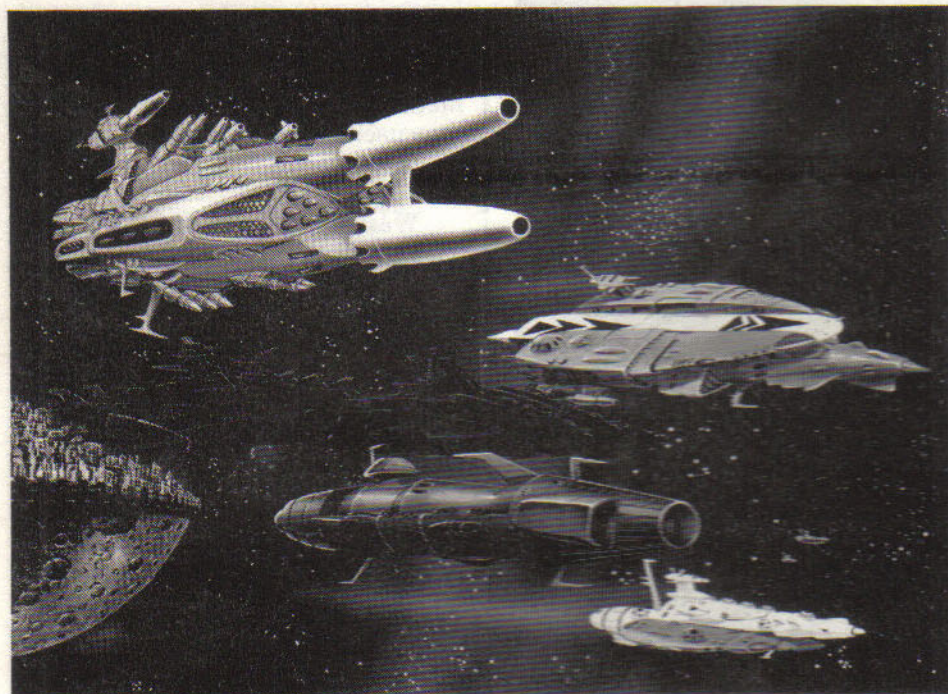# STARBLAZERS®



# STARBLAZERS FLEET SIMULATOR

Published by: Twentieth Century Imports
Price: Free
Designed by: Karl Hiesterman
Reviewed by: Kris James

*Starblazers Fleet Simulator* is a game of ship-to-ship combat that is played on the floor using plastic model kits, a ruler, movement templates, and ship displays which help keep track of damage to systems, weapons, and keep track of energy allocations. The player counts the undamaged engine boxes to obtain total energy, then must decide how much energy should go to movement and how much will be used to power weapons. Unfortunately, unused energy does not carry over from turn to turn.

The players roll a d6 die to decide who gets the initiative. The highest roll begins the play. from then on the players take turns. Movement is complicated only because of the number of objects it is possible to move and the items required to make that move. A ruler and turn template are needed.

The most difficult part, and the most time consuming, is deciding what to move to the best advantage. The player must develop a long range strategy as all missiles, fighters, and ships are considered one move each. Example: one player moves his ship, the other moves his missiles, but not his ship. He must wait until the first player moves again to move his ship. Combat is explained in detail in the rules.

The player has lasers, missiles, and occasionally energy torpedoes at his disposal. Damage of these weapons is a set value does not fluctuate. The only thing that needs to be determined is whether or not a hit has occurred. This is easily accomplished by measuring the distance, looking at the appropriate chart and rolling 2d6.

Lasers, missiles, and energy torpedos are not very damaging, as the damage inflicted doesn't carry through. This makes it difficult to completely destroy a ship. Because of this, ramming becomes a major tactic. A ship that rams another counts up all the undamaged boxes and divides this number by d6 to obtain the damage done. If the ram occurs at the front or aft of the ship and all systems in that section are destroyed, the damage carries inward to the center section. The ship being hit counts up the

undamaged boxes in the section hit and divides that number by a d6 for the damage done to the ramming ship. Ramming is a deadly move, since one or both ships generally explode. This move should be used with caution.

If this were just a game of blowing each other up it would soon become boring. To make the game more action oriented and exciting, docking and boarding were added. It is a definite challenge to get close enough for this to happen without your ship exploding. Once your marines are on the ship, it's a bloody fight for control.

This is a good, simple game that could be developed into a more complex game with a little dedication. I, however, am glad to see a wargame in which you don't have to look at a multitude of different charts or keep track of minute details that make a game long and drawn out.

I have found some problems, but a few simple changes in the rules seem to put them right. As lasers are less effective at long range, ramming became a prevalent maneuver. To fix this, the range of the lasers may be increased. This increases the likelihood of the opposing ships being too damaged to ram each other and creates the need for subtler tactics.

Another problem is the fighters are too slow to be a threat to opposing ships. By increasing their movement rate they become more of a force to be dealt with.

On the whole this is a great game, designed to put models to use. If you haven't tried it, I suggest you do.

# RHAND: The Morningstar Missions



**Published by:** Leading Edge Games
**Edited by:** Barry Nakazono, and Robert Calvet
**Graphic design:** Scott Miller
**Price:** $18.95

It's an interesting idea. 500 years ago Rhand was a peaceful, hi-tech world. The Spectrals, a hive-minded race, attacked. They destroyed 3 of the 4 teleportation satellites, wrecked the cities, and changed the climate to an ice-age one. The humans regrouped, a group known as ORCA took over coordinating the war, and the battle continues. A vital tool in the struggle is the Morningstar -- the last teleportation satellite. The Spectrals used all their space weapons in destroying the other three; so it is safe from attack. Using it, ORCA can transport their troops who use only ancient weapons now that the factories are destroyed anywhere on Rhand.

It's an interesting idea. But it doesn't hold up. Why does a hi-tech society have to revert to axes and bows? If they can maintain contact with a satellite, why couldn't they piece together a few rifles? If the Spectrals had weapons and knowledge to destroy 3 satellites, couldn't they -- especially in 500 years -- throw together something to destroy a 4th -- especially when the 4th satellite is a major thorn in their side? And where did magic come from?

Part of the problem is that the game meanders between being a campaign book and a game system. The system is okay. Five primary attributes, individuals being created from a pool of 4D6 + 48 points, secondary attributes, skills (general and specialist), combat system, and more. The system covers all the bases. It's nothing extraordinary but it's okay.

The basic world is, as noted above, interesting. But it never gets fleshed out. It soon becomes a mass of sketchy information and broad hints. I'd be happier with either a detailed campaign book or a new game system. This is a hybrid that is neither.

The book is a 99 page, 8 1/2 by 11", spiral bound book. Its text is in a single 5 1/2" column per page. The broad margin is filled with headings and odd quotes. The quotes are witticisms such as "'EAT FLAMING DEATH' - Huzzah the Magnificent". They add little to the book. The only interior art is a map of Rhand -- without denotations. The full color cover art is a bare chested man with shoulderpads. Like the entire system, it's okay but nothing worth going out of your way to get.

# STAR BLAZERS ®

**StarBlazers Fleet Simulator** (SFS) is a game of starship combat, and is made to be played using the **StarBlazers Mini Kits** from TCI. Necessary for play are:

- 1 six sided die
- 1 ten sided die
- a ruler or tape measure
- a pencil
- copies of the SSD's
- copies of the ship displays

## Sequence of Play

1. Energy Allocation Phase
2. Initiative Determination Phase
3. Movement Phase
4. Launch Phase
5. Combat Phase

The phases are described below in their respective sections, as are the actions that may be taken during each phase.

## ENERGY ALLOCATION AND INITIATIVE

At the beginning of the Energy Allocation Phase, each player secretly records the total energy available, energy to be spent on movement this turn, and total remaining energy for their ships. Total energy for each ship is found by counting the number of undestroyed Engine Boxes. The player now determines the energy they wish to use for movement. All of the energy allocated towards movement must be used during the turn. The remaining energy is noted, for this is the energy that may be spent for firing weapons, using Scientific Instruments, etc. All of the remaining energy need not stored or saved up from turn to turn. At the end of the turn, all energy, whether it was used or not, is considered gone. This means that if, on turn one, a laser was powered up, then on turn two the laser would be unpowered, whether fired or not.

Once all of the energy for each ship has been allocated, the fleet commanders each rolls die. In the case of ties, re-roll until one player rolls higher. The high roller has the initiative. The side with the
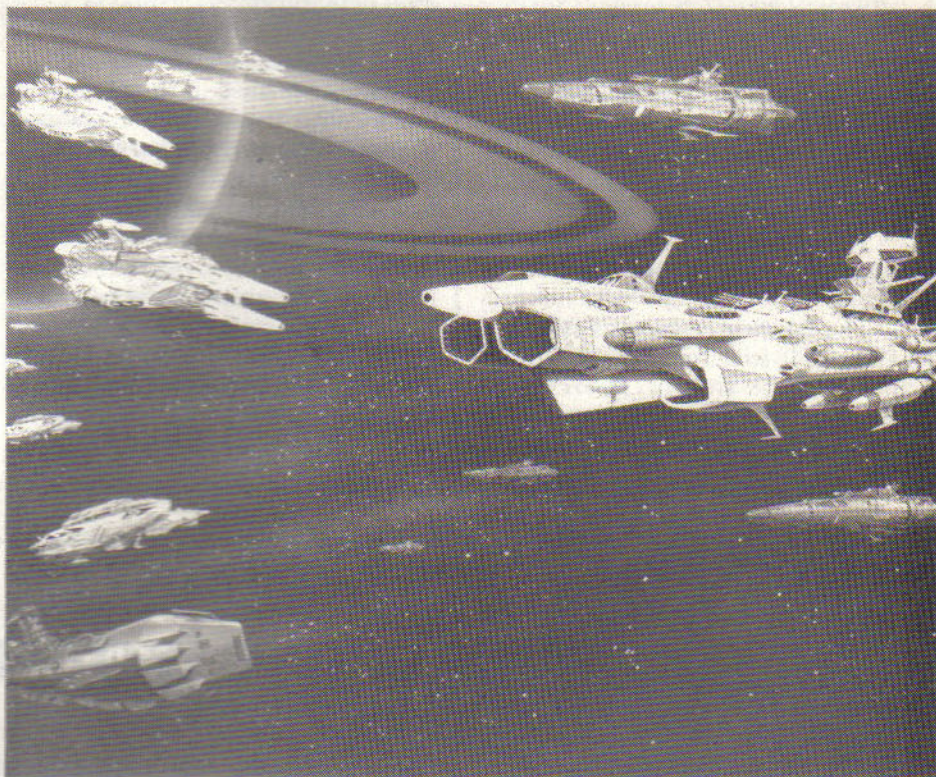
initiative *must* move one of their ships its full movement. For this, each ship, all of the fighters from one carrier, all of the shuttles from one ship, or all of the missiles from one ship, are considered a ship for the purpose of movement. After the first player has moved one ship, each side, in descending order of initiative, moves one ship. Then, the first side moves another ship, and so do all the others. This continues until all of the ships, fighters, shuttles, and missiles are moved.

**Example:** Side 1 moves one ship, Side 2 moves one ship's missiles. Side 1 moves one ship's fighters. Side 2 moves one ship, etc. If any missiles hit any ships during the movement phase, the damage is assessed immediately. If any

ramming occurs during the turn, whether or not it was intentional, this damage is also dealt with immediately. If any explosions result from all of this ramming and such, the damage is dealt out now, with every ship in its current position, not where it was or where it will be!

## MOVEMENT

In SFS, movement is measured in inches. For each movement point plotted for a ship, the ship is moved one inch, either forward or turning (see below). Each ship also has a movement class listed on its SSD. This indicates which turn mode guide to use, and thus how tight a given ship can turn. Each mark on

the turn guide is one inch of movement on the board. The turn guide is placed perpendicular to the ship, at the point where the stand connects with the base (referred to as the center point). The ship is now moved the desired amount on the turn guide, keeping perpendicular with the marks on the guide. Each ship may combine turns in either direction with forward movement, in any order, as long as the plotted amount of movement is not exceeded. Remember, all of a ship's plotted movement *must* be spent.

Ships also have the option to tack. A track may be done only if the ship plotted zero (0) movement points during the *previous* turn. A tack involves a ship rotating on its center point. For each 90° turn or less, it pays four movement points. This move may be used in conjunction with any other movement, as long as the tack is done first. Once a ship uses any other movement, it may not tack again during that turn. Thus, a ship could tack several times in one spot, but it could not move and then tack, or tack, move, and tack again.

The last movement option is the stress turn. This is used if a ship wishes to turn tighter than its turn mode allows. The ship announces that it wishes to use stress movement this turn, and may then use the next smallest turn mode. The turn modes, from largest to smallest, are C, B, A, and F. The ship records the number of inches moved in the lower turn mode. At the end of the movement phase, the ship rolls a die. If the numbers listed on the SSD under Stress is rolled, the ship takes damage. The damage it takes is equal to the number of inches turned in the low turn mode. This amount of damage is taken in *each* of the ship's hull sections, and in its engine. Needless to say, choose carefully when to stress turn your ship.

## COMBAT

Combat sonsists of two phases, the Launch Phase and the Combat Phase. During the Launch Phase, each simp launches missiles,

fighters and shuttles. Fighters, missiles, and shuttles are launched by placing their counter one inch from the ship, anywhere in the ship's front arc. Each millile tube that is powered this turn may fire one missile counter, each ship can launch all of its shuttles, and each ship can launch the number of fighters listed on the SSD (if it has fighters). Once all ships have launched what they wish, any damage resulting from the launch phase is determined immediately.

During the Combat Phase of a turn, players may fire any Lasers and Energy Torpedoes ("Torps") they have power for, and Fighters may attack. Marine combat also takes place during this phase, and its effects take place at the beginning the the *next* turn. All combat during the Combat phase is simultaneous, and any damage done during this phase takes effect at the end of this phase.

To fire a weapon, the weapon must be powered. The energy torps cost is listed on the chart, and lasers may be powered up to the number of undamaged boxes in the laser. The target must be within the weapon's firing arc, and must also have Line of Sight with the target. Planets, asteroids, and other ship block Line of Sight; fighters, shuttles and missiles do not. The Firing arcs are listed on the SSDs, and are defined as follows:

"F" is *Forward*. This weapon may only be fired at targets in the forward arc.

"A" is *Aft*. This weapon may only be fired at targets in the aft arc.

"T" is *Turreted*. This weapon may be fired anywhere *but* the aft firing arc.

The Firing Arc Guide is used by placing the center point of the guide on the center point of the ship. This will show the Forward and Aft arcs. If the target ship is within the weapon's firing arc, then the attacker measures the distance between the attacking ship and the target. This is the range, and is used to find the correct row on the Laser and Energy Torp charts.

Next, the attacker cross-references the weapon type with the range, This is the number, or greater, that needs to be rolled on two six-sided dice in order to hit. Fighters have one to-hit number, listed on the fighter chart.

There are several modifiers to this die roll:

*If attacking Fighters:* + 2
*If attacking Missiles:* + 4
*If attacking more than one target:* + 1 per additional target (ex., target #1 is normal, target #2 is at + 1, target #3 is at + 2, etc.)

Any energy torps, fighters and missiles that hit do the damage listed on the appropriate chart. Lasers do one point of damage per point of energy allotted to that laser. Lasers may only be powered up to the number of undestroyed boxes on that laser. Once one ship has fired all of its weapons, the damage to it is allocated immediately.

All ships are separated into sections, and each section contains various systems. Each section is numbered, as is each system. If the attacking ship is the the target's forward arc, the attacker rolls one die per weapon that hit. On a 1-5, the weapon hit the front section, and the damage is taken there. On a 6, the damage is taken in the center section. If the attacker is in the target's aft arc, one die is rolled per weapon. If the result is 1-5, the damage is taken in the aft section. If the result is a 6, the damage is taken in the center section. If the attacking ship is in the targets side (i.e., not the front or aft arcs), each weapon hit is rolled randomly. Each section is numbered, either 1-6 or 1-10, and these numbers indicate which section is hit when the appropriate die is rolled.

Any damage taken in a section is taken only in that section. If all of the systems in a section are destroyed, any remaining damage is lost, and does *not* carry over to another section (Exception: see Ramming and Explosions). Each system in a section is numbered, either 1-6 or 1-10, and these numbers determine which systems

take damage. a d6 or d10 is used, depending on the section and the ship. If a system is destroyed and there is still damage to be allocated, a new system in that section is rolled for. This continues until all of the damage is used, or all of the systems in that section are destroyed. When a system is destroyed, there are various effects. These are listed on a system by system basis in the System Descriptions section. The target ship must reveal which section was hit by each weapon, but need not reveal which systems are hit.

## RAMMING AND EXPLOSIONS

When two ships touch, the ships have rammed each other. The damage done by this ramming is resolved immediately during this phase. The ship that moved is considered the attacker, and the ship that was rammed is the defender.

First, the attacker determines where the ram it. and the procedure is the same as in Combat, above. Next, the attacker counts the total number of undestroyed boxes on the entire ship, and rolls a d6. The total number of boxes is divided by the die roll, and this is the damage taken by the defender in the section that was hit. Finally, the defender counts the number of undestroyed boxes in the section that was hit, and divides this by a d6 roll. This is the damage taken by the attacker, and this is taken in the section that hit the ship (if the ship hit the target with its front, it takes the damage in the front).

If either or both ship explode, resolve the damage immediately. Ships explode when all of a ships engine boxes are destroyed, or when all of the hull in any two sections are destroyed. When a ship explodes, count the number of engine boxes the ship had during the Energy Allocation Phase. This is the base damage done by the explosion. All ships, including fighters, missiles and shuttles

within a six inches take the damage. The actual damage taken is the base damage, divided by the distance in inches, rounded down.

The section where ships take this damage is determined the same way as ramming. An exception to this normal damage procedure is used for ramming and explosions. If a ram or explosion hits the front or aft of a ship, and all of the systems in that section are destroyed, the damage *does* carry on inward to the center section. This is used only for resolving ramming and explosions.

## MISSILES, FIGHTERS AND SHUTTLES

Missiles, fighters and shuttles are small ships that move in groups. These counters have one damage point, fighters and shuttles do no damage when they explode, and do one point of damage when they ram (after which they are destroyed). Missiles do the damage listed on the chart when they come in contact with an enemy ship, and only one point when they hit friendly ships. Fighters use the "F" turn mode, as do shuttles.

Missiles use the turn mode listed on the chart, and have a special rule about turns. The Mark I through Mark III missiles us the "A" turn mode, but may only make *one* inch worth of a turn. The Mark IV missile uses the "F" turn mode and may make *two* inches of movement in a turn.

Shuttles move six inches per turn, carry six squads of Marines, and are not destroyed when they ram a ship. Instead, they still destroy one system, but the shuttle and the marines survive, and immediately fight for control of that system (see below). Friendly fighters may land on carriers if they touch the ship and are moving the same direction as the carrier at the end of the movement phase.

## BOARDING AND DOCKING

Boarding may be done two

ways; either by shuttles or by docking.

Docking occurs at the end of the movement phase. If two ships are moving in the same direction, and re within one inch of each other, they may be considered docked for the duration of the turn. When docked, ships may send over Marines and crewman during the combat phase. Roll randomly to determine which system the boarders start in.

To conduct combat, count the number of undestroyed boxes in the system, plus any friendly Marines. Marines count double. This is the defenders crew factor. Now count the number of attackers, and once again, marines count double. The compute the odds, rounding down in favor of the defender. These are the odds used on the Boarding Table. The attacker rolls one d6 and cross references this result with the odds. The number on the left of the slash is the defenders loses, in squads, the number on the right of the slash is the attacker loses, in squads. For the purpose of loses, one system box is worth one squad. If the system is taken by the attackers (i.e., there are no more defenders), the system is *not* destroyed, but may no longer be used by the ship. If, after the combat phase, the system still has both defenders and attackers, the units will fight again during the *next* combat phase.

During the movement phase, Marines and boarding crewman (not the crew of the ship in question) may move from one system to another. The rules for movement are as follows:

A unit in a system may move into any other system in the same section, or any unit in a hull system may move into another hull system in an adjacent section. This will probably result in more combat. Any system taken by the attackers may no longer be used by the ship, until that system is retaken, or the ship no longer contains enemy units.

If the bridge is taken, the ship

may no longer fire it weapons, and the enemy units may not control the energy allocation and movement of the ship, as well as any systems and weapons they control. If the engine is taken, the ship no longer has power. If the bridge is destroyed and the engine is taken, the engine now functions as the bridge for the above control rules. Any boarders in a system that is destroyed are destroyed. During the launch phase, Marines may leave the ship if they have a shuttle available (their own or another). It is possible for a ship with no Marines to dock and board with their own crewman. The attacking ship takes all of the squads from any one hull section and boards the other ship. That hull section is now considered empty for boarding purposes. Remember, crewman are *not* Marines. They do not count double, nor may they escape via shuttles. They may only leave by docking with another ship.

## SYSTEMS DESCRIPTIONS

HULL - The passageways, rooms, and superstructure of a ship.

LASER-Lasers are the standard weapon of the Empire, and vary in size and type.

ENERGY TORP-E. Torps are a plasma weapon, deadly, but less accurate than Lasers. E. Torps function until the system is completely destroyed.

MISSILE TUBES-The tubes that fire missiles. They cost one energy per tube to fire, and may fire one Missile per turn. *Note:* The Anti-Matter ship has no Missile Tubes. Instead, it may fire some, none, or all of those missiles, and each one is marked off as fired.

BRIDGE-The control center of the ship, and on the turn it is destroyed, the ship must plot the same energy this turn as last turn, and the ship must move only forward.

ENGINE-The motive and power source for the ships. The number of undestroyed boxes is the total energy for this turn.

MISSILES-The storage area for missiles. For each missile fired, one missile box is marked off. If there are no Missile boxes left, the ship may no longer fire Missiles.

MARINES-The Barracks for the Marines. If destroyed while the Marines are still on the ship, the Marines are destroyed. Otherwise, there is no effect.

SHUTTLES-The Shuttle bay. If destroyed while the shuttle is on board, the shuttle is destroyed.

FIGHTERS-The fighter bay, and if the fighter is present when the system is destroyed, then the fighter is destroyed.

DECK-The fighter launch deck. If all of a ship's deck is gone, then the fighters may no longer land.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS-Data gathering equipment, with no bearing on the game.

ARMOR-A special armor made for ramming. The first four points of damage taken from the first ram are taken in this system.

BP-This is not a system, but it is listed on the SSD. This stands for build points, and is the abstract value given for each ship. This value may be used in creating scenarios, and handicapping the more experienced players.

## Laser Chart

### Laser Type

|        | 1  | 2  | 3 | 2b | PD |
|--------|----|----|---|----|----|
| 1-6"   | 7  | 6  | 6 | 10 | 4  |
| 7-24"  | 8  | 7  | 7 | 6  | 12 |
| 25-36" | 10 | 10 | 8 | 7  | -  |
| 37-48" | -  | 12 | 9 | 8  | -  |

## Energy Torp Chart

### Torp Type

|        | 1  | 2  | 3  |
|--------|----|----|----|
| 1-6"   | 7  | 7  | 6  |
| 7-24"  | 8  | 8  | 7  |
| 25-36" | 10 | 9  | 9  |
| 37-48" | -  | 10 | 10 |
| Damage | 8  | 10 | 15 |
| PTA    | 1  | 2  | 4  |

## Missile Chart

### Missile Type

|           | Mark I | Mark II | Mark III | Mark IV |
|-----------|--------|---------|----------|---------|
| Turn Mode | A      | A       | A        | F       |
| Movement  | 10     | 14      | 18       | 18*     |
| Damage    | 4      | 4       | 6        | 4       |
| Duration  | 5      | 5       | 6        | 11      |

*The Mark IV missile may turn 2 inches per turn, not just 1.

## Fighter Chart

### Fighter Type

|          | F-15 | F-5 | A-10 |
|----------|------|-----|------|
| Movement | 8    | 10  | 6    |
| Damage   | 4    | 2   | 6    |
| To Hit   | 7    | 7   | 7    |
| Range    | 7"   | 7"  | 7"   |

## Boarding Chart

### Odds

|   | 1-2 | 1-1 | 2-1 | 3-1 | 4-1 |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 3/1 | 2/2 | 1/2 | 1/1 | 0/1 |
| 2 | 2/2 | 1/2 | 1/1 | 0/1 | 0/2 |
| 3 | 2/1 | 1/1 | 0/1 | 0/2 | 0/3 |
| 4 | 1/1 | 0/1 | 0/2 | 0/3 | DE  |
| 5 | 1/1 | 0/2 | 0/3 | 0/4 | DE  |
| 6 | 0/1 | 0/3 | 0/4 | 0/6 | DE  |

# STARBLAZER SHIP DISPLAY

**1 - 3**   **4 - 7**   **8 - 0**

E. TORP 3-4 · LT 1 · LF 5-6 · LT 2 · HULL 7-0 · LT 8 · MISSILES 5 · TUBES 9-0 · HULL 6-7 · BRIDGE 1-2 · LA 3-4 · LA 1-3 · HULL 4-6 · ENGINE 7 0

**1 - 2**   **3 - 4**   **5 - 6**

E. TORP 1-3 · HULL 4-6 · MARINES 1-4 · SHUTTLE 9-0 · HULL 5-6 · LT 7-8 · BRIDGE 1 · HULL 2-3 · ENGINE 4-6

**1 - 2**   **3 - 4**   **5 - 6**

ARMOR · E. TORP 1-3 · HULL 8-0 · LT 4-5 · LT 6-7 · LT 1 · LA 6 · BRIDGE 2-3 · HULL 4-5 · HULL 2-3 · LA 1 · ENGINE 4-6

**1 - 2**   **3 - 4**   **5 - 6**

LT 1 · LF 2-3 · HULL 4-6 · LT 1 · HULL 4-6 · BRIDGE 2-3 · HULL 1-2 · LA 5-6 · ENGINE 3-4

**1 - 2**   **3 - 4**   **5 - 6**

TUBES 3-4 · HULL 1-2 · HULL 1-2 · MISSILES 5-6 · LT 7-8 · LT 9-0 · BRIDGE 4-5 · HULL 1-3 · LT 6 · HULL 2-3 · LA 1 · ENGINE 4-6

**1 - 4**   **5 - 7**   **8 - 0**

TUBES 1-2 · MISSILES 3-5 · HULL 9-0 · BRIDGE 6-8 · LT 3-4 · HULL 7-0 · LT 1-2 · EQUIP 5-6 · HULL 1-3 · ENGINE 4-6

## EDF Battlecruiser
MC-A
Stress 4-6
Laser-Type II
E. Torp-Type I
Missile-Mark I
BP-180
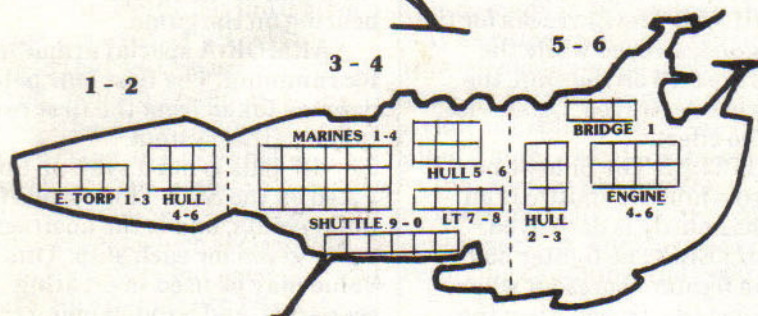
## Desslock's Cruiser
MC-B
Stress 4-6
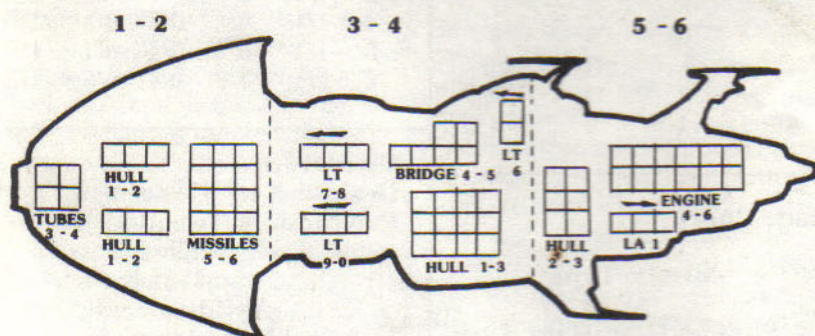Laser-Type I
E. Torp-Type I
Missile-Mark I
BP-100
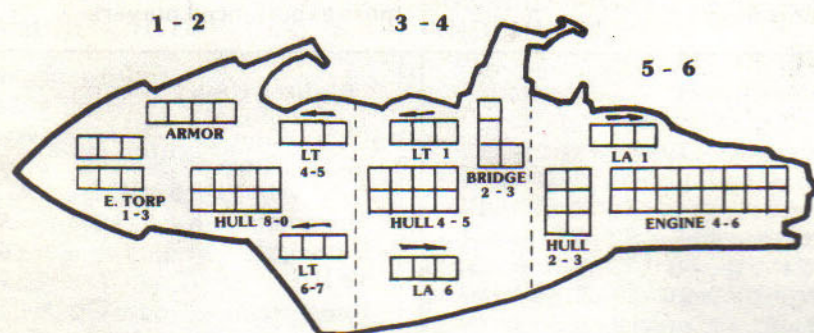
## Gamilon Destroyer
MC-B
Stress 4-6
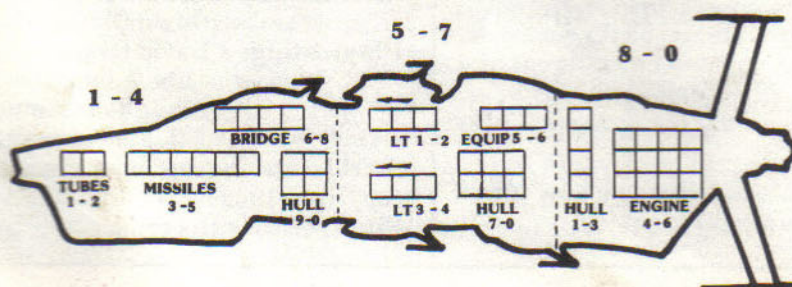Laser-Type II
E. Torp-Type I
Ram Armor
BP-190
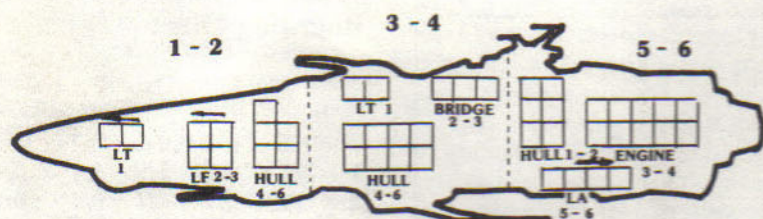
## EDF Destroyer
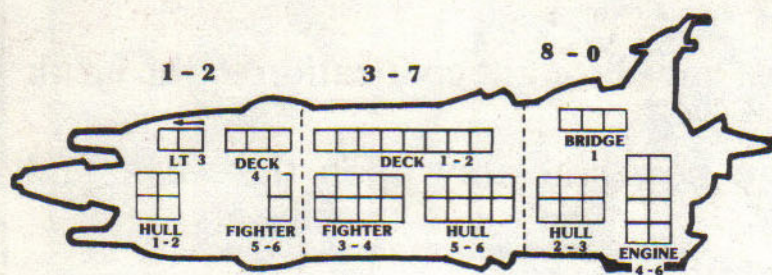MC-A
Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
BP-84

## Avatar's Flagship
MC-A
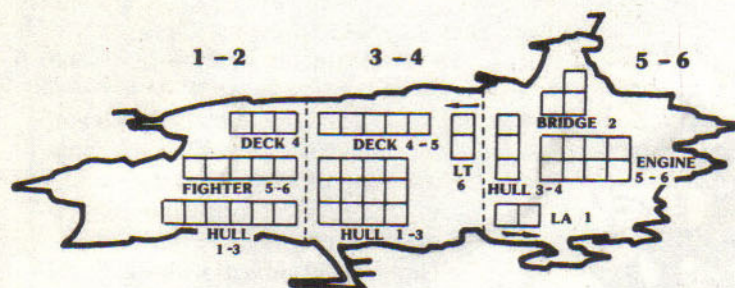Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
Missile-Mark I
BP-110

## Alex Windstar's Destroyer "Paladin"
MC-A
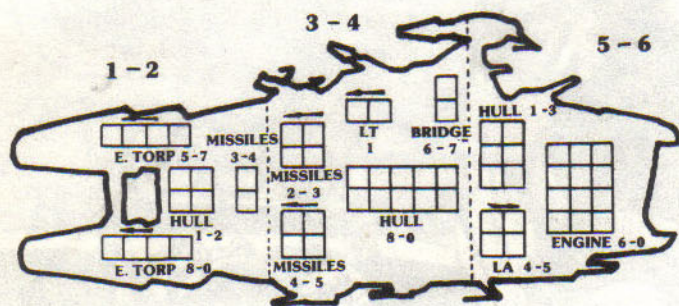Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
Missile-Mark I
BP-90

## Double Deck Carrier
MC-B
Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
10 Fighter Squadrons
May Launch 2 Fighters Per Turn
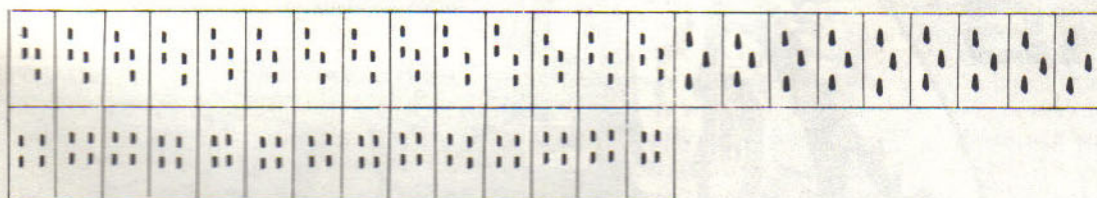BP-115

## Single Deck Carrier
MC-B
Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
5 Fighter Squadrons
May Launch 1 Fighter Per Turn
BP-100

## Anti-Matter Missile Ship
MC-A
Stress 4-6
Laser-Type I
E. Torp-Type I
Missile-Mark III
BP-105

## Missiles

## Fighters