

Star Fleet Warlord News

Issue #6

The Official Newsletter of the Greater Magellanic Cloud

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SFW HALL OF FAME UPDATE

Game	Winner	Corporation	Victory
17A	Charles Morriss	Thugs Inc.	Sole survivor
19	Bruce Spears	DÖs Demonic Psychos	102 sites
20	Bruce Spears	Galactic Toxicology	7 sectors
21	Matt Smyth	Catnip Inc.	7 sectors
22	Robert Vandenberg	Mrachne More Flot	86 sites

Game 17A was the ÖTexas Challenge,Ö a custom game offered to eight Texan players. On turn 27, Charles Morriss defeated his last competitor and the game ended.

Bruce Spears became our first two-time winner, and then a couple of weeks later became our first three-time winner! Of the four games heÖs played, he has won three of them. We asked him about the secret of his success, and he said, ÖI basically won both gamesÑand game #9, tooÑwith diplomacy.Ö

Matt Smyth was a first-time winner, and Robert Vandenberg won his second game (game #18 was his previous victory). Congratulations to all these Warlords!

A more in-depth report on these games, complete with quotes from the winners, can be found in CaptainÖs Log #16, coming soon from Task Force Games or a fine hobby store near you.

NEWS & THINGS

As many of you know (though some may have forgotten), the STAR FLEET WARLORD NEWS is now free to all currently active players in any game. Those who arenÖt in a game but would like to receive an issue can purchase one for \$1. Back issues are available for all previously published issues at this same rate. (Overseas customers will be charged \$2 due to the higher cost of postage.)

WARLORDÖS AIDE NOW AVAILABLE!

A computer program is now available from Agents of Gaming to help you with your turns. This program is known as the WARLORDÖS AIDE and is currently available for IBM-compatible computers only.

The WarlordÖs Aide is a database utility which enables you to maintain records for each of your ships in each game youÖre involved in. You can enter a shipÖs basic combat factors, officers, optional items, and so forth, and find its combined combat abilities with the touch of a key! More importantly than this, however, you can enter moves and orders for each ship, and the Aide will check these moves to see if theyÖre legitimate. No more ÖYour ship moved illegallyÖ reports on your turn sheet!

You can also enter miscellaneous orders, and the Aide will check these for the proper formats, displaying all legal parameters if you make a mistake.

Once youÖve entered a turn you can create one of two sorts of files: a text file suitable for printing (and acceptable as an official turn by Agents of Gaming), or an encoded file you can send to AoG by electronic mail or media. This can then be read directly by the STAR FLEET WARLORD computers, with no chance of a data entry error! And of course, if you send your turn by electronic mail, you cut out the post office as the middleman, saving you a stamp or (if you normally fax your turn) that pesky \$1 fax fee.

The best part is, the programÖs free! Agents of Gaming provides it as a service to you, the customer. The only thing we ask is \$5 to cover the cost of the disk weÖll mail you, the packaging, and the postage. Interested? Give us a call or write a note on your turn, and weÖll even include pre-entered databases for your ships in every game youÖre in, at no extra charge!

ERRORS FOUND IN THE NEW RULEBOOK

WeÖd love to be able to say there were no mistakes made in the new rulebook, but we did find some (although surprisingly few considering the bookÖs size). These are listed below.

Page	Error
41	The list of terrain immunities says monsters are immune to nebulas, but this is not completely true. Their shields are not dropped to zero as with a normal ship, but if they should be in combat within a nebula, their shield factor will not protect them. (A subtle distinction, but an important one.)
51	The UPGR order description says that repair planetoids cannot be used to upgrade ships, but in truth they can. The description of the repair planetoid on page 12 is correct.
62	The EV order cannot be used during the initial build. There is no Random Event Phase of your turn during the build turn, so thereÖs no way to get one. (Besides, you have better things to do with your 10 orders than waste one on a random event.)
64	The RSVP parameter of the ME order was found to cause confusion when first encountered. The effect was that you received the name and address of a player (in the standard player address section of your turn) with no explanation of where it came from. To alleviate some of this confusion, messages sent with RSVP are now preceded with the Corporation number followed by a double-greater-than-sign (>>) marker. So if you see Ö305>> Call me!Ö, you know to look to your player address section for Corp#305Ös name and address.
69	In the A% order description, near the bottom, Ö..Andromedans have very low attack factors but high staying factors...Ö should read Östaying power.Ö
74	In the example, the attacking ships would have taken damage from the asteroid field terrain when they entered the hex (before this battle even started), but this is purposely left out of the example for simplicity. (You might note, however, that the battle would have gone even worse for the attackers than it did, considering the amount of damage asteroids cause upon entry).

There are also a number of glitches in the Ship List, which are as follows:

Page	Error
2	F-CVE should have a ÖYÖ variant as well as ÖSÖ and ÖVÖ.
6	R-H+ should have a ÖBÖ variant in addition to ÖOO.
7	Z-SRV should have a ÖYÖ variant as well as ÖSÖ and ÖVÖ.
8	G-SRV should have (you guessed it) a ÖYÖ variant as well as ÖSÖ and ÖVÖ.
12	A-INF is not available until Y174.
12	A-KS, A-DIA, A-BUL and A-RAT possess displacement devices in Star Fleet Battles, but these were purposely left off in Star Fleet Warlord as a balance factor.
16	D-PSC should have an ÖSÖ variant letter (this was our most embarrassing mistake in the whole rulebook).
17	S-SC is listed as having a designation of ÖDDÖ. (The one with the name ÖScoutÖ is the SC, not DD.)

BIZARRE PLANETOID PRIMER

Okay, so you have a Bizarre Planetoid (BP) as one of your sites. The rulebook says its value varies widely from turn to turn, but that's pretty vague, isn't it? Here's some more information that will help you understand these strange sites.

Every BP has a base value, which is what you see when you conquer the site or use a Scan Value order on it. This number looks awfully small, and can actually fall below the normal minimum (20) for any resource planets normally possess. Judging a BP by its base value is only half the story, however.

When your turn runs, the computer generates a value called the Bizarre Planetoid Value for your Corp. (I picked the acronym for all you Star Fleet Battles aficionados.) This value can range from 1 to 25, and this amount will be added to *every bizarre planetoid you own* on that turn! (In other words, a different value is not determined for each BP.) So if you have a "good" BP turn, in which a large value is rolled, *all* your BPs will produce extra resources. On the other hand, if you're unlucky, they'll all produce less than normal.

The Estimated Income Calculator assumes you will get the minimum (base) value from every BP, by the way, so if you have a lot of them, you'll almost always find yourself with more EPs than your accountants predicted. This should come as a pleasant surprise...most of the time, that is.

QUANTITY OR QUALITY?

by Jim Christensen

In STAR FLEET WARLORD, you'll often be faced with the choice of quantity or quality. In other words, should you buy a lot of little ships or one or two very large ones?

In general, quantity will win out. Why? Here are a few reasons:

¥ *Flexibility.* You can't split a battleship and send the pieces in different directions, but a four-ship fleet could be broken up if need be (perhaps to prospect).

¥ *Site conquering.* A lone ship can only take one or two sites a turn, but a cluster of small ships can sweep an entire sector in no time flat. Since most sites are undefended, and any size ship can conquer them, your little ships are just as good as big ones.

¥ *Combat.* Check out the example of combat in the rulebook. When you have a multi-ship fleet, the damage coming in is divided out amongst them. A lone ship, on the other hand, will take everything the other side can dish out!

¥ *Cost.* Small ships are cheaper to maintain, and also cheaper to refit, upgrade and repair. And if a small ship gets damaged, it's not that severe a blow.

Like all concepts, however, there are pros and cons. Large ships have their advantages, too. Here are a few situations where bigger is better:

¥ *Terrain.* Some terrains simply cannot be survived by small ships—magnetic meteors and variable pulsars, for example. You want to go in these hexes for the prospecting, and if you can't afford or don't have the enhancements (high crew, legendary officers), only a big ship will do.

¥ *Special buys.* If you have a chance to buy Frax or Seltorian ships, or Monsters, don't let size stop you. This is the only chance you'll get. Some random events (like the one that gives you speed-6 on your next purchase) are begging for big ships. And, of course, you'll probably want a large ship for the Graveyard.

¥ *Build limitations.* If you don't have enough order lines available but need ships fast, buy the largest ships you can afford. Having money left over probably won't do you much good if your Home Office is coming under attack (or you're hitting someone else's).

¥ *As fleet anchors.* In a close battle, the largest ships are going to survive at the end, and little ones will be swept away. Your major fleets should all have one or more big "anchors" that the little ones protect. A fleet of 80-90% DWs or smaller will make its anchor ships nearly invincible in a close fight!

HISTORICAL GAME NOTES

by Steve Forsythe

The Historical Game, a simulation of the General War, has recently been developed for STAR FLEET WARLORD. In this variant, two teams of six players each take the roles of the Alliance and Coalition races. The team concept, and the roles of the individual within the team, make the Historical Game quite a different challenge from standard SFW. As one of the original playtesters of this variant, I'd like to share with you some of my observations.

The Alliance and the Coalition players must remember that they are a part of a *team*. A team wins by controlling twice as many sites as the other team; this is the game's bottom line. It won't do much good for your Corporation to do extremely well while the rest of your team is wiped out! With this in mind, when making any decision during play, you must choose the path that provides the most benefit to the team. Even if it may not be the best move for your individual Corporation.

Of course, acting in concert to implement a really bad strategy might not yield the hoped-for result. Both sides have strengths and weaknesses. The two basic strategies hinge on maximizing your strengths or minimizing your weaknesses (and of course, negating your opponents' strengths). Both sides have at least one player who is likely to be attacked by two or more opponents with friendly forces too far away to help. Primarily, these are the Hydrans on the Alliance side and the Western Romulans for the Coalition. (The Kzinti and the Eastern Romulans are in a similar position, but the Kzintis can get help from the Northern Federation, while the Eastern Roms will only be attacked by one opponent, not two.) The Eastern Romulans are likely to have more income than the Eastern Gorns and so are OK as long as the Western Romulans survive (assuming both Gorn players don't target the Eastern Romulans).

Each team must decide if they are going to send aid (via the Economic Gift order) to their vulnerable player. They could also decide to send aid to the player(s) attacking the opponent's most vulnerable position. A good strategy will secure a war-winning advantage while preventing the opponents from gaining an equally good advantage. Capture of players' homeworlds, or at least bottling them up on their homeworlds, is the basis of a good strategic plan. Which sectors a player should be exploiting should also be explicitly stated in a team's overall strategy. Each player should know the team's strategy and plan accordingly.

All players should try to prevent the opponents from gaining sector bonuses and good prospecting. Destroying many of their ships while losing few of yours is also helpful in reaching your objectives. Strong effort should be made to prevent the opponents from scanning your home sectors while getting scans of theirs. Battles for homeworlds may involve well over 100 ships, so adjust your defense to match the threats. Remember to plan ahead; it is impossible to build a defense against a 50 ship fleet in two or three turns!

The following paragraphs describe the important considerations from each of the twelve participants.

Hydrans: Survival is the paramount issue for the Hydrans. Without significant aid, the Lyrans and Klingons will crush the Hydrans. If the Hydrans are to be sacrificed in order to focus all efforts on destroying the Romulans (one option for the Alliance team to consider), then the Hydrans should try to do as much damage as possible and survive as long as possible. With significant aid, the Hydrans could be as strong as both the Western Lyrans and Western Klingons. While still fighting a defensive war (using interior lines), effort can be spared to send lone raiders into Lyran and Klingon space.

Western Lyrans: Exploitation of sectors 01 and 11 is important. Destroying the Hydrans and providing aid to other players are two important goals for the Western Lyrans. Sending a warp gate through Eastern Lyran space could also prove very useful, and gives you something to do when they Hydrans have finally been taken out.

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Eastern Lyrans: Control of sector 30 is necessary; exploitation of sector 21 is good and exploitation of 11 a possibility. Destroying the Kzinti is a noble goal (from the Lyran point of view) but it is difficult to accomplish since the Northern Federation can get there just as quickly as you can. Again, a choice must be made between providing aid to others or attempting the quick demise of the Kzinti. In any case, a large fleet in sector 40 will bottle-up the Kzintis, making things easier for the Lyrans. It's up to either you or the Klingons to remove the Kzinti threat, so make sure the Klingons know your plans (and which of you will be the one to take the responsibility).

Western Klingons: Control of sector 12 and possibly 11, 21, or 31 are possibilities. The goals of destroying the Hydrans and providing aid are similar to those of the Western Lyrans except the Western Klingons have an additional option of attacking the Kzinti via sector 31. A Western Klingon warp gate in sector 31 or 32 would help defend the Klingons from the Kzinti and the Federation. Don't put too much effort into destroying the Hydrans, as this is the Western Lyran's job, but don't fall into the trap of leaving your border unguarded, either.

Eastern Klingons: Many options are available to the Eastern Klingons. These include all-out attacks against the Kzinti (in conjunction with the Eastern Lyrans) or against the Feds via sector 41. The Eastern Klingons *must* put pressure on the Federation in order to force them to allocate some resources to their own defense. This is the best way the Eastern Klingons can assist the Romulans. Sacrificing the Romulans to destroy the Hydrans and the Kzinti is probably not likely to win, as it gives the Alliance over half the map to control. If even one Romulan player survives, however, victory would be likely. Destroying a Federation player might be enough to win the war and if any opportunity to do so becomes available, go for it!

Northern Federation: The Northern Federation needs to coordinate its activities with the Western Gorns, the Kzinti, and the Southern Feds. A plan for exploiting sectors 40, 41, 60, and 61 must be worked out early. In the case of 40 and 60, it's generally wiser to let one Corporation control the entire sector (for the bonus) rather than try to split it up, but the Feds can't afford to give both of these sectors away entirely. You'll need to split up the prospecting carefully, too. Also, the Northern Feds should be sending aid to someone virtually every turn. A warp gate and fleet should head towards the Kzinti homeworld. It is reasonable that a Northern Fed fleet would try to attack the Eastern Klingons or the Western Romulans. Defense of the Southern Feds might also rest with the Northern Feds! It's important that the Feds have a plan and work to accomplish it. Both Northern and Southern Feds can easily become overextended by trying to do too many things simultaneously.

Southern Federation: Southern Feds have five different sectors they could reasonably move into: 41, 42, 52, 61, and 62. Of these, the Southern Feds are the only member of the Alliance who can quickly reach 42, 52, and 62. Sector 52, the Tholian sector, is a potential source of income, but it could also tie up many ships that could be used elsewhere (and the enemy is going to hear most of the battle reports you generate in Tholian space, so they'll know what you're up to). Exploitation of 42 and 62 is required to some extent just to prevent the other side from having unopposed access to those two wild sectors. Southern Fed will probably want to focus its efforts on either the Western Romulans or the Eastern Klingons. One of the Federation players should focus effort on the Eastern Klingons. Destroying the Romulans is a popular Fed pastime, but if the Gorns kill them first, a large Fed fleet may find itself flying through space, not accomplishing much. Obviously, it's important to make plans early and follow them through.

Western Romulans: Next to the Hydrans, the Western Romulans have the smallest hope of survival. Most likely one Gorn player and one Fed player (Southern, most likely) will attack in force. The Western Roms must exploit sectors 61, 62, and 71. Getting scans of the home sectors of the Feds and the Gorns is an important goal. It is much more effective to fight the Gorn fleets in open space than to defend a site against their attack, because of all those commandoes and site-attack bonuses. To survive, the Western Roms must destroy the Western Gorn fleet in sector 71. They must also have strong defenses to deal with the Feds. A cloaked fleet of even six to eight cruisers can force a player to defend a homeworld and is certainly strong enough to take a planet or two in a player's home sector. The Romulan

players (especially the Western one) must balance offense with defense. A totally defensive Romulan player is not taking advantage of his greatest weapon, the cloak. Knowing when to cloak and when not to is important. Improved cloaks and refits are available but should be used carefully. If a ship does not need to be refitted, use those resources elsewhere. Warp Gates and FRDs should be refitted and given improved cloaks at the first opportunity, of course.

Eastern Romulans: Exploit sector 92 and 81. Destroy the Eastern Gorns (or perhaps the Western Gorns) and then the other Gorn player. The same comments apply to Eastern Roms as they did for Western Roms except that the Eastern Roms are more likely to end up in a one-on-one matchup and have more income than the Eastern Gorns (much more, if they properly exploit sector 92, which is theirs uncontested).

Western Gorns: Exploitation of sector 71 (and to some extent 60 and even 61) is paramount. The Western Gorns should (a) kill Roms, (b) keep their home sector from being scanned, and (c) provide aid to others (if applicable). You're unlikely to come under serious attack, but you can never be sure with those sneaky Romulans, so allocate something (a base or a high-crew ship) to scan for cloaked ships every turn.

Eastern Gorns: Exploitation of sector 81 is critical. Exploiting 90 will not be easy because the ISC have large, powerful ships, but it's the only way to have an income close to the Eastern Roms. Attempting to tiptoe through sector 91 and come in the back door to Eastern Rom space generally fails due to the huge quantities of ISC ships you'll encounter. If the war stagnates, however, a foray into sector 92 to steal the sector bonus might be appropriate, but always try the direct approach first.

There are also a number of general observations that tend to hold true for all participants. Getting scans of all adjacent sectors on the third turn is so important that you should consider using two scouts just to make sure. Starbase orders take on a greater role, especially when helping to locate enemy bases. You should really consider counterespionage until several turns into the game, if only to keep the enemy from locating your Home Office with an ES order, then scan-hexing a safe path to it (enabling a sneak attack without a sector map). And, as always, don't forget the monsters and NPCs in the wild sectors; you have to take out their base as quickly as possible, and of course any battle report you generate will probably be read by your opponents, so they'll know where that base is as soon as you've conquered it. Don't underestimate the value of this sort of intelligence!

For each of the above, and in fact any objective in the game (no matter how minor), keep in mind the team concept. If you don't have the money for an EC order, get a loan from a teammate. If you need a scan of a particular hex but your starbase orders are all in use, a teammate's starbase will do the job just as well as yours. If the pirate base in a sector is too far away from you, but an ally's fleet is nearby, get him to conquer it (he probably won't mind the crew training, anyway) and then drop it so you can take it over easily.

In summary, every action taken should contribute towards accomplishing your objectives in the most efficient way possible. Income is important in accomplishing other objectives. Each player must weigh the return on the investment in time and resources. The NPC sectors will be difficult and require a good sized fleet to dominate. Most important of all is to have fun. Hopefully these observations will help you fight an exciting war and, win or lose, know that you fought well!

GAME VARIATIONS EXPLAINED

Every now and again Agents of Gaming offers minor variations to their standard game, in order to keep things interesting and less cut-and-dried. Some of the variations are explained below. Note that in games with fewer than 50 players, no prize is awarded for victory, other than the satisfaction of a job well done.

Express Game: This is a game which runs on a one-week cycle, instead of the standard two-week turnaround time. There are usually 16 players in such a game, and the winner is the first to control three sectors (not seven); sites are used only as a tiebreaker. Turns are due by a certain hour of a certain day of the week, and late turns are waived (i.e., no lateness allowed). Turns are accepted by electronic mail or fax, and to play you'll want to be able to do either of these on a regular basis.

Three-Week Game: This is a game with a three-week turnaround time. All other rules are the same as in standard play, including victory conditions, except that the number of players is less, usually 12 or 16.

Doomsday Game: In this variant, a turn is chosen secretly at startup time. The game ends at the start of this turn, but the players won't know what it is. At that time, the player with the most sectors (or sites, if tied) wins. The ending turn will be at least turn #20 (Y185).

All-Wild/All-NPC Game: Normally a game has 50 player sectors, 25 wild sectors and 25 NPC sectors. These variants, then, post the obvious changes. All-wild sector games tend to last longer and have larger fleets, while EPs are a little more scarce in an all-NPC game.

Pairs Game: This variant is for those who like gaming with a friend. Each pair of players is placed diagonally adjacent to each other, so cooperative play is allowed and encouraged! Of course, everyone else out there is going to have an ally, too. Victory conditions are normal, but when the game ends, the winner and his partner split 20 free turns.

Scrambled Corp# Game: In this simple variation, the Corporation numbers are scrambled for every Corp (except the wild sector pirates and Nasty Space Monsters). Note: If you don't know why this is significant, it'll come to you eventually....

Undead Game: You can keep playing even if your Home Office is conquered! In this variant, the only way to be completely knocked out of the game is to have all your ships destroyed and sites taken away by other players. You can even build ships at your Warp Gates, even if you don't own your Home Office (something you normally can't do)!

ASK THE GALACTIC COUNCIL!

What happens if I have a neutron star located in a negative energy field? Do I have my engines drained twice? Actually yes, but after the first draining, your ship's speed will already be 0.0 and the second drain won't have any effect. (Warp-draining terrain cannot take your ship's speed below 1.) This effect can actually come into play if you use a repair ship to enter the terrain. The negative energy field will use up one repair point, and then the neutron star will use a second point! So be sure you have two repair points available when entering such a hex.

What determines the bounty given for killing a monster? It's based on the monster's combat statistics, and (in the case of ones which carry them) whatever optional items it has. Experiment with the numbers for a while and you might be able to come up with the exact formula!

If I can raid my own sites, why can't I raid in direction zero? The raid depends at least a little bit on surprise, and if the ship's sitting there in orbit for days on end, it's hardly a surprise! Seriously, though, it's a matter of game balance. Raiding in direction zero is just too easy.

Exactly how does Guido go about repossessing ships? If you don't pay your loan completely during Y180, he takes two ships at random at the start of Y181, then four ships in Y182, six in Y183, and so on. This is particularly annoying because he's been known to take really important ships, like Warp Gates. Just make sure you never have to experience this!

Why can't you get stock from raiding sites? I'd think this would be just the sort of thing that would raise stock values. Early on in the history of the game, you *did* get stock from raiding, but we found that veteran players were raiding the sites in their home sector every turn to maximize their loans, and to go after the highest stock increase award. Later on in the game you could also use this to jack up your stock so your allies could make money playing your Corp on the market. In other words, it became a rules loophole, so we removed it. Problem solved!

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