

TCS MIDWAY

INTEGRATED

COMBAT

INFORMATION

SYSTEM

CONTAINS

SENSITIVE INFORMATION

TCS Midway ICIS

Personal communications / written

0842 2681.023

Good Morning, Commodore Blair.

You have two pieces of unopened mail.

1. Waypoint! From: Waypoint! Editors
2. *CLASSIFIED* From: *CLASSIFIED*

You have requested access to a classified document.
Please enter your "security authorisation and personal
code.

Sec. Auth. XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Pers. Code. XXXXXXXXX

Commodore Blair, you are authorised to view this TOP
SECRET document. Do you wish to continue at this time?

Decrypting.....

From the desk of:

JAMES TAGGERT

2681.022



Terran
Confederation
Senator
General (ret.)
TCSF



The Residence
Dumfuirlin
Scotland
Earth

Laddie:

Got this yesterday from Kevin at TCIA, and he said I could send it along to you. It will be out through regular channels in a day or so, but not until after the censors have had a pass at it. This version is the raw stuff — the one where the intelligence boys admit what they *don't* know. You're cleared for this information in any form, of course, but please be discreet about having it. And for God's sake don't tell Maniac anything you don't have to. (Even in the present crisis, I still chuckle to think of you and he back on the same ship after all these years.)

But back to business. The implications of this report are, frankly, terrifying. They're going to try to pin this on Kilrathi insurgents, of course, but I imagine you'll find that possibility as absurd as I do. I don't want to be a panic-monger, and I'd never say this to another soul in the galaxy save yourself, but I fear that we may be facing something that will make the Kilrathi look like a pack of rock-throwing baboons (with all due respect to our dear feline allies). It's the ungodly *efficiency* of this thing that has me so infernally scared.

I'd ask how your research is progressing, except I rather doubt you'll have time to take it much farther. They're talking about taking me out of mothballs for this crisis, and if they can find a place for a fat old fossil like myself, I'm sure they'll find a place for you as well, and probably sooner rather than later. They're going to have you in command of a fleet yet, my lad.

I was delighted to receive your letter about your arrival aboard the Midway, and I apologise for only replying under such ominous circumstances. The Midway sounds like a first-class vessel, and I'm more certain than ever that I did the right thing in squeezing those dolts on the appropriations committee until they authorised the funds to get her built.

I'm afraid we're going to need ships of her calibre far sooner than we ever anticipated.

I was also happy to hear that you and Chief Coriolis are getting along so well after all your unpleasantness following the war. Please give her my warmest regards.

On another personal note, I recently caught word that Iceman's son will soon be posted to the Midway - his first shipboard tour. Even though you're not on the command roster, I'm sure you'll whip him into shape just as his father and I did for you (and if you don't, Marshall certainly will). He's a good, fiery lad, the kind I fear we're going to need in days to come. I wonder how many like him will be left a year from now?

Take care, my friend, the clouds are gathering.

Paladin

There is a classified attachment to this message.

Do you wish to view it now, Commodore?

Decrypting.....

TOP SECRET

COMPARTMENTALISED ACCESS G1-3, II & 2, X1, 3, 7

NEED-TO-KNOW / DO NOT REPRODUCE

CI SERIAL #TG1A

CLASSIFIED

REPORT ON UNIDENTIFIED MILITARY THREAT

COMPILED FROM TERRAN CONFEDERATION INTELLIGENCE ASSETS

This is a PRELIMINARY REPORT. All data and analyses are based on *unprocessed* primary sources. Conclusions and recommendations should be regarded as **HIGHLY TENTATIVE**.

This information current as of **0730 hours 2681.021**

PRECIS

At 2025 hours 2681.018, in the Kilrah asteroid belt near Kilrah Prime, unknown forces initiated an apparent military strike on the Copernicus-Class planetological research vessel TCS *Devereaux*, destroying it. Between that time and 0345 hours 2681.019, two colonies, four intelligence outposts and a research station have also apparently been destroyed within the Kilrah system. All efforts at relief have resulted in the destruction of the vessels involved, and of seven attempts to infiltrate the area with intelligence-gathering resources between .019 and .020, only one has reestablished contact.

Early and unofficial reports estimate that all military and civilian personnel in the stricken areas are either killed or missing. On that basis the estimated casualty count stands at:

23,763 Kilrathi
2,988 Human (446 Confed military, 311 Confed admin/diplo, 2,231 civilian)
41 Firekkan

TIMELINE

2681.018

- | | |
|------------|---|
| 1441 | Confed Astronomical Station K-105 picks up unidentified energy surge near Kilrah Prime. Surge is identified as an equipment malfunction or the reflection of a solar flare. |
| 2022 | TOBY drones from the <i>Devereaux</i> destroyed while exploring Kilrah Prime. |
| 2025 | <i>Devereaux</i> destroyed. |
| 2215 (est) | Sivarist monastic outpost on asteroid K-14G destroyed. |
| 2351 | Astronomical Station K-105 destroyed. Fighters scrambled from Surveillance Outposts Bravo and Delta to recon and respond. |

2681.019

- 0022 Recon group from Outposts Bravo and Delta jump to site of K-105. They have not re-established contact.
- 0144 Kilrathi colony on Kilrah 6 attacked.
- 0158 Last known signal from Kilrah 6.
- 0215 (est.) Previously unknown Kilrathi smuggler / insurgent base on Kilrah 7.4 destroyed.
- 0330-0338 Surveillance Outposts Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta attacked.
- 0415 (est.) All Surveillance Outposts presumed destroyed. Kilrah system presumed fully in enemy control.
- 1700 First of seven recon missions dispatched into Kilrah systems from Tal'q Naval Station. It does not return as scheduled, all contact lost.
- 1900 Tal'q sends FLASH message to Terra, goes to full alert status.
- 2132 Major Leeward Washington discovers remains of smuggler's base on Kilrah 7.4 during the 7th recon attempt from Tal'q.
- 2310 Major Washington completes recon of Kilrah 7.4, returns to Tal'q with photos and possible enemy artifact. His is the only recon mission of seven to return as scheduled, others presumed lost. Recon missions terminated pending analysis of known data.
- 2345 Strike group, lead by Corvette TCS *Brack*, dispatched from Tal'q to Kilrah 6.

2681.020

- 0337 Last transmission from TCS *Brack*.
- 0730 Initial TCIA report on incident compiled and dispatched.

INTELLIGENCE SOURCES

Information above compiled from the following sources:

Telemetry logs of Confed Bases and ships as recorded by central processing, Tal'q Naval Station.

Routine civilian and military subspace traffic.

Fragmentary SOS message sent during Kilrah 6 attack.

Report of Major Leeward Washington, TCSF, and recordings taken by him of secret installation at Kilrah 7.4.

ANALYSIS OF TELEMETRY AND AUTOMATED SUBSPACE TRAFFIC

With the exception of the previously unknown Kilrathi insurgent base, all of the ships, stations and settlements destroyed in the enemy attack were hooked into the Confed Subspace Data Network. These facilities all sent regular data packets to the nearest subspace hub, in this case located at the Tal'q Naval Station.

Automated subspace data was sent at regular intervals ranging from twice a day (in the case of the Sivarist enclave in the Kilrah belt) to every five minutes (from the *Brack* while on Alert status). The cessation of these transmissions allows analysts to bracket the time of attack for the lost facilities.

Telemetric transmissions always include a "ping" recognition signal identifying the source and time of the transmission. In addition, telemetric packets regularly include personal mail, news and announcements and official logs and reports. In military and scientific ships and outposts, the bulk of a typical telemetric packet's bandwidth usually consists of the automated logs of sensor and system data.

The most remarkable thing about the telemetry of the facilities in question, right up to the time of their destruction, is that there is no sign that an attack — or anything unusual — is going on at all. Of course, the later data includes a good deal of speculation about the fate of those facilities already destroyed, and a record of security procedures being activated and followed, but little first-hand evidence of enemy incursion right up to cessation of transmission.

It must be emphasised that a full analysis of the millions of zettabytes of automated telemetric data received from the action area during the event window is a major endeavour that will take several days, at a minimum, to complete. However, the broad and superficial analysis of the available data that has been currently conducted reveals only one potentially anomalous event.

About six hours before the first known enemy attack (on the *Devereaux*) the K-105 observatory recorded a puzzling energy surge within the Kilrah belt. The surge was a tightly focused pulse of energy .165 of a second in duration. It measured at 47,000 dG in intensity, and crossed the subspace spectrum from mk 1772 down to mk 3500 (the lower limit of the K105 detection equipment). The surge fits the profile of no known subspace energy source. The event occurred at 018.1441.26, and at 1502 was manually flagged as a probable false reading by technicians at the observatory, according to the K105 sensor logs.

It is important at this juncture to emphasise that there is absolutely no hard evidence whatsoever linking the 1441 event with the subsequent attacks. However, the possibility does suggest itself that this surge marked the entry of the presumed enemy into the Kilrah system, perhaps via some previously unknown ultra-low-band jumpgate technology.

TRANSCRIPT OF KILRAH 6 MESSAGE

... monitor buoys (not?) responding, extensive damage to the ... ground forces not ... (bunker?) ... (can't) receive so just listen. Confed forces cut out completely ... (civilian?) losses at 100 percent, property destruction total ... building gone, just a big hole in the (ceiling?) ... will attempt visual ... (Delay of approximately 40 seconds, speaker presumably away from console). Saw it ... huge. Nothing else alive out there. (Colony?) flattened. Nothing moving (outside?) ... just ... overhead. Never seen anything ... (not?) Kilrathi. Don't know ... (report?) but will keep talking. What else ... [Message ends.]

ANALYSIS OF KILRAH 6 MESSAGE

The voice in the message is apparently that of a female human in her 20s or 30s. Although it is unconfirmable, it seems likely the speaker is Coretta Tokagawa, 25, a technician at the Kilrah 6 Colony Communications Center, based on colony personnel records and evidence within the message itself. It seems certain that the physical point of origin for the message was the K6CCC, as that is the only facility on the planet's surface with facilities for a subspace voice transmission. The transmission faded in and out of clarity, and was punctuated frequently by static bursts of three to fifteen seconds in duration. The message was a direct broadcast signal, not part of a scheduled telemetric packet.

The fluctuations and interruptions in the transmission are consistent with a scenario where orbital relays are destroyed and only the ground-based transmitter remains, possibly with superficial damage. Static may indicate a high level of surface radiation, perhaps as the aftermath of an orbital bombardment.

SigInt is presently looking into how this single transmission could have got through to Tal'q when no other attack produced any emergency traffic whatsoever. No conclusions have been reached based on technical analysis, however the message itself seems to have been sent between the actual battle for Kilrah 6, when the defence forces and most of the colony were destroyed, and a final clean up sweep of the area. Perhaps the hypothetical enemy jamming or blocking ability was disrupted immediately after the battle, either through combat damage to enemy systems, or through sentient error.

The most probable events surrounding the message's transmission seem to be as follows (*note: the following two paragraphs contain deductive and speculative analysis, which cannot be independently confirmed*):

Immediately after the battle, the speaker (presumably Ms. Tokagawa) was in the K6CCC central processing room, where she had either been on duty or taken shelter during the attack. Taking stock of the situation, she determined that all planetary and

intra-system communications were down, but that the primary subspace transmitter was still operable (unsurprising, since the transmitter, its power source and geo-resonant antenna were all located immediately beneath the central processing room). She took it upon herself to report the situation to the best of her ability. The source and accuracy of her estimates of casualties and property damage is not known. Perhaps it is based on communications traffic during the battle, or perhaps she simply extrapolated from the destruction in her immediate area.

Like most of the Kilrah 6 colony, the K6CCC is constructed mostly underground, and the ceiling of the central processing room was approximately 11 metres below street level. The message seems to indicate that this ceiling had been laid open to the sky by the force of the attack. The speaker seems to have used this gap to visually survey the immediate area, observing total destruction and a large object, apparently airborne and presumably of enemy origin. The speaker seems to be of the opinion that the object does not appear to be of Kilrathi origin (however, due to signal quality, there is also room for the exact opposite conclusion, that the message states that the object is Kilrathi in origin). The speaker appears to be attempting to order her thoughts as the message ends. It is unknown whether the end of the message was due to renewed enemy assault, the restoration of enemy jamming measures, or simple cumulative equipment failure.

REPORT OF MAJOR WASHINGTON

My squadron (Second Long-Range Patrol Squadron, "Hugyn," 71st air-defence battalion, Tal'q) scrambled when the base got the alert at 1900, and in the briefing we were told that First Squadron had already lost five recon pilots and we were taking over the duty. Lt. (Katrina) Shea volunteered for the first pass, and left just before 2000. When she didn't report back, I pulled rank on a couple of other volunteer pilots to get the 2100 attempt. I left at 2058 in an Excalibur refitted for trans-system surveillance. I wasn't carrying any armament except lasers — if I spotted trouble my orders were to bug out and report, not fight.

The plan was to make a series of jumps towards Kilrah. On my first jump, into the inner Oort Cloud of the system, I was too far out to see anything. My first in-system jump took me about 5 million kilometres outside the orbit of the 7th and outer planet of the system, a small gas giant with a minimal ring and 6 significant satellites. I was still too far away from the Kilrah belt to pick up anything, and since 7 was on my side of the sun (about 9.3 million kilometres from my position) I decided to give it a scan. I picked up enough complex alloys for a small fleet on the spectrograph, and high and localised hard radiation. Accuracy was rated at 35% for the spectrograph and 60% for the radiation count, so I decided to move in at 2120.

I found another in-system jump point to within about 200,000 kilometres of the planet, and began an elliptical trans-polar orbit. By 2132 I pinpointed the source of my

reading as 7.4, a dead rock moon about 21 kilometres in diameter. I went all-stop except for sensors. There were no active signals anywhere in the spectrum, and background radiation was starting to fade, so I started to move in cloaked. I had visual with 4 by 2140. When I reached 200 kilometres out from 7.4 (optimum sensor range for my package) I went all-stop again. At that point I determined that my spectrographics weren't from a fleet, but from an enclosed base on the moon. Previously, the base had been concealed by about five metres of rock, but the rock had been scoured off, exposing the upper bays and corridors to my spectrograph.

Still with nothing on the bio-sensors and no active EM, I came in low and slow for my first pass. I estimate about 250,000 square metres of working and living space in the levels of the base exposed to view. The main area was a hangar space about 100 x 60 x 25 metres, that had been laid open to space. I could see the remains of at least two cargo shuttles, and enough miscellaneous wreckage to account for several more. I couldn't see how the hangar had accessed the surface before the attack, since the top of the space was completely gone. Structural analysis indicated a base capable of supporting a couple of hundred Kilrathi without crowding. If this was a smuggling base, it was a major hub, probably keeping the whole former inner sphere of Kilrah supplied with black market goods. I did a full-spectrum scan, and took a few dozen pictures. I didn't see any bodies.

I pulled up about 1000 kilometres and did a close orbit sweep, which came up with four objects that hadn't hit the ground yet. Three of the fragments turned out to be the remains of two old Dralhti, one in two pieces. I saw plenty of shot-up Dralhti during the war, and the damage on these two looked like any other energy weapon attack. I did notice one thing. The more-or-less intact Dralhti had a cockpit that was ruptured, but not destroyed. However the pilot was not in the ship. I got within three metres of the seat with my camera, and took some pictures. Through the viewfinder, I could clearly see that the restraints had been unfastened, not damaged. Although it's possible that the pilot may have loosened the straps and left the cockpit himself, for some reason, my personal opinion, based on the intact Dralhti and the general lack of remains after the attack, is that the dead Kilrathi — and maybe living ones too — were gathered up by the enemy after the attack.

The fourth object was smaller than the others, and I probably wouldn't have noticed it at all except the computer was reading it as anomalous — the analysis routines wouldn't even guess what it was or even what it was made of. It was about 2 metres, by 1 metre, by about 25 centimetres. It definitely looked manufactured — the undamaged portions of the surface were smooth, and had a definite odd sheen, sort of like a fish's scales or the inside of a seashell. Colour was dark, almost black, with a bit of purple. While I couldn't make a positive ID, I was very sure that it wasn't Confed or Kilrathi, and it wasn't natural, so under the circumstances it seemed pretty likely to be a chunk of an alien ship. I took a few pictures and did a full passive scan, then I tracted it and secured it with a waldo.

My orders were to bug out as soon as I collected any useful intelligence, and I figured this qualified, so I took one more medium-range sweep and left the same way I'd come in. I left the area at 2207, and arrived back at the base by 2310.

(Note: Preliminary analysis of the images and data collected by Maj. Washington confirm his account. At this time, analysis has nothing significant to add. A full report is pending.)

REPORT ON ARTIFACT FOUND AT KILRAH 7.4

Object is an irregular slab of hard substance, 1.88 metres long at its longest point, 1.33 metres wide at its widest point, and 28 cm thick. Object describes a slight convex curve of approximately 3 degrees. Composition appears to be primarily silicon with other trace elements in a crystalline matrix. Colour is dark, with a red or purple tint, surface is glossy and displays a moire or "shimmer" effect under direct light. Two contiguous sides of the object are jagged and slightly twisted, suggesting that the object is part of a larger structure, and was blown or ripped off in combat or some sort of accident. Slight smudges and scores on the object are consistent with the effects of Kilrathi lasers.

The crystalline structure is quite unusual, and will take some time to analyse fully. However, the object appears to be composed of a complex polymer chain. Overall, the substance is about 1.8 times as hard as Confed fighter hull metal, but slightly more brittle.

The concave side of the object displays one large and three small depressions. The large depression consists of a central cavity about half a centimetre in depth, and about 22 x 19 centimetres across. From the central cavity, three radial channels branch off within an arc of about 60 degrees. These channels are equal in depth to the central cavity, and vary in width from 3.1 to 1.2 centimetres, ranging from 27 to 34 centimetres in length. The three smaller depressions are arranged in a shallow curved line about 35 centimetres from the large cavity. They are slightly shallower than the central cavity, circular, about 3 centimetres in diameter. On viewing these depressions the observer is forcefully struck with the impression that they represent a "hand-print" (or "claw print") with one of the appendages representing an opposable "thumb." Likewise, the smaller depressions suggest three "finger-tip" sized "buttons." Exerting pressure on these cavities has no discernible mechanical effect, and indeed the entire object seems completely solid.

It is possible, however (though still unconfirmed) that the depressions do represent controls or switches of some kind. The crystalline structure of the object bears microscopic irregularities which seem to represent some sort of "channel" through the object, and it is possible that these "channels" may represent circuits for the conduction of electricity or some other form of energy. If so, bringing the appropriate appendage into contact with the depressions may initiate actions or transmit infor-

mation throughout the structure from which the object was detached. If this hypothesis proves correct, in effect the artifact's creators have managed to incorporate the circuitry of complex machinery into the superstructure of the machine itself, greatly reducing the number of parts, and allowing for extensive redundancy of systems.

In conclusion, the artifact appears to be a fragment of a larger structure or device, possibly a ship. Its composition and construction conform to the standards of no known race, either past or present, however it appears to be the work of an advanced tool-using culture with a knowledge of physics, chemistry and engineering which, in most cases, seems to rival or exceed our own.

THE ENEMY: PRELIMINARY DATA

Current data about the nature of the enemy is as follows.

1. They entered our space at Kilrah, presumably through a gate or singularity of unknown nature.
2. They have systematically destroyed all structures and vessels found in the Kilrah system.
3. Their tactics are efficient, thorough and brutal. Evidence suggests all sentients under their attack are either killed or taken prisoner.
4. The degree and speed of destruction suggests a force equivalent to a major Confed strike force consisting of multiple battleships and fighters.
5. They have been able to jam subspace communications during their attacks, completely cutting their targets out of communication.
6. They appear to be establishing a sphere of control with Kilrah at the center.

There are two possible scenarios to explain the enemy's identity at this point.

Either:

- A. The enemy is an extremely well-armed and organised fleet of Kilrathi insurgents. Or,
- B. The enemy is a fleet from a previously unknown starfaring race.

The first hypothesis carries the weight of Occam's Razor behind it. It is almost axiomatic that several of the most significant groups of outlaw Kilrathi would wish to retake their home system. The apparent destruction of several Kilrathi communities (including the secret armed base at 7.4), while puzzling, is not greatly inconsistent with the Kilrathi character, particularly in light of the recent resurgence in ancient clan rivalries.

What is both puzzling and troubling is the question of where the Kilrathi (assuming they are Kilrathi) may have got the previously unknown jamming technologies and formidable destructive potential inherent in the presumed and confirmed attacks, as well

as a the possibility of a previously unknown jump technology. The anomalous artifact from Kilrah 7.4 is also disconcerting. We are led inexorably towards a third scenario.

- C. The enemy represents an alliance between the Kilrathi and some previously unknown alien race.

If an unknown race is, in fact, involved in the attacks, that raises further questions.

As to their biology, the only data available is the "hand print" on the artifact recovered at Kilrah 7.4. If this is indeed what the shape represents, and not some sort of writing or art, the impression is of a remarkably flexible tool-using appendage, larger than a human hand and possibly even stronger than a Kilrathi claw. The hypothetical appendage, while possessing the approximate functionality of a human hand, conforms to the morphology of no known alien species.

Nothing can be stated about their psychology, except that the thoroughness and efficiency of the attacks suggests a remarkable degree of organisation and co-operation. Machine intelligence, or some sort of hive-mind, would not be inconsistent with current data.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

The military situation suggested by the current crisis is indisputably grim for Confed, but there is absolutely no evidence at this time which could be reasonably construed to suggest that the situation is hopeless.

While the enemy attacks thus far have been overwhelming and daunting in their efficiency and completeness, their targets have been largely unarmed and isolated. The only actual military victory that can be claimed by the enemy at this time is the destruction of the *Brack* and its escorts, a group consisting of one small capital ship and less than a dozen tactical fighters.

The ominous elements of the enemy's success so far cannot be ignored, however. They consist of:

- The enemy's apparent ability to emerge from an access point of unknown origin without warning and (at least at the time) undetected.
- The enemy's ability to completely seal off their targets from all communications prior to and for the duration of the attacks.
- The speed and destructive thoroughness of the attacks themselves.

Of these three points, the third is actually the least alarming. A confed carrier group attacking from a convenient jump point could have destroyed any of the targets so far attacked with equal dispatch using conventional naval weaponry. In destructive potential, the enemy has shown itself to be Confed's equal, but has not yet demonstrated that it is our master.

The enemy's communications-blocking technology does seem to represent a significant strategic advantage (although its effectiveness has been blunted now that the initial element of surprise is lost). However, the advantage thereby is no greater than, for example, the Kilrathi's development of cloaking technology during that conflict.

Strategically, the significant questions are as follows:

1. Will closing off the access point at Kilrah effectively halt enemy operations, or can a similar access be established elsewhere? Or perhaps the attack originated from an undiscovered staging point already within the Confed sphere?
2. Does the force so far encountered represent a large, state-of-the-art strike force, or does the enemy have even more devastating forces staged in reserve?

If the enemy's entry point to our space can be sealed, and if the current force represents the apex of their military science, then Confed probably faces a brutal but winnable conflict should the enemy persist in an aggressive posture. Of course, if the enemy force consists primarily or entirely of Kilrathi insurgents, it is highly likely that they have already extended their conventional warfare assets to the maximum, and our primary fear then becomes pirate strikes and guerrilla actions staged from the retaken Kilrah system.

However, if the enemy can access our space from multiple and unpredictable points, or if they have significantly more destructive forces and weapons in reserve, it is possible that we face a conflict that is unwinnable through conventional military action.

Although it's far from certain, logic dictates that the more optimistic scenario is the more likely — that access points into our space are not easy nor economical to establish, and that the current force, while probably not the entirety of the enemy naval capacity, is not a trivial or non-representative sample of their military capabilities.

Our assets, even in the most extreme scenario against a completely-unknown enemy, are our extensive knowledge of Kilrathi and Confed space, our numbers, and our unrestricted lines of supply. If we combine these with creative but prudent strategy, we may well be able to contain and defeat the enemy.

Strategic Recommendations. Intel recommends that naval operations pursue a near-term strategy of maximum defensive readiness combined with limited offensive feints and probes to test the enemy capabilities. Since the enemy's effectiveness against smaller forces was demonstrated against the *Brack*, it is recommended that initial sorties include at least one carrier or megacarrier, and a proportional escort of cap-ships. Since the enemy's effectiveness against static targets is established, it is recommended that all spaceworthy battleships be kept in space and dispersed, returning to base only for the minimum times required.

In the absence of further data, our initial long-term goal should be to capture and seal the hypothetical enemy access point at Kilrah.

NONHUMAN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

The purpose of this report is to consider the possibility that the enemy is some race other than the Kilrathi, and to examine the history of the Kilrathi and other nonhuman races for clues as to the identity of this hypothetical mystery race.

The alien threat conforms to nothing previously encountered by humanity, except perhaps the most hysterical manifestations of the 20th century "UFO" hysteria, or ancient myths of vengeful gods or monsters descending from heaven and raining destruction.

Likewise a superficial examination of Firekkan history shows contact with nothing similar, nor does the Double-Helix civilisation (unsurprising, since the Double-Helix has very little concept of history in the human sense). Pre-space cultures like the Mopokes also offer no useful perspective, at least on initial analysis.

Investigation of any possible link between the current enemy and such putatively-extinct civilisations as the ancient Stelte or the comparatively recent Hari will be an ongoing process. So far there is no evidence to link the current threat with any such civilisation known.

Given the enemy's emergence at the former site of planet Kilrah, in the current Kilrah asteroid belt, it seems obvious that Kilrathi history must bear the first and most intense scrutiny for any pertinent hints. Two possibilities immediately suggest themselves.

The first is the Mantu, an alien race that came into conflict with the Kilrathi approximately two Terran centuries before the Kilrathi first encountered humanity. The Mantu conflict ended in a standoff, and as far as can be discerned no Mantu ship has tried to cross or enter Kilrathi space since that time.

In the 250-odd years since the Mantu conflict, the Kilrathi have aggrandised, vilified and generally mythologised their former foe (a similar process is now occurring towards Confed — it seems to be an intrinsic Kilrathi trait to deify/demonize those enemies which cannot be defeated). However, the Mantu war is a historical conflict which left contemporary records, and these have been examined by Terran historians since the surrender.

Once the propaganda and legend are stripped away, the Mantu seem to have been an insular, somewhat paranoid race of explorers and prospectors who reacted with extreme prejudice to Kilrathi aggression. Significantly, there is no suggestion in the historical record that the initial aggressor in the conflict was the Mantu. Probably the Kilrathi assaulted non-military Mantu vessels in much the same way that they did at the beginning of the Terran conflict.

The Kilrathi fear of the Mantu's return is well documented, but may well be merely a paranoid, atavistic response to an enemy left alive and at large (another well-documented trait of Kilrathi psychology). There is nothing substantial in the historical

record to suggest any explicit promises of vengeance from the Mantu civilisation against the Kilrathi.

Furthermore, there is nothing in the current enemy's tactics or technology that corresponds to anything specific in the historical record of the Mantu. If the enemy is the Mantu they have completely changed their *modus operandi* in the last 250 years.

That being said, it must be admitted that the enemy's known level of technology could well have been achieved by the Mantu in the last two centuries, and they remain a suspect, or at least a primary line of inquiry. The possibility of an alliance between some Kilrathi faction and their ancient Mantu enemies seems preposterous on the face of it, but given the massive recent upheavals in Kilrathi society, it cannot be ignored.

The second possibility from Kilrathi history is far more ancient and more nebulous, dating back approximately four millennia, to the dawn of Kilrathi civilisation and the Cult of Sivar.

Kilrathi myth holds that in ancient times, warrior-gods descended from the stars and challenged the warriors of Kilrah to battle. But when the Kilrathi army assembled, the gods scorned the force, pronouncing the Kilrathi unworthy of their attention. The gods left, promising to return and battle the Kilrathi when they became worthy.

This myth is the source of the famous "Prophecy of Sivar" (which many xenohistorians believe predates its reported authoress, the prophetess Kt'lan, and even the historical prophet Sivar himself, by several centuries), which formed a philosophic cornerstone of Kilrathi culture. The Prophecy and its surrounding myth have been explicitly used by religious propagandists throughout Kilrathi history to justify the race's militaristic and expansionist tendencies. All battles, including the Mantu, Hari and Terran conflicts, have been seen by the Cult of Sivar as preparation for the final challenge of the star gods. Specifically, the prophecy states that if the Kilrathi ever faltered in their path of conquest, the gods would return and destroy both the Kilrathi remnant and their conquerors (a horrific prediction to the Kilrathi, who view the death of a blood-foe by another's hand as among the gravest of dishonours). The Cult of Sivar viewed Kilrathi history as heading towards one of only two possible outcomes. The first, Tr'thrak, is a sort of Ragnarok — a glorious final battle against the star gods where the Kilrathi would find either final victory or eternal honour in death. The second, Kn'thrack, or "void," would occur if the Kilrathi were defeated by unworthy opponents and the star gods returned to annihilate the race without honour.

In human history the pattern of pre-historic military conflict being recorded as mythology for posterity is well established. Examples include the Mayan Quetzlcoatl myth, the Egyptian tales of Horus, Osiris and Set, and the Hebrew legends of the Nephilim, or "giants in the earth." Kilrathi Sivarist doctrine has always been explicit regarding the possibility that the star-gods of the ancient myth are physical beings come to wage war with great magic (advanced technology?), but who could be faced and perhaps conquered by a sufficiently prepared and resolute warrior-race.

If the current enemy is indeed the ancient race of "star gods" who (accidentally or on purpose) set the pattern of Kilrathi civilisation in motion thousands of years ago, then we can only hope that their progress in the intervening millennia has been far slower than ours.

ADDENDA: As of 2681.020 0715, as this document was being prepared for distribution, Confed Intelligence Central Processing assigned the code name "Nephilim" to the current threat, until such time as a more precise appellation is possible.

END OF DOCUMENT

CLASSIFIED

Commodore Blair, you have left a classified document open and inactive for 5 minutes.

PLEASE INPUT IN THE NEXT 30 SECONDS OR THIS DOCUMENT WILL CLOSE

Closing ... Recrypting ...

You have one piece of unopened mail.

Commodore Blair, this session has been inactive for 20 minutes. Do you wish to continue? This session will close in five minutes unless you input.

This session will close in four minutes unless you input.

This session will close in three minutes unless you input.

This session will close in two minutes unless you input.

This session will close in one minute unless you input.

Thank you Commodore Blair.

You have one piece of unopened mail.

1. Waypoint! From: Waypoint! Editors

The document you have requested is an unclassified, official operating document of the TCS Midway. Authorised Personnel only.

W A Y P O I N T !

WAYPOINT!

The official shipboard newsletter of the pilots and flight crews of the TCS Midway

Vol. 1, Number 1

First Quarter, 2681

Published whenever we get around to it

Welcome to the first issue of *Waypoint!*, the official newsletter of the TCS *Midway* Space Forces. We're sorry this took so long to get out — especially since the Marines have had their newsletter going for a few months now. We hope it will be worth the wait.

In order for this publication to be "official" (which means Fleet HQ pays for it, and we don't) we have to make it a "resource for tactical and technical training" in addition to just being a newsletter. One of the ways this is done on other ships is to prepare a packet of basic indoctrination and familiarisation materials that can be integrated with the newsletter part and given to newbies. One of the reasons this first issue took so long was assembling that info, and since this is the first issue, we all get it! Thrilling, huh? Seriously, some of this info is pretty basic stuff, but some of it's pretty interesting, and it's all stuff you should know, so pay attention!

The *Waypoint!* staff wishes to thank Maj. Todd Marshall for his ... enthusiastic help in providing us with news and info for this first issue. Next issue, we'll have even more news and commentary.

Also, if you have a personal ad or announcement for the next issue, just mail it to WAYPOINT! We'll print anything we can get past the censors and the CAG! — The *Waypoint!* Editorial Staff

P.S. This is a personal message to the CAG. Yes ma'am, we know that "waypoint" is no longer an official navigational designation, but *Navpoint!* didn't seem to have much to do with the TCS *Midway*.

WAYPOINT!

FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

The entire crew of the *Midway* — naval, marine and space forces — has been hand-picked to test a completely new concept in capital ship design philosophy. We are all honoured to serve on the maiden cruise of the first Confed megacarrier! More than twice the size of any wartime-era cap ship, the *Midway* is designed both for the longer cruises and more diversified missions of peacetime, and to be a virtual floating naval base in a time of military emergency.



Ours is the first of 10 planned ships in the *Midway* class. The next ship in the class, the *Mistral Sea*, is set to launch in the next 100 days. Within five years, all 10 *Midway*-class megacarriers will be in space and fully operational. As the first crew in our class, it behooves us to also be the best crew in our class!

We've faced a number of challenges in the short time we've all been shipmates together, and I'm not just talking about the Valgard incident. We're a large crew on a new ship trying to come together as a team. That's always a tough process. Fortunately both the ship and the crew are the best that Confed has to offer, and therefore we've been able to meet all our challenges to date, and will continue to do so into the future.

— Capt. Daniel Wilford, TCS *Midway*, Commanding

FROM THE CAG'S DESK

It's good to see the launch of *Waypoint!* It means that the Space Forces of the *Midway* are finally moving past the initial chaos of organising a new unit, and beginning to function as a team. I've served on ships where shipboard pubs were useful, efficient channels of communication between the various ranks and divisions of the ship, and I've seen newsletters that were channels for whining, complaining and general morale busting, and I've also seen newsletters which did not one damn thing either positive or negative. I hope the *Waypoint!* will turn out to be the first kind.

I'm not one to turn down a bully pulpit when it's offered to me, so now that the warm wishes are out of the way there's something I want to be put out loud

WAYPOINT!



and clear to all Space Forces personnel on this vessel. I'm talking about crewmen — and even worse, pilots — who talk about "peacetime service" like it was some kind of vacation. Now I have been in combat, and I do not like being shot at, and I am just as glad as anybody on this ship that, as far as I know, there is nobody out there planning to shoot at me right at this moment. But I am here to tell you that in my group there is no such thing as "peacetime service." Because war is not something you get an early warning about. When the Kilrathi started the

war, they didn't write an invitation first, and when the Border Worlds conflict broke out nobody wrote training time into the schedule. War is not simply an event, it is a process that begins in peacetime.

As I write this, it's been 58 days since we took out the pirates in the Valgard system. We won that fight, but we lost two good pilots in what should have been a clean operation. By way of comparison, Col. Dekker's men on the ground faced a much tougher fight than we did, but came out with no casualties at all. I'm not pointing fingers at anybody except myself for the loss of those men, but they died because we did not yet have our act completely together as a unit. I'm here to say that the next time we go into combat (and there *will be* a next time — the galaxy is still a dangerous place with or without the Kilrathi empire) we *will have* our act together, and the reason we will have our act together is because this group is going to stay at a wartime level of readiness at all times. This is the attitude which will keep you alive in the next conflict, whether that conflict is against a handfull of pirates and smugglers, or against a full-scale invasion fleet.

— Commander Patricia Drake, Commander Air Group

W A Y P O I N T !

NEWS JOURNAL

*Compiled from the Armed Forces Subspace Newswire***Pirates Executed at Valgard**

Thirty-six Kilrathi convicted of piracy, murder, extortion and malicious disorder were executed 2681.014 at Valgard. Included in the mass execution was the pirate's leader, Krahtagh N'Ryllis, AKA "Bloodeye." The executions were carried out at 0700 at the Valgard Military Prison complex. The prisoners were executed as a group, by flash incineration.

The Kilrathi Provisional Counsel protested the executions. Although the Kilrathi did not dispute either the guilt of the accused nor the appropriateness of the sentence, they argued that the pirates should have been turned over to their own people for execution by traditional methods.

Sector Governor Stella Lee issued the following statement in response to the Kilrathi protest. "While the government of this sector appreciates the eagerness of the Kilrathi to assist in the process of justice, we strongly feel that it is important that these bloody murderers should meet their well-deserved fate at the hand of those they so brutally victimised. Therefore, we must respectfully refuse Kilrathi assistance in the execution of this sentence."

N'Ryllis and his followers, the so-called "Demon's Eye Pack," terrorised colonists and disrupted space traffic in Epsilon Sector for almost five months last year, until their base was taken by Confed Marines. Of the estimated 400 Kilrathi living in the pirate base, at least 300 were killed and the rest taken prisoner. Fifty-four females, children and slaves were released into Kilrathi custody, while Bloodeye and 35 followers were charged in a high-profile trial that resulted in capital convictions for all the accused.

W A Y P O I N T !

Senate Debates "Peace Dividend"

Negotiations continue on the 2682 Confed budget, and the issue of greatest contention continues to be military spending.

The Federationist majority, lead by Senator James Taggart, continues to push for gradual expansion of the military budget, to maintain current operational levels and expand research and development programs. However, the Populist Party, lead by Senator Gaston Diego, is pushing for a 35% rollback of all military spending — a reduction of about 1.7 trillion credits — with 10% to be diverted to humanitarian programs, and the remaining 25% to tax relief.

In vigorous debate on the Senate floor on 2681.016, Sen. Diego vigorously attacked the spending policies of the Confed armed forces, and a pet project of Sen. Taggart's in particular. "Now I look at this so-called megacarrier that we're spending so much on, and I ask myself what, exactly are we defending against?" Diego said. "My Uncle Eddy used to keep a blaster by his bed in case he was attacked by little blue aliens in the night. After they spent most of their life savings on wall repairs, my Aunt Lori had him locked up. I'm wondering if we're not throwing our money after imaginary threats? And I wonder if we're going to come to our senses, or end up like Uncle Eddy."

Taggart's response was less poetic. "Talk of a 'peace dividend' is, at best, redundant. Military expenditures are already down 45% from their wartime peak. And far from being wasteful, the megacarrier program is the most economical plan available. Over half of our war-era fleet is obsolete and failing, and if we tried to replace the old ships with ships of the same type, it would cost almost twice as much as the entire megacarrier program to provide the same level of defence," Taggart said.

"When the Kilrathi started the war more than half a century ago, we were unready and underequipped, because we thought we could count on a time of peace. The cost of our misjudgement was an unthinkable toll in lives and property. The Confederation owes it to itself — to its people — to make a solemn vow to never be so taken again," Taggart said.

The Senate is expected to vote on the final appropriations bill no later than 2681.030.

SHIP'S NEWS

Postings and Promotions



Lt. Jean Talvert

Jean "Stiletto" Talvert has received a brevet promotion to acting first lieutenant, in conjunction with her assignment as commander of the Diamondback Squadron. Congratulations, Stiletto, we're confident you'll get that "acting" flag off your new rank real soon now.

Major Todd "Maniac" Marshall reached a career milestone on 2681.011, when he shot down two armed smugglers during a routine sweep of the Hawkins system. The smuggler's marked Marshall's 2000th and 2001st confirmed

kills. Marshall was already the only pilot to make Ace while assigned to the *Midway*, with his five kills during the raid on the Demon's Eye pirates. For this career benchmark the Captain has put Maniac in for a Senatorial Letter of Recognition. Although Marshall's career precedes the establishment of the Ace of Aces medal by about 25 years, if he had been accruing Ace of Aces points throughout his career, the Maniac's chest would currently be weighed down with 16 such medals, all with the full four bars. Marshall is the highest-ranked ace currently on the Space Forces flight roster, and is rated the fourteenth highest-scoring ace in Space Force history.



Maj. Todd Marshall



Lt. Maxwell Garrett

Two new flyboys will be reporting to the *Midway* on or before .025. They are 2LT Lance Casey and 2LT Maxwell Garrett. According to their academy records, Garrett and Casey are a couple of top guns in the making, holding numerous individual and team records for Academy simulator exercises and live-flight trials. They'll be posted to the Diamondbacks.



Lt. Lance Casey

Newbie Pilot is Hero's Son

Waypoint! has learned that 2LT Lance Casey, one of the pilots ordered to report to *Midway* in the immediate future, is the son of Maj. Michael "Iceman" Casey, a hero of the Kilrathi War. Maj. Casey racked up 367 confirmed kills during a nine-year career, during which he also earned bronze, gold and silver stars. He was killed in action two months before the birth of his son.

In addition, *Waypoint!* has learned that the *Midway's* own Commodore Christopher Blair and Maj. Todd "Maniac" Marshall were early shipmates of Maj. Casey. We asked them to tell us about the Iceman.

Comm. Christopher Blair: Michael Casey was a friend, a teacher and a true hero. I look forward to meeting his son, and I am confident that he will carry on the Casey name with the honour it deserves.

Maj. Todd Marshall: You babies probably won't believe this, but there was a time when even I, the Maniac, was a pathetic, puking newbie plebe like yourselves (only much better looking). During that time the Iceman, one of the best damn pilots I ever knew, did me the tremendous favour of kicking my worthless plebe butt until I became the paragon of military virtue you see before you today. I intend to honour the Iceman's memory by making his pathetic puking plebe son's life a literal hell until such a time as he proves himself worthy of his father's name.

Hero of Kilrah Prepares to Leave Midway

To most of Confed, Commodore Christopher Blair is the eleventh greatest ace in Space Force history, and the man who holds the all-time record for Kilrathi Ace kills. More importantly, he's the hero of Kilrah — the pilot who, in a daring raid into the heart of enemy space, delivered the Temblor bomb that ended the Kilrathi empire and with it, the bloodiest war in human history.

To the officers and crew of the *Midway*, he is a constant shadowy presence, appearing out of nowhere to quiz the engine crew about reactor performance, or help a bewildered repair team fix a fouled loading line. As the Senior Operational Consultant on the team that designed the *Midway*, Blair's been a part of this ship since it was a mere blueprint on the desk of a space engineer with dreams of grandeur. Blair was there when the *Midway* was christened, and for the last 50 days he's been part of her crew, observing the final phase of her shakedown cruise. Soon he'll be leaving the *Midway*, retiring from active duty and moving to Earth, where he'll divide his time between consulting for the Navy and the Space Force, and lecturing at the SF Academy on Earth.

With characteristic modesty, Comm. Blair declined to be interviewed by the *Waypoint!*, but our own Major Todd Marshall, who's served with Blair off and on since they were in the Academy together, and who accompanied Comm. Blair on the historic Raid on Kilrah, was only too happy to tell us about his former shipmate.

WAYPOINT!

Waypoint! You and Comm. Blair graduated together and served your first tour of duty together, correct?

Maniac. That's right. We served on the *Tiger's Claw*, under Paladin, who you babies know as Senator Taggart.

Waypoint! Comm. Blair wasn't always the hero he is now. At one time he was known as the "Coward of K'tithrak Mang."

Maniac. Seems kind of odd to think about that now, but yeah, he almost got cashiered out, and he spent about nine years in a purgatory assignment because of that. It was a bum rap, of course. Chris Blair might be a little slow-witted and easily confused, but I've never seen him turn chicken.

Waypoint! Tell us about the Raid on Kilrah.

Maniac. Well, see, at the time we were both stationed on the old TCS *Victory*, and it was the heaviest fighting of the war, and we were running short on experienced pilots. So they decided, OK, we'll take the best guys we have left, and we'll sit the slowest pilot in the bunch on top of that bomb, while those with the real moves will fly escort and try to get him in in one piece. I was with Maverick (Blair's wartime callsign — *W!*) right up to the time we entered orbit — the last fighter left in the escort — when I had to peel off and take out a whole wing of cats. It was, I think, twelve to one, so by the time they were down to the last two or three, my ship was pretty beat up and I had to eject. Anyway, to make a long story short, somehow Blair managed to drop his bomb on target, and now he gets all the glory instead of us pilots who did the real fighting during the raid. Typical.

Waypoint! This will be Blair's second try at retirement, won't it?

Maniac. That's right. Right after the surrender, Blair tried to settle down and farm. Farmer Blair, what a joke! Lucky for him Confed reactivated his commission and sent me to deliver the orders. Maniac to the rescue again. This was right after a messy breakup, too, and man, you have never seen a sadder specimen of pilot-flesh than farmer Blair. Blair's always been emotionally fragile, especially when it comes to romance. Of course it's understandable, if you compare him physically to a real outstanding masculine specimen like myself. How can he compete?

Waypoint! This was during the Border Worlds conflict I believe. That was the last time you and Blair served together?

Maniac. Right. Funny thing there — Admiral Tolwyn always had it in for Blair, from the time he was a cadet. But Maverick had the last word. Which isn't to say that Tolwyn didn't deserve exactly what he got. Um, I'd better not say anything more about that. I think some of it's still classified. Anyway it was right after that that he transferred his commission over to the Navy and started doing R&D, which if you ask me is a much better place for somebody of Blair's limited talents.

Waypoint! Thanks for your help, Maniac!

Maniac: Hey, no problem. Always happy to set the historical record straight.

WAYPOINT!

WELCOME TO THE TCS MIDWAY!

The material below has been prepared by the officers of the TCS *Midway*, and compiled by the staff of *Waypoint!* to provide an introduction to the mission and operations of the TCS *Midway*, the Confederation's first megacarrier.



YOU ARE HERE

By Master CPO Rachel Coriolis

Let me start out by explaining things to the Newbies. Look down, see that nice solid deck under your feet? How about those charming plasteel walls that surround you and that nice bright ceiling overhead? Do you know why those are there? They're there because you are in what we in the armed forces like to call a "Capital Ship," and this

ship is what keeps you and your friends and all your food, air and pin-up holozines from floating away into space. Isn't that nice?

Now for you veterans, yes this really is a cap ship, and not a luxury resort. Don't let details like the ability to walk two abreast in a corridor or the lack of that special starship stench fool you. It's just that the *Midway* is about twice the size of any Confed carrier before it.

Wartime-era carriers usually carried one squadron of fighters, plus the naval crew of the ship itself. *Midway*-class megacarriers are designed to carry their own crew, three full fighter squadrons (252 ships total), and a 1,500-man Marine Expeditionary Unit, for a total complement of up to 6000 personnel (as of this writing the *Midway*'s not yet up to full complement, carrying two squadrons and three companies of Marines). The point of the megacarrier concept is a vessel that can deal effectively with any local crisis — ground-based, orbital or deep-space — with minimal escort, but which can also serve as the center of a strike force or carrier group in the event of actual war.

The *Midway* is 1,830 metres in length, with a displacement of 200,000 tonnes.

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It's not heavily armoured for a ship of its size, but its shield generators are the equal of those found on most wartime top-security permanent installations, making the *Midway* a literal flying fortress. In addition to its fighters, its offensive capabilities include laser turrets and missile stations, for anti-fighter defence, plus medium ion cannon turrets for slugfests against other cap ships.

One of the major innovations of the *Midway's* design is that, while all the fighters in an old carrier were kept in a central hangar bay, the *Midway* uses a new arterial concept of fighter storage. Fighters are stored along an arterial launch corridor that runs the full length of the ship, with six launch bays leading to space. Any fighter can be launched from any bay. During the war, one gutsy Dralhti pilot with dreams of glory could simultaneously find glorious martyrdom and eliminate a carrier's whole fighter compliment with one suicide run through the hangar doors, but the *Midway* can keep launching and landing ships for as long as any tube remains clear.

Science Division

By Lt. Com. Aurora Finley

The "eggheads" in Science Division represent an innovation never before seen on a Confed warship. We're here to solve problems — any problems, from correcting an alkaline imbalance in an agricultural colony's soybean fields, to explaining anomalous radiation readings in the corona of a type-K star, to triangulating the probable position of a smuggler base from known contacts and intercepted communications traffic. Basically we combine the functions of a colonial scientific extension ship with those of a naval intelligence field station.

Scientific services is a multi-service office. We use Navy researchers, Marine intelligence analysts, Space Service scout pilots and engineers and techs from all services. We have a current complement of 81, working towards a planned full complement of 120. We serve under the direct command of the Captain, and I act as Chief Operations Officer.

There's no job too big or too small for the Science Division Office!



W A Y P O I N T !

Tactical Operations

By Col. Jacob Manley



When the newsletter staff first suggested I write up a guide to the fighters of the *Midway* and their missions, I of course replied, "Go away, Lieutenant, I have real work to do." However, when the CAG later came forward with the same suggestion, I reconsidered my position. All I have to say is that if I have to write this, all of you had better know it if it should happen to come up in conversation (and it will).

Back during the war, fighters were designed to be as diversified as possible. Some were lighter, some were heavier, some carried torpedoes and some didn't, a few could jump, but all of them were basically expected to be able to fly against any target they were assigned — another fighter, an installation or a cap ship, in both offensive and defensive capacities.

Today, freed from the often desperate measures of wartime, we are moving towards a more specialised philosophy of ship design. Fighters are fighters, bombers are bombers and interceptors are interceptors. We don't expect one ship to be all three, at least not at the same time.

The TCS *Midway* is rated for three full squadrons, of which two are currently commissioned, the Black Widow (First) Squadron and the Diamondback (Second) Squadron. The Diamondbacks are the junior squadron, in charge of close-in missions, point defence and routine escorts. The Widows are the senior squadron, handling long range combat patrols, offensive operations (including bombing) and other heavy combat duties. The Diamondbacks generally use lighter craft, while the heavier hardware belongs to the Widows. When the Third Squadron is commissioned, sometime in the next 100 days, it will be the elite squadron, flying Vampires, Devastators and similar hard-core strike craft.

Remember, you can always get full specs on any fighter in the *Midway's* arsenal by checking the reference guide in your Integrated Combat Information System (ICIS).

The three squadrons of the TCS *Midway* are expected to be able to perform any of the following mission profiles:

WAYPOINT!

FORCAP (Forward Combat Air Patrol), escort, recon, TARCAP (Targeted Combat Air Patrol), wild weasel (air defence suppression), strike, anti-ship, BARCAP (Barrier Combat Air Patrol, or blockade), counter-air and bombing missions against both ship targets and installations. You will note that for the purposes of these definitions fighter spacecraft are referred to by the archaic term "air" craft.

At full strength, the *Midway's* Space Force assets will include craft of all the following types:

F-106A PIRANHA

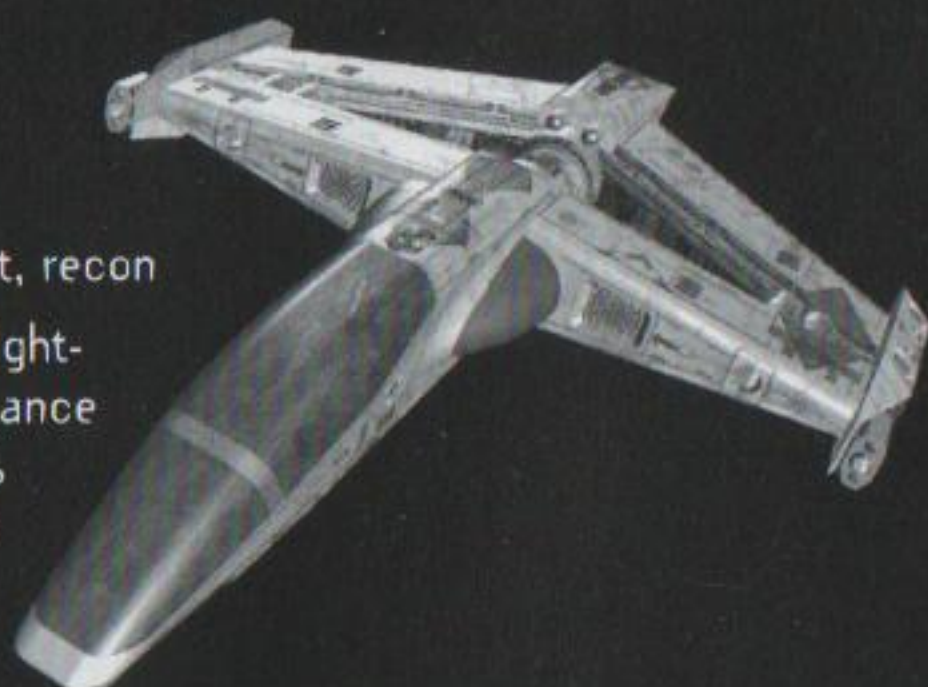
SCOUT FIGHTER

Squadron: Diamondbacks

Mission/Role: FORCAP, escort, recon

Intended as a short-ranged, light-weight escort and reconnaissance fighter, the Piranha sacrifices shields, armor, and firepower for manoeuvrability and acceleration. A pure dog-fighter, in the hands of a skilled pilot the ship's small size and nimble moves make it so challenging a target that the design concessions are offset.

The Piranha is most often seen assigned to very small escort carriers tasked with counter-insurgency and anti-pirate operations, but a few are assigned to the TCS *Midway*, where they're tasked with low-intensity fighter missions and the occasional scouting hop.



WAYPOINT!

F/A-105A

TIGERSHARK

MULTI-ROLE FIGHTER

Squadrons: Diamondbacks, Black Widows

Mission/Role: TARCAP, FORCAP, BARCAP, escort, recon, light strike and light anti-ship, wild weasel

The Tigershark is a throwback to the wartime general-purpose fighter. It is most frequently used for light strike and SEAD duties, but can be effective as a dogfighter.

Its shields are of medium strength, with good (though not excellent) recharge characteristics. The Tigershark is a generally valuable supplement to the more specialised fighters in a CV's wing, capable of filling most "gaps" as needed.



WAYPOINT!

F-110A WASP

INTERCEPTOR

Squadrons: Diamondbacks, Black Widows, (Proposed Third Squadron)

Mission/Role: FORCAP, sometimes BARCAP

The Wasp is a small point-defence fighter that serves as the inner tier of a carrier group's defence. Lacking the range and endurance for prolonged CAP-style patrols, it is usually launched only when enemy bombers have breached the outer BARCAP and are closing on the carrier itself (in a "scramble" situation).

It is tailored to destroy enemy torpedo bombers, at which it is devastating, but it is also effective against most fighter-class targets. In addition to its traditional missile armament, it carries multiple "cluster-rocket" packs (swarmers).

If longer-range capacity is needed, this ship can make use of a detachable booster rocket that gets it to its destination more quickly without using afterburner capacity, at a faster rate than afterburner velocity. Once expended, the booster is automatically jettisoned, resulting in markedly-improved acceleration and manoeuvrability for that portion of the fighter which remains.

Its thin shields recharge quickly.



WAYPOINT!

F-108A PANTHER

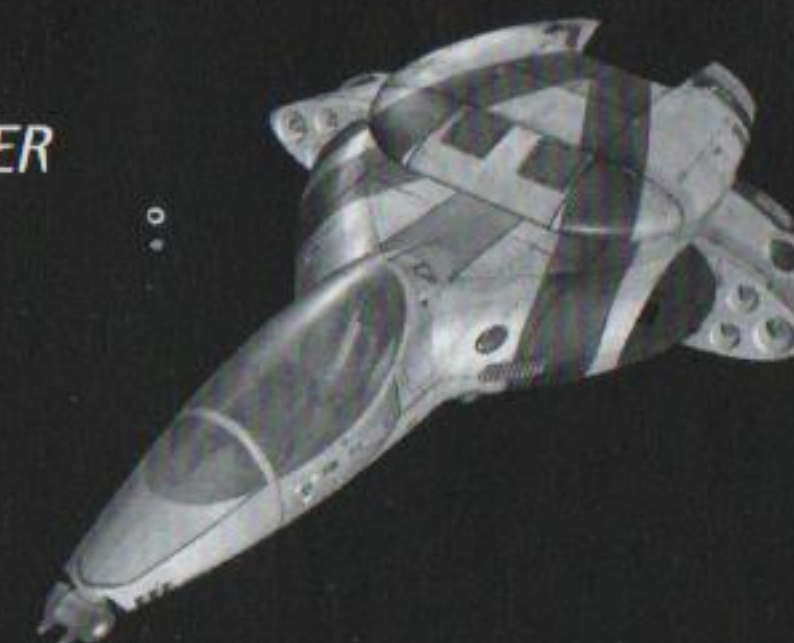
SPACE SUPERIORITY FIGHTER (CLASS B)

Squadron: Black Widows

Mission/Role: BARCAP, TARCAP, offensive counter-air, escort, some FORCAP, some recon, wild weasel

Usually assigned to light escort carriers, the Panther is a smaller answer to the Vampire. Though it falls short of its bigger brother in terms of long-range combat capability, its exceptional acceleration and manoeuvrability make it preferred by some pilots, who consider it a superior dogfighter.

Its shields are lighter than the Vampire's, but exhibit similar excellent recharge characteristics.



WAYPOINT!

F-109A VAMPIRE

SPACE SUPERIORITY FIGHTER (CLASS A)

Squadron: (Proposed Third Squadron)

Mission/Role: BARCAP, TARCAP, offensive counter-air, escort, some FORCAP, some recon, wild weasel

Usually assigned to heavy fleet carriers, the Vampire is customised to destroy other fighters. The Vampire can engage in long-range missile duels, with good chances of survival.

Its shields are of medium strength, but exhibit an excellent recharge rate.



WAYPOINT!

TB-81A SHRIKE

TORPEDO BOMBER (CLASS B)

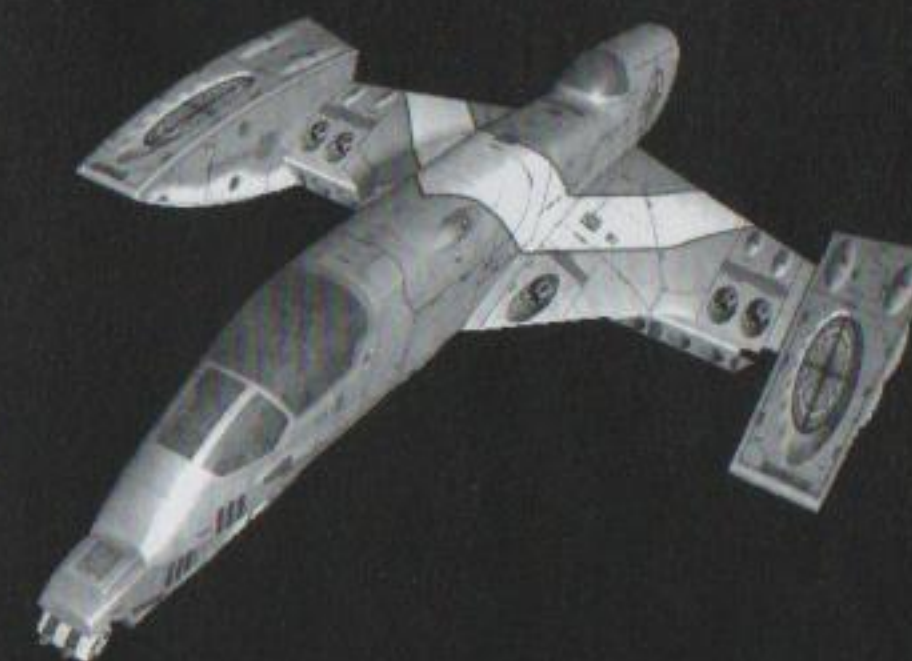
Squadron: Black Widows

Mission/Role: strike, anti-ship, anti-hangar, sometimes recon

Usually stationed on escort carriers, the Shrike is a lightened answer to the much larger Devastator. While it is not as powerful an anti-ship platform, it is noticeably faster and more manoeuvrable than the TB-80, and therefore somewhat less vulnerable in the event of a fighter encounter. It enjoys the same computer targeting system as the Devastator, but not its massive plasma cannon. Rather, the Shrike carries a more conventional armament.

Due to its limited torpedo load, the Shrike is most effective against naval targets of light cruiser-size and downward, but in larger groups can be employed effectively against larger targets.

The Shrike has top, bottom and tail turrets, but lacks the Devastator's side mounts, depending instead on overlap from the top and bottom positions to cover its flanks.



WAYPOINT!

TB-80A DEVASTATOR TORPEDO BOMBER (CLASS A)

Squadron: (Proposed Third Squadron).

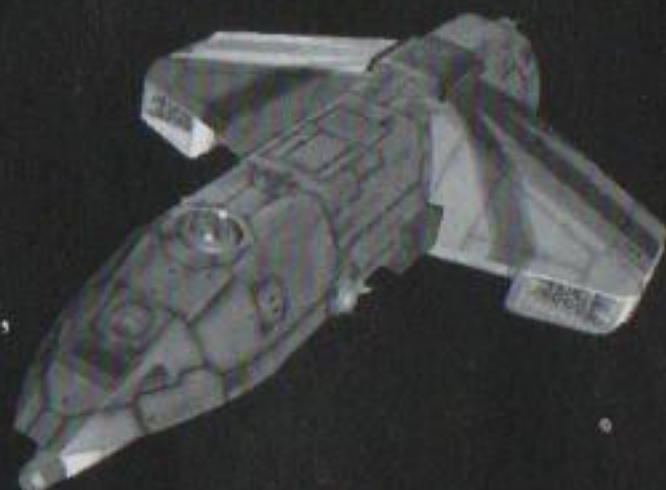
Mission role: strike, anti-ship, anti-hangar, sometimes recon

Usually stationed on fleet carriers, the Devastator has a simple mission: survive long enough to destroy a big target. Its main anti-ship armament is the torpedo.

The Devastator's massive plasma cannon is essentially a smaller version of the same weapon carried by capital ships. Virtually useless against fighters (due to its very slow firing rate), this extremely powerful weapon can cause significant damage to starships, and is by far the platform of choice when it comes to striking heavily defended and armoured targets like battleships and heavy cruisers.

Additionally, to facilitate its survival in a fighter-rich environment it carries anti-fighter turrets on its top, bottom, rear and sides.

Its shields are extremely thick, but exhibit only average recharge characteristics.



WEAPONS

The following weapons are mounted on current Confed fighters and cap ships.

GUNS

Laser Cannon

Confed's mainstream low-power, low-damage weapon that is effective at long ranges.

Ion Cannon

Fires a bolt of highly charged ion particles at the target. This long-range gun does a moderate amount of damage with a high refire rate.

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Mass Driver

This weapon uses a linear accelerator to fire projectiles of metallic mass at a target. A long-range gun, it requires less energy per shot than most blasters and has a relatively fast refire rate.

Adjustable Mass Driver

Upgraded from previous versions, this weapon incorporates a "choke" setting. A thinner choke yields a higher rate of fire and uses less energy, but does less damage at shorter range. A wider choke inflicts more damage and has a longer range, but takes more energy and has a slower refire rate. The dynamics of the mass driver's adjustability are determined by the length of time you hold down the trigger.

Tachyon Gun

More powerful than previous versions of the same gun but with a longer refire delay and a higher energy cost. It also fires one of the fastest moving "bolt" type projectiles.

Heavy Plasma Cannon

This weapon has a slow refire rate, but packs a solid punch. Primarily used against starships, it is not designed to be used against small, highly mobile targets, but will tear a fighter up if a lucky shot is scored.

Mk2 "Stormfire" Cannon

This Gatling gun from the Benelli Corp. has a slower fire rate than its predecessor, the Mk1, but fires a higher-calibre round that explodes against a ship's hull on contact or at the extent of its range. Also, like the Border Worlds' original Stormfire weapon, it has a limited number of rounds.

Particle Cannon

More powerful than the Mass Driver but less powerful than the Tachyon, this weapon fires excited atomic particles at its target that create small nuclear explosions on impact.

WAYPOINT!

MISSILES

Mines

Confed's internally guided submunitions. Mines are deployed backwards, and are detonated by proximity.



Dumbfire Rocket

Confed's no-lock rocket that delivers a massive payload to its target. Excellent against slower moving hard targets like transports, corvettes and destroyers.



Friend-or-Foe Missile

Confed's all-aspect, no-lock missile that can identify friend or foe targets and distinguish between the two, seeking out and destroying the closest enemy.



Image-Recognition Missile

Confed's top-of-the-line all-aspect single-warhead guided missile. Has changed very little since its inception. Once a ship type has been locked into the missile's memory, it will persistently hunt that ship down (until its propellant expires). If it misses on the first pass it will loop around and reacquire its target.



Heat Seeker Missile

Requires less circuitry than the image-recognition and friend-or-foe missiles and packs more of a punch. However, if this missile loses its lock it will not reacquire another target. This munition is best used when you're on the enemy's six, since his heat signature is usually strongest at the rear of his ship.



HARM Missile

This missile rapidly locks on to and destroys turrets.



WAYPOINT!

Torpedo (Light)



The light torpedo is effective against smaller starships but does not pack enough of a punch to bring down heavier vessels.

Torpedo (Heavy)

The only fighter-mounted munition effective against major warships.



Tracker "Smart" Missile



Very long-range anti-fighter missile. Excellent against fast targets trying to flee an area. This missile is really one large booster rocket with several smaller Friend-or-Foe missiles attached. You fire the weapon and hold the trigger until most of the distance to the target is covered (or the booster expires), then release it to launch smaller missiles, which use integrated tracking to pursue and eliminate any nearby enemy ships. Unlike the laser designator on the Swarmer missile, the Tracker missile operates independently of the ship that has fired it once it is released.

Rocket Pods

Pods of small, fast, unguided rockets that have a fast rate of fire and come in six- or twelve-packs. Good against slow moving targets like bombers and transports, but only light damage to a starship. Each rocket does considerably less damage than a Dumbfire, but as a pod they do much more extensive damage.



Swarmer



Multiple missiles launch at once from each pod and track their target. A line-of-sight weapon (you must maintain a visual lock on target until missiles impact), primarily used for close combat/dogfighting against powerful targets. Swarmer are unaffected by decoys.

Commodore, you have no unread mail in your mailbox.
Do you wish to end your session at this time?

Good day, Commodore Blair.



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