefields might be a special card (or a terrain card) and would require including a minesweeper (probably a card not a ship).

We might include some new rules, for example, allowing a ship to "sit and TAC" which would give it additional defenses (shield points) but allow the enemy to concentrate fire on it.

The Tholians seem to think that they need a "pinwheel" card although we're not sure (yet) how they would use it.

Two new kinds of cards are being considered, which would have special backs to be distinguished from Ship and Action cards. One would be a "special reserve" card which you could keep in addition to your regular hand. These might include a minesweeper or some other special cards. (This might be hard to do given that existing special cards do not have a distinctive back, but this might replace the current "reserve card" system.) Another new category might be a "play immediately" card which might include monsters,

raiders from other races (Paravians, Andros, Xorkaelians), and special events (Everybody Draw Extra Ship).

Some "special missions" might be added, such as a supply raid that allows you to get some of the reserve cards, a "reinforcements blocked" card that cancels the "draw a new ship" card, and a "suicide mission" card that lets you send one of your ships deep into the enemy formation (but lets the entire enemy fleet fire on it after its attack is over).

Remember that *Captain's Log #26* included a lot of notes, ideas, and concepts for expansions, and other than the fact that we are no longer trying to create a "stand alone second deck," all of it remains under consideration. We won't repeat all of that information here, but you might want to review it.

We are also considering the need to do a new on-line rule-book that would clear up some of the confusion (particularly about the planet-based fighter card).

<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM DREADNOUGHT</p> <p>PPD PH-1 PH-1 PPD</p> <p>PH-3 PH-3</p> <p>PL-F 16 PL-F</p>	<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM CRUISER</p> <p>PPD PL-S</p> <p>PH-3 PH-1 PH-1</p> <p>PL-F</p> <p>10</p>	<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM LIGHT CRUISER</p> <p>PPD PH-1</p> <p>PH-3 PL-F</p> <p>8</p>
<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM CARRIER</p> <p>PPD PH-1</p> <p>PH-3 PH-1</p> <p>FTR FTR</p> <p>10</p> <p>PL-F</p>	<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM DESTROYER</p> <p>PL-F PL-F</p> <p>PH-3 PH-1</p> <p>6</p>	<p>INTERSTELLAR CONCORDIUM FRIGATE</p> <p>PL-F</p> <p>PH-3 PH-1</p> <p>5</p>