

The Star Fleet Times

Volume II

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE STAR FLEET UNIVERSE

Issue #21

VUDAR SPECIAL EDITION (PART 2 OF 2)

This is the second half of the Vudar Special Edition which began last issue. As promised, this issue treats you to a full 10 pages of Vudar material in addition to this bit of fiction ...

WEAPON TRIALS

The Orion CR captain glanced up as his first officer swept onto the bridge with her usual flair. The human woman, Cassia Lundin, was wearing an orange radiation suit and carried a radhelm under one arm. "The new cremen report all is ready, Captain," she said with a satisfied smile. "Two hours ahead of schedule."

Kravas Til grunted in response, acknowledging her statement with the barest of nods. He felt no excitement, no blood burning in his Klingon veins at the thought of the battle to come. This would not be a fight worthy of a warrior—it would be a slaughter.

He grumbled something that sounded like a sigh, then barked, "Begin the attack. Bring us to warp two on a course for the colony."

"Aye, captain," came the reply.

"Sir," said Lundin, "if you don't mind, I'll spend the battle down in Aux monitoring the new weapon. I doubt you'll need me here."

"Very well," Til answered. Lundin departed with a bounce in her step, a human trait the captain found more than a little bit irritating. It was not enough that the blasted Cartel Lord had to send him on this milk run, he had to assign an overenthusiastic career-minded human as his second!

The screen lit up, bringing his attention to the tactical situation. The asteroid field where *Divine Providence* had been hiding for the last standard day slipped off the short-range view behind them as the small planet appeared ahead. Kravas Til narrowed his eyes, watching for the telltale blips of the target convoy to appear. They did not disappoint him. Soon all four were visible, and these were quickly identified as one large and two small freighters plus an escort ship, probably a frigate or POL.

The tactical officer began reporting the ship's status. "All weapons prepared. Speed warp two, range 400,000 clicks and closing. Non-freighter target now positively identified as a police ship. Something else ... two smaller targets, shuttle or fighter size."

The smaller blips appeared on the screen amidst the larger ships. Fighters, thought Til. A Gendarme class with fighters, he supposed, which would be expected. The fighters would be the most dangerous foe—if they were Stinger-2s, they outgunned the Gendarme by almost a 2 to 1 ratio. "Weapons, target fighters first. Two phasers and one disruptor on each, firing on my mark."

He waited patiently, watching the range count decrease until it reached 150,000 kilometers. "Fire," he announced calmly. He felt no surge of excitement as the ship rocked slightly, even as the green bolts and blue lances shot out to strike their distant targets. To use the human idiom, a Raider Cruiser wouldn't break a sweat against a convoy with this little protection. He didn't even intend to double an engine.

"Phaser fire was ineffective," the weapons officer reported. "One disruptor hit. Fighter is 30% damaged."

"The fighters and police ship are changing course," said the tactical officer. "They appear to be charging us, sir. The freighters are scattering, as expected."

At least the doomed captain and his pilots had some courage in them, Til thought. With his weapons just fired, he couldn't afford to run right through all those fusion beams. "Helm, course 270 mark 1," he ordered. "Let them have 50,000 clicks, but no more. Starboard weapons fire when ready; target the undamaged fighter. Then set course for the large freighter."

A few moments later the one disruptor and two phasers to starboard fired, and the fighter crumpled into a shattered mass of metal. The Gendarme and other fighter fired a moment later, as the CR began to pass around the planet. The fusion beams and phasers tickled the shield, but didn't penetrate.

"Fire all phasers and the disruptor at the freighter," Til ordered, and watched his weapons easily pierced the lumbering hulk's shield and sent arcs of energy dancing across the hull. The already weak warp engines shuddered, then faltered.

The remaining fighter and the police ship accelerated, moving away from the area and towards the two small freighters. "They're heading away," said the tactical officer. "We could just let them go."

"No," Til ordered. "Our orders are clear; we must test the new weapon. Lay in a pursuit course. Cripple the fighter with disruptors, then prepare to fire on the police ship."

"Aye, sir." The CR swung around, accelerating, and headed towards the starboard flank of the convoy. As soon as the disruptors recycled, they fired, and the already damaged fighter took the full brunt of both hits. Crippled, its speed dropped and it broke away. Til ignored it. Nearly half a minute passed as the *Divine Providence* slowly closed on the police ship and the otherwise helpless freighters, reaching 50,000 kilometers range.

Suddenly, the Gendarme made a snap turn, charging directly at the CR. "All weapons, fire!" barked Til. The phasers and disruptor struck the front shield of the POL, along with the blazing multicolored bolt of the Vudar ion cannon recently installed in the forward option mount. The Gendarme's shield buckled, and penetrating fire destroyed a fusion beam and the phaser-2.

As the burning Gendarme passed the CR at 10,000 kilometers range, the gatling phaser and surviving fusion beam hit the forward starboard shield, knocking it almost—but not quite completely—down. Til allowed himself a half-smile. The police ship captain had spirit, but would die just the same. "Bring us around, and prepare to destroy the police ship," he ordered, paying little heed to the small freighters he would pass during the maneuver; their phaser-3s would not be enough to penetrate even the weakened shield, which was still at 17% efficiency, and would have the benefit of reinforcement.

Suddenly, a blast of fusion energy struck the raider cruiser. The deck lurched and sparks flew from two consoles. As Til fought to recover from the shock, a lesser blast from phasers sent the ship reeling again. "Report!" he shouted.

"Weapons fire from the near freighter!" came the reply. "Warp engines at 80%, impulse offline, port disruptor out, phasers one and two not responding ..."

A Q-ship! Til cursed himself for a fool. The fighters had not come from the Gendarme after all.

"Captain!" a female voice shouted. It was Cassia Lundin in auxiliary control, he realized, and her voice was no longer quite as cheery. "The Vudar crewmen can't recharge the ion cannon!"

"Why not?" Til demanded.

"Without impulse power, it can't be armed!"

"BLAST!" yelled Til, rising from his chair in anger. "What good is that cursed weapon? Helm! Set course for the asteroid field. We are retreating!"

"Aye, captain!"

Til sat back down roughly. Dully he realized the fault for losing this battle was due to his own overconfidence. Even a cadet would have at least considered the possibility of a Q-ship! Still ... perhaps he could salvage something out of this. Yes, he thought. He could put the blame for the loss on the ineffectiveness of the ion cannon weapon. He might even point out Lundin's failure to properly brief him on the ion cannon's limitations.

A smile crossed his face as he leaned back in his chair, his mind already composing his report to the Cartel Lord ...

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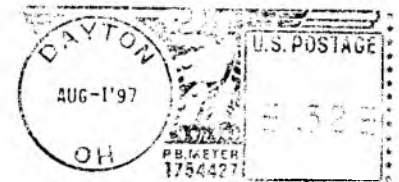
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Agents of Gaming is authorized to act as a clearinghouse for some out of print TFG material. Chief among these are back issues of Starletter, Star Fleet Times and Subspace News, all of which are available for \$2 each; \$3 each for overseas customers.

Starletters:

Back issues available: 80, 82, 86-92. Others sold out.

Subspace News:

#1: Early Years Hydrans; #4: Alliance conjectural maulers.

Star Fleet Times:

#1: Gorn, Rom fast cruisers; Custom Ship Design System.

#2: Thol, ISC maulers; D5 squadron SSD; MON scenario.

#3: Romulan Saberhawk SSD; CDS expansion rules.

#4: Humor issue with 4 weird ships.

#5: Tournament issue (tactics for new tournament ships).

#6: Origins report; campaign design; Canadi'en CA SSD.

#7: SFB campaign rules, Deltan war destroyer SSD.

#8: Legendary officers, Fed carrier hybrid SSDs.

#9: Scary Ships I: Shiva, Megahawk, Lyran SSCS, Fed CVN.

#10: More legendary officers, two Barbarian SSDs.

#11: Naval Construction Dock and Warp Gate SSDs.

#12: Fiction, F&E Production Wheel, Flivver carrier group.

#13: 4 more humorous ships including Fed police mauler.

#14: Bombers and fighter-bombers (*really* big fighters).

#15: Nicozian sample; Jindarian TC; Fed scout carrier.

#16: Origins report; Orb scenario; Hidden Agenda fiction.

#17: Term papers; crossword; Klingon D5VP.

#18: The Josers (a humorous new race).

#19: Scary Ships II: Paravian DN, Lyran triple mauler, more!

#20: Vudar 1: Ion Storm Generator; BATS, CW, FFW, FLG.

#21: Vudar 2: Rules, BCH, DWP, DWS, CA, TCA, DW.

#22: Andromedan PFs, stealth fighters.

#23: Weird Dreadnoughts of the General War.

#24: Iridani (a new race for the Omega Sector).