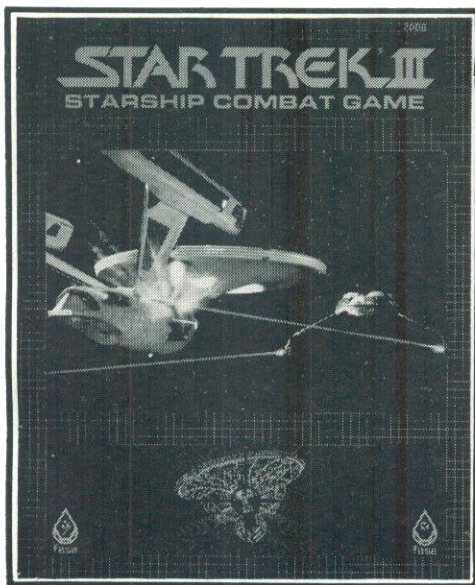


# THE REASON WE ARE HERE

Thoughts on a *Star Trek III Starship Combat Simulator* Campaign

by Dale L. Kemper

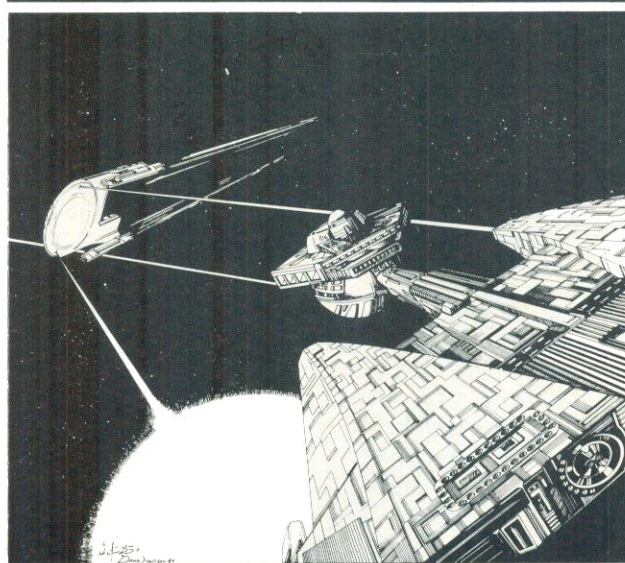
During the naval miniature phase of my wargaming interest, I was always a bit exasperated when playing a battle where my entire object was to simply "kill the other guy". After an endless number of these kill-or-be-killed scenarios, it soon became pretty meaningless. I felt there had to be more to it. There had to be a reason behind the battle: whether it was to protect a convoy, keep the enemy battlefleet from bombarding your coast, or to take control of the sea-lanes in preparation for an invasion. None of these battles could occur in a vacuum. Because of this need for greater detail, our group invented ideas for a naval campaign, a sort of microcosm of an entire war but on more manageable levels. Readers who are interested in **STAR TREK III Starship Combat Simulator** (either in conjunction with ST:RPG2 or not) might feel much the same way as I. After all, there is a limit to how many times you can enjoy pitting the *Excelsior* against a Klingon armada and beat them every time.



Campaigns are nothing new, as any miniature enthusiast will tell you. A campaign gives the player a reason for being there. Every action taken on the tactical gameboard can have sweeping repercussions for some other player in the game, whether on your side or not. And there is always the possibility in a campaign of many battles rather than just one; the forces lost or damaged in today's battle might have been better used in future operations, so beware of becoming too aggressive all at once.

Campaigns can be broken down into two levels of play: operational and tactical. The operational level entails all the big decisions made by the supreme commander for each side: disposition of forces, defining objectives, initial strategic openings, and so on. The tactical end of it occurs when opposing local commanders come into contact; this is where the Combat Simulator comes in. Over it all is a referee or judge to moderate the campaign and organize the tactical battles. This person should be an experienced campaigner well-versed in the rules of the game.

In order to start a campaign, the first decision to be made is what kind of plausible situation will be used to bring the combatants together. In historic campaigns that I have played, actual situations such as the Caribbean theater in 1789, the North Sea in 1914, or the Mediterranean in 1942 were used. Mythical worlds full of 'what-if' scenarios can also be used if you want something a little different, American World War II naval vessels versus the British, for instance, or the Klingons allied to the Federation. The key is to have your situation make some sort of sense. It need not follow hard and fast rules. Explore the possibilities. If the Organians had not intervened to stop the Klingon-Federation War, what then? Or, if you prefer to remain within the official *Star Trek* Universe, you could envision a renegade Klingon fleet commander who has taken matters into his own hands (see the FASA adventure **Termination: 1456** by yours truly for more information.) You are the Federation task force commander assigned to stop his persistent raids on the Federation borders. Any sensible situation your imagination can conjure up will fit the bill.

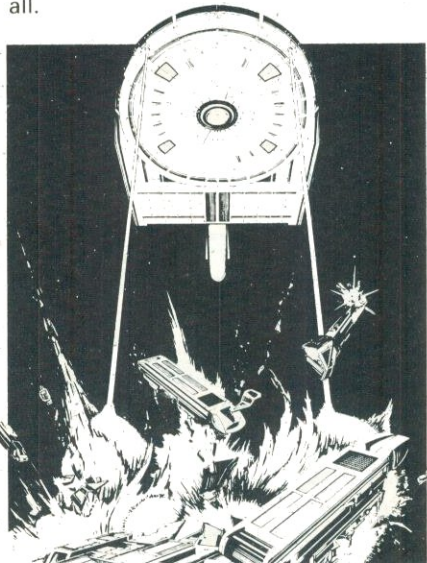


After the plausible situation has been decided upon, it is important to draw up a campaign map for each player and the moderator. In terms of the **STAR TREK III Starship Combat Game**, these would best be represented as star systems on graph paper, as discussed in the **Trader Captains and Merchant Princes** supplement. This will delineate your operations area, and everyone will know how far each base or objective is from the other. The moderator's map will have all forces involved in the campaign listed on it, while the player's map would only show the forces they command.

Concerning the forces involved, the moderator should make his or her campaign scenario challenging yet fair. This does not mean that each side must have the same point level of warships. There are many ways to balance a campaign. In a situation in which I was involved, one side was initially outnumbered by better than two to one, but, because of scheduled reinforcements and the victory conditions (all they



had to do was hold out until relieved) the game was quite balanced. Any extras one side receives, the other should get something in return to even things up. Player experience should be considered here also. It is not much of a challenge to pit someone of ten years wargaming experience against a newcomer who just picked up the interest. The novice should get the better defensive position or the better ships, as an overwhelming defeat would only serve to crush his interest in campaigning at all.



Another area to be dealt with is orders. The moderator should write up general orders for the supreme commanders of each side. These should state what is expected of them, what their objectives are, the forces at their

disposal, the initial disposition (or placement possibilities, if the commander has a choice), their subordinates, and any special information that they may need (reinforcement schedules, mission deadlines, warnings from the Intelligence Section, and so forth). These are called general orders because that is just what they should be. The supreme commanders are given their mission, how they achieve it is their problem. After they have formulated their plans, the supreme commanders should in turn write out orders for each of their subordinate commanders detailing the specifics for carrying out the operation. It should be noted that there can be more than two opposing sides, and therefore, more than two supreme commanders. One possible situation along these lines would entail the Klingons, the Federation, and the Orion pirates, all with differing victory conditions. Moreover, subordinate commanders do not necessarily have to have the same victory conditions as their supreme commander (especially on the Klingon side). This could indeed make for some interesting gaming.

In an average campaign, you will find most battles centering around objectives, such as planetary bases or supply points, rather than the too-often-seen deep-space battle. Such situations are possible depending on the moderator's ideas on deep-space sensing. Even forces entering the same square on a graph paper map are probably light years apart considering interstellar distances. Some fudging on initial contact will probably be necessary.

No brief article on **STIII Combat Simulator** campaigns would be complete without mentioning a little about role-playing your supreme commander or subordinate character. In campaigns such as we have discussed, role-playing can be as involved as Book Three of the **STIII Combat Simulator** rules, or as general as ignoring the whole thing and just being yourself. Some interesting situations have developed in campaigns where role playing was a part. I once had a subordinate commander who hated my family for taking his father's seat in Parliament (in 1782). My subordinate's victory conditions centered around discrediting me! Needless to say, he did not follow orders well.

With these simple guidelines, embellished to personal taste, a meaningful campaign can be conducted using **Star Trek III Starship Combat Simulator**. Elements such as ship repair, supplies, intelligence gathering, reinforcement timetables, and all the other facets of an operational campaign can be duplicated with trial and error. The specifics are up to you, but the effort expended will be more than worthwhile in making your gaming experience something more than a "shoot 'em up" scenario.

If any of you have a campaign running, or wish to give one a try using these guidelines, we would love to hear from you here at **STARDATE**. Campaign battle reports or scenario outlines will always be welcome, the more detail the better!

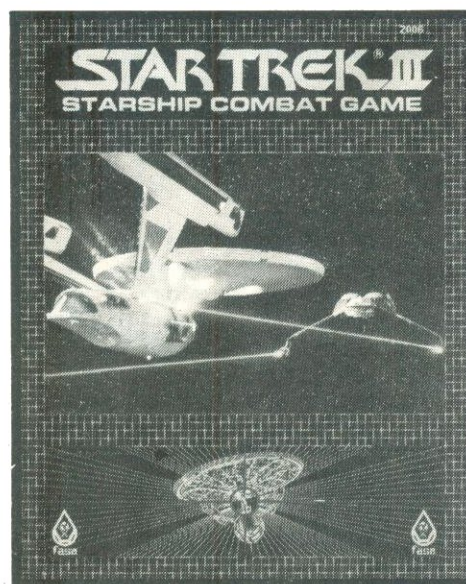
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