

AACLIGHT

Close Encounters in NEARSPACE



Second Rat
Games



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CLOSE ENCOUNTERS IN NEARSPACE

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and more immediate enemy.

And so the reef remained a mystery for another 5 years.

KARU REEF TIMELINE

2301 First rumor of Karu reef (as rogue comet) reported.

2306 Reef's gravity well and energy signal starts setting off navigational warnings in nearspace pathway, forcing vehicles to drop out of FTL.

2307-2308 Reports of alien life come in, and are analyzed by the Sol Protectorate.

2308 The first force, an investigative force led by the Karu, disappears.

2309 Second force, Sato Battlegroup, is sent in. It engages the denizens of the Reef while trying to recover the remains of the first force. While Sato Battlegroup is at the reef, the Spartan Rebellion begins.

2310-2312 Spartan Rebellion distracts mankind from the approach of the reef.

2313 Arclight incident. Some of the forces removed from rebellion space are sent to watch the reef, only to find that Paq hunters have already started hunting the area. Sol Protectorate declares Karu Reef its property.

2314 Unaligned (pre Spartan States) whaler fleets arrive and start poaching. The reef is too large for the available Sol Protectorate forces to adequately guard, and the commander is somewhat sympathetic to the economic plight of the rebel system economies, so they police the area like game wardens, selling licenses to independent whaling fleets instead of blowing them to stardust.

2315 Sol Protectorate whaling fleets start hunting the reef.

2319 The Machines find Karu Reef; they destroy all Sol Protectorate and Spartan State vessels, as well as Paq vessels and range buoys. Because of the lucrative

nature of the reef, Sol, Spartan, and Paq factions return quickly.

2320 Sol Protectorate finds signs of alien tech on reef. They start building a battle station in orbit.

POLITICS OF THE REEF

As with any valuable commodity, ownership is often up to debate. Although the "I saw it first" mentality works in some cases, these are rare when more than one person or group desires the object. The winner of such ownership debates is less often the group with the stronger legal claim, as it is the group with the stronger firepower.

SOL PROTECTORATE

The Sol Protectorate has claimed the Karu Reef as its property. To support that claim, it maintains a small security force near the reef. With the exception of the Machine incursion, the security force has not been needed, as Sol's claim has not yet been contested. However, since the reef drifts closer to Spartan-controlled space lanes every day, that time is coming soon.

Sol military patrols usually do not prohibit Spartan whalers from hunting the reef, though they will impose exorbitant licensing fees and shipping taxes to vessels without Protectorate registrations. The Protectorate security force keeps track of incoming traffic as best it can, but tends to wait until the Spartans are cleaning a kill before it approaches to demand payment. That way the Sols get their cut without totally bankrupting an unsuccessful expedition. Protectorate forces will even offer aid to vessels that need it, in the way of medical assistance or emergency repair supplies.

Protectorate forces also honor Paq hunting markers (see below); they generally avoid the zones, and break off pursuit of wounded creatures that flee into Paq space. Because the Paq and the Sol Protectorate have an alliance, the Sol Protectorate does not charge the Paq any fees to hunt the area, and the Paq don't hunt the Sol Protectorate citizens in the area.

Recent surveys by the Sol Protectorate security force have detected rubble and signs of

Karabec possess a series of spines set in overlapping arcs spread around their body that serve as their main weapons. Each set of the spines has three arcs. When a spine thrust scores a critical hit, roll the crit twice and choose the best one. On critical hits that cause bonus crits, the bonus crits are not rerolled.

When the karabec is killed, it performs a Dying Swipe. It may make one immediate attack with each set of spines at any ship within range. Karabec do have tentacles, but they do not use them in combat, drawing them inside when they feel threatened.



STAR ANGEL

Description:

These large creatures, a cross between a snail and a squid, were the first stellar life-form humans encountered. The front of the creature bristles with large tentacles, surrounding a sharp maw capable of slicing through the hardest of hulls. (Hulls are usually compromised well before they reaches the creature's maw, thanks to the rending and tearing of the creature's tentacles. A hard shell protects the rear of the creature, though the shell splits into five large petals, or wings, in order to collect radiant energy.

Because all the early star angels

encountered were no longer than a medium fighter, star angels were thought to be fairly small. However, the Karu discovered these were either younger versions or a genetic offshoot when it encountered the full-sized star angels deep within the reef. By the time the Karu launched a distress beacon, the entire fleet was destroyed.

Star angels tend to be very territorial, but on occasion have been know to pursue prey over vast distances when maddened. Originally Sol Protectorate doctrine called for long-range attacks, given that the star angels' main offensive weapon was fairly short ranged. This doctrine had to be changed the moment the first star angel "jumped" and crushed the offending ship. New Protectorate doctrine dictates either a swift retreat or massing all firepower on a single target at a time.

Statistics and Rules:

Once every three turns, after normal movement, a star angel may "jump" in a straight line, up to a distance of three times their current Thrust. They may also burn an opportunity to "jump" as a D6 Nixie, a D6 CM, and a 3D6 All attack vs. ESV on everything in the 1 hex surrounding the star angel.

A star angel typically attacks by grappling the prey with its tentacles. The star angel may either do direct damage to the target with a tentacle, or instead snare the target. The angel may attempt a snare attack on one ship per turn; it may hold ensnared as many ships as its current Structure.

In addition to the normal 3D6 damage of the snare, there is a possibility of the target being captured. On the target's movement turn, the angel rolls 3D6 and compares it to the target's current Thrust.

- Roll < Thrust – Vessel escapes and may move at half Thrust this turn
- Roll = Thrust – Vessel may not move but takes no damage
- Roll > Thrust – Vessel may not move and takes High ASV damage and if MedL Roll > Vessel's Structure, a critical is scored

Finally, a star angel may sacrifice a Structure to return any tentacle attack that was previously destroyed.

on a torpedo. The result is the Feltran torpedo. Although without the damage absorbing effects of a standard Tabor Shield, the Feltran torpedo is still immune to the effects of the Nebula. It otherwise functions as a normal torpedo.

Tabor Shields

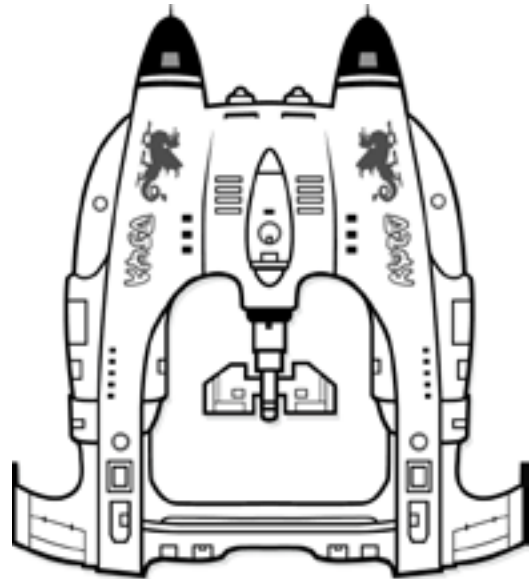
A powerful shielding technology, originally developed to protect Barakun ships from the devastating effects of the Barakun Nebula, the Tabor Shield also excels at protecting ships in combat. The power drain when the shield is in use is quite high, so the shield is not omni-directional. The shield can only protect a section of the ship at a time, but may be changed at any time to take advantage of the tactical situation.

When a ship armed with Tabor Shields moves, it may change the arc(s) covered by the shield. Once selected, the arc(s) may not change until the next turn. When a ship is hit in an arc covered by a Tabor Shield, the ship's current ASV or ESV is either doubled or tripled with a minimum of 2 or 3 (depending on the size of Tabor Shield installed). The Tabor shield always adds 2 or 3 (depending on size) to a ship even if its current ASV or ESV is 0. Any cannon fire that fires from the Tabor Shielded ship through the arc where the Shield is active has a -5 to-hit as it punches through the shield. There is no to-hit penalty for a ship targeting a Tabor Ship.

Ships

SEPTUM

The typical assault fighter of the Barakun, the Septum augments its Tabor Cannon with a four pack of heavy Feltran torpedoes. It only has average speed but is fairly maneuverable. Normally such a ship would be outclassed against the Protectorate or the Machines, but the nebula greatly evens the odds. For this reason, Septums are rarely seen outside the Nebula, and then only in large numbers.



PHALANX

This heavy capital ship sees extensive use both inside and outside the nebula. Its heavy armament and strong Tabor Shields help it to hunt even the largest creatures. Its main weakness is its lack of maneuverability and underpowered fusion drive. Since it was originally designed to hunt space creatures, the Barakun engineers put extra effort in shielding the ship. The additional mass proved to be too great for the powerplant, but production continued regardless, since many creatures were not that fast themselves.

ARCLIGHT DAMAGE SLIDER



Roll

STRUCTURE

FORMULAS

TURN: 1 + MANEUVER
 Multi-HEX: Sides TURNED +
 MANEUVER
 Failed Multi-HEX: 1 + MANEUVER
 + Fail AMT
 Torp EVASION: # of TORPS +
 MANEUVER vs. Pilot's
 Helm Die + Ship's
 COUNTERMEASURE Die

SYSTEM SHORT (1 TURN)

- * -5 TO THRUST
- * -2 TO DS
- * WEAPON SYSTEM INACTIVE
- * COUNTERMEASURE INACTIVE
- * NIXIE INACTIVE

DAMAGE Codes:

- T - THRUST
- E - ESV
- A - ASV
- M - MANEUVER
- W - WEAPON*
- C - CREW
- ~ - SYSTEM SHORT*
- D - DEFENSIVE SCREEN
- S - CREW STUNNED*
- G - SPECIAL Equip
- X - Critical
- > - STRUCTURE
- *Odd DAMAGE ATTACKER CHOOSES

STUN EFFECT:

ALL ACTIVITIES by THAT CREW MEMBER ARE MODIFIED by -2 UNTIL THE END OF THE NEXT TURN.

ENGINEERING

THRUST	4
ESV	4
MAN	6
DEF SCREEN	6
SPEC Equip	6
WEAPON	8
CREW	8

Ships

- CORSAIR
- STARHAWK
- LANCER
- WARMITE
- CRIMSON FIRE
- JAVELIN

DAMAGE ICONS

- ASV
- ESV
- Both
- HIGHEST
- LOWEST

Critical Hits

- 2-Ship destroyed.
- 3-Life Support. One crew member dies in 2 turns
- 4-Screen malfunction. Ship has no ESV
- 5-Evasive thrusters degrade -1 thrust and DS. All future Thrust hits cause Defensive Screen to drop by one as well.
- 6-Communications knocked out. Ship must move first next turn.
- 7-Evasive thrusters degrade -1 thrust and DS. All future Thrust hits cause Defensive Screen to drop by one as well.
- 8-Engine malfunction. Only have Thrust 5 until end of next turn.
- 9-Comms interference. If this ship has the highest Cmd skill, modify initiative by -2
- 10-Targeting Systems All weapons Speed Restrictions are at -1, to a maximum SR of 12
- 11-EW damaged. All Jam and Countermeasure attempts modified by -2.
- 12-HUD Damaged all to-hit's modified by -2
- 13-Torpedo Targeting Short No torpedo locks for one turn
- 14-Weapon damaged. A weapon with burnout on triples now burns out on doubles
- 15-Turret jammed. Choose a weapon with multiple firing arcs. It may only fire into one arc, randomly chosen
- 16-Targeting Systems. May only target closest enemy.
- 17-Thruster locked. May only turn right.
- 18-Fuel leak. Ship cannot move in 5 turns.
- 19-Thruster locked. May only turn left.
- 20-ESV screens malfunction. No ESV until after next turn.
- 21-Creaking hull. Take 3D4 Low damage each turn. Reduced by ASV
- 22-Targeting Systems All weapons Speed Restrictions are at -1, to a maximum SR of 12
- 23-Hull cracks. Lose all ASV
- 24-Chain reaction destroys ship.

Jump Pods

MAY MOVE TO ANY HEX IN RANGE Roll 1D6 PER TORP TRACKING. ON 4-6 TORP EXPLODES.

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