

# Star Fleet Warlord News

Issue #2

The Official Newsletter of the Greater Magellanic Cloud

Sept. 1993

## NEWS & THINGS

Hello, everyone! I hope you enjoy this second issue of the STAR FLEET WARLORD NEWS! This issue will include updates on current game status, some strategy and tactics, and an overview of some of the lesser-known rules of SFW.

As this issue is being written, we are just starting our 8th full game of WARLORD game #20. We're also starting two specialty games, a three-week game and a one-week game, in the next few weeks. (Yes, you read that right—a one-week game! To play, you fax your turn in to us by Sunday night. We then mail it back to you. No late turns allowed! Interested in playing in a game like this one? Let us know!)

## SFW HALL OF FAME UPDATE

Game	Turn	Winner	Corporation
10	28	Bill Grace	Dante's Inferno
11	26	Tom Moylan	Splattered Smurfs

These were the last two games running under the old 100 sites or 9 sectors victory conditions. Games 12 and beyond use 80 sites or 7 sectors. Congratulations!

## NEW GAME FEATURES

FRDs now have a unique special ability within the game to make them worth buying. As many of you know, starting with turn 10 (Y175) you can start applying a speed refit to your ships which increases their maximum speed by one point. Up until now, the ONLY way to do this is using a base. Repair ships, facilities ships, logistics bases, legendary engineers, and so forth would not work.

Well, the fleet repair dock (FRD) is now capable of making speed refits! To do this, simply move the ship which needs refitting into the hex of the fleet repair dock. The ship then issues the REFT order normally, just as if it were using a base. The FRD cannot move on the pulse this occurs, but it can do anything else it needs to do, such as prospect. The refit will not use up repair points and therefore the FRD is capable of refitting an unlimited number of ships in a single turn.

At 200 EPs you may find the FRD rather expensive, but it may be the best way to get a full-sized fleet built and refitted in the middle of open space. A WG/FRD/MON combination may become the new standard for warp gate task forces!

This ability is available in all STAR FLEET WARLORD games as of the moment you read this dispatch.

## ERRATA UPDATE

A couple of other things spotted by alert players since the last issue of the SFW NEWS are listed below. A few clarifications are included as well.

Pg	Error/Note
05	The sample income totals are wrong. The adjustments for the People category should be +140, not +130, and the total EP(PE) should be 290.
14	Exploration ships (and therefore ships with legendary navigators) will also bounce off antimatter zones if they have no shields or if they are Andromedan, and will bounce off black holes and gravity wells if they would be destroyed by entering them.
48	The Monitor is considered a Heavy Cruiser for purposes of missions which carry extra optional items.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM

We're all human and some mistakes are occasionally made transcribing your turns from paper to the computer. These fall into several categories, and here's what to do when you see them.

*Simple errors/typos:* If we mistype a ship name, misenter your personal information, or something very simple like this, the best way to correct it is to write a note on your turn. Use the blank area at the bottom of your orders sheet, or write on the back. We'll be happy to fix it before the turn is run. Ask yourself, "Is this something which can affect me if someone attacks me before I run my next turn?" If so, then *don't* use this method—call instead!

*Wrong moves/orders:* The computer does some error checking as we enter turns, but can't catch everything. We also try to reread turns, but some errors escape our eye. If we misenter a move or an order, give us a call and we'll be glad to correct it. The best example is when you have several ships making very similar moves all in a row. Occasionally, as the turn is entered, the person typing will look back at the sheet in the wrong place, but the move entered will be legal so it will pass unnoticed. These are very hard to detect. A simple phone call and this will be easily fixed, usually while you're still on the line so you know the correction was made.

*Complicated errors:* These are the tough ones which we may not be able to handle right away. For example, you have two fleets joining together to hit a site but for some reason we misenter the moves for one of them and it doesn't arrive. The other one then attacks and dies! This is *extremely* complicated. We must now recreate every ship on your side, and every defense on the opposing side, and rerun the battle. If the defending player has already run a turn since then, we have to bring him/her into the picture. You get the idea! Anyway, when these things happen we will take our time to make sure we fix the error correctly (or compensate you if it cannot be fixed without serious repercussions elsewhere). Often, we run an update turn which details what was done and provides you with a new orders sheet.

There are a couple of things you can do to help us eliminate errors whenever possible. First, and most importantly, USE THE CORRECT ORDER FORMATS. If you use a PS order, put the parameters in the proper order and be sure to include any necessary keywords. E.g., the order OPS F POL #2 could be either "purchase a F-POL with max price of 2," "purchase a F-POL at warp gate #2," or "purchase a F-POL with the name #2." *If an error is made as a result of your writing an order improperly, it will not be corrected!* (Why? Because unscrupulous players could purposely write orders wrong, then have us correct them *if they want to*, depending on what they see in their turn results!)

Another big help is to use ditto marks or lines to indicate duplicate ship moves. If several ships make the same move, use a line underneath each pulse which is the same. Not only does this alert us to similar moves, it saves you the trouble of writing all those hex numbers over and over again. (You can use this to duplicate word orders, like REPR and TRNG, as well.)

Finally, make sure you write clearly. Use a pencil so you can erase if necessary. If you plan to fax your turn, make a photocopy of the blank orders sheet and fill in the copy with pencil. Then transcribe the orders using a dark pen onto the original. This gives you a clean, clear fax which we'll be able to read easily.

One last note. Please, don't be afraid to call us if we make a mistake requiring immediate correction. That's why we are here! Call any time day or night and leave a message if the machine answers. Then follow up to make sure the error was resolved. You can reach us at (513)256-2432.

## ASK THE GALACTIC COUNCIL!

*How is stock calculated?* Stock goes up when you do something of interest to your stockholders, like conquer a site or win a battle. It can go down if you lose a battle (especially if you lose a lot of ships) during your turn, and also drops a little bit if you lose things between turns. Naturally, major accomplishments like taking out other Corporations or NPC bases are worth a significant stock bonus.

*What good is stock, anyway?* First, it's an overview of how well you're doing in comparison to everyone else. It is also used to determine how much it costs someone to spy on you; it limits the amount of EPs you can trade to any other Corporation at one time; and of course it is eventually possible to buy and sell stock and make a profit off other players' good fortune.

*When are ship shields restored to full levels?* This is done when your turn runs, at the start of the turn, before any movement occurs. The Next Turn Generator does not do this unless one of your turns is waived, in which case the shields are restored at that time.

*Why is the Lyran SR not considered a generic ship since it is built on the Lyran Tug hull? While we're at it, how come the WYN LDD doesn't have 4 PFs?* Because those two ships would be too good if they had those things. The L-SR is already a survey ship and a scout; giving it missions would be too powerful. Likewise, the W-LDD is already an awesome ship for its cost. Besides, if you want to get technical, it wasn't really around when PFs came out (it had already been converted to the PBB).

*In my battle report I saw a ship with a (L) next to it in parenthesis. What does that mean?* A letter after the ship name (e.g. F-POL-1 (L) Masterson-10) indicates that the ship was already damaged when it entered the battle. L is used for light damage, M for medium, H for heavy and C for crippled.

*I attacked a site owned by another player and it had one satellite even though I know they had not placed any fortifications there. What's going on?* Sites controlled by a Corporation have at minimum 1 satellite. The initial ground party you drop off has enough equipment to get one in operation to add the minimum level of defense (1 point). This is why when you attack an undefended site but have no shields (e.g. due to a nebula) you will still take 1 point of damage. Of course, sites which are totally unowned have no such advantage.

*My ship had down shields and entered a heat zone, and was destroyed by the terrain despite my legendary navigator! What happened?* Navigators protect from damage by asteroids, meteors and dust and allow half damage from minefields and pulsars. They do not help against heat zones. Let me go into more detail. When the hex is about to be entered, the navigator can order the ship not to enter but ONLY if the terrain would destroy the ship BEFORE any damage would be rolled up. So if it were crippled and about to enter a black hole, this would be an auto-kill so the ship would bounce back. But if it had down shields and was entering a heat zone, there is a damage roll, so the navigator would not help.

*How come so many random events say "This won't work on warp gates?"* Warp gates are treated with great care by the computer. The ability of one WG to turn into a huge fleet in a couple of turns is kind of scary. Random events take this into account to avoid unbalancing the game. Why do you think we don't let players trade ships between each other? By the way, none of the random events of the form, "Pick a random ship and do something good/bad to it" will affect a warp gate. Imagine one of these key units suddenly blowing up due to a random event, or suddenly gaining a cloak or a speed of 6, and you can begin to comprehend the problems this policy avoids.

*Can I use the AA (Ask for Ad) order on Monsters or Frax?* This is an order you learn about on turn 1 of the game. The answer is yes, you can use it on any ship in STAR FLEET WARLORD, including monsters. If you don't know the designator for a particular monster type, just write out the name in full.

*When do the monsters move?* The monsters (and all the non-player Corporations, such as the Frax and Andromedans) move at the beginning of each turn before any player turns are run. At the end of each turn, usually on Saturday afternoon, we run something called the Next Turn Generator. This is what does all the various accounting things like change ship prices, increment moon prospecting, and calculate the Best Corps lists. Right after this the monsters move.

*I tried to move from hex 0116 of sector \_\_\_ (fill in the blank) to hex 1601 but the computer said that's an illegal move! What happened?* Those hexes are not adjacent! Check the map segment on page 23 of your rulebook and you'll see what I mean.

*Is it possible to denote computer controlled Corporations on the stock report we get each turn?* No, we don't WANT to show them on the stock report. You could very quickly discover the pattern (or lack thereof) of player placement in the game. Eventually you will probably figure it out, but it's unfair if you know it right away. This is one of the reasons there are Dummy Corps in the wild sectors (by this I mean Corporations with no ships or sites, just a name). It has been found that without these dummy Corps a skilled veteran can take a blank map, sit down with the first top 20 list he/she sees, and figure out what the galactic pattern is after a few moments' study. (Of late we have been trying to confuse these efforts by making the patterns a little less regular, but when you have to fit 50 people in 100 sectors, this is not easy.)

*If a ship loses speed in an early pulse of movement (say, to a negative energy field) does it slow down immediately and lose later movements?* No, you get to "coast" out the rest of the turn, but the speed loss will be permanent until repaired, starting on your next turn. The flip side of this apparent advantage is that a ship which repairs lost speed cannot use the "regained" speed points until the start of your next turn. We have to be consistent with these things, you see.

## A MORE COMPLICATED QUESTION

*I want to make sure my ship gets filled with drones when I buy it. How do I specify this?* This looks like an easy one, but there are some subtleties in the sequence of play that I'd like to explore in the answer, so here goes.

First, when a ship visits a base during movement phase, it collects what is available that it can carry. If two ships arrive at bases in the same pulse, they pick up in "age order," oldest ship taking first dibs (as explained in the last issue of the newsletter).

When a ship is bought, the computer checks to see if there are any optional items available for it to pick up at that time. (The ship has come through your warp transporter and is at the Home Office.) If so, it takes what it can. It is then delivered to a warp gate (if you specified one).

After all orders are issued the computer makes one final check to see if any ships at bases can pick up items (i.e., if you bought any optional items during the orders phase, or did something like deassign fighters from a base). If so, it gives them away (again in age order, if it matters).

So let us imagine the following example of three orders:

- |   |
|---|
| (1) PS Z CD [purchase a Kzinti drone cruiser] |
| (2) BD 30 [buy drones, 30 EPs worth]          |
| (3) PS Z DF [purchase a Kzinti drone frigate] |

And let us imagine you already had 10 drones in stock. What would happen?

When you buy the CD, which can carry 36 drones, it takes the 10 in stockpile right away, but since the BD 30 which follows *HAS NOT YET BEEN PROCESSED*, it cannot access those drones. Second, the BD 30 is taken care of, buying 30 drones. But they are NOT redistributed *UNTIL ORDERS PHASE IS OVER!* So when you then buy the Z-DF, it picks up 24 of those 30 drones. Orders phase ends with 6 drones yet unclaimed, which are then distributed to eligible ships at bases. Assuming none exist except the newly purchased Z-CD, it would get those 6, but if any older ships were out there, they would get first crack.

## USING STARBASES FOR FUN & PROFIT

Starbases are excellent defensive items. You can have one by fortifying a site with a mere 600 economic points. The first site to become a starbase is usually your Home Office, although captured HO's and other key sites often reach this status eventually.

In addition to the 150 DF the starbase provides, you can assign up to 30 fighters and 12 PFs (after Y179) to it. A legendary weapons officer and/or marine major will increase the DF by 20% each, and a legendary ace pilot can be used to make the fighters and PFs even better. Fully loaded like this, a starbase is difficult to defeat with an equal EP-amount of ships.

The best thing about a starbase, though, is that it provides something called a Starbase order. This is an extra order you can issue in addition to the 10 miscellaneous orders you are normally entitled to. Starbase orders are almost always some sort of scan which helps you gain information or defend a site in some way. There's no limit to the number of starbases you can own, and hence no limit to the number of starbase orders you could earn.

Starbases are usually too expensive to build in one shot. Typically they are built up with 100 or 200 points over the course of several turns. However, if all you want is one of those special orders, you can get the same effect with 300 EPs and a legendary science officer assigned to the site. Legendary science officers also help the base gain additional starbase orders at larger base sizes.

*Note: Even if your base is located in scan-blocking terrain (and therefore cannot make an automatic ship scan), it will still give you a starbase order if it is large enough to do so.*

Starbase orders are quite useful, and you will hear detailed descriptions of them as play proceeds. To make sure everyone has an idea of what starbase orders can do, I'm going to take this time to explain each and every one of them. I won't give a complete description of the command syntax, but I will mention what you have to do to learn more about these orders. Here goes:

**Scan Hex (SH):** This is the most basic starbase order and you learn about it as soon as you gain your first one. Basically, you can use it to scan any hex in the galaxy, and I do mean ANY hex! The scan reports the terrain, defenses (fortifications, fighters and PFs), and number of uncloaked ships in the hex. It does not tell you who owns the site (if one exists). The typical use for this order is to check out a site for defenses, or to look across a sector border to see if a particular hex is safe to send a scout or fleet into. (Late in the game, when you have a half-dozen starbase orders, it's possible to scan a safe path all the way across an unscanned sector, but this can take a good deal of time to accomplish.)

**Scan Value (SV):** You hear about this as soon as you use Scan Hex (above). SV is similar to SH, but tells you the actual value of the site, i.e., what it produces in the way of resources. This can help identify home offices and NPC bases in wild sectors (which have higher values than standard sites of a given type). It will also report the prospecting value of the hex, if any.

**Scan Cloaked (SC):** This nifty order is described to you as soon as you own your first warbase. You specify a starbase (or larger base) to make the scan and it tells you if there are cloaked ships in the sector where the base is located. Larger bases will tell you more information, and megabases will actually show the hexes which contain cloaked ships. (Note: This order is the reason cloaked decoys work like they do in STAR FLEET WARLORD.)

**Scan Fleet (SF):** This is an improvement over Scan Hex (SH) and is explained when you have earned a second starbase order. SF will tell you not just the quantity of ships in the hex you specify, but the exact classes and even the names of these ships! If the ships are cloaked, their presence (but no other details) is reported. This is great for picking out the exact defenses at that key site you're planning to attack. However, the disadvantage is that SF requires two starbase orders to issue, not just one!

**Scan Jamming (SJ):** You hear about this one on turn 10 of the game, although it can be used by starbases before this point. When SJ is used on a

site, that site cannot be scanned by the SH, SV or SF orders! You must own this site, of course, and the protection ends when your next turn is run. After you have a couple of starbases, you will want to use this on your home office every turn to prevent use of the SF order on it.

**Starbase Launch (SL):** This allows a starbase to actually attack another site by launching drones at it! The site must be in the same sector, and you must have drones available and unallocated (i.e., in your stockpiles). The maximum number of drones you can launch is equal to 1/20th of the starbase's fortification level, and the order can only be used by each starbase once per turn. Otherwise, this order is basically a BOMB order used by your base instead of a ship. All restrictions of the BOMB order apply, and you learn about this order when you issue BOMB for the first time. Note that larger starbases will do better than smaller ones in terms of range and damage scored.

**Scan Extended (SX):** This order is explained when you have earned a third starbase order. You can use it to make a ship scan of any sector you like! This is a great way of getting a look at a sector before you decide whether or not to invade it. You can also use it as a stopgap measure if you lose your last base/scout in a critical sector you're attempting to defend, or if you are checking up on an ally to make sure he's not preparing to backstab you. The only problem is that this order takes three starbase order spaces to issue!

**Scan Passive (SP):** This is a defensive order which enables you to boost your starbase's defense factor. When issued the starbase you specify will have its DF increased by 20%. This is cumulative with weapons officers and marine majors. In addition, the passive scans will help you detect and identify incoming enemy scans on your site and tell you who made them. (Normally there is only a slim chance of finding out these things, increased by the fortification level. SP will make the chance almost automatic.) The only disadvantage is that a site on passive will not make a normal automatic ship scan that turn. Passive scans remain in effect until you run your next turn. You hear about SP after earning your 4th starbase order.

**Scan Monsters (SM):** This is a convenient order at just about any time, but late in the game when monsters have had a chance to duplicate themselves several times, it is almost a requirement. Earn your 5th starbase order to hear about it. SM allows you to identify monsters in the same sector as your starbase, including type, location and prevailing direction they are moving! This scan costs 100 EPs to perform unless used by a full-sized megabase.

**Scan EPs (SE):** This is the last starbase order you learn about and is perhaps the most powerful. You must have 6 starbase orders to hear about SE. To use it, specify the hex of your base and you'll get a complete list of all the prospecting values of every hex in that sector! However, there are some restrictions on this. First, it costs 100 EPs, just as SM does, and a megabase does not lower this price. Secondly, it takes three starbase order spaces, just like the Scan Extended order. Finally, it must be used by a warbase or larger base, not any simple starbase!

A couple of final notes on starbase orders:

If you expect to be earning a starbase order on a given turn, you can issue the order in anticipation of this; however, you must use one of your normal miscellaneous orders. You can't just write it in at the bottom unless there is a line to write it on.

Starbase orders which use multiple order spaces need only be written once. The extra order lines can be left blank or filled with other starbase orders in the event you lost a starbase between turns. For example, if you did an SX order you might write SH orders in the other two spaces. If you lost a starbase and had only two, the SX would fail but the other two would succeed.

Orders which require you specify the starbase making a scan assume that the base in question is not located in scan-blocking terrain. If it is, the order will fail. Orders that don't scan, like SL or SJ, ignore this restriction.

In conclusion, starbases are extremely useful things to have around. The amount of information their scans can provide is considerable, and in STAR FLEET WARLORD, knowledge is power!

**COMING NEXT ISSUE**

*The Nasty Space Monsters*—the creatures you love to hate! How do you deal with them? How powerful are they? What kind of special abilities do they have? What's the best way to hunt them down? These and other important questions will be answered in the third issue of the STAR FLEET WARLORD NEWS, due out at the end of the year!

*Historical Warlords*: A pseudo-historical simulation of the General War using the rules of STAR FLEET WARLORD! We plan to make this a 6 vs. 6 team game, one side playing the Alliance and the other the Coalition. Due to the number of special rules involved, a playtest session is needed to make sure it works properly. Watch for an announcement about rules, tactics and how to join a game in our next issue!

Plus the standard tactic articles, questions and answers and game progress reports. See you in December!

**WARLORD WRITERS NEEDED!**

Got an idea, strategy or tactic which you could meld into an article for this newsletter? Send it in—we're looking for some good material! Include any articles with your turns or simply mail them to the address shown below. You can send them by electronic mail if you're on GENIE. There might be a turn credit or two in it for you if your article gets published!

**SFW FOUND IN CAPTAIN'S LOG**

Task Force Games produces a semiannual product known as *Captain's Log* for the Star Fleet Battles game (on which STAR FLEET WARLORD is based, as you should already know). The latest issue, *Captain's Log #12*, contains three pages of material for SFW, including several tactical notes, three best first builds, and a two-page article on general strategies to use throughout the game. Pick up a copy from any fine hobby store, or borrow one from a friend!

If you're interested in learning more about the Star Fleet Battles game system (it's a tactical game, whereas WARLORD is more strategic in nature), the product to look for is called the *Cadet Training Manual*. This inexpensive book will explain how the game is played and teach you to play it from the ground up. If you're not sure if SFB is for you, the *Cadet Training Manual* will let you find out without any expensive commitment in time or materials. Give it a shot!

**MORE ABOUT AGENTS OF GAMING**

*Who We Are*: I'm Bruce Graw, designer of STAR FLEET WARLORD and sole owner of AoG. My game persona is Agent One. I'm a member of the Star Fleet Staff and hold the title of Orion Crimelord.

If you call us, there's a 50% chance you'll get me or my employee, Bruce Fiedler. As you may have noticed, we're both named Bruce, which can cause confusion if you aren't careful. Mr. Fiedler is usually the one who runs your turns, so you need to direct questions about a turn to him if you can, whereas I'm normally the one to handle rules questions and suggestions. However, our knowledge overlaps pretty well and we can usually both handle any question you can come up with.

*Our Computers*: We get a lot of inquiries about what sort of computers we use. We have three: two 386/40s (one of them for software development and support and the other for the newer and faster games), and one 486/33 which handles the older, larger games. (Turns usually take from 2-5 minutes to run, by the way.) Borrowed Macintosh computers are used for the newsletter and rulebook. Our laser printer, known lovingly as the *Printer From Hell*, is a Xerox 4045 monstrosity which weighs over 100 pounds and therefore usually gets its way. It's unique in the laser printer world in that it has a photocopier built into it. Of course, this advantage is moot since it usually doesn't work. (Sigh.)

*Our Relationship with ADB/TFG*: We work very closely with these two, but AoG is an independent company. ADB and TFG cannot answer questions about STAR FLEET WARLORD; these must be directed to us. All rules and game materials are approved in advance by ADB/TFG to ensure they meet contract standards. Also, we are not permitted to reveal details of this contract, so don't ask (it's another of our most common questions).

*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.

**PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION**

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