Star Fleet Warlord News

WELCOME!

Welcome to the first SFW newsletter, the STAR FLEET WARLORD NEWS! We plan to publish this on a quarterly basis, at a cost of one dollar per issue. This introductory issue is, as you may have guessed, being sent out at no charge!

If you would like to receive the newsletter regularly, send $4 for one year (four issues). If youÕre sending this in with a regular turn credit payment, be sure to indicate on your turn that you wish to subscribe so that we can note this fact in our records.

This first issue will explain some basic items, some history of the game, and answer some of the many questions asked by players. We're open to suggestions for future articles, and we'll take submissions as well. If you think you have something to contribute that other readers may enjoy seeing, send it in!

STAR FLEET WARLORD HALL OF FAME

Game	Turn	Winner	Corporation
1	25	Jerry Morris	Gorean Empire
2	29	Tab Postlethwait	Intergalactic Motors
3	37	Jeff Abbott	Guns 'R' Us
4	35	Gary Fitzpatrick	Deep Doo-Doo Inc.
5	42	Russ Roy	Dons Leonis
6	28	Lee Seifert	SatanÕs Buddies
7	32	Tom Gondolfi	Tri-Bermuda Shipping
8	32	Mark Menter	Rough Riders
9	26	Bruce Spears	Nonconformists

NEW GAME FEATURES

From time to time we make improvements in the game, often at the suggestion of players like yourselves. Any such improvements will be listed here, and will also be described during play. Needless to say, if you have any suggestions, donÕt hesitate to submit them!

The latest advancement was suggested by several players on the GEnie communication network. The question came up as follows. If you can get heavy scout abilities by putting a legendary science officer on a regular scout, what happens if you put one on a heavy scout? The answer at the time was "nothing special," but I put it to the players to come up with something. They suggested that the ship somehow be able to see across sector borders. After thinking about that one for a while I came up with the following.

Any heavy scout with a science officer, captain, or crew level of 9 will gain a special scan during the Automatic Scanning Phase of the turn (the same phase in which bases make their scans). This scan will report the terrain and number of uncloaked ships in every hex surrounding the heavy scout, including hexes across borders! No special order or action is requiredÑjust move the heavy scout to the proper hex and it will make the scan automatically. Note that it cannot do this if it is in scan-blocking terrain (anthing that would prevent a standard SCAN order from succeedingÑsee page 24 of your rulebook).

This would seem to be of great use early in the game when you can move the scout up to the edge of the map and find a safe hex to move into prior to scanning. The hexes in the corners would be primo locations for this maneuver. Now the only choice for you, as a player, is what to do with your initial legendary science officer! Do you want him/her on a regular ship to make it a scout, to make a regular scout a heavy scout, to give a heavy scout this special scan, or on your Home Office to get the starbase scan? Decisions, decisions!

ERRATA LIST

Like any game rulebook, some errors were found after the first printing. Here is a list of all those we've compiled to date. If you find any others, let us know immediately!

Pg	Error
07	Regardless of your Home Office's terrain, its prospecting value will begin play at zero.
20	In the description of the monitor (under Civilian Ships), the word "battleship" should be "battlecruiser."
21	Phase Space Spider EP cost should be 180.
29	Summary under MSNx says to see chart on next page when the chart is actually on page 25.
31	Race letter "P" under the PS example should be "O".
43	F-FFM should have 6 T-bombs.
43	F-DEA should be available in Y175.
43	F-CLS variants should be "S,Y".
43	K-D5N variants should be "I,D".
43	Confirming: F-CVL does not have Survey ability. It trades its survey equipment for the six fighters it carries. F-COV is similar, trading survey abilities for troops.
44	R-WB,WE,FE,SE,CE,PE,KE should be of the CL class.
44	R-HS,BH,PEL,WH,BHE,CH should be DDs (speed 5, except HS is speed 1).
44	R-CH should have only 3 PFs.
44	Z-PFT variants should be "P,S".
44	Confirming: R-SPJ really should have two "B" variants. It's that good!
46	H-NMS should have 8 T-bombs.
46	L-CCX should have speed 5.
47	D-MPA year of availability should be Y175.
47	O-LR year of availability should be Y121.
48	C-FMS should have 10 T-bombs.
48	C-FML should have 20 T-bombs.
48	C-APFS and C-ACVL years should not be italicized.

CONQUEST OF AMERICA

We run another play-by-mail game in addition to Star Fleet Warlord. This is a post-World Plague scenario in which players run Clans bent on conquering the continent of North America. It has something of a "road warrior" flair, since the Clans use convoys of vehicles to move about and take over cities. You can also conquer any of the 4,000 or so hexes on the map, which represent areas of population and steady income, but the cities are where the real money is!

A huge, 24x36 map is provided for play, and includes all of North America plus Cuba, Central America, and the northern tip of South America. We are also opening a new variant using the European theater, with a game beginnng July 3.

There are up to 40 players in a game of COA (usually less, though) and turns are two weeks long. The rules are simpler than Star Fleet Warlord and the manual checks in at 20 pages, plus the map. The cost to play is also less, at just $4 per turn. Naturally, there are no hidden fees or other charges.

If you'd like to take a look at the rulebook, let us know. A copy (which includes the map) costs $4, but of course there would be no obligation to play. Write "Send me a COA Rulebook" on your next turn if you'd like to check it out. The cost will be deducted from your turn credits automatically.

HISTORY OF STAR FLEET WARLORD

The roots of this game are buried in my early days of Star Fleet Battles (SFB) gaming. After the failure of several local campaigns, I designed something called Crossroads to Empire, which I thought was the ultimate SFB campaign. Naturally, it had lots of rules, but it seemed to fall into the same problems as every other campaign I had ever seenÑnamely, players didn't want to lose their ships, and battles were too big to fight (not to mention the logistical problems of getting everybody together to play). Turns would take months, and when they were due, it was an effort just to get people to submit them. Out of this I decided two things about my next campaign: It would have to (1) be easy to manage and (2) have some means of taking care of battles automatically. Also, to keep interest in the game at a high level, it would have to be fast-moving. All of these features fairly screamed for computerization!

With this in mind I came up with the idea for a game I called "Galactic Conquest." Players would be able to buy any ships they wanted, and the game would start in Y165 and proceed one year at a time. It would be totally run by computer, and turns would occur every two weeks. Finally, it would be run through the mail, eliminating the problem of getting people together to play. I started programming it in late 1989, and started the first game at the end of December. It had 20 players, mostly gathered from local SFB and F&E veterans.

The first game was extremely simple. There were no warp gates; everything was bought at the Home Office. The only optional items were fighters and PFs. There were no legendary officers or outsanding crew abilities. The only ship variants were carriers, PF tenders, scouts, and X-ships. Tugs and Orions had no ability to change missions. Bases couldn't make scans of any kind. There were no monsters or NPCs. Fighters and PFs could only be picked up by issuing a GETF/GETP order. And so on. As you can see by the current game, a lot of changes happened in the next few years!

Galactic Conquest was still, at the time, just being run for fun. There was no intention of making it into a business. As game #1 reached its halfway point, players started asking about the next game. I didn't have time to run one (I was employed by the USAF full-time) so I had a friend run game #2. Game #3 followed a few months later.

Near the end of 1990, as game #1 drew near to a close, I began a major upgrade to the program which added (among other things) Andromedan displacement and satellite ships, loans, primary races, legendary officers, decoys and minefields, auctions, devastated planets, raiding, and drone bombardment. This was known as the ÒExpert GameÓ and was opened up to veterans only. A rookie-only game was started a few months later, and another Expert Game opened later in the year. It was about this time that I began to realize that this game had marketing possibilities.

Game #7 was another major modification, one which removed all the SFB terms, because I perceived that trying to release it as an SFB game was undesirable. This was a major blunder on my part. After I showed off the game at Origins 1992 (and started games 10 and 11, numbers 8 and 9 having started earlier in the year), Amarillo Design Bureau saw through the thin disguise. At this point things could have gone very badly for me, but fortunately ADB was not interested in terminating the game. Instead, they asked me to put the SFB back in and run Galactic Conquest as an officially licensed game, with the name changed to Star Fleet Warlord.

The result of this was a lot of money and time spent de-SFBing the game, something which hadn't really been necessary. However, it was all for the greater good, because it enabled me to upgrade the game one final time to create what you see today. I hope you're enjoying it so far, and will continue to enjoy the game for years to come.

ÑBruce H. Graw

ASK THE GALACTIC COUNCIL!

Is my initial build limited to just ships, or can I buy optional items? You can issue any legal orders among the 10 you are allowed. This includes Request Loan (RL), Primary Race (PR), and purchasing of optional items (the three most common build orders, after Purchase Ship, of course).

Can WYN "generic" ships (especially those built on Orion hulls) use missions Orions cannot use (such as the Survey mission)? Yes. These ships are piloted by the WYN, not by Orion pirates. The only reason Orions can't use those missions is because (chuckle) no self-respecting Orion would be caught dead in such a ship!

I want my Orion ship to be in Scout mission when I buy it. How do I specify this? You can't specify it during the buy; it comes in Battle mission and you MUST spend a pulse of movement on your next turn making the switch with the MSNx order.

Can we lay minefields? We used to allow this in Galactic Conquest but took it out in the Star Fleet Warlord conversion. The problem was one of balance. Minefields were either too powerful, making them the ultimate defensive item (which everyone would use), or they were too wimpyÑthere was no middle ground. Taking them out of the game solved the balance problem right away.

I conquered all the major sites in my sector, but I didn't get a sector bonus! What's the deal? You won't see the bonus until your next turn, assuming you retain control of all the sites. Remember, sector bonuses are *income* and are awarded during the Income Phase. Since Income Phase comes before Movement Phase, you won't see the bonus until the beginning of your next turn.

In what order are optional items supplied? If you have two ships arrive at a base at the same time, which gets first crack? E.g., if I have 2 ships, both needing 20 drones, and only 30 are available, and both enter a hex with a base on the same pulse, what happens? Ships have priority by age. The older ship takes what it can, followed by the next oldest, and so on. So one ship would get 20 and the other 10, in the example above. Note that this "oldest first" rule can have other applications, such as when two ships are in the same hex and one moves while the other tries to use it for some reason (e.g., as a repair ship). This is why the rulebook says that the ship being used must remain still on the turn another ship utilizes it.

Can I convert my Gorn CA into a Gorn BC by applying the appropriate Star Fleet Battles refits (specifically, the + and F refits)? No, programming every refit and upgrade that ships can receive in SFB would be an impossibly mind-numbing task, so instead we provide a generic "upgrade" order. You spend ores, and your ship receives a 10% bonus in all its combat stats, plus something extra depending on race (drone capacity for Klingons and Kzintis, for example). You will learn about this a few turns into the game, and it can only be used by ships which are at least 5 turns old.

When you buy a generic ship, does its stats include the mission it comes in? Yes, it does. 10 points of AF are included in the factors for most ships (battle mission is the default for all except the monitor, which comes in defense mission). Note, however, that the stats listed do NOT include crew bonuses, optional items, officers, and so on.

Are similar ships raised in price because another one is bought? For example, say someone buys a F-CA on turn 1 and I buy a F-CA+ on turn 2. Is the price of my F-CA+ higher because of this? No, there is no relation between the price changes of two different types of ship. As far as you are concerned, they are two completely separate models, no matter how similar they are.

What happens to miscellaneous items that are on a generic ship which changes missions and the new version cannot carry these items? Say, for example, a cruiser in Carrier mission that changes to something else and is no longer able to hold 12 fighters? The extra items are returned to the Home OfficeÕs stockpiles and are ready for re-use immediately.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

Many of you have asked for a detailed description of how combat works. Okay, then, here is a sample of a battle you might see in a game of Star Fleet Warlord. WARNING: This is an extremely complicated example, and if you don't understand everything you read now, try checking it out again after you've participated in a few battles. Everything should then become clear.

Let's say Corp #1 attacks Corp #99's site by sending in three ships, a F-CVS (strike carrier), a F-CMC (commando carrier), and an O-CVL (light carrier) which is in the PF Tender mission. All three ships are fully loaded with optional items. The total attack factor of these ships would be calculated as follows.

F-CVS: AF of the ship is 40; it has a crew of 4 (+10%) making a total of 44. (Note that this bonus does not apply to optional items carried, such as fighters.) There are 12 fighters which would normally have an AF of 4 each but have 5's because of the strike bonus, for a total of (12x5)=60. The ship also has 4 T-bombs for 12 more points and a total of 116.

F-CMC: The ship has a basic AF of 28, but also happens to have a crew level of 6 (+30%) and is a troop transport attacking a site (+25%) for a total percentage bonus of +55% making the adjusted AF 43.4 which rounds down to 43. (Note how these percentages are summed before the multiplication is made.) It also has 4 T-bombs (12 points) and 8 commandoes (16 more points), the latter of which will score an extra 2-5 damage on the base during the first round of combat, but this is not included in the inital force calculation. The total AF of this ship is 71.

O-CVL: Has an AF of 36 (normally it is 46, but the ship switched from Battle to PF Tender mission and lost 10 AF points in doing so) and an average crew of 3 (no bonus), but there is a legendary weapons officer aboard (+25%) bringing the AF to 45. There are 8 fighters (32 points), 6 PFs (90 points), 4 T-bombs (12 points) and 16 drones (16 points) for a total of 195(!!).

This brings the fleet attack strength up to a final grand total of (116+71+195)=382. Pretty good for three ships!

The defenders are in an asteroid field and have a base with 200 fortifications, a legendary weapons officer on the base, and 10 fighters. In addition, there is a monitor and three Tholian PCs stationed at the site. The DF of this fleet is calculated as follows.

First, the site itself has a base DF of 50 (one-fourth of 200) plus a weapons officer which increases this by 20%, plus it is located in asteroids (+10%) for a total bonus of +30% or 15. Add to this the fighters (40 points) for a subtotal of 105.

The monitor has a DF of 40 and is in the defense mission (the default), which gives it a 25% bonus (see pg. 25 of the rulebook) when defending a site. Add to this the 10% asteroid bonus for a total bonus of 35% or +14, yielding 54 for this ship, which has an average crew and no other items.

The Tholian PCs have a base DF of 18, but since they are Tholians guarding asteroids, they gain a special bonus of +25% (see page 18), giving them a DF of 22.5, which rounds up to 23 apiece (each ship is totaled separately). These ships have no other special bonuses or items.

This makes the grand total (105+54+23+23+23)=228 which now must defend against an AF of 382. Take note of the fact that AF is used only for the attacking fleet and the DF is used for the defenders. The DF of the attacking fleet will come into play only as hit points for the individual ships; the AF of the defending fleet will not be used in this battle.

The first thing the computer does is calculate the attack and defense factors as you've seen above. (Aren't you glad the computer does all of this for you?) Then it compares them to see if the attacker wants to risk an engagement or retreat. In this case the attacking Corp #1 has left his attack percentage at the default of 90% (you will learn how to change the attack percentage later in the game). Since he has a relative percentage in this fight of (382/228)=168%, which is higher than 90%, this is judged to be more than enough to allow the attack to commence, which it does.

The battle begins with Corp #1's fire being divided out evenly over the 5 defenders (base, monitor, and the three PCs). 382/5 rounds to a maximum of 76 points per volley. The program will roll one 10-sided die (that is, a random number from 1 to 10) for each 10 points of AF available, then one 6-sided die for the remainder. This makes the volleys as average as possible, although this will be varied over a standard bell curve as you might expect. (This also means larger battles will tend to have more average results because of the curve.)

The first volley does 32 damage to the fortifications. But now the commandoes from the F-CMC kick in, doing 2-5 apiece for a total of 28 damage, a grand total of 60. The base drops to 140 points of fortifications. Because this can only support 7 fighters (one per 20), three of the defending 10 fighters are destroyed.

The second volley hits the monitor for 44 points, doing light damage. (A monitor has 42 points of shields, so 2 points get through. It has 40 hit points to start with, so this brings it down to 38.) The next volley is 22 points to one T-PC, scoring light damage. The fourth volley causes 50 points of damage to the second T-PC, destroying it. The final volley does 34 points and cripples the last PC.

Now the defenders fire using their 228 points (note that it is not reduced by losses until the start of the next combat round - there is no "initiative" to win or lose). This is divided over only three ships, for a potential of 76 per attacker! (Obviously, Corp #1 has packed too much firepower into three ships. He would be better off with just one carrier and several additional ships to further divide fire.)

The first ship, the CVS, takes only 25 damage (a miserably low roll) and takes no internals. The CMC takes 45 damage and is crippledÑwhich destroys ALL of its optional items immediately and automatically, but does not affect the shipÕs other inherent bonuses (crew, etc.). The O-CVL takes a whopping 60 damage and blows up, a severe blow considering the number of fighters and PFs that go down with it! (Note: PFs sometimes absorb internal damage, but this does not always happen and doesn't occur here.)

Now the second round of combat begins. (The attacker is now engaged, and has no chance to retreat once the battle has commenced.) The program recalculates the attack and defense factors once more for each combatant. The F-CVS has no damage and has lost nothing, so its AF is still 116. The F-CMC has been crippled, so its AF is reduced by 2/3 to 9, plus the bonuses (+55% of the ORIGINAL AF, or +15) for a total of 24. The O-CVL is dead and (obviously) contributes nothing. Total AF is now 140.

The defenders still have 140 fortifications (140/4=35 DF plus the 30% in bonuses (+10.5) rounding to 46), and the 7 fighters (28 points), yielding 74 defense points. The monitor has light damage (67% of its original DF, or 27) plus the 14 bonus points for a 41 DF. The surviving T-PCs are lightly damaged (new DF 17) and crippled (new DF 11) for a total of 143.

The attackers now fire again. Their 140 points of potential is divided into 4 volleys of up to 35 each. These cause, in order, 25 to the base (knocking it to 115 and killing 2 more fighters), 20 to the monitor (heavily damaging it), and 15 to each of the T-PCs, destroying both of them.

The defenders then retaliate, dividing their 143 points into two volleys of up to 72 each. They score 50 damage to the F-CVS (it can take 2 more on the shields and 40 internals, so it is destroyed) and 45 on the crippled F-CMC, which is instantly annihilated. The battle is over, and the defenders have won!

Now, this is a very complicated example of combat, but it illustrates the basic features of the combat generator. I won't bother reiterating the main points here, as they are obvious to anyone who was reading carefully. Read over it again and if you don't understand any given calculation, jusk as your GM for a clarification. Obviously, you do not have to understand all of this (or even most of it) to play SFW, but the example should help you determine better attack and defense strategies.

AGENTS OF GAMING POLICIES

Here are some things you should know about the Agents of Gaming and how we conduct business.

Standby Positions: If you want to get into a currently running game, let us know. Occasionally players drop out for personal reasons and leave Corps in fairly good shape behind. We can place you there if you like. Just ask!

Multiple Games: You can be in as many games of Star Fleet Warlord as you can handle (don't let us stop you!). Ask us for another build form, or just write one on a plain piece of notebook paper. Remember to include your name, address, and ten orders at a minimum. Note: You cannot be in the same game twice!

Default Builds: If you want to join a game quickly, you can ask for a default build. This consists of one loan request and the 9 most popular ships of Star Fleet Warlord (and you're guaranteed to get all of them). The ships are: O-FT, C-FDX, F-POL, C-FAS, H-SC, D-PSC, W-AMS, O-SLV, and K-E3D. You get two scouts, two "fast" ships, a minesweeper, the ever-useful Orion Slaver, and three prospectors. Kind of bland, but it gets the job done. If you'd like this build, just write "Default Build" in place of the orders on your initial build form.

Business Hours: We generally operate during the hours of 10am-6pm Eastern Time on weekdays. However, sometimes one or more of us will be here during other hours, so feel free to call anytime. The worst that can happen is you'll get the answering machine. (You're not going to wake anyone up by calling late.)

Paying for Turns: We STRONGLY urge that you do not send cash through the mail. (If you do, and it is lost, there will be no way to verify that you sent it.) Use a check or money order. PLEASE write it for at least four credits at a time.

Rubber Checks: If you bounce a check, you will be charged two turn credits ($10). This covers the fee our bank charges us for processing the bad check.

Using the Answering Machine: If you call and get the answering machine, speak clearly! You'll need to give us four pieces of critical information if you have any question or problem to report. These are: (1) Who you are, (2) what game you are in, (3) what Corp you are playing, and (4) your Code#, so we can verify you're who you say you are. If you have a question, we will try to answer it on your next turn (it is not really economical for us to return every phone call we get, much as we would like to) or when you call back. If you are reporting a problem, be sure to explain it fully, and we will gladly fix it for you. For non-critical things like simple game questions or very minor slipups, you should probably just write these on your next orders sheet rather than call.

Incoming Express Mail: If you send us something via express mail (which we don't recommend), keep in mind that we use a post office box. We often check it after the post office's regular business hours are over (especially on weekends), so you MUST check the "No Signature Requried" box on any Express Mail you send us. Otherwise, they will not put it in the box, and we will have to get it the next dayÑor Monday, if it arrived on Saturday. As you can imagine, this ruins the effect of an expensive express mail service.

Outgoing Express Mail: If you want us to send your turn out in an express mail pack, we will do this at a cost of 2 turn credits ($10). Ask for it on your orders sheet. You must have at least 2 extra credits in your account before we will do this, of course.

Using The Fax Machine: You can fax us a turn at any time. There is a nominal charge of $1 for each turn you fax. Call our number, (513)256-2432, which doubles as a voice and fax line. The way it does this is with a device that senses incoming fax calls. (This is why when you call us you often hear a "click" and then a different sort of ring than the one you first heard.) Depending on the type of sending fax, it may not recognize the signal in time, and might direct the call to the voice line. If this happens, either one of us will answer (if we're here) or the answering machine will pick up. You can still send the fax, though! Press 11 on your phone (if you have a touch-tone phone), and the switcher will bounce the call over to the fax machine. You can then press Start on your fax and start sending. Note: Don't bother with a cover sheet!

Outgoing Faxes: If we fax you a turn, the charge is $1 per minute of the outgoing call (even overseas). Each page usually takes around 45-50 seconds, and we round all fractions up (since that's what the phone company does). We normally don't send a cover sheet (since we would have to charge for that, too) unless you ask for oneÑremember, your name and address are going to be on the first page anyway. Turns are usually faxed after regular business hours. We DO send a copy of your turn through regular mail, unless you live outside the USA.

GEnie: You can talk directly to the game designer and other players on the GEnie computer network. Find SFW in Category 10, Page 805, Menu Item #1, Topic 39. Contact the game designer, Bruce Graw, by sending electronic mail to B.GRAW1.

PUBLISHERÕS INFORMATION

AGENTS OF GAMING
POST OFFICE BOX 31571
DAYTON OH 45437-0571