STAR FLEET BATTLES

VOLUME III
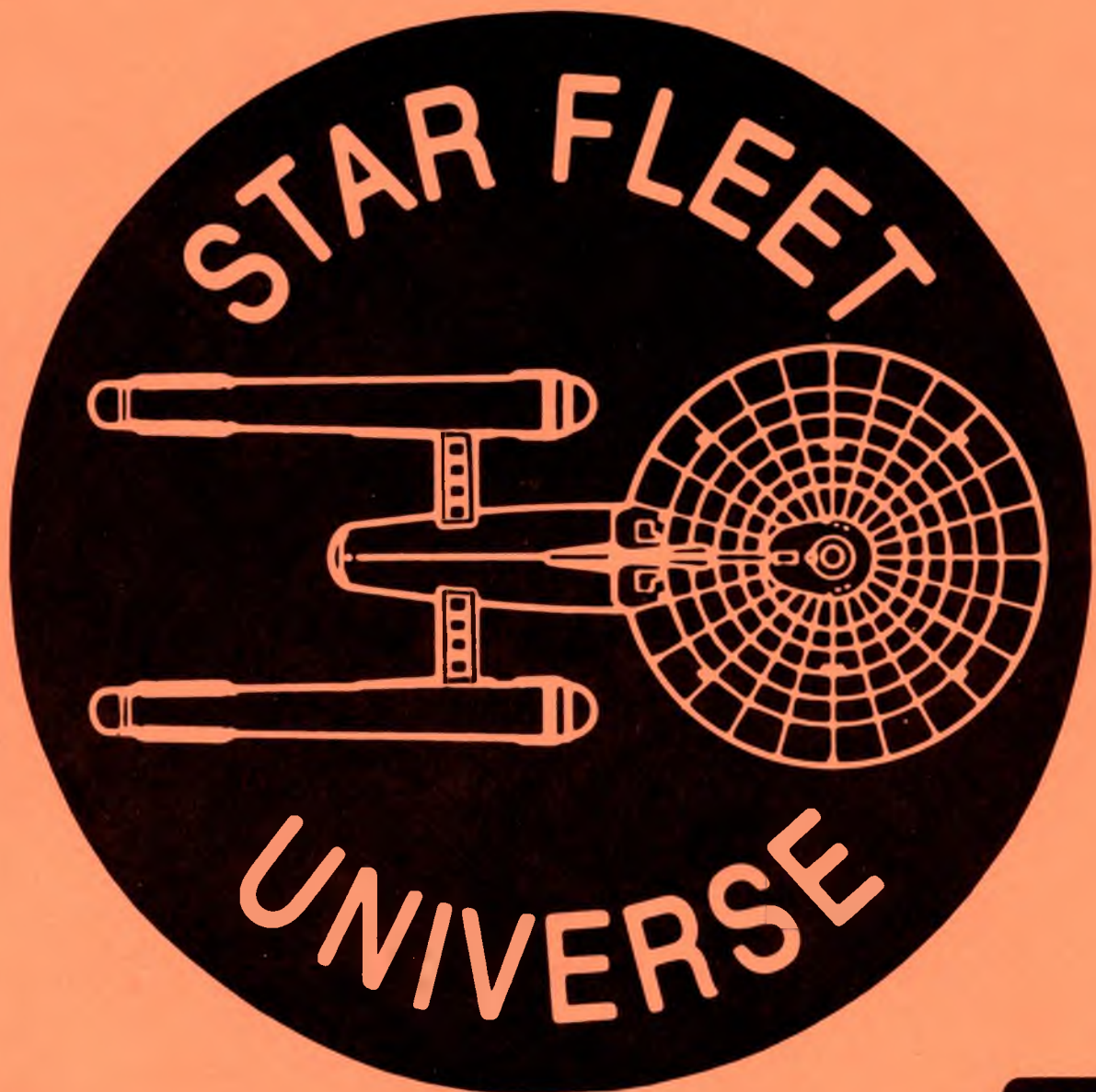
STAR FLEET BATTLES

COMMANDER'S RULEBOOK

VOLUME III

NOTICE TO PLAYERS CONCERNING THIS VOLUME

This is Volume III of Commander's Star Fleet Battles. You must have Volume I and Volume II in order to use this material. It is virtually impossible to use this material in conjunction with the old Designer's Edition rules.

This rulebook is designed to be cut apart and integrated (i.e. shuffled) into the first two Volumes. For example, pages 5 and 6 of this volume should be placed after page 8 of Volume II and before page 15 of Volume I. This integration is not required; many players prefer to keep the three volumes in their original bindings. If you choose to do this, ignore the various instructions to insert these pages.

The pages of this volume are numbered 1-80 for ease of production and as a check against missing pages. Make sure that your copy is complete *before* you disassemble it. The page numbers will become irrelevant after the integration is complete.

Some pages of Volume I and Volume II are replaced by this Volume. These include the Master Ship Chart, Master Fighter Chart, Table of Contents, Index, Annexes, and other designated pages. Check carefully as you integrate the three volumes to make sure you do not discard needed pages. If you do, it will be necessary to purchase a new Volume I and/or II as individual pages are not available as replacements. (You might keep the removed pages for a brief time to make certain that you didn't discard a needed page.)

Volume III is only available as a boxed edition; the rulebook is not available separately.

The complete Volume III includes this rulebook, a 48-page booklet of SSD sheets, and two different sheets of 108 die-cut counters. If any parts are missing or defective, contact Task Force Games at the address given on page 2.

(Z10.0) DESIGNER'S NOTES FOR SFB VOLUME III

THE LONG ROAD TO HERE

The greatest challenge in producing this volume was the fact that, while it was the first new rulebook to be printed in almost three years, a considerable amount of new material had been added to the game system in the intervening time.

At the end of 1982, the old "Designer's Edition" came to an end with the publication of Expansion #3. At that point, it was decided to revise, update, expand, and reformat the existing material into the Commander's Edition. Volume I was published in June of 1983 and Volume II in June of 1984. This created a two-year period during which, at least nominally, no "new" material was added to the game.

And yet, that was never really true. All during this period new ships (and more than a few new rules) continued to appear in *Nexus, Captain's Log,* and *Starletter.* Examples of this phenomenon are the Federation Frigate *(SSD Book #1),* the Lyran Jaguar *(Nexus #5)* and the Gorn, Hydran, and Romulan command cruisers *(Captain's Log #2).* All were needed for the game system (and the many players engaged in campaigns), and so they were published in various places as space and time permitted.

All of this extraneous material has been gathered here. The result is that quite a bit of the "new" material in this volume has been available to the actively gaming public in some form for up to two years. New gamers entering the universe will benefit from the "playtesting" while veterans will find that Volume III organizes a considerable mass of previously helter-skelter material.

All during this project, we knew that this was the last "general" rules module; the supplements will deal with single topics. Because of this, special efforts were made to get everything necessary for a "complete" game system into this volume. Particular attention was paid to the countersheets; with *Reinforcements* and this volume, no major ship lacks a counter.

A TURN IN THE ROAD

Volume III represents a transition in Star Fleet. With the publication of this Volume and Supplements #1 and #2, all of the materials previously published in various places has been made a part of the integrated rules system. As such, the game system is finished, but not complete (or perhaps vice versa).

The Star Fleet Universe will continue to expand, although now it can do so from a solid base. The game will move onward and outward, rather than back and forth across the same old material again and again.

AND IN THIS VOLUME WE HAVE...

And so, ignoring the material picked up from two years of back-door publishing, just what is new in this Volume? Actually, quite a bit.

The last of the major races, the Interstellar Concordium, is included here, along with a satisfactory explanation of why the game universe was able to maintain balance without them during 185 years of subjective time (and five years of objective time). If their ships appear particularly strong, remember that they will be facing the refitted combat veterans of the General War.

The long-promised "New Tholians" have arrived. (Their former subjects are not likely to appear in the game universe.) The Web Caster provides the answer to the age-old question: "How could this bunch of rocks actually run an entire galaxy?" When facing their ships, forget everything you ever learned about formations, maneuvers, and speed. You'll have to pay more than a few ships for the new tactics manual that is required.

The Andromedans (including, as promised, a ship that carries three Dominators — but doesn't move) are now complete, with new ships, campaign data, and the secret of their success and failure.

Many other new concepts, such as Tactical Intelligence and Cargo Handling, have been introduced. The ships that actually perform those (D9.4) repairs have been included. Many new pods have been added, although we rejected the concept of scout/survey pods as an unrealistic use of tugs. Surprise and Hidden Deployment were added to standardize their use in scenarios.

The various fleets are now complete, including exploration ships, space control ships, light tugs, and police vessels. These will provide many new challenges. There are also a host of specialty conversions of the mass-produced war cruisers. The introduction of heavy fighters for all races pre-sages the Interceptor-class (the PF-prototype) that will be introduced in *Supplement #3.*

Many rules sections have been revised and completed, including (J8) MRS Shuttles, (J9) SWAC Shuttles, and (D21) Catastrophic Damage. Material from various scenarios such as (D18) Surprise and (C14) Tholian Pinwheel has been brought into the rulebook.

And as noted, virtually all of the extraneous material previously published in a variety of places has now been integrated into the system in addition the new material. Much of the older material has been modified based on player comments since its original publication.

THE FUTURE

The future is bright for Star Fleet Battles. Supplements are now in development covering Fast Patrol Ships, Star Fleet Marines, Sub-Light Battles, and new Minor Races, to mention only a few items.

The supernova on the horizon, however, is *FEDERATION & EMPIRE,* a strategic level game set in the Star Fleet Universe. While this Volume of SFB depicts some elements of the climactic General War, only F&E will show the war in its full fury. F&E is designed to be not only a campaign system for Star Fleet Battles but an exciting game in its own right. F&E will be a brother, not a stepchild, to SFB.

There will not be a Volume IV (at least not before 1987), but there will be Captain's Logs, Supplements, SSD books, and articles in *Nexus* to keep the Universe expanding continually. Simply because this volume has added more than 200 ships to a game that already had that many does not mean that there are no more to be added. Simply because this volume adds 32 scenarios to the 135 previously published ones doesn't mean there are no more stories to tell. Your comments, questions, and suggestions are the life-blood of Star Fleet Battles, a game that by definition can never be finished, but also can never die.

Stephen V Cole, Professional Engineer, Designer of SFB