Hailing Frequencies
Official Fanzine of SFCoC
http://hailingfrequencies.tripod.com

Open Hail

Welcome to the first print issue of Hailing Frequencies. I am sure most of you have read this fanzine online already. The print edition will be used for archive purposes. You will be able to get a print edition of Hailing Frequencies at around the first of each month, just before next issue is about to release.

Remember you can see the latest edition of HF online at the URL listed in the title. You can also find ways to submit articles, suggestions, and comments at this site.

This fanzine is dedicated to the Star Fleet Command gaming experience and campaign play, as well as multi-player to be specific. As you may have noticed Hailing Frequencies has teamed up with SFC Campaign Online. It is our hope that we will be able to provide a central location for SFC players to find all their SFC multiplayer and campaign needs.

This fanzine is for the players of SFC and will hopefully be by the players as well. I am hoping that players will be inspired to share their tactics, fiction and general material as it pertains to SFC. While campaign and multiplayer are the primary focus of this fanzine, it will not be limited to such. I hope to provide material for solo play including new scenarios as well as playing tips. While this fanzine has teamed up with SFC Campaign, it will in no way be limited to it. All SFC based campaigns and groups are welcome to send in material about your game so we can all share in the fun. My goal with this fanzine is to provide a place where the entire SFC community can come to share it's material with everyone. Each month as a new issue comes out the old issue will be archived to a print edition.

Now that we know what the goals are, the question is how do we achieve them? Notice that I used the word we. That is because while this is a fanzine for the SFC players, it is also BY the SFC players. One person can only do so much, and while I love SFC, you would all eventually get bored at just reading my material. However the SFC community is full of talented individuals, writers, tactical, technical and even artists. We need to all work together to make this fanzine a success. If you have any material you would like to submit for others to see click on the Submissions button above to read the guidelines and how to get material put into Hailing Frequencies.

I would like to take this chance to thank Dennis Greene. He has inspired me to put this project into motion and his online campaign has been a joy to be apart of. I would also like to thank Nicholas Cioran from Blackfleet for jumping into the fray with me and providing material on a quick basis, as well as opening the Blackfleet forum for tactical papers to be discussed. Finally I would like to thank Chris Rebman for coming through with some fiction for this first issue and doing it in a style that hints at future stories.

While there are many others I could thank, the list would go for some time. So lets drop the mushy stuff and look at the first issue.

**Hailing Frequencies
Open!**
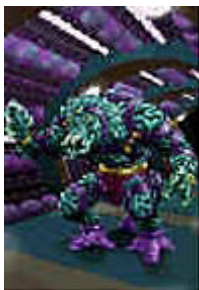
HMS Starfinder: *Shakedown Cruise*
By Chris "Capt. Nev Iskoru" Rebman

Aboard the HMS Starfinder, Capt. Nev Iskoru stepped off the transport pad. The transporter officer was surprised to see him, he was not scheduled arrive for another half an hour. "As you were." He said as he dismissed officer, as he stepped onto the lift. "Bridge!" Only one crew member stepped out of line enough to show surprise at his appearance.

"Report." He snapped, it was a new ship and a new crew. He decided to start by making sure everyone understood that he was in command. In the depths of space, with it's mysteries and dangers there could be no room for doubt.

"All stations are in readiness Capt.," the chief officer responded. "We are still missing our navigator and our medical team. They should be aboard ship in half an a hour, sir."

"I am going to make an inspection tour the ship, report to me when the rest of the crew is aboard."

"Aye, sir."

Nev moved to the lift, and ordered it to take him to engineering. A few moments later, the lift doors opened, and he stepped out into engineering. Engineering was a cavernous room, dominated by the warp core, which was pulsing a gentle green. Few of the engineering crew stopped what they were doing to knowledge his presence, but that was the way it should be. Hydran naval command trained their officers and crew never to stop their chores unless their command-
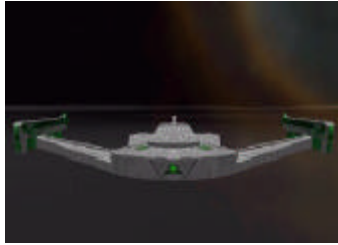
The Underdog that Bites!: Flying the WarEagle

By E.L. "S'faret" Crisler

No ship in SFB or SFC is so under rated by opposing players as the Romulan War Eagle. When most players look at a War Eagle they see it's weaknesses, and there are plenty.

- Poor Speed
- Poor phaser suite
- Low power curve

However for each of these perceived weaknesses there is also a strength. A strength that is hidden as well as a ship that is traveling under cloak. Well in this article we will pierce the cloak that surrounds the War Eagle and show just how effective a warship it can be.

Speed is life. This is the most well know axiom of SFB and SFC play. When we apply this axiom to the War Eagle we see a ship that is bound to be dead. The ship is speed limited, in SFC it cannot reach speeds much higher than 20 and it's power curve makes it hard to hold speeds higher than 15 and still charge all of it's weapons.

However within this perceived weakness there is strength. While the War Eagle has a poor power curve for speed, it also has one of the lowest cloaking costs in the game. Many players try to avoid the cloak because it slows them down. This is against the "Speed is Life" theory so they feel that cloaking means death. However the War Eagle is designed to handle slow speeds and is able to still make speed 12 with cloak and recharge weapons. While speed 12 sounds slow, when you realize that the ships top speed is only around 22, it no longer seems as bed.The cloak, when combined with the excellent all around shielding that the WE has, makes it almost phaser proof. Lower the speed to about 10 and add some ECM to the mix and you have a ship that can handle quite a mugging and still be in decent shape. The cloak not only increases the effective range that the phaser have to fire, it also does a decent job of lower the damage level on it's own. So when you add the increased range based on lose of lock-on, reduced chance for a good hit due to ECM shift and then reduced damage due to the cloak, we see that the WE has a very effective defensive system.

Example: *At range one a Phaser 1 will normally do and average of 5.3. Now lets add the loss of lock on penalties, the effective range now becomes 7. The Phaser's ability to hit is now lowered compared to what would normally be. By moving the range bracket to 7, we now have a chance for that same phaser to miss. Now if we also assume an ECM shift, even as little as 1 the chance for a miss increases yet again. Now we also see the average damage level fall thanks to the ECM shift, the phaser that was before averaging 5.3, now averages around 4.8. But there is still more lose for the phaser on the way. The effect of the cloak also has a chance to lower the damage. The average effect is to lower a weapons damage by 50%. So we now have that lovely Phaser 1 is down to an average damage of 2.4 per shot. This is a net 62% reduction in potential damage, however this is further reduced by the fact that about 50% of the shots will actually miss.*

Now there is a stastical change here that most people tend to miss. A Federation CA packs six Phaser 1 that normally combine to deliver 3- points of average damage at range one, even with a mild ECM shift. Now suddenly we have the same ship delivering 7 points of damage on the average, due to reduced dmage and an increased chance to hit! This is almost a 75% reduction in average damage! Not bad for something that most consider a kiss of death.

One of the strengths of the WE is it's amazing all-round shield power, having a shield strength of 26 at all facings. This means that when under cloak the WE can handle usually anywhere from 3 to 5 full volleys of Phaser 1 from a Federation CA! With the addition of the 5 points of Armor the WE, thanks to the cloak, is one tough nut to crack.

Okay I know what's coming, "But the Federation also has Photon Torpedoes!" All to true so lets look at the results they will have on the cloak. At range one a normal/overloaded photon will still have a base 50% chance to hit a ship under cloak. Now there is a side effect here that should be noted. At range zero or one the Photon causes feedback damage, thus damaging the ship that fires them. But lets overlook that deterrent for a second. Okay so we have a base 50% chance to hit, but with ECM shift in place that percentage drops. Overloaded photons can now miss easily and normal loads can be cut to only a 33% chance to hit. This assumes that the ECM shift is only 1. (ECM has an ugly effect on photon hit percentages) So with this data in hand lets look at another example to see where this leaves us.

Example: So we assume a cloaked ship with a 1 point ECM shift at range zero. We will assume normal loads for the purpose of this example. A normal load does 8 points of damage, this is reduced to 4 doe to the effects of the cloak by halving damage on the average hit. Now this sounds ugly until we look at what will happen.

Lets put this example all together, a Federation CA at range one is trying to mug a WE under cloak. The Fed uses standard loads on his Photons to reduce feedback damage. The WE has achieved an 1 ECM shift. The Fed unloads a full alpha strike, the phasers average 2.4 apiece and only hit with about 50%, the Photons average 4 damage, however the hit chance is reduced so we will be generous and assume a 50% hit rate, or 2 photons. We now have 18 points of damage on the average!

Note: *In both the above examples, damage levels shown are calculated on an AVERAGE! There is a possibility of higher damage being down, however the same chance exists that little if any damage will be done. Both examples are based on a Federation CA being at range from a WE under cloak and with a ECM shift of 1.*

The significance of this is HUGE if you look closely. A Federation CA has a ton of crunch power under a full alpha strike. Normally at range one the CA can deliver an average of 63

points of damage assuming normal photon loads, the cloaked ship has reduced the Federation effectiveness by 72%! Plus thanks to the shields and armor of the WE, it can withstand 2 such range one strikes and still be deadly!

The Hydran RN, one of the TOUGHEST cruisers in the game would take 30 internals from a single Federation range one alpha strike and be HURT! A second hit would KILL it!

Okay so I hear the next argument building on your lips. If the WE is going slow then what will stop the enemy from closing in, sitting at range 1 and pounding on the WE until it uncloaks then nailing it point blank?

Well there are a couple of methods that will stop an enemy from coming in too close. The easiest is to make use of your transporter bombs. The WE is the ultimate minelayer. While under cloak the WE can maintain a fair speed and still move unharmed through a minefield. This allows you to lay a nice little mine field and maneuver around it. When laying mines remember that Romulans also carry the Nuclear Space Mine. This bad boy does 35 points of damage, over 3 times what a normal space mine does. This helps to put distance on the enemy or damage his shields if he is dumb enough to drive through them.

Note: There is a bad side to this. By driving through a mine that you are passing through the enemy can flash your ship and gain a momentary lock-on. If he has an overloaded alpha strike loaded this could be your death.

Another option is to allow him to mug you at close range. I can hear the exclaims over this starting already. You have heard me right, let him close and try to mug you. Stay slow and make him run around you a bit. Use the lower speed and thus lower power usage, to raise your ECM and reinforce your shields. The second he has dumped his alpha strike uncloak and start following him. He is now dead. He is stuck at close range and low speed and you are uncloaking with a full alpha strike, including the NASTY Plasma R.

If he only hits you with phasers and holds his heavy weapons then a different tactic is needed. Drop speed to really low levels, even stopping if need be. If the enemy slows as well to hang around you have him now :-) Put your newly gained power into ECM and shield reinforcement. Pick which shield you are going to face him with and put all the power there. Use the HET to put your newly powered shield at the enemy and dump a Wild Weasel out the shuttle bay. This will jack your ECM up and make you that much harder to hit, begin to uncloak. Hold your fire until the target does, but then once he does NAIL HIM! He will again be at low speed, close range and with no weapons to return fire with. The Plasma R will rip out a shield and your phasers can gut him :-)

Many people do not feel the WE has the fire power to hurt a ship, of any size, in a single volley. While they acknowledge the power of the Plasma R they assume that the low number of ph-1s that the WE has means lower damage.

Tactical Tidbits
Provided by BlackFleet.org

Dirty Tricks
Turning the Other Cheek

Rakhzan, Red Claw County

An effective tactic that I have used time and time again is to begin a battle pass at an opponent and begin a turn away from him at range 4-5. Fire primary phasers then heavy weapons. Usually the phasers will drop his shield or weaken it enough to allow the heavy weapons to finish dropping them and score a good set of internals. It is important that you are continuing the turn away from him when this succession of salvos is fired. When his shield drops your hit and runs will activate and most of the time his ship systems are stunned so he cant retaliate or by the time he does recover to retaliate you have completed that turn and have a full shield facing him.

Probing Thoughts

Captain Krumb, IKV Death's Hand, BlackFleet

Great! You've maneuvered your ship well enough to turn that glowing plasma ball into a harmless light show. But was it a pseudo torp or the real deal? Chances are you're just outside of scanning range but close enough to turn in for a quick strike. Is it safe? Fire a probe at the offending plasma-chucker and find out. Look sharp; for a split second, the sensor panel will tell you if his tubes are charged or not.

Experienced Romulans and Gorn will often mix pseudos with real torps, so you can also use this to make a quick calculation about the damage ratio that you would give and take if only some of his plasma tubes are still charged.

POP Goes the Weasel

SFCShadow, SFC Online Campaign

When attacking a base with missile weapons and plasma, you know the base will pop a wild weasel to defend itself (especially with the player controlled base scripts). Use this to your advantage. The tactic is to destroy the WW (preferably with direct fire weapons) as soon as the WW launches from the Base. This is very important, it must be as close to the base as possible.

Before you destroy it make sure you have launched your missiles or plasma's (this caused them to pop the weasel right?). The preference is to make sure they come in "waves", or staggered. Timing of this is important. You want each "wave" to impact on the WW so it doesn't get caught in the blast radius. This will allow the collateral damage from the repeatedly destroyed WW to damage and even destroy the Base. Even a Starbase cannot sustain the damaged delivered from a well executed missile/plasma attack of this kind.

They can't use successive WW's either, because it will be destroyed immediately by the pulsing/exploding WW, adding to the collateral damage.

Zen Flying

Viking, Imperial Militia

People always seem to consider SFC in terms of a turn-based game instead of the real time game that it is.

One example of this is torpedo charging. A Photon torpedo takes four points of power for each of two "turns" to finish charging. Then you have to pay 2 points of power to hold it. So the question is, why finish charging? Simply choose to exist in the moment right before charging is finished (very Zen!)

Take a Fed CA as an example, 34 power, 30 of that is warp, and 4 photon tubes. Begin charging all photons as overloads. As close as possible to having them finished charging, set speed to 28. 1 point of movement from impulse, 27 from warp leaving only 3 warp power available to charge photons. The interesting thing about heavy weapons, is that if less power is available than needed to charge one, the drain no power at all. The simply sit in the ready state, waiting for you to finish charging.

Once you have moved into the position from which you wish to fire at your opponent toggle your speed down to 14, freeing up 16 power to finish charging the overloads in a few seconds. Then fire and increase speed again to make a hasty exit. In the 1-2 (if you've timed it right) seconds needed to finish charging the photons your drop in speed should be minimal. This tactic can be used with other races as well, but the photon is the only weapon in Star Fleet Command that requires warp power, so the other races will find their batteries being drained, and less power available for EW, tractors, and so forth than the Federation.

Leveling the Field

Kol Korvus, IKV Deathslayer, Black Fleet

It is a misconception to believe you must match or exceed your opponents ECM/ECCM rating in all situations. It can be advantageous to merely "level the field" by ensuring that your opponent suffers the same shift that you do.

A good example of this is when your opponent runs with 6 ECM. You could reduce the EW shift to zero by expending 6 points of power to ECCM. However, by spending 4 points of power, 3 to ECCM and 1 to ECM you can resulting in a 1 point EW shift for yourself and your opponent, and have the advantage of having 2 extra points of power to spend at your discretion.

Alternatively, if your opponent is running with a high ECCM rating, spend nothing on ECM and just enough in ECCM to ensure cover the difference. Again the field is level, and you have a power advantage. In a duel between closely matched ships this can mean the difference between overloading a torpedo or not, a few critical points of speed, and so forth. If your ship is at a power disadvantage, the extra power will help balance the game.

Damn the Torpedoes

SFCShadow, SFC Online Campaign

When one or more Plamsa weapons are tracking you and your reasonably sure they are real. Don't run. If your far enough away from your opponent (say 10-20k), turn toward your opponent and reduce speed and launch a WW. Just before the Plasma impacts on the WW accelerate as fast as you can and charge the enemy. The torpedo will turn and "Chase" you once again, but you won't need to worry it won't have much strength left by then and any rear firing phasers can be used to reduce it's strength even more.

Now your opponent has a large pucker factor and most likely will be caught off guard by your not "breaking away" as you bear down on him and make him pay.

Scatter Pack Whack

Konyaku, IKV Devourer, Black Fleet

Anyone who has ever played a race that uses scatter packs hates it when those six drones are wasted. Whether by a fleeing opponent, evil probes, hideous t-bombs, or phasers held ready for point defense against the drones, those six drones can make or break your game depending on who's receiving the package. So, if you have a SP handy you want to use it too its full effectiveness.

Doing this maneuver requires going faster than your opponent is, preferably as fast as you can. After your opponent has fired a salvo at you (hopefully it won't hurt too much), close with a tractor level two, and HOLD YOUR FIRE. Drop a SP before you connect with tractors, and you will be pushing your opponent back or be at a standstill.

Whatever the case the SP will release beyond PD, and your opponent isn't likely to drop his shield for a t-bomb. As soon as the SP fires IMMEDIATELY do a free angle HET as the drones go off. Fire your alpha before the HET charges to the halfway point (this should break their shields and give you a nice hit and run opportunity), and when the HET goes off change views from overhead to normal to steer your way into the drones.

Your opponent will run into your SP at full speed with you dragging him along for the ride. To add insult to the injury drop an SS as well and some extra drones from the racks once the SP hits.

If everything goes as planned your opponent will receive six drones through a down shield, crippling him fatally, if not another shield will be down and his insides will be ripe to carve with whatever weapons you have at your disposal. This requires some practice due to the speed needed to execute the maneuver with so be patient. Practice makes perfect.

HMS Starfinder
Continued............

(Continued from page 1)

ing officer explicitly asked them to. The chief engineer Xanen, however, did come over to see the captain.

"Your Lordship," the engineer said as he bowed. "I see you have decided to visit us early."

"Yes I have," Nev agreed. "I was wondering, if I were to ask you right now, is this ship space worthy? What would your answer be?"The engineer considered this for moment then replied "I would say that we're ready for anything."

"Then in that case, be prepared. I intend to test of the ships limits today."

"Aye, sir."

Despite the long years that his engineer had known him, Xanen had kept his professionalism and not reacted as a friend but as an officer. That was one of the reasons that Nev had chosen him for this assignment. Part of Naval training included for officers of the rank of commander or higher to serve a rotation through each department before being allowed a command. Xanen had been his supervisor and friend during that time. Nev felt sure that if Xanen said the ship was ready for action, then it was. As he took the lift to his quarters, Nev's thoughts continued to wander. Xanen had originally been assigned duty on a tug near Klingon space. A necessary job, but one with no real glories. Xanen had saved Nev's life when the warp core of the Knight class destroyer they were serving on failed. That ship was destroyed, and all but fifteen crew had escaped. Nev vowed to do what he could to repay Xanen. This was a step in the right direction. He would need the kind of loyalty he knew he would have from Xanen, as he was the only other person who suspected that the Starfinder had been commissioned for more than skirmishes against the Lyrans. If only he knew what that mission would be.

Nev began to look through his crew profiles. Yelandras. Wing commander. Decorated triple ace. She had participated in the opening maneuvers of the war, playing a crucial part of the first counterassault. Her wing was the only one to come back undamaged. Nev had met her before. No, that was too gentle a word. They had mated together. Of their children, two had become fighter pilots, one died shortly after birth. The matriarchal was killed for that. If the matriarchal could not properly care for children, it was of no use to the hydrans. Still, there had been love there. It still hurt, Nev discovered, that part of his family had been executed. He tossed the file aside and looked at the next one.

Sub Commander Trexal Neval. His new first officer. According to the file, he was fresh out of OCS. Before that, he had served aboard a scout ship. Nev groaned inwardly, that will mean that he has never seen combat. With the help of Hydorian, his god, Nev would make an officer out of him. Just because he was unseasoned was no reason to take it easy on him.

Nev had just picked up the next file when the comm interrupted him. It was Neval. "Our navigator and medical teams have come aboard sir, we are ready for departure."

"Thank you, sub commander."

"Neval out." Nev thumbed off the intercom.

He glanced at the name of the file he had picked up, Berceus Tricarian, Navigator, Helmsman, and Pilot. And good too. The closest thing to a legend he would ever meet. This was definitely a surprise. Nev went up to the bridge to prepare for the tests and to meet the rest of his crew.

On the bridge, Nev settled onto the central pedestal, his three legs arranged symmetrically around it. The bridge of the Starfinder was vastly different from that of the Federation starship he had once been aboard. Aboard that ship, everyone face in almost the same direction, toward the main view screen. On a Hydran ship, the bridge was arranged in a circle and divided into thirds. Each third had a particular function. One third was communications, the next weapons, the third helm and navigation. Only the captain faced the screen directly. The others had their own repeater screen that gave them only the information they needed to perform their job with no useless distractions.

"Helm, plot a course for the Lyran neutral zone, and prepare for warp speed.""Aye, captain." The response came with no delay, Nev thought, that's good."Course laid in."Nev thumbed the comm switch. "Bridge here, are you engines ready, Xanen?"The reply was quick, "Aye, sir. I can give you full power at your command.""Thank you, keep an eye on those engines, they're getting a workout today.""Aye, Sir.""Helm, bring us into warp.""Aye, Sir." There was a moments pause, in that brief moment, the pinpoints of light that were stars stretched into long streamers. "Warp factor One, Captain.""Warp Two.""Aye, Sir." Then a moment later, "Warp Factor Two."The ship was performing wonderfully, it was now time to make a real test of capabilities. He thumbed the comm switch "Engineering, this is it for the easy stuff. Can you handle a real test?""All of my teams are in readiness, captain. Just give the word.""You heard him Helm, Warp factor Eight.""Warp Factor Eight. Aye, Sir."The engines began to run hard, pushing the ship up to unbelievable velocity. A low hum began to build up as the ship increased in speed. The Starfinder was approaching maximum speed. Soon, the deck would begin to shake. "Helm, can you give me warp factor Ten?"The response was a little slower, and the voice a bit nervous, "Warp Factor Ten, Aye."The low sound became a soft whine as the engines neared critical levels. "Warp Factor Ten, Sir.""Xanen, how are we doing?""I recommend shutting them down sir, we can't keep this up for long.""Soon, Xanen, soon. Keep your teams ready.""Aye.""Helm, give me Warp Eleven."This time the Helmsman was obviously frightened. It was a good sign, the ship apparently had higher limits than his crew. At least he could depend on the ship getting him out of trouble. "Sir, we are cruising at maximum safe velocity now. If we try to travel any faster...""...We'll tear the ship apart," Nev finished for her. "That's what we're here to find out, Warp Eleven.""Aye sir. Warp Eleven."The whine of the engines jumped another notch, definitely obvious over the other sound of the ship. The deckplates were rattling, and it was difficult to stay on the pedestals that served as seats. "Warp Factor Eleven Sir."Even

Nev wouldn't push the engines any faster. Only the Federation have ships that can manage these speeds and higher for any length of time. The one they named Enterprise is said to be able to take Warp Thirteen for only a few minutes.An alarm began to sound, followed by the urgent voice of Xanen on the intercom. "Captain, we have some buckling on the forward hull, the ship can't keep this up.""Okay, that's enough, Helm, take us down to warp Two."With a sound of relief, Berceus answered, "Aye, Sir.""Engineering, get your teams on that buckling, we're going to do a few combat drills.""Aye, Aye, Sir. We're ready for you down here."Nev smiled, putting Xanen in engineering was definitely a good choice. He pulled up the long-range sensor display on his personal console. Just on this side of the Neutral zone was an uninhabited system of eight planets and an asteroid ring. That would be just the thing. He sent the information to helm."Plot a course that takes us through the gas giants rings, around the star and then into the asteroids. Run a full evasive pattern the whole way. Take us to warp one, then sublight as we enter the system."Berceus began entering the information into her computer quickly, not even pausing briefly as she replied "Aye Sir.""Weapons, bring up the fusion cannons and prepare for firing tests. Charge phasers to full." He turned back to his display, then thumbed the shipwide intercom, "All hands, this is yellow alert, battlestations."In response to this order, the bridge lights dimmed and a soft yellow flashing light appeared at intervals along the wall next to the ceiling. The ship slowed as the star appeared on the screen, distinct from all of the streaks flashing past in the distance. Then the streaks became pinpoints again and the planets resolved themselves into solid orbs hanging in space. Then the image cartwheeled wildly as the first of the high velocity evasive maneuvers was made. Nev took his eyes off the view screen. Watching evasives always turned his stomach. When it had become necessary in the past, he relied solely on reports from his officers to get him through. He didn't usually have to worry about it, he was a competent warrior, and the fights were generally over before he had to worry about getting away. The turning and diving of the ship made it difficult for anyone to stay seated, the maneuvers were too difficult for the inertial dampers to fully counteract them. The ship leveled itself for a moment before slicing through the debris of the planetary rings. The deflectors crackled with energy as ice and dust was scattered away. Once again, the ship righted itself and the star hovered into the main view screen. It was close and approaching dangerously fast."Helm, I want you to get us as close as possible without being trapped in the gravity well. Do you understand?"Berceus affirmed that she did, and the screen began to darken to counter for the amount of light being projected through. It was still becoming painfully bright."Shields on full, maximum reinforcement." The weapons officer remarked. "Exterior hull temperature rising, radiation levels still normal.""Thank you."

Drone Defense Thesis
By Dennis "SFCShadow" Greene

Introduction

This document is an attempt at understanding Drones, their effectiveness and how to defend against them. I will attempt to outline thier uses by type and also propose methods of reducing their effectiveness in combat when faced by drone carrying ships.

Differences from SFB vs. SFC for Drone Defense

The primary difference from late SFB vs. SFC is the substitution of a ph-3 and 1/2 APR for ADD's on some ship designs.

ADDs (Anti-Drone Device) were developed as a response to the Kzinti1 in general and Klingon drone cruisers in specific. As time passed and drone technology became more refined, starships found themselves more and more often facing a seemingly unending wave of drones hurled at them. As a means of countering the drone threat, a new type of missile rack was developed.

- The ADD Launcher threw large clouds of matter at incoming drones, shuttles and fighters. The launcher had a maximum range of 3 hexes (3.0K - 3.99K), where it was most effective. The closer a target to the launcher, the less chance it had to hit, due to the spread of the flak cloud. The launcher was able to fire at at single target each second until it exhausted it's ammunition.

- Later, the launchers were modified to be able to launch tiny "dogfight" Type-VI drones in addition to the flak clouds. The original ADD rounds were able to damage shuttles and fighters to a very limited degree, but were unable to damage an enemy starship's shields or hull in the slightest. ADDs were instrumental in keeping many a starship in one piece when faced with inbound 10 or even 12 drones.

- Due to limitations in the simulator software, ADDs were omitted from the ship schematics provided. In their stead, the simulator programmers have equipped each ship armed with an ADD launcher a ph-3 and ½ an APR to power it.

Effectiveness of ph-3 and 1/2 an APR vs. ADD

This would normally be a nice balancing move due to the phaser and power being able to be used for other purposes. However, some examples in which having an ADD would be superior are:

A ph-3, when fired at range 1, will do 4 points of damage 66% of the time. 33% of the time, it will only do 3 points of damage. A typical Type-I drone requires 4 points to kill. It can also only be fired once every 30 seconds or so. An ADD, if it hit, it will automatically kill any drone, and can be fired every second until the threat is eliminated. As a damaged drone will not do less damage when it hits, it falls to the defending ship's captain to dedicate a number of ph-3s exceeding the number of drones inbound, by 33%. If 6 Type-Is are inbound, you'd better have 9 ph-3s ready to fire.

Unfortunately, it gets more complicated. The simulator software does not model the typical availability ratios of Type-I to Type-IV drones, and therefore only allows "All or None" options. You could conceivably be facing down an enemy armed solely with Type-IV drones, and have no way of knowing until you see your front shield disintegrate from just 2 drone impacts. The ADD would stop the same number of Type-IV drones - it's an auto kill if it hits, regardless of drone type.

The ph-3 however has a much more difficult time versus the Type-IVs. A single Type-IV takes 6 points to destroy, and does double the damage of a Type-I if it hits. No ph-3 made can destroy a Type-IV in a single shot, so instead of allocating 9 phasers to kill 6, you must allocate 12 ph-3s. Even a Hydran couldn't hope to stop them all with 2 ph-Gs. Now, remember the double drone control of the Klingon drone cruisers? Now you have *12* Type-IVs inbound, and nowhere enough phasers to handle them.

While I am NOT saying a single ADD will let you take on the Klingon drone fleet, I do believe in certain situations a single ph-3 and ½ point of power will never make up for the loss of an ADD launcher. There are tactics which will allow a captain to deal with a drone wave, however none are as elegant as ordering the weapons officer to release the safeties on the ADD launcher. On the other hand, the exclusion of the ADD launcher may force the cadets to invent new anti-drone tactics, and rely more on their wits than on the technology. The ideal strategy for our officers to learn is to not allow his/her ship to be put in the situation I have described.

Know Your Drone

As can be seen, the ph-3 ½ APR exchange for the ADD is not a good substitute and alternate means for dealing with the perceived drone threat is needed. Before we can discuss ways to defend against drones we need to be able to tell drone types apart. You can tell drone speeds primarily by their color when they launch

- If the drone is violet in color this indicates that it is a fast speed drone.
  The Type I drone will do 12 points of damage when it intercepts its target unless it is destroyed.

- If the drone is a pale blue or a light colored blue this indicates that it is a medium speed drone.

- If the drone is a dull or angry red/orange it is the slow speed drone. Scatter pack drones are of this type and also Type IV drones.
  The Type IV drone will do 24 points of damage when it intercepts its target.

As can be seen the type IV is much more dangerous especially in numbers because of the enormous damage it can deliver per unit.

Drones can move at three types of speed.

- Slow Drones - Move at speed 12
- Medium Drones - Move at speed 22
- Fast Drones - Move at speed 32

Note that type I drones are smaller/skinnier then type IV drones, but many do not notice, also note that the fastest drone can move faster then

your ships are capable of doing, these can be extremely dangerous types of drones and defense vs. this type is even more important then the rest.

Drone Defense Techniques

Many think that when they see drones that there is no effective way to defeat them and are overwhelmed and panic. This is not true or necessary, drones although dangerous are only truly so if in great numbers. Even then there are methods of dealing with drone "waves" that can make them impotent.

Verses One Drone – This is perhaps the easiest to defend against. Single drones are more an annoyance that can't be ignored then a threat.

- Use your tractor beam – The defensive tractor beam should be your primary defense vs. a single drone. This prevents the drone from hitting your ship and will hold it there until it runs out of fuel. *Many people are not aware, but you can use the "primary" tractor beam as well as defensive tractors, thereby giving you an extra tractor beam if you need one. Just charge it up and "target" the drone, the tractor will grab it like it will a ship.*

- Use your phasers – This is the next best defense. If you have abundance of phasers then by all means, designate a few to anti-drone defense and let them take care of the problem. It takes on average of one phaser 1 to destroy a type I drone and type IV. Although to guarantee a type IV kill requires 2. It takes on average of one phaser 2 to destroy a type I drone and two phaser 2's to destroy a type IV.It takes on average 1.5 phaser 3's to destroy a type I drone and two phaser 3's to destroy a type IV drone.

- T-Bombs and mines – Although this is an effective defense, for a single drone unless there are no other options this is the most wasteful type of defense. The reason is that a mine is an explosive device that has the potential of taking out many drones at once and to waste on a single drone is a waste of resources, but in a pinch they can be used. Be aware that a mine / T-Bomb needs a period of time to become active, don't expect that as soon as you place them they are immediately available. You'll have to time it so that it is active at the time the drone crosses it.

- Run away – Perhaps not the most gallant of defenses but if all else fails, running away from drones is an effective form of defense. It is much easier to run away from the slower drones and reenter combat with them still chasing your around, vs. fast drones although it is still an effective technique (especially if there is some distance between you and the drone), because of the extreme high speeds involved, it is harder to turn back into a fight. Running away for fast

Drone Defense Thesis
Continued.......

drones should be used so you can cycle your phasers and fire on the drone. Depending on the drone faced and the situation, this can actually be the best defense if managed properly.

- Shields – This may sound like an odd defense, but that's what they are there for. Sometimes it is best to just take the hit on the shield so you can place more effective fire on your opponent and you are not willing to give that opportunity up. If possible reinforce the shield to be hit and bear down and charge

Verses Two Drones – The defenses against two drones are the same as outlined for a single drone, sometimes a "combination" is best. Using a tractor and shooting them is usually best, and the mine / T-Bomb defense is slightly more useful here as you can take both drones out with a single mine a better use of that resource. Unless you have very good shields, this defense should only be used in desperation and I would recommend against it.

Verses Three to four Drones – If you start seeing this many drones you are beginning to get into the "threat" by numbers stage of combating drones and all of the above methods work for defense except the shields defense, as so many drones against anything but the strongest of shields will bring it down and most likely do internals. If you have a wingman, a new defense is possible.

- Mutual Defense – When faced with multiple drones, flying your ships near to each other can be an extremely effective defense, this allows each ship to take on the burden of defense and reduces the cost of defending for single ships. A nice feature of multiple ships defending is that their defense tractors can be used if they are near drones, even if they're not targeted at that ship. The same is true for phasers placed on defense duty, as long as they are near a drone they will auto fire. So Mutual defense is very possible.

- The Mine defense begins to come into its own, at this level of drone numbers because if the drones are grouped together a single mine will destroy them all.

Combined with the "run away" defense, the mine defense is also useful. Just roll a mine out the back while you are running. If the drones are close, to close for the rolled out mine to arm in time, then T-Bomb a mine in front of your ship. You'll overrun it before it arms and take out the drones that way, even if you move slightly to slow or misjudge the transport range, if they are right on you, you may still get them with the mine and take minor damage to your rear shield. 10 points damage is better then multiple 12 points or greater drones.

Verses Six to Twelve Drones – At this level drones become a real threat and what has been outlined for three to four drones become a necessity. Mutual defense should be the norm unless you plan on using all your phasers to defend against the threat. Even if you are planning to, you

will eventually be overwhelmed and succumb to their shear numbers. The shared burden of defense will become paramount in surviving so many drones and the mine becomes one of your best options in dealing with the threat. This is because the mine can destroy the whole lot of them if they are grouped together and drone waves of this type are usually grouped in 6-8 "packs". There is a new defense to be considered at this level.

- Wild Weasel (WW) – At this level and above another possible defense is the Wild Weasel, basically the Wild Weasel is a shuttlecraft that make so much "noise" that it tricks the drones into thinking it is the target and not the ship. There are some disadvantages to the Wild Weasel for the owning ship. While the WW is active you cannot move faster then speed 4, doing so violates the WW. Since most combat is at higher speeds, this will cause your ship to 'suddenly' stop while it launches the WW. Firing your weapons while a WW is active violates the WW and it will no longer function.

As can be seen, using the WW removes any initiative you may have in the battle, but if it's a choice between having no defense or not having enough defense, it is better then taking terrific damage or even destruction.

Verses 13 or More Drones – This is enough to waste a ship in short order and truly cannot be dealt with on an effective level with less the full cooperation of a wingman pair or fleet. All of the above tactics / defenses need to be done in concert with all members of the fleet. If you try to take on that many drones alone instead of as a unit you will see your fleet destroyed one ship at a time. Mine placements work best by multiple ships placing them and tractor defense and phaser defense is much easier to do if the fleet acts as one unit. Great care must be used when so many drones are "airborne" as it will only take letting one wave through to loose or reduce its effectiveness in defending itself.

Miscellaneous Defenses

HET is another defensive measure that can be used in desperate ways. If all else fails and you're out of options or you want to combine this defense into an offense the High Energy Turns is another method of defense. This defense requires more skill, timing and much practice to perfect. If perfected it can be quite a shock to your opponent. The process is to time your HET to coincide with the drones impacting on your ship. By rapidly turning your ship as the drones intercept, you can spread the damage across several shields and if any weapons that were not able to fire come to bear they may get a shot off as well. The problem with that is as soon as you fire, the HET is voided, so be careful in anti-drone defenses used this way.

Drones can be used in anti-drone defense as well. Place your launchers in single fire mode and use your targeting on the drones individually and fire away, one drone will kill any drone it hits.

ECM is also a possible defense. If your ECM is high enough you can "spoof" the drone and it

will not detonate when it hits your ship.

Admin Shuttles can be used as a defense screen as well, but requires you stay near them for this to work and only gives you a limited defense, but every little bit helps.

Suicide Shuttles also can be used as a desperate defense measure like drones; if they target and hit a drone they will kill it. This is a bit of overkill and the drone can avoid it if turning since SS are so slow.

Probes can be used to take out single drones as well, if they hit, they will kill any type of drone.

Heavy Weapons; many don't consider this, but heavy weapons can target and destroy drones as well, photons, disruptors, Fusion beams etc. This needs to be done manually like the drone vs drone method of defense.

Some races have "special" means to deal with drones.

- Lyran ESG, although this is many times used as an offensive "Ram", they were primarily meant for drone/fighter defense. Just power them up and "sweep" drones away.

- Romulan Cloaking device, when a Romulan cloaks, they will break the lock on for drones (and plasma's) so that they cannot hit the Romulan. Even if they do hit, they may still miss or cause little damage due to the cloaking devices ability to reduce damage done once hit.

- Plasma shotguns, this is a method whereby you fire your plasma weapon as a bunch of small F type plasma's.

- Hydran Phaser G's and fighters. These can be excellent defenses since a G type phaser is equivalent to 4 type 3 phasers. The Hydran fighters carry (except earliest type) G phasers as well.

Limitations of Drones

The greatest limitation of drone bearing races (in SFC that is Klingon and Federation and Orion only) is that they have a limited supply of drones. Drones will eventually run out. Each ship that has drones has a drone "rack" and this determines the number available and the number that can be fired at once. Each drone rack has unique properties:

A rack – This is the standard rack and has a capacity of 4 standard drones and can fire one drone per turn.

B rack – This is a larger drone rack holding 6 standard drones, with the same firing rate of the A rack.

C rack – This is the rapid-fire drone rack. Two drones may be fired in a turn. These cannot be launched within 12 impulses of each other (or about 7 seconds at speed 7). It holds space for 4 standard drones.

F rack – Sometimes referred to as the "Jump rack". It is identical to the A rack but installed in a shuttle bay. This allowed ships that don't ordinarily carry drones to carry them; the race most likely to use this is the Federation and Orion and very early Klingon ships. This rack does not fire as often as standard racks, firing 1 drone every 2 turns. (Or about 40 seconds at speed 7)

G rack – This is just like the C rack but is

SFCoC Status Report

Stardate: 2000.04.08
GNN Special Report:

The war is OVER! Today Federation leaders met with representatives from the Klingon. Lyran and Romulan Empires at Alpha Centauri. The Federation, facing obvious annihilation met with it's enemies to discuss the terms of it's surrender.

Under the terms of the Centauri Compact, the space that used to belong to the federation was divided up amongst the Coalition forces. The Klingons took possession of the areas that where under the command of the 3rd and 7th Federation fleets. The Lyrans where granted control of the 4th fleet's zones. The Romulans claimed the space controlled by the 6th fleet, including the Vulcan star system. While the Romulans had originally made claims to portions of the 5th fleet's control areas, in the interest of peace they relinquished this space to the Gorns. The granting of this section of space to the Gorn was done in the interest of providing a more

stable peace in the aftermath of this terrible war.

Star Fleet was forced to disband, and defense forces allowed are limited to nothing larger than a CL. The Federation Council was disbanded and a new representative government was put in place. Romulan, Klingon and Lyran advisors also sit on this council. In it's first act the new council declared that the Federation was disbanded. The area of space that was once the Federation home sector is now controlled by the newly formed Sol Alliance.

On the Hydran front, the borders where left unchanged, however the Hydrans and Sol Alliance are forced to pay 15% of the GNP for the next 5 years in order to compensate Coalition forces for the expenses they incurred in the war.

Tonight the galaxy sleeps, for the first time in many months under the flags of peace. But for how long!?

http://sfccampaign.tripod.com

Stardate: 2000.05.01
Current Update

At this time SFCoC is well into turn two of it's second beta run. The rules have been slightly revamped and a new map is now being used. Issue 2 of Hailing Frequencies will have a full report on the current status of the second beta.

On a related note. The first beta of SFCoC PBEM has gotten underway. Turn 1 is completed and turn 2 will begin shortly.

The PBEM system is deisnged for a smaller group of players, 2-12. It also takes into account that soemtimes players cannot get together online easily, so rules are setup for solo play of the resulting missions. This system is designed for easy play with a quick pace, so far it has lived up to expectations.

Full reports on both of these beat runs will be available in the second issue of Hailing Frequencies.

Drone Defense Thesis
Continued.......

supposed to have an extra targeting system to allow for better anti-drone defense, treat as a C rack.

Type IV Drones are twice as large as standard drones and therefore can only be carried in limited numbers.

Firing more drones then a ship can control will result in some drones going inert and no longer useful.

- A ship with 3 or less drone racks cannot control more then 6 drones at a time.

- A ship with 4 or more drone racks cannot control more then 12 drones at a time.

Many times drones can be outrun if the captain pays attention.

Drones take some time to get to target unless they are near their targets when fired.

Drones can be destroyed before reaching their targets as outlined above.

Drones can be tractored and rendered impotent until destroyed by weapons fire or they run out of fuel.

Drones can be "spoofed" (by WW's) and High ECM.Drones, unless fired from extremely close range, are useless vs. cloaked targets, and then only if they are in the early stages of cloaking or have been "flashcubed".

Drone carrying ships, especially Drone boats or ships that carry many drones, usually carry less weaponry (especially Federation ships) then stan-

dard ships. Once they run out of drones they lose a significant portion of their firepower.

Summary

As can be seen here, drones although a respectable weapon, need not be the fearsome magic "bullet" that many seem to think they are. They are not the all-powerful Armageddon weapon, and should not be overly feared or considered the magic victory in a bottle. Used properly like any weapon they are a potent threat, but there are limits to their use like any other weapon in SFC. If you rely too much on your drones for victory, against a savvy opponent, you may find yourself defeated with some very simple methods.

HMS Starfinder
Continued............

Nev was beginning to be concerned, he had told his pilot to get as close as she could, but even to him, it seemed as if they were approaching too close. The deckplates began to shake again as the stars gravity began to pull at them, and the ship banked into a wide turn that to Nev looked as if it were plotted directly into it."Exterior hull temperature near critical, radiation levels rising, sir.""Helm, are you sure..." Nev began."The ship can take it, I have everything under control." Berceus interrupted.Nev made a mental note to reprimand her later. He didn't want to start an argument that could end up with them crashing into the biggest fusion reactor anyone had ever seen. Just as Nev thought that the ship couldn't take anymore, the star began to slip sideways and the ship leveled again, its nose pointed toward the

asteroid belt. The rattling and shaking died down, and the brightness returned to normal."Impressive flying, Helm." He said, relieved. "I will want to see you in my quarters after your duty shift ends.""Aye, sir." She replied. If Hydrans had been capable of it, she would have smiled."Approaching the asteroids, Sir." Berceus announced."Thank you. Weapons, status?""All phasers charged, Fusion cannon on overload and holding.""Good. Lock onto a few of those asteroids, and lets see what these cannon can do.""Aye sir." There was a short silence as the weapons officer relayed targeting information to the Helm, and she concerned herself with aligning the ship with the target. A moderate sized asteroid moved into the main view screen."Weapons locked. Preparing to fire."This was the most tense moment of life on a Fusion

ship. The Fusion cannon were terribly short ranged, and required the target to be extremely close for best effect. As the asteroid loomed over the ship, the weapons officer cut loose with his phasers and beams of pure energy sliced into the rock, knocking away a few chunks. Moments later, the Fusion cannon tore loose, and the view screen was momentarily flooded with the white hot light of four cannon wrecking the molecular stability of the asteroid. It exploded into fragments just the ship sped through the place where the rock used to be."Very good, everyone. Stand down from Yellow alert. Helm plot a course for our intended rendezvous.""Aye, captain.""Captain," came the voice of the comm officer, "Incoming transmission. It's from Starbase H34, and it's encoded security level three. They say its urgent, sir."

The Underdog that Bites
Continued............

While the number of ph-1s will limit phaser based damage the raw power of the type R torp more than makes up for it. Lets use an example like we did above. A WE si fighting a Federation CA. The WE has survived and is able to get it's shots off a range 1. Assuming that average occurs, the Romulan will deliver a 70 point strike! This is 7 points more than the Federation CA under standard photon loads, and the plasma has a better chance to hit than photons since ECM shifts dont effect it hardly at all. So our WE, through proper use of it's cloak might have suffered some mild internals while it charged weapons, say 5 or 10. However in one strike the Federation ship just lost a shield, assuming a number 1 shield hit (the strongest shield the Feds have), as well as suffered 40 points of internal damage!

Now what about the enemy that stands off at range. This type of enemy is a bit harder to hurt but it can still be done. Due to the slow speed of the WE the normal Plasma Ballet tactics cannot be performed. Instead keep your speed low and ECM high. Use the cloak to make his long or medium range weapons ineffective. When you do uncloak and fire, never give him a bad shield, use power in reinforcement and ECM to make his shots less effective. If he is staying at medium range, 15 to 25, then use the Plasma R on him. The R Torp is a very effective medium range weapon, doing as much as 20 points of damage out to range 25. It can also compete with the Hellbore for long range shots. In enveloping mode it can deliver 8 points per shield at range 20, the Hellobore delivers 4 to a single shield and 1 to each of the others.

Most opponents make the mistake of assuming that plasma is only effective at close range. The Type R Torp that the WE carries is an extremely effective weapon out to range 25 in normal fire mode and in enveloper mode it can still do 3 points per shield at range 28, a lot more than the Hellbore at the same range.

If he keeps his speed up and stays at range, just stay patient. Use phasers at range and hold your plasma. The phasers will gradually where at a shield. A human opponent will grow impatient eventually and charge to force the battle. Wait for him and he will come. When he does plaster him by shooting your plasma at range 20, let his closing speed combined with the plasma's speed keep the range short and re-cloak.

Another tactic that gets forgotten with the WE is the overrun. Your are charging your enemy and have just dumped Plasma at him. He ducks under the weasel, don't turn off, charge him! Crank up the speed and run him over. As you pass drop your Nuclear Space mine on him and use the transporters to drop a normal mine with it. YUCK, that's 45 points of damage to someone's shield :-) What if he goes slow to avoid the mines, that's easy to counter, go dead in space and drop a WW. It will run straight behind you, straight into the mines, he will eat them anyway, and you get some extra ECM for a few moments.

Do not under estimate the psychological advantage that a Plasma R gives you. Watching the shield of any CA, and most DN, crumble from one weapon with one shot, is enough to put fear into anyone. As such the psuedo torp can be effectively used. The fear factor of the Type R can cause the opponent to react to a psuedo more readily than they would to say a psuedo F. Use your psuedo to get yourself into the position you want. In the over run tactic, the psuedo makes the target weasel. You can now do the over attack as discussed and then HET and nail him with the R Torp as he comes out from under the WW.

Lastly when you are getting supplies for your WE don't forget a Suicide Shuttle or two. It makes a nasty surprise for the enemy to see you come out of cloak and fire that plasma, only to then notice the SS that is going to hit him on his now down shield.

As you can see from this short article, the War Eagle is not the pitiful ship that many have made it out to be. It has a ton of options that make it a match for any cruiser in the game. The key to the War Eagle is patience. So the next time you face an opponent that laughs at your little War Eagle, just smile nicely and fade from view under cloak. The next time he see's your smile it will be lit by the fireball of his ship exploding :-)

Coming Next Issue

Well I hope you have enjoyed Hailing Frequencies, Issue 1. It was a blast to put together. Now we get to look forward to Issue 2. With some exciting material already sent in the second issue of Hailing Frequencies looks to be bigger and better.

SFC Fiction Special Edition

Wow we just got Issue 1 done and already we are looking at a special issue:-) Well the reason for this is that a TON of fiction has arrived and is promised, how about a sneak peek?

Chris Rebman will bring back Capt. Nev Iskoru and the HMS Starfinder for another story in what looks to be a series of short stories.

Nicholas "Kol Korvus" Cioran has sent over a new piece of fiction entitled, Going Home. Read it here first on Hailing Frequencies.

Dennis "SFCShadow" Greene takes one of his first SFC fiction pieces, Battle of the Not so Mighty, out of mothball for Hailing Frequencies.

E.L. "S'faret" Crisler steps up with his fictional work based on the SFCoC Beta 1 Campaign. After this the Romulans will never be the same, The Return to Mnhei'sahe.

Tactical Tidbits

These little bits of deep tactical wisdom will be back next issue with a new topic and more tactics to drive your opponent nuts.

Hydran Thesis

Craig " TOC-Bimmer" Wiswell provides our tactical thesis next issue with a look at the Hydrans.

SFCoC Status

Check out all the latest on SFCoC as Beta 2 gets under way and the war begins. Combat reports and news from the campaign, all in issue 2.

Taming the Lyran Tiger

Dennis "SFCShadow" Greene takes his whip and chair into the center ring to show you how to make the Lyran Tiger jump through hoops.

As you can see we are off to a great start with issue 2 already and plans have begun for issue 3. But there is still one important element missing from Hailing Frequencies, and that is YOU. HF is for SFC gamers, but it is also BY SFC gamers. We need you, not just to read this fanzine but to be a part of it. If you have any material you think would be good for HF please go to the submissions page and send it in.

Again thanks for reading Hailing Frequencies. Use the link on the submissions page to send any comments or suggestions as well as material. Until next time........

Hailing Frequencies Closed

FINAL FRONTIER
STARLANCE.COM — STARFLEET COMMAND LEAGUE

Top 5 Units (Stardate: 2000.04.12)

UNIT NAME	Unit Race	Score	Ratio
Zapata	Klingon	1856829	62%
Ministry of Kahless	Klingon	1558741	55%
Guardians Errant	Gorn	1284448	70%
iCoP	Pirate	1240703	73%
Golden Triad	Hydran	1202594	68%