

Star Fleet Warlord News

Issue #9

The Official Newsletter of the Greater Magellanic Cloud

June 1995

SFW HALL OF FAME UPDATE

Game	Winner	Corporation	Victory
H3	Team victory	Coalition team	Military
H7	Team victory	Coalition team	Military
31	Randy Hill	Outward Bound	85 sites
32	Isidore Baker	Cloudmasters	83 sites

Game #31 was one of the longer games of recent times, lasting 22 turns. After 20 turns, there were several Corporations with 60 or so sites, but Outward Bound leapt from the pack by taking 25 sites in the remaining two turns, scoring Randy Hill his first victory.

Game #32 was a runaway victory for the Cloudmasters, a Corporation familiar to many of you (Ike Baker has played numerous games under this banner). He won the game in Y184 after having smashed his only nearby competitors, and no other Corporation was even close to his strength when the game ended.

Games H3 and H7 were historical games. In game H3, the Coalition team bided their time and held off the Alliance until finally their concentration of power enabled them to conquer their foes—first the Hydrans in Y184, and then both the Kzintis and Southern Federation in Y186. Without the economic strength of half the Federation, the Alliance could not continue and surrendered in Y187.

Game H7 had a similar result, but ended three turns earlier, in Y184. The Alliance pulled off a sneak attack in Lyran space, knocking out the Enemy's Blood County with a Hydran war fleet, but elsewhere the Alliance was unable to concentrate firepower in time to hold off the Coalition war forces. On one turn the Alliance lost the Hydrans, Kzintis and Eastern Gorns and were forced to capitulate.

Special note: It has not escaped our notice that the Coalition seems to be the dominant power in the Historical Game arena. Are there no worthy Alliance teams? Or are the Coalition players just that much better? We don't think the game is unbalanced in favor of the Coalition. Prove it to us!

For the player's views on their victories in these games, watch for Captain's Log #17, scheduled to be released in mid-1995.

NEW SHIP LIST UPDATE

Yes, we're still intending to update the SFW Ship List (as we mentioned in last quarter's issue of the Warlord News). This is the next major project for the Agents.

Many of you have called and/or written to ask when this list will be completed. The answer is: I don't know. Since we plan to include ships from two Star Fleet Battles products, Module C4 and Module R6, and those products aren't out yet, we can't proceed until then. (C4 is scheduled for mid-July and R6 for mid-August.) After that it's a matter of reviewing the new ships, considering which ones to add, and then updating the rules and ship list to match. As we mentioned last time, we intend to add a "hit point" feature, so we will have to evaluate EVERY ship in the game to get the hit points right. Will we change the other stats? Maybe—A lot of the stats we use were chosen based on the DF=hit points rule. You might see the DFs of many ships increase while their hit points decrease, or vice versa, to adjust the ship to the new system.

The plan is to have the new ship list done by the time the next newsletter is published, perhaps even accompanying issue #10 of the Warlord News. That puts the arrival time at your mailbox as sometime around the first week in October. We will include additional information as this date approaches.

LYRAN SPECIAL ABILITY CLARIFICATION

In the SFW rulebook, on page 36, the following rule appears: "Lyran ships use a special defensive weapon called the expanding sphere generator (ESG) ... Any Lyran ship involved in an attack on a base will gain a 10% bonus to damage caused to the base only. In addition, when the base is knocked below 200 points of fortifications, it is considered destroyed (normally a base will survive in a damaged state). This effect occurs even if there is only one Lyran ship in the attacking fleet at the time the base is reduced below 200 fortifications."

This sounds great! All you need is one Lyran ship and you can wipe out any base station you encounter, right? Wrong! *No fortifications are destroyed by this ability.* The ONLY effect is this: when the base goes below 200 fortifications, its status as a base is lost, meaning it can no longer be used (by the base's owner) as a base for optional item pickups, repairs, and so forth. Obviously, this means your Lyran ship has to lose the battle for this benefit to be of any value to you, so it's hardly a benefit at all. In fact, it's so unlikely to ever come into play that we might as well not have included it in the rules (and we'll take it out when we do the next revision of the game, a couple of years from now).

As the author of the rulebook, I apologize for any misunderstandings which may arise (or may have arisen in the past) as a result of this poorly written rule.

CONTINENTAL CONQUEST

Continental Conquest is AOG's new play-by-mail game! It's set in a world devastated by a global plague. Most of the population has perished and all governments have collapsed. The surviving cities are now islands unto themselves, ripe for conquest by Clan leaders such as yourself! To accomplish this you'll use convoys of vehicles scavenged from the wrecks that litter the countryside, using these to transport your loyal troops in your quest to bring order to this lawless land. Your ultimate goal is to control enough cities and territory to be recognized by the people of the continent as the one true Emperor!

Continental Conquest isn't completely new—it's a heavily upgraded revision of an existing game, Conquest of America, which some of you may have heard of before. The rulebook has been entirely rewritten and many new features (population, buildings, air and military convoys, bombing, razing, etc.) have been added. We've also created a new map, Oceania, to go along with the existing American and European scenarios.

Games have from 10-20 players each, depending on the map used, and victory conditions vary from game to game to keep things interesting. Turns are \$5 apiece (with no hidden fees, as is our policy) and the typical game lasts 20-25 turns. If you would like a rulebook, they're available for \$5 each just for asking. A startup pack is also available—\$20 for the rules and 4 turns, so you basically get the rulebook free! For more information contact Agents of Gaming now!

IN THIS ISSUE...

This issue's theme is commandoes. Robert Knight of Keyport, Washington gives us a view from the inside with a nearly two-page story (actually meant as a sequel to "Volunteers," which appeared in Captain's Log #16), and follows this with some general tips and ideas on the use of commandoes in Star Fleet Warlord. Add to this some tactics and Q&A and you have issue #9 of the Warlord News. Read on!

VOLUNTEER WITH HONOR *by Robert G. Knight*

Colonel-Commander Countess KÖrel Vak Kaleen, niece of the great Count Kaleen himself, could not believe her eyes as she read the display. With each word, each sentence, the disgust she felt made her warriorÖs blood burn hotter and hotter. ÖScoutsÑthe elite! BAH!Ö she swore bitterly. ÖHow can the Council appear to sanction such ... such *drivel* by posting it on the corporate nets? I thought the net was supposed to be a source of news and information, not entertainment!Ö

As Lieutenant Gary Robertson, new leader of the Alpha Two Strike Team, stood watching, Colonel Kaleen threw up her arms and turned away from the display. He couldnÖt quite hear her growl what must have been another Klingon oath. Although he had only known her for a short time, he was already used to hearing them. ÖWhat is wrong, Colonel?Ö

ÖAh, read that and see for yourself!Ö she spat while walking away from the display.

As Lt. Robertson read, Kaleen paced around the lounge. They were in the commando barracks section of the Battle Station *FoundationÖs Edge* on a corporate frontier somewhere out in the Cloud. There were no viewports this deep in the station, but a flat screen set into the wall displayed a view that mimicked one. Kaleen found herself staring into a wispy nebula, letting her anger drain away, if only a little bit.

After reading the display, Robertson thought he understood her reaction. Colonel Kaleen was the CO of the CorporationÖs Commando Department, leader of Alpha One Strike Team, first officer of the Commando Carrier *ThorÖs Hammer*, and was widely recognized as one of the greatest warriors in the GMC. Rumor even had it that she had turned down command of the *Hammer* so she could continue to lead assault and raid missions. As the CO of the Department, she was not even supposed to do that, but as she saw things, that was what her staff was forÑto handle the administration of the Department, while she went out to ... have fun?

She was the best, and that was exactly why he had fought for this posting the second he heard it was open. He wanted to be the best himself, and that meant working with the best. It meant working for her.

Still, while he too found the comments somewhat distasteful, he also found her reaction to them a little humorous. She certainly had a passion for her profession! As he turned around to face the colonel, he had to struggle a little to keep from grinning at her.

ÖIÖd like to see just how elite this Woodring would really be when face to face with a true warrior holding a *dÖk tahg* on him.Ö

Lieutenant Robertson then made the minor mistake of saying, ÖExcuse me, Colonel, but what is a *dÖk tahg*?Ö

Without missing a beat in her pacing, Kaleen took a step towards Robertson. Then she seemed to grin slightly just before she appeared to trip on a leg of a chair. Startled, Robertson took a step and reached out to help. When he saw her execute a perfect shoulder roll towards him, his mind began to realize the significance of her actions, but it was too late. He was able to get his arms up to block her thrust just as she brought the tip of a short-bladed knife to his throat, but he was far from certain that he could have stopped her if she had really wanted him dead.

As their eyes met, and this understanding passed between them, her grin turned into a snarl. Neither blinked. Neither moved. He found her strength amazing as he began to struggle against her with both arms. Still, if he was reading her correctly, she was not even straining yet.

Her grin was starting to come back.

After a few more seconds she growled, ÖThis is a *dÖk tahg*!Ö She pulled it away from him and made sure he got a really good look at it before putting it away. That was another thing he was already used to: her talent for using every training opportunity that would present itself, even if some lessons were rather physical. He could not help thinking how glad he was that she was on his side.

She eventually bared a large toothy smile and swatted him on the back. ÖYou will make a great warrior someday, Lieutenant,Ö she told him, and sounded as though she really meant it.

Robertson gave a coughing ÖThank youÖ in response. *If that was a friendly back slap, what does an angry one feel like?* he wondered. ÖSo, Colonel,Ö he went on as though nothing had happened, Öjust where would you put scouts in the food chain anyway?Ö

ÖBelow combat ship crews, that are below fighter pilots, that are below PF crews, that are below Prime Teams, that are below warriors like us. Commandoes! We are the true elite.Ö With a hint of fondness she added, ÖThe Lizards and Insects understand this. That is why they use so many commandoes on their ships.Ö

Robertson thought for a moment. ÖI would think most people would say Prime Teams are at least our equals, and many would say they edge us out because they get a wider variety of training.Ö

The colonelÖs pacing stopped as she stood to eye Robertson closely. ÖIn combat, some are our equal, some are not. Their combat training is about the same as ours. But they also perform survey missions, and they perform prospecting missions, and they train shipÖs personnel. Some teams stay busy doing everything *except* being true warriors. It is difficult to become a true master of a trade when one is too busy being a jack-of-all-trades. No, we are a purer, thus better breed. We are the elite!Ö Her pacing resumed.

Now the lieutenant thought he would try another tack, for he was probing to learn how she thought, not to challenge her. ÖWhat about the points that Woodring makes about volunteering twice for the danger?Ö

ÖHah, we too have to volunteer twiceÑno, four timesÑto do what we do. We volunteer to be warriors. We volunteer to become commandoes. We volunteer to come to the Cloud. Finally, we volunteer for assignment to a troop ship so we can get the benefit of glorious combat for all of our volunteering. Sometimes face to face with the enemy. Our sweat mixing with theirs, our blood mixing with theirs!Ö

After a brief pause she pulled her *dÖk tahg* out with slow deliberation. When she held the gleaming metal out in front of her, there was a familiar click as the outrider blade flew out. With obvious admiration, she added, ÖMaybe even *mano-a-mano*.Ö

Now there was something he was not used to yetÑher impressive knowledge and use of Human Standard. He even made a comment about it once, and her only response was some cryptic comment about ensuring victory by knowing yourself and knowing your enemy. It made perfect sense to him. But he always had this gut feeling that there was more meaning to the comment than simply what it says or means on the surface. There was also some sense of vague familiarity that he could never quite get a clear grasp on. Someday he would ask again.

KÖrel paused for a few moments to return her blade and to analyze in her mind what she had read, then she continued. ÖYes, scouts take risks. Like blindly crossing sector borders without the benefit of charts or preliminary scans. They can easily cross a border and enter a nova, only realizing what is happening just in time to die. But that is gambling, nothing more. Where is the glory or honor in that?Ö

Looking Robertson deep in his eyes she said, ÖKahless does not wait with the Black Fleet in Sto-Vo-Kor for gamblers. Or teachers. Or miners. He waits for warriors who have honor. Especially those who die in battle.Ö

Robertson had no idea what she was talking about, but he could tell it was deeply important to her. He remained silent.

She spread her arms wide as if to take in the whole room. ÖBesides, we take the same risks as this Woodring and his precious scout. Although our *Hammer* was built by the Federation and is far too comfortable for warriors, it is a fine ship. Just about the best of its kind.Ö

After dropping her arms and taking a step as if to renew her pacing, she stopped short. Holding up one finger for emphasis she added, ÖPlus, it is the only class of commando ship that is also a heavy scout!Ö

VOLUNTEER WITH HONOR, continued...

ÓColonel, I know little about Klingon philosophy, so far, but I agree with the rest of your analysis. And I would like to add that if this Woodring is so fond of seeking the thrill of danger, he should ÓvolunteerÓ for a methane-breatherÓs commando scout. Ó Laughing, the lieutenant added, ÓThen he could have some assault mission icing for his scout cake! Ó

ÓWell put, Lieutenant, Ó KÓrel said, also laughing.

That was certainly another surprise. It never before occurred to Robertson that Klingons would, or could, laugh.

ÓYou have much to learn about my people, Mr. Robertson, Ó KÓrel said with a knowing grin.

Before they could continue, the colonelÓs communicator beeped. ÓThorÓs *Hammer* to Commander Kaleen. Ó

She held her wrist up to her mouth to respond. ÓKaleen here. Proceed. Ó

ÓCommander, this is Chief Engineer Boyd. The station will finish repairs and all testing on the *Hammer* tonight at 0230. We will finish taking on supplies at 2130. All new personnel have reported aboard. Ó

ÓVery well, Commander. Notify all personnel ashore that shore leave expires at 0600. Notify the duty department heads to commence preparations for getting underway. We will drop mooring beams by 0700. It is time for another mission. I will inform the Captain. First officer out. Ó

ÓSuccess, Commander. *Hammer* out. Ó

The excitement in her voice grew. ÓOh, you should have been with us on our last mission. Intelligence reported that another Corporation was moving into a nearby sector. So we were sent to interfere with their plans as much as we could.

ÓWe made a blind crossover into a new sector. After our science officer made sure our crossing was reasonably safe, we settled in and made our scans. There was no comm traffic so we knew that sector was a wild one, especially considering they couldnÓt have had time to take out a freelancerÓs home base. Plus, judging from the number of ships on the other side of the sector, we could tell the other Corp was serious about controlling it.

ÓBut that did not slow us down at all. We shot in to capture the closest sites to us before they could get to them. After sending a brief message with our data and requests for fortifications and reinforcements, we just kept going.

ÓWhen we met their ships in the middle of the sector, we slid in between them and flew on. On the way to the other side we were able to raid a couple of sites around there without our ship or teams taking any damage.

ÓSince we had to know what they were doing, we took a chance on stopping long enough to make accurate long-range scans. They were trying to cut us off from behind and on our flanks so they must have thought we would try to get back the way we came. But instead we did what they least expected. Ó

ÓYou went deeper into their territory and attacked one of their home sites! Ó Robertson said, smiling.

ÓExactly. Without enough intel to know which sites had fortifications yet, we had to be careful. So we turned a little to starboard and made for a site we thought would not have heavy fortifications. We chose well, too. It had only some light defenses and a couple of fighters. Nothing we couldnÓt handle. The *Hammer* took some light damage on the way in and the teams beamed in from about 45,000kms out so the ground base could not anchor us. The teams took some serious casualties there. That was when we lost Lt. Korg and Sgt. SÓslereth.

ÓAs soon as we destroyed their defenses and captured the site, we got underway. By swinging wide of their fleet we tried to get around them while taking enough time to get our shields back up. One of their frigates did manage to make a run at us, but once they got close enough to see what they were up against, and that our shields were up, they had no stomach for a fight and ran off. After we got clear we came home for repairs, and I think you know the rest. Ó

ÓColonel, I think this Woodring would know better than to have written some of what he wrote since his superiorÓKrotag, I believeÓis a Klingon warrior. Ó

ÓHah! Krotag? Bah humbug! I know of him. He is not much of a

warrior. Sure, he is a great science officer. One of the best. But as for being a warrior, no. He pushes his people hard so he can think he is a warrior by being a leader. But being a warrior and being a leader are not the same. He barely knows how to properly hold a *batÓtelh*! Ó

Again she stopped to look at Robertson and smile that big toothy smile. ÓYou do at least know what a *batÓtelh* is, donÓt you, Lieutenant? Ó

ÓAh, yes, sir, I do, as a matter of fact, Ó he said as he quickly scanned the lounge to see if there was one hanging on a bulkhead.

They were interrupted by an announcement from the comm unit in the lounge. ÓMedical to Colonel Kaleen, Ó the voice came.

KÓrel stepped up to the comm unit to activate it. ÓColonel Kaleen here. Ó

The simple reply was, ÓColonel, it is time. Ó

KÓrel paused, her brow ridges wrinkling more as her eyes narrowed in a squint. ÓUnderstood, thank you. Kaleen out. Ó

Robertson stood watching and wondering as the colonel turned off the comm unit, turned, and went toward the door to leave. When it swished open, she stopped, looked to Robertson, and said, ÓCome, Lieutenant, it is time for you to learn more about my people. We must go and warn the dead that another warrior is about to join them. Ó

The lieutenant did not hesitate, even though he had no idea what she was talking about. He did, however, know that whatever it was, it would be fascinating and educational.

As the door swished shut, KÓrel spoke. ÓBy the way, lieutenant, have you ever sampled Klingon cuisine? We have some dishes you might find ... interesting. Ó

COMMANDOES IN WARLORD

Commandoes are one of the better deals in the game. For only 3 EPs, you get an optional item which provides 2 AF and DF, which can be boosted to 3 AF & DF by adding a Marine Major to the ship (and Majors tend to be rather common). In addition, commandoes add an extra 2-5 Ófirst strikeÓ damage on the first round of battle whenever they are used to attack fortifications, which can be quite substantial when commandoes are used in quantity. A fleet with 60 commandoes will dish out an average of 210 points of damage to a base as the Ófirst strikeÓ damage (in addition to any other damage the fleet causes), which will wipe out a base station in a single shot. Needless to say, fleets with this many commandoes will rarely die on the fortifications.

With these combat abilities, commandoes are the equal of drones in cost effectiveness, but do not ÓdisappearÓ in combat at the same rates. A drone can be used up every combat round, while commandoes only die about once every 5 rounds of battle (and they can be killed by battle damage as well). This means that for every ship with commandoes (not for every commando) in a battle, there is a 1 in 5 chance per round that a commando will be lost. In other words, itÓs rare.

Gorns and Seltorians are the best races for commando lovers. Since a single commando ship will have little bearing on a large base assault, you will want to have large numbers of commandoes, which means lots of commando ships. Most of the other races have a few troop ships (and generic ships can be used in troop mission) but not enough to maximize the effect.

The only disadvantage of commandoes is their high food support costÓeach commando is the equivalent of two fighters or 10 EPs of ship value! Obviously, if your Corporation is short on food, you will not want to employ a lot of commandoes. Examine your home sector (and other maps as you get them) and if the sites you see are not strong food producers, avoid using lots of commandoes. In historical games, if you are the Gorns, beg food shipments from your allies!

THE RANDOM EVENT GAME VARIANT

Previous issues of the Warlord News have described some unusual game variants. We like to use these different variants because they keep the game fresh and interesting. This new one, which is being used for the first time in game #41 (and will be used again, seeing how quickly that game filled up), is called the *Random Event Game*. Here's a description:

In a Random Event Game, you can pick which random event you want to get every turn! No bad random events will appear because we'll provide you with a list of all events in the game and a code number to use to request one. Then all you have to do is issue the EV order followed by the event# you want. The list includes about 100 events, so you never lack for choices!

There are some caveats. You cannot get the same random event twice in the same game. Also, many events have restrictions (like not being available on certain turns or before/after certain dates); these are listed with the event description. If you don't follow these rules, you'll get a *truly* random event instead, which could be a bad one (or another good one you didn't ask for). Of course, you can't get more than one event on the same turn, or during the initial build, just like in normal games.

Players seem to already be adopting strategies for the best ways to utilize the really good events. The ones that give you free EPs or optional items are better early in the game, and once you've built up an income base, you can ask for the ones that let you take advantage of special opportunities (like putting the cloak on all the ships you buy next turn, or refitting all your ships with a single order). It doesn't do much good to get these events really early on and not be able to afford to use them!

The important thing to remember, of course, is that everyone else has access to these events too, so don't be surprised to see a fleet of cloaked Tholians or a battleship with a speed of 6.

Other than this ability, all other features of the game are normal, so the victory conditions remain the same (80 sites or 7 sector bonuses). The winner will, naturally, be the one who can make his or her random events work the best to achieve this goal.

Note: Don't try to use EV with an event# in any other game. The event# will be ignored and you'll get an event you didn't ask for (in all likelihood). This special feature will be available only in games with the *Random Event Game* label. Also note that this feature is available for custom games. Rumor has it that two intrepid teams will be trying it out in a Historical Game which will start soon.

ASK THE GALACTIC COUNCIL!

If I have a generic ship with a Prime Team and switch into the Notification or Survey mission, does that ship get a 50% bonus to prospecting? No, these bonuses are NOT cumulative. The description of the Prime Team in the rulebook explains this. It's also important to note that Y- and N-variants cannot be combined. If you have a generic ship which receives survey abilities from a random event, and then change it into N mission, it will be treated as a notification ship and the survey status will be ignored (the two do not combine). In other words, it just isn't possible to get more than one 25% bonus to prospecting.

How is the bounty for monsters calculated? It's a simple formula, really. Add the AF, DF and half the SF together and there you have it. (These are original AF, DF, and SF values, before any combat damage.) If the monster has a crew bonus it has achieved from combat, you aren't compensated. If it has fighters or PFs (Ghost Ships and their progeny, for example, or any other monsters of this type added to the game at a later time), add 4 EPs for every fighter and 15 EPs for every PF the monster had aboard before the battle started (if they lost them in a previous battle, you don't get anything.) Note that the EP value listed in the rulebook is not the bounty value, but the amount you pay to buy a monster if you get the chance to purchase one.

If someone has a battle in a sector and I have a base in that sector, do I hear about the battle? This has no bearing on your chance to hear about battles. See the LB order description for more details. Using LB is the ONLY way to increase your chances of hearing about battles that don't involve you.

If I kill more than one warp gate in an attack, what happens? What if the warp gates are controlled by Corps which have dropped from the game? You get 100 EPs for every WG you kill as long as you are the attacker (you get nothing if they attack you and die). It doesn't matter if the owning player is active or not.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

THE STAR FLEET WARLORD NEWS is published quarterly (at the end of March, June, September and December of each year) by the Agents of Gaming, and is copyright © 1995 Amarillo Design Bureau. Each issue costs \$1 (\$2 for overseas readers) except for those players currently active in any game of STAR FLEET WARLORD, who receive one issue free. Subscriptions are available at \$4 per year. Mail subscription requests and all submissions to: Agents of Gaming, P.O. Box 31571, Dayton OH 45437-0571.