



A black and white illustration of a space battle. In the upper left, a large, rounded starship with a conical nose and a large wing is shown. In the upper right, another large starship with a more angular, boxy design and multiple gun turrets is firing two long-range energy beams towards the center. In the center, a smaller, sleeker starship is being destroyed, with a large plume of smoke and debris erupting from its rear. In the lower left, a sleek, angular fighter jet is shown in profile, moving towards the right. In the lower right, a larger, more complex starship with multiple wings and a central engine nacelle is shown, with a smaller, spherical object (possibly a planet or moon) in the background. The title "STARSHIP COMMAND" is written in a large, bold, italicized font across the center, with "3RD EDITION" in a smaller font below it.

STARSHIP COMMAND

3RD EDITION

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About this edition

Starship Command 3rd Edition is a combined set of both Starship Command 2nd edition and Starship Command II in one box. Cards originally from Starship Command II are marked with a small II in the lower left next to a bolt, and rules originally added in Starship Command II are marked by a superscript II, like so^{II}, so that you can separate the game when you only want to play the basic game. For those who have played the game before will notice a vast improvement to the look of the game, but the rules have not changed. Enjoy.

Introduction

Starship Command is a game of ship-to-ship combat that uses cards to represent ships, damage from ships' weapons, and other possible ship actions. The objective of the game is to destroy or capture your enemies' ships while preserving your own fleet.

In the basic game each player will have a random mixture of different ships from four different races, while in the campaign game a player or team commands one race.

Components

278 Battle Cards (the “battle deck”)

- 89** Phasers
- 53** Torpedoes
- 32** Plasma
- 28** Deflectors
- 17** Damage Controls (**four** Damage Control 2s)
- 16** Evasive Maneuvers
- 8** Boarding Parties
- 12** Racial Advantages

- 15 Specials
- 8 Reinforcements

144 Ship Cards (the “ship deck”)

- 24 Confederation
- 24 Packtons
- 24 Ritillians
- 24 Shiltons
- 24 Dawgoraks
- 24 Fostonians

36 Fighter Squadrons (the “fighter deck”)

1 Rule Book (you’re reading it right now!)

Playing the Game

Number of Players

From two to eight.

Setup

1) Separate and shuffle the ship deck, the battle deck, and the Fighter Squadrons^{II}. Fighter cards **ARE NOT mixed in with the Battle Deck or the Ship Deck** but set aside. See the carrier rules for further details.

2) Deal out five ship cards to each player. Each player then places these cards face up in front of themselves – the way a player places them on the table has no bearing on the course of play.

3) Deal out seven battle cards to each player – these are kept in the player’s hand and are not revealed to other players.

Who Goes First?

Each player randomly draws a card from the battle deck. The player who draws the highest damage card goes first. Cards that are not damage cards (Specials, Deflectors, etc.) are considered a 0 (zero). The cards are shuffled back into the battle deck and then play proceeds clockwise.

Object of the Game

Destroy or capture as many enemy ships as possible, while trying not to lose any of your own.

Order of Play

- 1) Designate attacks or Retreat Ships
- 2) Play defense cards *
- 3) Calculate total damage to all ships *
- 4) Remove destroyed ships
- 5) Play boarding party cards
- 6) Play damage control
- 7) Declare Reinforcements
- 8) Discard unwanted battle cards
- 9) Replace battle cards (both attacker and defender)

* These actions taken by the defender.

Note: Special Cards and Racial Advantages are played during different phases depending on the card; see the Special Cards and Racial Advantages sections of the rules for more details.

1) Designating Attacks/Retreat Ships

There are three types of attack cards; Phasers, Torpedoes, and Plasma. Phasers 1-4 are the same type of attack card, but have varying ascending levels of power.

The player whose turn it is currently is called the “attacker” while all other players are “defenders.”

First, a player examines his ship cards and determines what weapons each ship possesses (Phasers 1, 2, 3, and 4, Torpedoes, and Plasma). Next, he examines his battle hand and matches battle cards with his ships’ weapon systems. Each ship may only fire one phaser and one missile weapon (Torpedo or Plasma) per turn. (except in an All Out Attack; see Racial Advantages).

Example: The Cruiser Saratoga is equipped with Phasers 1, 2 and Plasma. It may fire one phaser card (either a type 1 or 2) and one Plasma card during the player’s turn.

Next, the attacker examines his battle hand to determine which attack card(s) he will be able to play and then chooses his target(s). He places damage card(s) (Phasers 1, 2, 3, 4, Torpedoes, and/or Plasmas) face down on the chosen enemy ship(s). A player may fire at more than one ship and more than one enemy at the same time. When a card is placed it must be must announced what type of weapon it is (phasers (but not what kind), Torpedo, or Plasma). The attacker may play as many damage cards as are permitted by his ships’ weapon selections and his battle hand.

Example: The player with the Cruiser Saratoga plays a Phaser 2 card and a Plasma card on an enemy’s ship(s). He would announce to the other player(s) “a phaser and a plasma” and place them on the ship(s) fired upon. No other information about the cards should be revealed.

The attacker should place all attack cards face down before any other player plays defense cards. After all attacks have been designated, but before they are revealed, go to the next phase (playing defense cards).

Any ship that wishes to retreat from the battle must be declared now. See Retreating for further details.

2) Defense Cards

Warp

A Confederation ship may play a Warp at this time. See Racial Advantages.

Weapon Neutralization^{II}

A Dawgorak ship may play a Weapon Neutralization at this time. See Racial Advantages.

Absorption Web^{II}

A Fostonian ship may play a Absorbtion Web at this time. See Racial Advantages.

Evasive Maneuvers

After the attacker has designated all of his attacks, defenders may play an Evasive Maneuvers battle card. This will allow **one** ship to avoid one volley of attacks. A player may play as many Evasive Maneuvers cards as he has in his hand. The Evasive Maneuvers cards and all damage cards evaded are placed in the discard pile.

A volley is a set of attack cards (Plasma, Torpedoes, and phasers) coming at one ship. It can be from one to seven cards in size.

Deflectors

After all Evasive Maneuvers cards have been played, the defender can then play Deflector cards. A ship may not play a Deflector card and then play an Evasive Maneuvers card (or vice-versa). Each ship may play one Deflector card to defend itself only. Each Deflector card will stop one phaser damage card. If more than one phaser is used against a ship, one card is randomly drawn from the **face-down** cards identified as phasers. That card is the one stopped by the Deflector. The phaser card along with the Deflector card are then placed in the discard pile.

Note: Deflectors have no effect on Torpedoes or Plasma.

3) *Totaling Damage*

After all defense cards have been played, add the value of the damage cards that hit each ship to the damage that ship has suffered in previous turns (if any). This total is the amount of damage the ship has taken, and is subtracted first from shields and then from the Structure (Structure Points). These cards are placed under the ship with their amount of damage showing to ensure that a proper total of damage that the ship has sustained is maintained. Do this for all ships hit.

Damage to the Shields

After the total amount of damage is calculated, determine if it is greater than the ship's shield points. If it is, the shields are considered to be "down." If shields are down, the ship is vulnerable to Boarding Parties (see Boarding Parties section). Otherwise the damage is subtracted from the shields. This is now the current strength of the shields.

Example: The cruiser Saratoga has a shield strength of 20. It suffers 15 points of damage. The shields now have 5 points left.

Damage to Structure

If total damage is greater than a ship's shield value, the ship will suffer Structure damage from whatever damage remains unabsorbed by the shields. When a ship has taken damage that drops it to half Structure or less, the ship is considered to be **crippled** and loses many of its capabilities (see below). If a ship takes damage that equals or exceeds its **Full** Structure value then it is destroyed.

Crippled ships are incapable of defending themselves with Deflectors. They also lose the ability to use Racial Advantage cards. However, a crippled ship may still play Evasive Maneuvers cards.

Example: The Cruiser Saratoga has already taken 15 points of damage to its shields. It is then hit for another 20 points of damage. Five points of damage are absorbed by the remaining shield points, but the remaining 15 points reduce the

SP. Since the damage to the Saratoga is equal to or greater than its crippled total, it's now a crippled ship and may no longer play Deflector cards or use its Racial Advantage (Warp in this case).

Note: The “crippled” amount stated on the ship cards includes the shield points for the ship, so once the amount of total damage to the ship is equal to or greater than this number, the ship is crippled.

4) Removing Destroyed Ships

The player that actually destroys a ship gets that ship's value added to his point total for that battle (see scoring points). Each player should set aside the ships he destroys until the end of the battle – destroyed ships are not returned to the ship deck until after the end of that battle.

5) Boarding Parties

When a ship's shields are reduced to 0 (zero) it is vulnerable to Boarding Parties. The attacker may attempt boarding actions to take control of any vulnerable enemy ships (whether fired on that turn or not). This is done by playing a Boarding Party card on the enemy ship to be taken over.

The defender may counter a Boarding Party with a Boarding Party card of his own (if he has one). This exchange may continue until one or the other runs out of Boarding Parties. No other player may participate in this exchange.

If the defender is unable or unwilling to counter a Boarding Party he may elect to **Self Destruct** his ship. In order to do this he must play a Self Destruct card (see Special Cards for more details). The ship is immediately destroyed and no one receives points for its destruction. A self-destructed ship is placed face-up at the bottom of the ship deck.

If a boarding party succeeds, then control of the ship is transferred to the attacking player and he may now treat it as his own ship. All damage cards remain with the ship. The player taking control of a ship may play Damage Control cards at this time; (see Damage Control).

Note: A cloaked ship may not be boarded nor board other ships.

Example: The cruiser Repulse has its shields knocked down. The attacker now plays a Boarding Party card. The defending player, however, has his own Boarding Party card and counters the boarding party. Unfortunately for the defender, the attacker plays another Boarding Party card and, since the defender has neither another Boarding Party card nor a Self Destruct card, the attacker takes control of the Cruiser Repulse.

6) Damage Control

If the attacker has any damaged ships in his fleet he may now play Damage Control cards. Each Damage Control card allows the player to remove the indicated number of damage cards from his ships (one or two). The player may choose which damage card(s) to remove – there is no upper limit on the amount of the damage removed (just number of cards). This may bring the shields back up or uncripple a ship.

Example: The cruiser Repulse was just captured. The new owner now plays a Damage Control card, removing a Plasma that struck for 20 points of damage. The cruiser Repulse has now only suffered 15 points of damage and shields are once again operational. A player may play as many Damage Control cards as he has in his hand. Damage Control 2 cards may be used to repair two different ships (one card removed from each ship).

7) Reinforcements

A Reinforcement card allows the attacking player to draw one additional ship card from the ship deck. The new ship cannot fire until the player's next turn. Note that the Reinforcement card has a different function in the Campaign Rules (See Campaign Rules). The attacking player may also play a Self Destruct card on his own ships during this phase.

8) Discarding

The attacker may now discard any or all of his remaining cards he does not wish to keep. This is done by simply placing them face up on the discard pile. These cards may be examined by other players.

9) Replacing Battle Cards

The attacker now draws from the battle deck the appropriate number of cards to bring his hand back to seven cards. When the attacker has his full compliment of cards, the defenders, in clockwise order, should refill their hands to seven cards, replacing any cards played for defense. **All players should have a full hand of seven cards at the start of each turn.** If a player forgets to replace his cards, he must wait until the end of the next turn if any attacks have been designated. When everyone has replaced their battle cards, play continues in clockwise order, with the next player becoming the attacker.

Racial Advantages

When a player plays a Racial Advantages card he must announce which Race and (if necessary) ship he is using it for. Each race has a different special ability. The player must have the race's ship in his fleet in order to use that race's special ability and the particular ability may only be used by a ship of that race. Racial Advantages cards cannot be played by ships that are crippled.

The Confederation

The Confederation's Racial Advantage allows one ship to "Warp" out of battle. This is done in one of two ways. The first way this card can be used is at the beginning of the player's turn. Before any weapons are fired, he can Warp any ship that is not crippled out of the battle by playing the card and announcing that the ship is Warping out. Ships that Warp out cannot fire that turn and cannot return to the battle. The second way the card can be used is as a defense card. The card can be used to Warp a ship out of battle when it is being fired on. The card is played immediately after attacks have been designated. The ship is then Warped out of the battle without taking any damage from the volley. All ships that have been Warped out are still worth their value points at the end of the battle. In both cases, any damage that the ship has taken before Warping out remains with it until the end of the battle (see scoring points).

The Packtons

The Racial Advantages card for the Packtons gives them the ability to do an All Out Attack. An All Out Attack gives the player the ability to fire all of a ship's weapons at one time and as many times as limited by the cards in his hand. This means that all Phasers (1,2,3,4), Plasma, and Torpedoes can be fired as many times as the player has cards in his hand. The Packton ship must be capable of firing the weapon.

Example: A player has two Plasma, two Torpedoes, a Phaser 1, and a Phaser 3 in his battle hand. The player could fire all of these weapons using the All Out Attack if the Packton ship is capable of firing them.

The Ritillians

The Ritillians have Superior Boarding Parties as their Racial Advantage. Superior Boarding Parties are played in the same way regular Boarding Parties are, but the Racial Advantages card counts as TWO Boarding Parties. The player does not play a Boarding Party card when playing a Racial Advantages card for this purpose. The player must at the time of playing the Racial Advantages card announce which Ritillian ship the Superior Boarding party is coming from.

This card can be stopped by TWO regular Boarding Parties, or if the ship being boarded is Ritillian, another Racial Advantages card. Ritillian ships cannot aid any other of the player's ships to help stop a boarding party; defensively, the Racial Advantages card may only be used on a Ritillian ship.

The Shiltons

The Racial Advantages card allows the Shiltons to cloak one of their ships per card played. This is done at the beginning of the player's turn, before firing. The player plays the Racial Advantages card and announces that a ship is cloaking. He turns the ship card over and any damage cards the ships may have on it. The ship cannot fire on the turn that it cloaks. A cloaked ship cannot be fired on by any other ship (Except with the "Super Science Officer" See Special Cards) nor boarded. On subsequent turns a cloaked ship may fire on another ship. When this is done the cloaked ship becomes uncloaked for the rest of the battle or until another Racial Advantage is used. Any ship that is fired on by a cloaked ship may NOT use Evasive Maneuvers. Deflectors still can be used. A Confederation ship that is being fired on by a cloaked ship may NOT use a Racial Advantage to Warp out to avoid the volley. A ship may stay cloaked as long as the player desires. Ships may use damage control while they are cloaked. If a ship is crippled while cloaked (from an attack using the Super Science Officer special card), it immediately becomes uncloaked unless the Miracle Worker is played at that time (see Special Cards) and enough damage is removed so that the ship is no longer crippled. If the ship becomes uncloaked it could be boarded that turn. A cloaked ship may not board another ship.

Dawgoraks: Weapon Neutralization"

The Dawgoraks' Racial Advantage is used to disable an enemy ship's weapon systems. This is done by placing the Racial Advantage card on any enemy ship. Once this card is placed on an enemy ship that ship cannot fire any of its weapons. A damage control card or the Miracle Worker is necessary to repair any ship affected by this. Both cards are then discarded. This ability may not be used on fighters and does affect a carrier's ability to launch or retrieve fighters.

Fostonians: Absorption Web^{II}

The Fostonians' Racial Advantage is played when one of their ships is attacked. When the Racial Advantage is played it may absorb one incoming damage card of a given type attacking a ship. This counts as playing a defense card for that ship. The defender may choose what type of weapon is absorbed (Phaser, Torpedo, or Plasma), but must draw randomly from the cards of that type played against the ship. The drawn card is then placed into the defender's hand and may be used on that player's next (or subsequent) turn if he has a ship that can fire that type of weapon. The Racial Advantages card is discarded.

Special Cards

The Miracle Worker

This card is an instant Damage Control card that may remove one damage card. It may be played as soon as the ship is damaged, provided the ship still has at least one Structure left. It can also be used to disarm a self destruct played by an enemy, negating the effects of that card. This card can also be used as a Damage Control 2 card on the player's turn.

Super Science Officer

This card may be played in one of three different ways. The first two of these may only be played during the player's turn.

- 1) Allows the attacking player to examine one opponent's battle hand.
- 2) It may be used to fire on a cloaked ship. The attacker plays the Super Science Officer card and announces he is firing on a cloaked ship. He then proceeds to designate attacks in the normal way. A ship that is fired on while cloaked cannot use Evasive Maneuvers.
- 3) It may also be played as a defense, allowing the defending player to examine any volley of attacks against one of his ships. This is done before playing any defensive cards. If playing a Deflector as the defensive card, the player may pick the phaser blocked.

Note: When firing on a cloaked ship the player cannot see the shields or Structure

value of the ship, because the card had been turned over at the time of cloaking. Therefore the attacker is less likely to know how much damage is needed to destroy the ship.

Superior Weapons Officer

This card is announced just before an attacking volley is designated. It prevents the defending player from playing any defensive card (Deflectors, Warps or Evasive Maneuvers). This card can only be stopped by the Computer Defense card.

Example: The cruiser Saratoga has only 5 shield points, but has full Structure of 24 for a total of 29 points. Another player plays the Superior Weapons Officer along with two Torpedoes and one phaser on the Saratoga. The defender can take no defense, except the Computer Defense (even though he did have an Evasive Maneuvers card in his hand). The three damage cards are turned over and totaled for 30 points of additional damage. This damage, along with the 15 points The cruiser Saratoga has already sustained is greater than the ship's combined shields and Structure value. The cruiser Saratoga is now space dust! The attacker gets the ship card to add to his total points at the end of the battle.

Computer Defense

This card is an Evasive Maneuvers card for an entire fleet, and is played in the same phase as Evasive Maneuvers would be played. All attacks against that player's fleet miss the turn that this card is played. It can be used to negate the Superior Weapons Officer, but then only this attack is avoided. The rest of the fleet may still defend normally.

Example: If the player who lost the Cruiser Saratoga played this card in its defense, then the cruiser would still be around for this example. But alas, he didn't, so it isn't.

Self Destruct

This card may only be played on a ship in the player's fleet. It will cause the

ship to be destroyed. This card can only be played on the owner's turn during the Reinforcement phase or when one of his ships is being boarded. However, any ship that Self Destructs is not worth any points for any of the players; the ship is simply discarded (placed face-up at the bottom of the ship deck).

Gremlins"

This card negates any non-special card (phasers, torpedoes, plasma, deflectors, evasive maneuvers, etc.) except Damage Control and Reinforcements played. Gremlins and the card it is played against are simply discarded. Does not affect ship cards. Does not count as a defense if used to stop a weapon from firing. It may be countered by the Miracle Worker.

Communication Interception"

This card may negate one Reinforcements card. It is played when another player plays a Reinforcements card, negating that reinforcement (it never arrives). If more than one Communication Interception is played then they are resolved clockwise around the table. This card also stops the Master Tactician (see below); play it as soon as the Master Tactician is played. It may also be used to counter another Communication Interception. It also counters Tactical Advantage.

Master Tactician"

This card may only be played during the player's turn. It allows the player to take the next turn immediately following his current one. Player must play this card before drawing new cards at the end of his current turn. This card is countered by Communication Interception.

Tactical Advantage"

This card will end the game when played. Card does not need to be played when drawn, and can be held by the player that drew it as long as desired. Once the card is played all other players will have one last turn, ending with the player that played the card.

Players may want to set this card aside when dealing out the initial battle hands, shuffling it back into the deck after determining who goes first. This card is countered by Communication Interception.

Stolen Technology"

This allows a ship to use another race's racial advantage. Must be played with a Racial Advantages card. There is no direct counter for this card, but the Racial Advantages card played in conjunction with the Stolen Technology card may be countered by Gremlins.

Example: this card (along with a Racial Advantages card) would let a Ritillian ship cloak.

Counters to Special Cards"

Gremlins by Miracle Worker

Communication Interception by Communication Interception

Master Tactician by Communication Interception

Tactical Advantage by Communication Interception

Stolen Technology by nothing (but see description)

Retreating

A ship may leave the battle at any time without using any card. This is done when a player announces that a ship is leaving during the Designating Attacks/Retreat Ships portion of his turn. The ship is set apart from the rest of the fleet. The ship is still able to be attacked and defend normally and it may play damage control. The ship may not make any attacks of any form after it has been designated as leaving the battle (including using Boarding Parties). The ship remains set aside until the beginning of the player's next turn, at which point, if it has survived, it has successfully retreated from battle and is considered a surviving ship when determining score at the end of the battle. A cloaked ship may leave battle in this way without uncloaking.

Note: Damage cards stay with the ship once it successfully retreats.

Carriers"

Carriers are played the same way other ships are, except that they may carry fighters (see next section).

A carrier initially carries a set number of fighter squadrons (this number is printed on the card). When a player gets a carrier (either at the beginning of the game or by reinforcement) he is then randomly dealt the number of fighter squadrons listed on the ship card from the stack of fighters previously set aside. These fighter cards are placed face down under the carrier until they are launched. Any carrier that is destroyed while the fighter squadrons are still on the carrier lose all those fighter squadrons and the player that destroyed the carrier gets the value of both the carrier and all of the fighter squadrons on board at that time.

If a carrier is crippled while fighters are on board, half of these fighters (round up) are lost, chosen **randomly**. If the carrier is repaired so that it is no longer crippled, the fighters stay destroyed. If the Miracle Worker is played immediately after the carrier takes the crippling damage and removes enough damage so that the carrier is no longer crippled, then the fighters are not destroyed.

Launching Fighter Squadrons

To launch a fighter squadron(s) simply pick one or more of the fighter squadron cards and turn it (them) over next to the carrier. Next, you may place a damage card from your battle hand and place it under each just-launched fighter **FACE DOWN** (This card is no longer part of your hand and will be replaced at the end of your turn). This card may be ANY damage card (Phasers 1,2,3,4; Plasma or Torpedo). The fighter is now considered launched, and if paired with a damage card is considered loaded. On the player's next turn he simply picks an enemy ship that he wishes to attack and in the Designate Attack Phase says the fighter squadron is attacking that ship. In the Total Damage Phase he reveals the damage card and the ship takes the designated amount of damage. After the fighter squadron has made its attack it may, on the next turn, return to the carrier and land, (fighter squadrons

cannot land on any carrier that is crippled) by placing the fighter squadron face down under the carrier. At this time any fighter that is damaged may be repaired on the player's next turn with a Damage Control card. Fighters may NOT play Boarding Parties or be boarded or play Racial Advantages. Any carrier that is cloaked and launches fighters immediately becomes uncloaked.

Defending Against and Attacking Fighter Squadrons

Once a fighter squadron has been launched it can be fired upon by any other player on their turn but ONLY with Phasers. Fighter squadrons take damage just as any other ships would and can play Evasive Maneuvers, but not Deflectors. Fighter squadrons do not have any shields and take damage directly to their structure — once that is gone the fighter squadron is destroyed.

Any ship that is attacked by a fighter squadrons may not use Evasive Maneuvers, Warp, or Weapon Absorption, but may use Deflectors to try and stop the attack. This will only be successful if the fighter squadron is carrying a Phaser card. (Deflectors do not stop Plasma or Torpedoes).

Fighters Defending Ships (Dogfighting)

Fighter squadrons may be deployed to protect ships in a player's fleet from enemy fighters. They must be armed with a phaser card in order to fire on another player's fighter squadrons. When another player's fighters attempt to fire on a player's fleet, the defending player's fighters (launched on a previous turn) may dogfight the incoming attacking fighters. If a dogfight occurs, attacking and defending fighters first fire and resolve damage simultaneously upon each other before any attacking fighters are allowed to fire at other ships. (Attacking fighters must also be armed with phaser cards to fire at other fighters.)

Reinforcements for Carriers

A Reinforcements card may be used to replenish a Carrier with fighter squadrons instead of drawing a new ship from the ship deck. This allows a player to fill a carrier up to its carrying capacity listed on the ship. This includes any fighters that

may already be launched. Example if a carrier can hold three fighter squadrons and two have been destroyed and one is in flight then a player may use the Reinforcements card to add two fighter squadrons to the carrier. These fighters appear like any other reinforcements — they do not start on the carrier. They may appear armed, taking battle cards from the player's hand..

Ending the Battle and the Last Draw

Play can end in one of two ways:

- 1) All ships except for one player's have been destroyed and there are no unplayed reinforcements.
- 2) Once the last card is drawn it becomes the last round of the battle and every player gets one more turn. The player on whose turn the last card was drawn will also be the player to take the last turn. At the end of his turn the battle ends. **The battle deck is not reshuffled** to allow players to refill their hands – they must play out the last round with whatever cards they have remaining.

Scoring Points

Every ship that a player destroys is worth a certain number of points. This total of value points is marked on each card.

Example: 29 points for the Saratoga class heavy Cruiser.

Every ship that the player has surviving at the end of a battle is worth its value points minus any Structure damage that was sustained during the battle.

The total value of enemy ships destroyed and the player's surviving ships is the amount of value points earned for that battle.

Victory – Winning the Game

The player with the most value points at the end of a predetermined number of battles, or the first to reach a pre-determined number of value points is the winner. If two or more players exceed the set point value at the end of a battle, the player with the most points wins. We recommend either 2 battles or 250 points for a shorter game (45-60 Minutes) or 4 battles or 500 points for a longer game (2 hours).

Campaign Rules

The campaign game is played the same way that the regular game is played, except each player takes command of a particular race. Two players may play the same race but with different ships, allowing more than six players. Players of the same race may not exchange battle cards but may exchange ships between battles. Players playing the same race are a team.

Number of Battles

Determine how long the game is going to be or how many battles there will be. We recommend three battles.

Buying your fleet

At the beginning of the game separate the ship deck by races. Each player is given 150 points to buy a fleet. Ship costs are determined by their value points. Any points unused for fleet purchase may be banked for later use.

Starting the game

After the fleets have been bought, each player decides which ships are going to be sent out to do battle. The number of ships sent is completely up to the player. After all players have done this, all players reveal their ships at the same time. All ships purchased do not have to be brought in for the first battle of the game. Any ships that are not brought in are said to be back at a starbase and may only come into

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battle by use of a Reinforcement card. The Reinforcement card **does not** allow the player to draw a new ship from the deck.

Ending a campaign battle

There are two ways a battle can end in the campaign game. The first is when the battle deck runs out. The other is when only one player or team is left because the others have been destroyed, have cloaked (and say they have no intention of returning for more battle), retreated, or Warped out and have no more ships left to do battle.

Ships leaving a battle

When a ship leaves a battle by using a Warp or retreating, that ship is then sent to that player's starbase and remains there until that battle is over. Any damage done to it remains until the end of the battle when damage is repaired (see below). Ships that Warp out of battle may not return to that battle.

Making repairs and buying new ships

After each battle, all players receive 50 points to make repairs to their ships and buy new ones at value cost. If it is a team game, then each player gets 50 points. On top of these 50 points a player gets any points left over from previous battles. Cost for repairing shield points is one point per two shield points (round down), and one point per point of Structure damage. Any ship that was not purchased before the battle may be purchased now (destroyed ships cannot be purchased again – they are out of the battle permanently). Ships may also be exchanged between team members at this time. Any points left over may be saved for use after the next battle. These are cumulative with the points saved from previous battles of the campaign, if applicable.

Campaign Victory

After the predetermined number of battles have been played, each player counts up how many points he has by adding up all the value points of the ships left in his fleet, plus the value points from all the ships that he destroyed plus any points

that were banked and not used. Any ships that are captured are worth double their value. Subtract points for any Structure damage remaining on captured ships before doubling their value, but the minimum value (after doubling) for a captured ship is its normal value points (i.e. a captured ship is worth at least the amount of points that would be received for destroying it). Teams figure one total for all players. The player (or team) with the highest total is the winner.

The Races

The Confederation

Members of the Confederation come mostly from the planet Earth, but there are other races that sometimes serve on board Confederation ships. These other races usually did not develop the technology for space travel on their own, and were discovered by the Confederation. The Confederation ships are the fastest made in this section of the galaxy, and can slip out of battle very quickly. Currently it is believed that the Confederation has explored more of the galaxy than the other known races.

The Packtons

The Packtons appear to be a cross between a spider and a human. Much about this race is unknown. First contact with them by the Confederation happened only recently, with both sides exchanging fire shortly thereafter. One thing is apparent about them, the Packtons seem to fire first and ask questions later. The Packtons are able to concentrate vast amounts of firepower at one time, thereby destroying opponents in one blow. Other races seem to have encountered similar problems when dealing with the Packtons, and will attack them out of self defense.

The Shiltons

These catlike humanoids are the most warlike and aggressive of the known spacefaring races. They have continuously attempted to occupy systems claimed by other races. The Shiltons have the ability to cloak their ships in battle. There are rumors that say the Shiltons and the Ritillians have been at war for almost 50

years over one sector of space. All other space faring races loath the Shiltons and will attack them on sight.

The Ritillians

The Ritillians are reptilian-looking humanoids that, like the Shiltons, are known to be very aggressive. One of the main differences between them and the Shiltons is that the Ritillians usually respect other race's territorial claims. The Ritillians have equipped their ships with excellent and numerous troop transport systems that allow them to bring huge Boarding Parties over to enemy ships to take control of them. The Ritillians will sometimes negotiate with Confederation ships, but only when at a disadvantage.

The Dawgoraks"

Whether it be running arms to the Shiltons and Ritillians, strip-mining a system, or disabling an offending Battleship, the Dawgoraks are a well-known conglomeration of merchants and traders that inhabit their own corner of the galactic arm.

The name Dawgs (dogs) as they are often called, is a bit of a misnomer as the Dawgoraks are a conglomerate of several races that have agreed to work together for mutual benefit. Only one of them could be considered dog-like, but the name stuck.

Until recently, the Dawgoraks eschewed military confrontation, arming their ships with a weapon that would temporarily disable other ships' sensors, making them unable to fire effectively. With the discovery of the rich resources of the disputed area, the Dawgoraks have been forced to seek a military solution as all diplomatic ones have failed.

The Fostonians"

The Fostonians originally supported the Shiltons. It is known that the Shiltons gained some of their shield technology from the Fostonians, but what the Fostonians gained from the Shiltons is still unknown. It has been speculated

that the Shiltons took advantage of the Fostonians, but then there is speculation that they are still secretly allied. Whatever the case, it is now known that these Koala bear-like creatures have openly entered the war. Since the Confederation's first contact with this "new" race, the Fostonians have shown themselves to be excellent in the art of diplomacy. The Fostonians themselves have also proven to be proficient fighters. Though their projectile technology is not overly powerful, they do have the most advanced defenses of all the known races.

Optional Rules"

Optional Rules can add more fun and flavor to the game, but it may alter game balance. Use at your own risk. These rules may be used for tournaments and for campaign games.

Ranks

Ships may be set up in two distinct ranks — front and rear. Ships in the front are treated normally as far as combat is concerned. Ships in the rear are set behind all of the other ships in the fleet. This is referred to as screening. A ship that is screened cannot be fired on by other players nor can that ship fire upon any other ship while it is screened. A carrier may launch fighter squadrons while in the rear (see next section).

Once the front rank is gone, all ships that were in the rear are immediately considered to be in the front.

A ship may move up to the front rank just by announcing that it is doing so and moving the ship card up to that area on the table, but it may not fire until the player's next turn (this includes fighters).

Launching fighters from the rear rank works much the same as in the standard game. After a player announces that a fighter is being launched and is loaded, the fighter must move to the front rank before the fighter may attack.

(It takes a minimum of 3 turns for a fighter to make a complete attack run when launched from the rear rank. 1st turn: launch/ 2nd turn: travel to front rank / 3rd turn: attack the target).

A fighter may change ranks and then land on a carrier in the same turn.

Generic Deflectors

Using this rule deflectors may stop **ANY** single weapon fired upon a ship. Attacks are declared as normal, but all the cards in a volley fired at a ship are put together. The defender then plays a deflector and removes any card from the volley. Whatever card is removed is deflected. This applies to defending against fighters as well.

Note: This will make combats less bloody.

Example: Two phasers (a type 2 and type 4), a plasma, and a torpedo are fired at a ship. These four cards are placed on the defending ship and the defender is told that there are two phasers, a plasma, and a torpedo in the volley. The defender is not told which cards are of what type — he must pick blindly if he plays a Deflector as his defense.

Experimental Rules"

They seemed like a good idea at the time

Do not use these rules for tournament play.

Packton Racial Advantage

Instead of the All Out Attack Racial Advantage use the following:

Superior Targeting Systems: Packton scanner and sensor technology is superior to that of the other races. The Packton racial advantage allows the Packton to double the damage of a weapon card that is fired at the target. The Racial Advantages card is played as a normal weapon, is declared as such, and is placed in the volley

that is attacking a ship. Note: The Racial Advantages card must be declared as a weapon that is actually fired. If more than one weapon of that type is fired, it is considered to be with the highest damage card of that weapon type. If the weapon it is declared as strikes its target, the weapon's damage is then doubled for purposes of seeing if the ship is destroyed. If the ship is not destroyed by this extra damage then the Racial Advantages card has no effect and is placed in the discard pile.

If a Deflector is played, and the card randomly drawn is the one that the racial advantage would have doubled, then the Racial Advantages card is discarded without any extra effect. If the Racial Advantages card is drawn then draw again.

Example: A player fires a volley of two plasma and two phasers at an enemy ship. He has a Packton ship firing part of the volley so includes a racial advantage in the volley and declares it as “two phasers and three plasma.” If the larger of the two normal plasma is stopped then the racial advantage has no effect. If the larger plasma hits then its damage is temporarily doubled. If this doesn't destroy the ship then the extra damage is ignored.

Boarding Party Mobilization

Using this optional rule allows for a boarding party card(s) to be played upon ships in your fleet. The boarding party card remains on top of that ship. The card can then be used to defend that ship, but only that ship. The boarding party card can still be used to capture another ship, as a normal boarding party. The mobilized boarding party no longer counts as a card in your hand, and thus can free a space for an extra card. Note that this optional rule is only applicable for boarding party cards, and the Ritillian racial advantage may not be used in this manner. Also, if a ship with a mobilized boarding party is destroyed, then that boarding party is destroyed as well.

Assault Ships

This rule increases the power and importance of assault ships. Any Boarding Party card played from an assault ship counts as two boarding parties (a Ritillian racial

advantage would count as three boarding parties!). This advantage can only be used for an offensive assault — that is capturing an enemy ship — and defending the assault ship itself. If using the Boarding Party Mobilization optional rule, then only a Boarding Party that is played from the attacker's hand, or from a mobilized assault ship counts as two boarding parties.

Battleships

Due to the vast amounts of personnel on board a battleship is very difficult to capture. A non-crippled battleship has an automatic defense equivalent to one boarding party against enemy boarding parties. Therefore, at least two boarding parties are necessary to capture a non-crippled battleship. Boarding parties are otherwise played normally when attacking and defending a battleship. Ritillian battleships have a defense of one boarding party — not two (same as the other races) when using this rule.

Multiple Attacks

Larger ships not only have larger but also more weapons than smaller ships. Therefore, allow Heavy Cruisers to fire up to two phasers per turn and Battleships to fire up to two phasers and two missiles (torpedoes and/or plasma) per turn.

Kamikaze Assault

This is declared at the same time as ships leaving battle. However, instead of leaving the battle the ship rams an enemy ship. The ship to be rammed is declared at the same time as the kamikaze attack. At the beginning of the attacker's next turn the kamikaze ship collides with the enemy ship. This causes damage equivalent to the ramming ship's original Structure to both ships. If the kamikaze ship is destroyed, no player receives any points for this ship. Designating attacks comes after the kamikaze assault is resolved. Due to the internal disruption of the collision, the kamikaze-ing ship, if it survives the collision, may not fire on the turn it rams another ship. Note that either ship may be destroyed before the attacker's next turn, thus preventing the kamikaze assault. The ship that is being rammed may not use Evasive Maneuvers to avoid being hit.

Suicide Assault

This is the same as a Kamikaze Assault with a slight twist — the ship plays a Self Destruct card when it rams the other ship. The suicide ship is destroyed. Damage from a suicide ship is equal to twice its original Structure.

Interceptors

In addition to loading fighters with phaser cards to fire at other fighters, an unloaded fighter may fire phaser 1 cards at other fighters only.

Credits — Starship Command

Original Design and Concept: Michael J. Russell

Additional Design and Development: Eric M. Aldrich I, Michael Fryer, Michael J. Russell, and Steven Seacord

Production: Michael J. Russell and Nick Cortinas with help from Eric Nyquist and Jeffrey Vaughn

Cover Art: Jefferson

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Ship Graphics: Eric Nyquist

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Credits — Starship Command II

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Credits — Starship Command, 3rd edition

Design and Editing: Eric M. Aldrich I and Michael J. Russell

Production: Michael J. Russell and Matthew Filer

Cover Art, Card Artwork, and Graphic Design: Matthew Filer

Ship Graphics: Eric Nyquist and Matthew Filer

Additional Suggestions and Editing: Tracy Fryer, Kristin Ahlgren Manning, Eric Nyquist, Steven Seacord

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Rules questions? Comments? Always wanted to write to a game company? We will gladly answer any inquiries about Starship Command. Just contact us on our web site at: www.infernogamesco.com.

Designers' Notes

Starship Command came about through the desire to find a fast-paced ship combat game that was fun. We had played Battleline's (now Avalon Hill's) Naval War forever and had found it quite enjoyable. But we wanted more. When 3W released Modern Naval Battles we jumped on it immediately and played several times before we decided it was a disappointment. The chrome was great, but the action die determined all too often who won the game, and it dragged on seemingly forever. Michael Russell decided he could do better and Starship Command was born. Starship combat had yet to be covered in a card game (that we knew of at the time), so he chose to make it the central focus of the system.

Starship Command went through over two years of fanatical development and playtesting. The rules were written and rewritten several times before we were finished, and the game has held up incredibly well since its initial release in February 1992. The four of us who designed Starship Command had over 40 years combined gaming experience. The oldest of us was then 26

The first edition was a disaster as far as production was concerned. If a book is ever published on how not to produce a game, we will no doubt be the primary case study. Never, ever think that a commercial game of

this size can be produced for under \$10,000 and done right. We tried to do it for under \$2,000 and wound up with a physical disaster of the first magnitude as far as the cards were concerned. Friends became ex-friends and we moved on.

*Still, what few reviews we got were incredibly positive. Scott Haring's *The Gamer*, never one to mince words, gave us a B+ despite the atrocious physical quality. Vortex was equally positive. Sadly, neither of these two publications is around any more.*

We barely broke even on the first batch. While we've been told that this was a bloody miracle as far first games go, it was enough to kill us off for a while — we had to make money and we couldn't with what the printer had left us.

*People who played the game liked it enough that despite only selling about 150 copies of the first edition, we had enough interest generated to keep up a tournament at the Strategicon game conventions in Los Angeles. Fortunately enough for us, this group included one individual willing to invest in the company, Nick Cortinas. He approached Russell about it, not the other way around. We were flabbergasted. Not wanting to stare too long into the proverbial horse's mouth, we immediately got together the second edition just in time for *Origins '94*.*

Several cosmetic changes were made for the second edition. The most important was the ship cards were completely redesigned and the ship art computer generated. The rules were revised for clarity and readability and the cover art was redone. The card backs were redesigned, although we tried to get the stylized logo to print out and couldn't do it at any of the graphics places we tried. Several ships were renamed and few were modified.

This time we did it right. Cortinas is also a manager in a print shop, so he

was invaluable in getting the production done right. The results speak for themselves. Still, this print run was only 1,250 copies. By the time you read this, the next print run of the original game should be just about done.

Originally Russell hoped to use FASA's adaptation of the Star Trek™ universe as the setting for his game. When it became apparent this would be impossible, he developed a whole new galaxy to set his game in. Michael Fryer designed the Packtons to finish out the four races included in the original set.

As we playtested, the final set of features coalesced and we spent the last year before the release of the first edition getting those features to work to perfection. We put on the back burner all the neat ideas we came up with, intending to use them later. That later is now.

When we did the original Starship Command we had two design axioms we stuck to: Keep It Simple and No Dice (as in no dice are required to play this game, period). In this expansion we did pretty well in keeping with the first one and easily kept the second one. This required two complete rewrites of the rules and over 40 revisions. Rules development is not pretty.

With this expansion the game gets a bit bloodier, so we fiddled around with Plasma deflectors, Photon deflectors, and double deflectors. This added too many cards for too little results, so we junked them and introduced the Generic Deflectors (which had been used briefly during the playtesting of the original design). We didn't even have to add or change any cards. Of course, deflectors work fine just stopping phasers, but if you feel things are a bit too bloody with the new cards then by all means use this rule.

*Carriers and fighters are a staple of science fiction shoot-em-up-in-space flicks. We *HAD* to add these. It wasn't easy, but we're pleased with the results.*

Ranks were designed originally with the assault ship rules in mind, but found again to be too much effort for too little effect. However, when we came up with carriers, ranks made possible a myriad of strategies that weren't available otherwise without them, so we stuck them back in as a standard rule. This proved to annoy several playtesters who felt the game lost the "beer and pretzels" feel it had before. We finally compromised and made it an optional rule.

We had a lot of complaints about that we didn't have enough Reinforcement cards in the original game. We added four more here, but we also added a counter; Communication Interception.

Gremlins are our version of Murphy's Law in space.

Tactical Advantage was added to speed the game up and keep people from abusing the fact that the deck was about to run out. Now you can never be sure when the battle is going to end.

The Dawgoraks and the Fostonians were designed by Eric M. Aldrich I and Steven Seacord, respectively.

We hope you enjoy this expansion. We put a lot of work into it. Hopefully you will feel it paid off.

And if you think it looks easy, YOU try thinking up the names of 24 different types of wild cats.

Thanks again,

Eric, Mike, and Steve

(1995)

Designers' Notes for the 3rd edition

Starship Command 3rd edition is about 16 years overdue. It's been on the backburner seemingly forever, and, quite frankly, we doubted it would ever see the light of day.

But sometimes stange things happen when you least expect them.

This edition is essentially just a combination of the second edition of Starship Command combined with Starship Command II. We've played it to death in the 17 years since it was last published, and we discovered the game is pretty darned good. We thought about tweaks, but we couldn't come up with any.

One criticism we have received over the years is that big ships are undervalued compared to smaller ships. We have found it depends on what stage of the game it is. In the beginning it is always easier to destroy a cruiser as opposed to a battleship with a single volley. But later in the game if one side is down to two cruisers and the other just a battleship, the cruisers will win more often than not. So the end result is we didn't touch the values of any of the ships.

We did clarify how Retreating works. But the majority of the effort was put into redesigning the cards. All of them. The only art left from the previous editions of the game are the ship silhouettes.

Redesigning the cards required dredging up all the old notes from the prior editions, including all known errata. But 17 years is an eternity in computer time. The last editions were compsed on a Macintosh Quadra 605 and Macintosh Ilci. The Quadra 605 is long gone but we still had the Ilci around and it still works. Getting files off of it though involved a lot of floppy voodoo.

We wanted this to be the “be all end all” of editions. It won’t be as this print run is fairly small, but we do not foresee any major changes when we reprint again. The only thing we’d change is the backs to fighter cards — make the type red to match the ship deck like it was in the original Starship Command II — but that’s it. (we didn’t do this due the cost of preparing another plate, but in retrospect this was probably a poor decision)

Combining the rule sets isn’t as straightforward as it might seem. There are some people who do not like the added complexity of Starship Command II, so we tried to have it both ways here. It’s fairly seamless.

There’s even a “new” ship that inadvertently got left out of Starship Command II all those years ago. It’s actually just the name — the ship itself was always there.

Thank you for indulging us over the years. We still get comments about the game and people asking if we have any spare copies. We can finally say yes.

Thank you.

Eric M. Aldrich I, Michael J. Russell, and Steven Seacord

(2012)

ADMIRAL FUZZY & THE ZORCHWEILER INCIDENT

A story by Kristin Ahlgren Manning

Admiral Fuzzy, commander of the Fostonian fleet, paced the bridge of his ship. Ranged before him was an entire squadron. By their markings they were Zorchweilers, the marines of the Dawgorak fleet. Zorchweilers were known for their determination to allow as many souls as possible to experience the afterlife. They were tough, mean and, unfortunately, not stupid.

"Are you ready down there?" queried the Admiral into the com. "Yes, sir," replied First Lieutenant Stuff Cheek.

"Then all we can do is wait and hope this works."

The mood on the bridge was tense. The officers rocked nervously. The small ensign watched his scanner. "They're deploying into the Z-attack formation, sir."

"Good. That's the standard formation. Ensign, enter the Plan A maneuvers and prepare for high speed." The Admiral called into the com, "Lieutenant, is the cloaking device settled?"

"Yes sir, but I still don't understand what. . ."

"Never mind Lieutenant. Just prepare to transport it to Plan A coordinates on my command."

The ensign interrupted. "They're moving in and arming weapons."

"Lieutenant, activate and transport device, NOW!"

There was a moment of silence that seemed much longer. Then a crowd of voices . . .

"The Zorchweilers – they're altering formation – firing on the device. Sir – what's going on?"

Admiral Fuzzy smiled (as far as it is possible for a Fostonian to smile). "Ensign execute flight plan, NOW." As the ship pulled away, the Admiral was very pleased indeed. His intelligence service was correct.

Later the Admiral sat in his office with Senior Advisor Slow-Gait. The older bear was chewing cud and contemplating Fuzzy. "You look insufferably pleased with yourself."

"We were right, my friend. The Dawgoraks have the ability to track the operation of the Shiltons' cloaking device."

"It was still a very large risk you took."

"How so? They can track but they cannot penetrate. They must assume a superior force behind the cloak, especially in a combat zone and so took the only appropriate action. Besides running away, of course. But I rather doubted they'd take that option."

Slow-Gait wuffed his nose. "I suppose you are right. But you have tipped our hand none the less. They will wonder how we knew to try this."

The Admiral leaned back. "We'll cross that branch when we come to it."

LATER, ABOARD A FLAGSHIP OF THE DAWGORAK FLEET:

A very nervous lieutenant waited outside the office of his new commanding officer. Colonel Rex was rumored to eat unprepared junior officers. This was only a rumor – he hoped. The captain who had entered the office previously emerged, apparently unscathed, and gestured for the lieutenant to enter. He did so, trying not to hold his breath.

"Lieut. Spot reporting for duty, sir."

"At ease Lieutenant, at ease. You have read the report?"

"Yes sir! It states that at 23:00 hours yesterday in Redball sector 5 coordinates 23/42/42, which is in the militarized zone, a Fostonian. . ."

"Thank you, Lieutenant. I read the report before I sent for you."

"Of course, sir. I would never presume that you had not, sir. Let me just say, sir, that.. ."

"Sit, Lieutenant."

The lieutenant sat.

The colonel continued, "I don't care very much that the Zorchweilers were made to look foolish. I do care that the damned bugbears have apparent knowledge of our latest technical advance."

"I don't know how that could have happened, sir. Our security systems are the best in the known galaxy. . ."

The colonel just looked at Spot who sank a little lower in his chair.

"Find out what happened. You're new to this command but I've had adequate reports of you from previous superiors. Give me an answer and see that it doesn't happen again. Do well on this and you can stay on my staff. Drop the bird and you're back chasing the stick for the quartermaster. Any questions?"

"What are my limitations in this investigation?"

"There are none. Surprise me. Dismissed."

Spot retired to his room after his meeting with the colonel. He turned on his personal terminal.

"Like, ohmigod, it's you. Where have you been? I am having the most grociferous day without you. Let's go to the mall."

The computer had researched a new personality. Again.

"All right, I give up. Where is this one from?"

"Some backwater Confederation planet about 2 light ages ago. I found a whole dialect

tape from some historian's doctoral dissertation. It's called Foundations and Origins of the Post-Modern Global Order. Real ancient history. Shall I continue?"

"NO. That sounds worse than the Fostonian slang you had last time. I need you to do some real work. Get me the standard data on our security systems surrounding scientific research at the top secret level and above. Then put a call out to Fred, remind him that he owes me a favor and get the real stuff on the same topic. Beep me when you're ready."

"If I do this will you help me work on my impersonation of Colonel Rex?"

"Only if you really want me court-martialed."

— SIGH —

The computer shut itself down and Spot had a chance to think in peace. The security had to be tight. But somehow there was a leak. How could a bunch of fuzzy cud-chewers get into a Dawgorak system? Even a Zorchweiler system?

ABOARD THE FOSTONIAN SHIP:

The intercom sounded, interrupting Admiral Fuzzy's game of Confederation-style chess with Slow-Gait. It was Ensign Jump. "We're being hailed by an unidentifiable ship, sir. Whoever is onboard is demanding to speak to you."

"I'm on my way, Ensign."

Slow-Gait was worried. "Who or what do you suppose it is? Unknown ships don't just turn up in occupied space, especially in combat zones."

"We'll find out, won't we? This could be fun."

"You've always had an unfortunate sense of humor, Fuzzy."

The Admiral reached the bridge and looked at the forward view screen. There was the ship. He'd never seen anything like it before. He looked over to First Lieutenant Stuff-Cheek who was trying without success to match the ship on the scanner with the known outlines in the computer. "Damn these blurry reproductions," he thought. "We can send a Fostonian into the depths of the galaxy and we still can't get good graphics." He turned to the ensign. "Do we still have an open communications link?"

"Yes sir. But whoever is out there must have been in space too long."

"What do you mean?"

"Listen."

And there was silence as the bridge was filled with truly awful. . .singing.

It was a very vulgar song, popular with Shilton fighter pilots, about alcoholic beverages, walls and 'the girl with the long, long tail'.

Admiral Fuzzy was dumbfounded. "Turn that off!" Ensign Jump obeyed. "That person is 40

obviously a few pods shy of a load. Do we have a fix on his ship type? His probable armament?"

"Negative on the ship type but scanners show no active weaponry."

"Right. Do scanners show any apparent malfunction with the ship?"

"No sir."

"Right. Then we're leaving him right where he is. Helm, prepare to increase speed. . ."

From no apparent source, the voice returned. "Okay, but you'll be sorry. The Dawgoraks are looking for you guys. Sure you don't want to talk to me?"

Admiral Fuzzy looked around the bridge. "How's he doing that?"

"I don't know sir. I. . ."

"How are you doing that?" The Admiral felt foolish shouting at what should be an inoperative comlink. There was silence. A musical tone sounded. A calm female voice spoke.

"If you would like to make a call please hang up and try again."

The Fostonians looked at each other in confusion.

There was a burst of static followed by an outburst of "(hugely obscene Packton insult deleted by censor)" coming clearly over the comlink.

The original voice returned. "Sorry about that. I got my lines crossed. Now. . ."

"Who are you?"

"You can call me Fred. Now, about the Dawgoraks. . ."

The Admiral was firm. "I have no interest in discussing anything with you. You obviously fell out of one too many trees in your youth."

"I know about the cloaking device incident. The Dawgoraks are coming for you. They're very close. If you don't talk to me you're going to be reduced to space dust by an entire subdivision of their fleet. Come over to my ship, you personally, and we can discuss terms."

"If you think I'm coming over there alone.. ."

"I'm alone here so bring as many of your people as you need to feel secure, but I'm only bargaining with you." And the voice of Fred was gone.

"Well", said Fuzzy. "It looks like this will be even more fun than I thought. As an escort I'll take. . ."

"Me sir." As one every officer on the bridge, including Slow-Gait, stepped forward to volunteer.

"This is very touching, however I will take the on-duty security team. I can't take all the ranking officers of the ship into unknown territory leaving the engineer in command here. Where do you think you're serving? The Confederation?"

The Admiral waited patiently. The security team shuffled nervously. The room was small for them all, built apparently on a human scale. There were several of those things the Confederation humans called “chairs” as well as a large table. There were two doors — the one through which the party had arrived and one on the opposite side of the table. Just as the waiting verged on nerve-wracking, Fred appeared. He was an average-sized male human with a thin face and glasses. Fuzzy didn’t find him threatening-yet.

“I’ll keep this simple. I have been engaged to discover your source of information within the Dawgorak military. My usual sources have failed me. Therefore I want you to tell me how you had access to top secret Dawgorak military research.

Fuzzy was stunned. Then he started to laugh. “Just like that? I can’t believe I wasted. . . Never mind.” He switched on his communicator. The signal was blocked. Fuzzy got up to leave.

“Don’t bother, the doors only unlock on my voice command.”

“You can’t force me to tell you anything. Nothing you could try to do to me. . .”

“I won’t do anything to you. I’ll just let you watch the Dawgs, who should be here momentarily since I gave them your exact co-ordinates, destroy your crew. Tell me your source and I’ll call off the attack. Otherwise I’ll be happy to drop you at the nearest Fostonian outpost when it’s all over.

“They’ll leave. To save all those lives my second will take the ship away. Those are the standing orders.

“I don’t believe those orders apply to heads of fleets.”

The two locked eyes for a moment. “Very well”, said Fuzzy, “but I’m not going to let you have the satisfaction of the answer. Send me directly to the Dawgorak command ship and send my security team back.”

“Doesn’t matter to me, leaf-breath. I still get paid whether you have a death wish or not.”

Fuzzy turned to his followers. “I hope you understand this is a true emergency situation.”

ABOARD THE DAWGORAK COMMAND SHIP

Lt. Spot nervously buckled his collar. He couldn’t believe his luck. Admiral Fuzzy of the Fostonian Fleet coming here to personally surrender vital security information. He’d be promoted for sure. He headed for the transporter room. Lt. Spot arrived just in time to see his “promotion” activate a small button on his communicator and be transported away again.

“What happened?” barked Spot.

"That must have been a locator device, sir. It allowed his ship to find him and transport him back.

"Right," growled Spot. "Those Fostonians are meat."

BACK AT THE FOSTONIAN RANCH

"I'm very pleased," beamed Admiral Fuzzy. "I'm glad you understood my hint regarding the emergency situation homing signal. Now, what is the battle situation?"

The view from the bridge was grim. Several Dawgorak assault ships and two heavy cruisers were ranged before them with a carrier lurking behind the front line.

"Raise the shields and prepare phasers and torpedoes," the admiral ordered.

"Already done, sir."

"Ensign Jump, scan for the largest incoming torpedo and attempt to capture it with the absorption field.

"Yes sir."

"Remember, we are fighting for an opening to run, we cannot defeat this force. Lt.

Snuffle, send a distress call to the nearest allied receiver and see if we can get any. . ."

The first Dawgorak volley rocked the ship. ". . .help. Take evasive maneuvers on the next volley and return fire. Did we catch anything Jump?"

"Not this time sir. The carrier has launched two fighters and they are moving in."

"Attack those with phasers when they come in range."

The first Fostonian volley fired. A torpedo hit the first assault ship but the ship's deflector neatly turned the phaser fire. The second Dawg volley completely missed as the Fostonian ship danced from side to side.

Admiral Fuzzy laughed as the volley passed harmlessly by. "Space dust, my hinder end. Not this cycle. Ready another volley and target those fighters."

Meanwhile the Dawgs were seeing something strange on their scanners:

"I'm tracking the operation of four Shilton cloaking devices sir."

Lt. Spot laughed. "They're trying that same trick again. Ignore the devices and concentrate fire on the ship we can see."

"But sir. . ."

"Do as I say, Private."

"But sir. . ."

"Don't contradict me, Private."

"But sir they're uncloaking and those are Shilton battleships."

Admiral Fuzzy watched with pleasure as the Dawgoraks turned tail and ran. This really was his lucky cycle. "Don't chase them," he sent to the Shilton leader, "It's more fun to see them run away."

Capt. Claw was unhappy, he had hoped to add some kills to his record but he knew the terms of the treaty. "Very well," he hissed, "it's your choice. Just be careful how and when you call us again."

And so it goes. Everyone lives to fight another day. This time.



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