Star Fleet Warlord News

SFW HALL OF FAME UPDATE

Game	Winner	Corporation	Victory
16A	Steve Hecker	Growth Enterprizes	83 sites
16C	Team victory	Columbus team	Adjudicated
23	Jack Novak	Galactic Liberators	7 sectors
24	Mark Loughman	House of Finwe	8 sectors
25	Dan Sample	Serrated Edge	82 sites

Game #16A was the first three-week game of SFW, and it lasted 27 turns (over a year and a half). When it ended, Steve Hecker had a 45-site lead over his closest *surviving* competitor!

Game #16C was a custom game pitting teams from two cities (Columbus, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan). The game used the ÒundeadÓ variant so no player was actually knocked out of commission, but several had lost their Home Offices. After a *very* close adjudication, the Columbus team was ruled to have the superior position. To illustrate how difficult the adjudication was, the Columbus team had the #1, #2, #6 and #8 Corps (with the #8 position a hopeless wreck) while the Detroit team had the #3, #4, #5, and #7 rankings. ThatÕs almost too close to call!

Games #23, #24 and #25 were standard 50-player games. All were close fights, and in #23 and #25, the players won by hanging on with their teeth. In game #24, which ran longer than it deserved to, Mark Loughman decided 7 sectors werenÕt enough and won the game with an unprecedented 8th sector bonus!

For the playerÕs views on their victories in these games, watch for CaptainÕs Log #17, scheduled to be released in mid-1995.

NEWS & THINGS

As many of you Star Fleet Battles players are aware, Task Force Games produced a SFB bi-monthly newsletter called STARLETTER. This is being replaced by a new magazine called STAR FLEET TIMES, to be published 10 times per year by Agents of Gaming. SFT will include everything found in the old Starletter plus pages of tactics, new scenarios, fiction, updated product release information, and other fun.

SFT subscriptions will be $15 per year ($16 in Canada, $22 for overseas airmail). If youÕd like to subscribe, inform Agents of Gaming by mail or phone. Your subscription fee will be taken out of your game account automatically, unless you send a separate check (which is not necessary). You do not have to play Star Fleet Warlord to read Star Fleet Times, but you should play Star Fleet Battles!

Production of the Star Fleet Warlord News will not be affected by the Star Fleet Times.

USING LOGISTICS BASES

Logistics bases have been in the game for several years, but until recently were considered useless by most players. Several weeks ago, the logistics base (which goes by the designation C-LB) was improved significantly, and the year of availability requirement (Y173) was dropped. Since the C-LB is now available from the start of the game, it deserves to be described in a public forum. Of course, players will continue to be given a description of them in Y172.

A logistics base is a speed-0 ÒshipÓ which can be placed in any hex which does not contain point terrain (obviously, it follows that they cannot be placed in the same hex as a site). Rules and requirements for placing one are described shortly. Once dropped, the LB is available for several useful functions.

Repairs/Upgrades: LBs are treated as repair ships with unlimited repair points for purposes of the REPR or UPGR orders. Naturally, you will still have to pay standard fees in Ores to use REPR or UPGR while in the hex of a LB.

Integration: Logistics bases are considered integration ships for all purposes, so you can use them to pick up officers, train your ships, and so on. Again, regular fees apply.

Hospital: LBs are considered hospital ships and will automatically CURE any ship which enters their hex. This is one of the LBÕs most useful powers. There is no order required to use this function; just move your afflicted ship into the hex and the CURE action will occur automatically.

Optional item distribution: LBs are able to supply ships with optional items just as a base can. If a ship enters a LBÕs hex and is short on one or more optional items which you have in your CorpÕs stockpile, the LB makes them available for immediate pickup.

Now that you know what a logistics base does, itÕs important to know what it *doesnÕt* do. First, LBs are not fortifications (and in fact are quite weak in combatÑany frigate could probably take one out without too much difficulty). You cannot assign fighters, PFs or officers to LBs. Because LBs have a speed of zero, they cannot issue orders for themselves. Also, even though they provide many of the features of a normal base, only the features described above are availableÑthey canÕt, for example, be used for REFT or GETC orders, nor can they restore repair points to repair ships.

Now that you know what logistics bases can do, how do you get one? The way to go about it is with the LOGB order. This is issued as a single-pulse order by any repair ship which has at least two unspent repair points. These two points are expended by the order (and, as explained above, are not restored by the LB itself). Note that since actual repair points are required, a Legendary Engineer or Legendary Captain is not sufficientÑyou must use an actual repair ship (or a generic ship in the ÒRÓ mission). There is also a hefty cost in EPsÑ100, to be exact. However, considering that the LB performs the functions of a repair, integration, hospital and facilities ship rolled into one, you might find the price well worth paying!

NEW WARLORDÕS AIDE REVISION AVAILABLE

Users of the popular WarlordÕs Aide software have responded with their comments and suggestions, and AoG has answered with a new version of the program. The new version corrects a few minor bugs and inconsistencies, and provides the following new features:

¥ Fleet combat factor calculator
¥ Improved ship combat factors including terrain modifiers
¥ Improved turn output format
¥ ÒPrintÓ command
¥ Ready reference guide to ALL game orders
¥ Ability to resequence ships with a single command
¥ Estimation of EPs spent by orders
¥ Improved support for turns E-mailed across Internet

This revision will be available in mid-January. The WarlordÕs Aide remains a free product, but we do require $5 to cover the cost of the media, and of course shipping and handling. (Overseas customers add $5). Players on GEnie will be able to download the software directly from the software libraryÑEmail B.GRAW1 for details.

DESIGNING YOUR OWN CUSTOM GAME

One of the unique features of Star Fleet Warlord is its customizability. If you have a group of people who want to play against each other or against another group, the game can be modified to handle your needs. The result is a *custom game*.

Technically speaking, any game which is not played in a 10x10 galaxy with 50 players and the standard rules (save perhaps one or two minor variations) is a custom game. Several of these are in progress as this is being writtenÑthe three-week games 20A, 22A, 29A and 34A, as well as the one-week ÒexpressÓ game X2, and the 32-player ÒundeadÓ game 35. Historical games are also a special form of custom game, with a number of significant modifications.

The first step in designing a custom game is to ask yourself what you or your group wants out of it. Do you want to fight each other in a savage, dog-eat-dog battle? Or do you want to work together as a team to challenge one or more other teams of similar skill? Or a combination? Or something entirely different?

If you want to play an every-person-for-him/herself all-out war, you will want to set up your galaxy so each player is close to the other. Spacing Corps out does not generally work as the first 10 turns wind up very boring. We recommend placing players diagonally adjacent to each other with side-adjacent sectors being non-player (wild or NPC). Placing enemy Corps in such a way that they share a common border is also possible, and leads to almost immediate conflict (of course, this may be what you want).

If your objective is to challenge another team(s) to a rumble, as was done in the recently concluded game #16C (see page 1), there are several ways to go about this. One way is to use a setup similar to that of game #16C, which was a checkerboard with players from one team alternating on the diagonals with his opponents. As this was a 4x4 galaxy (with standard wraparound features), the result was that every player found himself surrounded by his enemies! You can well imagine some of the strategies and conflicts that resulted.

Another method is to set up each team in an area of the galaxy by themselves. For example, you might set up an 8-player team game in a 4x4 galaxy with one team in sectors 10, 11, 12 and 13 and the other in 30, 31, 32 and 33. This reduces the number of fronts from 4 to 2, but also reduces each CorpÕs maneuverability somewhat (there are basically only two sectors any one Corp will be able to enter).

Once you have a team game design, your next step is to find a team to fight you. You might already know the team you want to challenge, or you might put out the call for one. Contact Agents of Gaming in this latter case, and theyÕll help any way they can. Of course, if your group is large enough, you might form teams among yourselves and play each other!

Setting up the galaxy to fit your needs is the first step in designing your game. Several possibilities have already been described, but many others are possible. One thing to keep in mind is not to separate players too much. It may sound like fun to have players two sectors away from each other, but the game will never finish, and players will quickly become bored.

Once you know what the playing field will look like, the next thing to do is decide on which, if any, special features you want. Start with the basic game rules and add and subtract features until you have the game you want. Some of the things currently available are:

Game Schedule: Your game should run on some kind of set schedule. The standard is two weeks with ÒfloatingÓ deadlines (i.e., you can be up to a turn late before turns start getting waived). However, floating deadlines are not recommended for custom games, as it encourages the deliberate delay and double-turn tactic. Instead, a fixed deadline is recommended, with a Ònull turnÓ run if the turn is not sent in by the due date. A Ònull turnÓ is one with no moves or orders, except that all ships are automatically set to prospect (plus, like any other turn, a turn report will be generated and turn fees will be charged). Most custom games use a three-week deadline. It is

also possible to specify *no* deadline, with turns run as soon as all playersÕ turns are in, but this is highly discouraged. As the players of game #16C discovered, turns begin to take longer and longer to arrive until it becomes a month or more between turns and players lose interest.

Non-player sectors: These can be wild, NPC, or bothÑfor example, you can declare that all non-player sectors are wild sectors. (Games with all-wild sectors tend to have more EPs available through prospecting and fleets become correspondingly larger.) You can also put in a Graveyard of Ships if you wish or simply leave it out of the game.

Monsters and NPCs: It is possible to delete these entirely, or add extras as you desire. You could also say, for example, that no monsters appear in home sectors but there are 2 in all wild sectors. Pirates can also be left out or added as needed.

Availability of certain orders: If you donÕt like an order or two, you can cause it to not appear in the game. Currently, the following orders or features can be deactivated: allying with/defending against a Corp, loans, primary races, legendary officers, decoys, site devastation, long-range bombardment, site raiding, trading with other Corps, buying Corporation stock, supply and demand (both standard and extended), Frax/Seltorian special ship buys, ÒfreeÓ things (FI, FT, etc.), random events, and stock reports/best Corp lists. Additional deactivations might be available on a case by case basis depending on the amount of programming involved.

Primary races: A common theme is the Òsingle-raceÓ concept such as the one used in the Historical variant. In this game each player must pick a single race and play it exclusively (except for civilian ships, which are always available to everyone). Depending on your wishes you might or might not want to include the CP order, which would let players change their minds every 12 turns. It is also possible to allow players two primary races, or not require primary races at all. As a final option, you might even consider deleting one or more races from the game entirely!

Anonymity: It is possible to have a ÒsecretÓ game where players are marked as Òanonymous,Ó which means it is not possible to get their name and address. This is an intriguing variant Agents of Gaming is considering for a future standard game, but is available for custom games as well. On the completely opposite track, it is possible to have the game announce the name and address of all players at game start.

Sector maps: One intriguing possibility is to provide some or all of the game maps to players before the game has even started. The obvious choice is to have players get their home sector map before they send in their build, enabling them to tailor their builds to match their sector. Providing players with maps of the sectors directly adjacent to theirs is also interesting, as is the possibility of sending ALL game maps to every player (eliminating the need for the SCAN TERRAIN order entirely!). Note: Making and distributing maps requires extra work by AoG, so an additional fee will probably be charged for this service. Contact AoG for details.

Other variants: You can, of course, use any of the variations described in the previous issue of the newsletter (pairs, undead, etc.) in your custom game. You might also come up with your own featureÑyou have nothing to lose by proposing this to AoG.

The final step is to decide how to end the game. Pick a number of sites or sectors or some other firm victory condition which is reasonable. Stating Òuntil only one person is left aliveÓ is not acceptable to AoG because by turn #30 only a couple of Corps will be left, and their turns will be nightmares to run. It is important to remember AoG is a business and cannot be put in the position where it is losing money (which tremendously huge turns will do).

Once your game design is ready, contact Agents of Gaming with the details and any questions you may have. Remember that AoG reserves the right to refuse any proposal or to modify it to fit their established business practices.

Above all, keep in mind that your custom game should be designed for fun, both for you and the rest of your group or team. Good luck!

EXPLORING THE
GRAVEYARD OF SHIPS
By Brian Robbins

As most players are aware by now, a unique income opportunity arises in Y171. The Graveyard of Ships (GS) is located in a sector of space not normally accessible. This single sector is filled with both major and minor sites, as well as numerous other hexes containing prospectable terrain. There is a catch to this income bonanzaÑonly one ship from each Corporation may be sent to the Graveyard, and ships sent there can never return home. The sole exception to this latter rule is a displacement-capable ship, but since a Starbase would have to be built to allow it to leave (and it could never return), this option is almost not worth mentioning.

Getting into the Graveyard is relatively simple. The only entry points are Gravity Wells, Black Holes and White Holes, and the ship wishing to enter must visit such a hex and issue the GRAV order. A scan is generated automatically and a map of the GS sector will be provided free of charge.

Because there are so many different types of ships to select from, players should choose an objective, whether it be site acquisition, increasing your income from prospecting, or flying around trying to destroy the opposition. Each objective, or Õmission,Ó has certain ships that are best for the job.

If your mission is to capture sites, one of the better choices is a generic ship (usually a tug) from any race, placed in Carrier mission for maximum attack factor (and naturally loaded with fighters). If you canÕt use a tug, use any carrier or other ship which can build up a tremendous amount of AF. You also want to add a Legendary Captain and a Prime Team to your ship. The Captain confers the Legendary Weapons Officer bonus of +25% to AF and DF, plus the Ace bonus of +1/+3 to fighter and PF combat factors. The Prime Team then provides the effect of five commandoes, which is +15 AF and DF (it would normally be +10Ñ2 per commandoÑbut the Captain gives the benefit of a Marine Major also, which adds 1 to each commandoÕs AF and DF.

If your intention is strictly to prospect, you should consider a survey ship (or generic ship in Survey mission). Because you donÕt intend to enter combat, you donÕt need a full-fledged (and expensive) tug, but your ship should still be large enough to handle a variable pulsar. YouÕll want to remember to train your ship as high as you possibly can to maximize your prospecting bonuses. You donÕt really need the Legendary Captain for this objective, but you still want the Prime Team because it provides Notification abilities (an additional prospecting bonus).

If your mission is to destroy every ship in your way, the only logical choice would be either a Battleship or Dreadnought. In either case, a Legendary Captain (or at least a Weapons Officer) should be assigned, and a Prime Team will also be useful. Since much of the terrain in the GS is caustic, train the ship to crew level 5 to avoid damage from asteroids and the like. Under the Òkill othersÓ theory, you will also want to build a base station in the Graveyard to get a ship scan, then hunt down ships by watching their movements and hitting them while they prospect.

Given the expense of a Legendary Captain, Prime Team, and extended training, you will probably want to spread the costs of these improvements over the course of several turns. If you have a gateway (BH, WH, GW) in your home sector, move the ship of your choice, plus an integration ship, to that hex and start the preparations. If you can, try to get into the Graveyard on the earliest possible turn (Y171), to maximize your chances of success whatever your mission there.

DonÕt forget that the GRAV order is a one-pulse order. If you have any leftover movement after GRAV, issue RAID orders in random directions and hope you get lucky and find a site.

The following is a list of some of the better ships to send to the Graveyard. Note that PF tenders and the like are not listed here because by the time PFs have come out (Y180), you should have already had your ship in the Graveyard for many turns. Do not wait too long to use the GS!

Race	Sites	Combat	Prospect
Federation	CVS, TUG, TUG+, CVA	CVS, TUG, TUG+, BB, DN, DN+, CVA	TUG, TUG+, GSC, GSC+, CLS, CVE
Klingon	D7V, C8V, B10V	B10, B10A, B10V, C8, C9, C8V, C9A	D7E, D6E, TGA, D5H
Romulan	SUPA, SUPB, CNV, KRV	KCN, FHK, SUPA, SUPB, K9R, CON, SPJ	KRE, SPA
Kzinti	TGC, CVL, CVS, CVL+	BB, DN, CVA	TGC, SR, SRV
Gorn	CVA	BB, DN, CVA	TUG, TUGF, SR, SRV
Tholian	CVA	CVA, D, DP	Ñ
Orion	CA, CA+, CV	DN, CV	Ñ
Hydran	LC or any carrier	MNR, LC, ID	TUG, SR, SRV, SRG
Andromedan	INT	INT, DEV	OGS
Lyran	CVA	BB, DN	SR
WYN	ACVA	ADN, ACVA, ABC	ADN, OBR, ABC, OCR, ODR, AC, OLR, ACV
ISC	CV, CVA, CVS	BB, DN, CVA	SR
LDR	CVL	DN, BC	LTT
Frax	CWV	DN	Ñ
Seltorian	HVS	HVS	Ñ
Civilian	ACVA	ACVA	Ñ

Note that most battleships are not available until Y175, which may be too late to be worth waiting for. Frax and Seltorians also appear late in the game but are listed above for completeness.

Remember, the ship you send to the Graveyard must be able to survive one-on-one combat, so choose wisely. By following the steps below, you can have the right force working for you in the Graveyard of Ships.

1. Determine what your objective is.
2. Choose an appropriate ship.
3. Train the crew to the highest level you can afford.
4. Assign a Legendary Captain to the ship, or the appropriate officers for the effects you need.
5. Assign a Prime Team to the ship.
Good luck!

THE MONSTER CAN WAIT
by Jim Christensen

Consider waiting to deal with your home sector monster until at least Y173. You can use the monster in an attempt to earn one or more crew-9 ships using a plan similar to the following:

1. Purchase 2 or more LTTs or tugs, preferably Feds as they will be able to get a crew level by upgrading.
2. Place a Prime Team on each (you get one free in Y170 and can ask for the other in Y171).
3. Train the ships to crew-7 (the PT allows this).
4. Go monster-bashing with both ships. The chance of getting a crew increase to level 8 are 50% for each ship, and crew 8 allows a switch to the valuable mission ÒN.Ó One level later (either by combat or by upgrading, if a Fed ship) you can switch to the ÒFÓ mission, and of course get all the other benefits of crew level 9. All of this on about Turn #10 of the game!
5. Now separate your crew-9 ships and get them to your fleets to use as facilities ships. Each belongs in its own theater and will survive battles easier than the fragile C-FTF, which you can buy only one of during the game. If you need more than 3 facilities ships, you're way too aggressive!

USING YOUR MAPS   *by Jim Christensen*

One of the keys to victory in any game of Star Fleet Warlord is good record-keeping. If you lose track of ships or sites, or mix up materials from one game to another, you can make mistakes that could cost you victory. Here are some suggestions for how you might avoid these pitfalls.

One help to record-keeping is a good place to keep your records! Keep a three-ring notebook for each of your games, with all your turns in sequential order and all your maps in sheet protectors (the glossy ones are best). This allows you to easily reference everything and keeps you from mixing pages accidentally with other games.

With the aid of colored grease pencils, you can do a tremendous amount of map work without destroying the originals. This includes the following:

¥ Ship trackingÑyours, monsters, and other players. Watch the movements of other ships and youÕll quickly be able to determine which are player-owned and which are monsters or NPCs. Properly done, this makes monster hunting a piece of cake. You can also watch terrain get prospected and can avoid wasting your time in those hexes later.

¥ Marking hazardous terrain. A bright red ÒXÓ over old minefields, variable pulsars, supernovas and novas will keep you from ever accidentally entering them. If they are on sector borders, block the borders heavily in red to avoid moving that way. YouÕd be surprised how much help this is.

¥ Showing surveyed moons. Mark any site which you have ÒactivatedÓ with a yellow tick mark. On the original map you might consider noting the number of moons.

¥ Marking treaty boundaries. A heavy green or blue line can be used to show lines youÕve agreed not to cross, or others have agreed to avoid. Ten turns after you make a treaty, are you going to remember the precise hex line you agreed on? And did it include the line or just the hexes on the other side of it? If you drew your line properly, youÕll know.

¥ Indicating previously prospected hexes. I draw a letter ÒPÓ below the terrain ID. Other players put a slash through the hex or draw a line through the hex number. Whatever works. DonÕt forget that moons (unless surveyed) and white holes build up over time and can be reprospected.

¥ Site ownership. I find it helpful to use a highlighter of one color to mark major sites on the original map, then another color for minor sites. Then I use a circle on the page protector to indicate which sites I own. If you do this, donÕt forget to wipe off the circles for sites you lose!

ASK THE GALACTIC COUNCIL!

When I go into the Graveyard of Ships, what happens if I land on a supernova? You can land on any hex in the Graveyard, except one containing a site or one containing a ship. Terrain does not matter, and does not affect your ship in any way. If you land on a supernova, nothing would happen except that you would probably prospect next turn.

If my ship enters a Stargate (or weak space) and is moved into the hex of a fleet too big for it to attack, what happens? This might be one of our most popular questions here at AoG. The answer is, it retreats back to the hex it was in before it entered the Stargate (or weak space) even if that location is all the way across the sector! It sounds odd, but it works this way for game balance purposes (it avoids forcing your ships to enter combat against their will, the only other valid solution). This same result would occur even if the ship had been moved twice (or more), perhaps by landing on a Stargate after being displaced by weak space.

I tried to set several sectors to listen to (with the Listen for Battles order, LB) but only the last one was set! Why? You can only have one sector set to be Òlistening toÓ at a time. Otherwise there would be nothing stopping you (other than the number of orders you have) from selecting *every* sector around you as one to listen in on (and thereby suffer no penalties).

When can you buy Frax and Seltorian ships? The sale of Frax ships occurs in Y176 and Seltorians in Y178. You are informed on the preceding turns about the upcoming sales, but if you donÕt have advance warning, you will miss a possible chance to buy orders in preparation for the sale.

I got a message that a player bumped into me between turns, but they didnÕt. What happened? They sent you a message RSVP and their name was flagged as someone whose address you needed to see. Unfortunately the only way the computer knew how to tell you was that they Òran intoÓ you between turns. I have corrected this problem, and in the future, if someone RSVPs you, there will be a special note about it in the ÒPlayers MetÓ section of your turn.

PUBLISHERÕS INFORMATION