

# The Stellar Crusaders

## Revision 1.0

### Author's Note

The Stellar Crusaders came about when I wondered what would happen if some sincere missionaries entered the world of VGAP4. The result is almost a “good” version of the Borg and I hope you find them entertaining. They don't have a superdreadnaught or a heavy carrier, but they have an awesome base that truly deserves the title starbase. Being concerned with life, many common tactics (e.g., destroying bases from orbit) are denied them.

Since the Crusaders are much different than existing races, I was concerned about game balance. I did my best to give them unique strengths and weaknesses. I may have given them too many weaknesses, but I would rather start out weak and strengthen them if needed than err in the opposite direction. Once populations become large, their economy should do quite well in the end game – if they survive that long.

Enjoy!

### Race Attributes

This empire was originally founded when a missionary from Earth – now remembered as St. Pemoht – converted the head of a Privateer clan to his religion. This charismatic duo were part of a great revival that swept their sector of space and converted millions of sentients from all known races. The purpose of this empire is to evangelize the galaxy. They have a very high respect for honesty and law. The eternal salvation of all sentients is very important to them and they mourn whenever an unsaved sentient dies. They believe that they have a duty to evangelize, defend the faith, and be good stewards of their resources. This philosophy has greatly impacted their development. Since their ranks consists of a wide variety of sentient races, they have an interesting assortment of technology and ship designs. Given their beliefs, they have discarded many technologies that they believe are unethical or inefficient. For example, they don't terraform planets as they prefer to enjoy each planet as it was created. Their military tactics are designed at stopping other military ships, not at destroying colonists (potential recruits). Most races shorten their full name to Crusaders. They are led by a Council of Elders.

### General Restrictions

- The Crusaders can not sell contraband. They may collect and buy it to attract natives. Some Enforcer converts also brought the technology to build Material Redistribution Centers.
- Crusaders do not collect taxes.
- Crusaders may not gamble. If an allied ship with a gambling device is overhead, Crusaders will not visit it.
- The Crusaders may not research superweapon technologies.
- Crusaders are very sensitive to worlds being blown up. Every time a planet is blown up by a super laser, the colonists at all Crusader bases will lose 5 happiness points. If a planet was blown up by an ally (attack off for both races), the colonists will lose 50 happiness points. If the Crusaders' leader orders a captured ship to blow up a planet, their colonists will lose 100 happiness points.

- Any ship owned by a Crusader may not fire upon bases. Crusader fighters will not attack bases from space attacks either, but operate normally from ground based attacks.

### **General Differences**

- Since the Crusaders are a melting pot of all known races, spying on other races is easy for them. In fact, a few converts initiate contact with the Crusaders without leaving their location. However, Crusaders may not sabotage bases, incite disorder, or steal ship plans. They may utilize the other spy attacks and get a 25% bonus to their chance of success for sabotaging ships. On the other hand, other races may easily mingle with the Crusaders and get a 25% bonus to sabotaging Crusader bases.
- Crusaders retained the Privateer technology to launch pods at very high speeds (120). However, they were not able to learn how the Privateers keep the high speed of the pods from damaging their power supplies. So the Crusader pods only have 25% as much power as the standard pod.
- Crusaders treat natives as equals and many natives accept the Crusaders' faith (however, the natives stay as natives – they don't become colonists). All natives in a Crusader base get a +50 to their happiness score.
- For ground assaults, Crusader attack stats are special. Their personal (colonists, troop, highguard, and crew) combat strength is halved for attacks and doubled for defense. Their ground units and fighters are unaffected by this adjustment.
- Any ship owned by a Crusader uses special software to target weapons. Damage done to enemy weapons is doubled. However, the trade off of this specialized targeting results in halving the kill power of all weapons.

### **Exotic Tech Restrictions**

- Crusaders frown upon cloning and are forbidden from using Tank-O-Tronic exotic technologies.
- Crusaders are forbidden from using Propaganda exotic technologies.
- Crusaders are forbidden from poisoning contra items (but may purchase the other anti-contra technologies).
- Crusaders are forbidden from buying the Transphased World Crusher exotic technology.

### **Conversions**

Stellar Crusaders have the ability to convert other sentient races to their religion. Hive minds (such as the Borg) are immune.

- If the Crusaders are on the same planet as other (non-hive) empires, 5% + 7 of the other people (colonists, crew, troops) will convert and join the Crusaders. If everyone in another base converts, the base will merge with the Crusaders' base.
- If the Crusaders take prisoners, 5% + 7 of the prisoners will convert to the Crusaders each turn. Note: This includes Borg since the Crusaders remove the cyborg implants from all Borg prisoners. Note2: Fed colonist prisoners must undergo drug therapy first at the Crusaders' expense.
- Other highguard will only convert if a crusader highguard is within 5 light years (it takes a personal relationship with another highguard to convert a highguard). If enemy highguard are on a ship or base that otherwise converts, and no Crusader highguard is near, the enemy highguard will flee in their personal shuttles.
- Crusaders will not stop evangelizing for any reason. It is an integral part of their nature. So allies will converted to Crusaders just like any other people.

- Federation members are twice as likely to be converted as other races. However, when their colonists join the Crusaders, they must enter an additional withdrawal program that costs the Crusaders 1 MC and 1 medical unit per joining colonist. Other Federation citizens (troops, crew, highguard) have enough self-discipline to shake the Federation drug habit without attending withdrawal programs. If the Crusaders do not have enough resources (MCs or medical units), the converts stay in a detoxification program until the resources are available.
- Each turn there is a 2% chance of a revival. If this occurs, the Crusaders will get a message letting them know they have experienced a revival that turn. During revivals, the odds of conversion increase tenfold.

### **Captured Crusaders**

When captured, Crusaders are model prisoners, but they have some unique characteristics:

#### **Normal Prison conditions**

- The Crusaders will convert other prisoners in the camp at a rate of 10% + 7 people per turn. As with other conversions, highguard prisoners will not be converted unless the Crusaders also have a highguard prisoner.

#### **Labor Camps/Mines**

- 1) The Crusaders will convert other prisoners in the camp at a rate of 10% + 7 people per turn. As with other conversions, highguard prisoners will not be converted unless the Crusaders also have a highguard prisoner.
- 2) If other races (not counting Borg) are in the camp, their death rate will be halved, but the Crusader death rate will be increased by 10%. This is because the Crusaders will give them half of their food allotment.
- 3) The happiness penalty suffered by the Crusaders' homeworlds is reduced by 50% as the prisoners are considered martyrs.
- 4) Guards usually receive special training to ignore Crusader prisoners and are not subject to conversion.
- 5) Each turn there is a 3% chance that the Crusaders will sacrifice themselves in a distraction to free the other prisoners. The Crusaders will all die, but one of other imprisoned races will escape to their nearest base. Both the Crusaders and the race that escapes will get a message with details about the escape and the prison planet. The Crusaders will use this information to fine-tune their evangelism message toward the empire who had the prisoners. For the next 2 turns, the Crusaders' evangelism is twice as effective as normal against this empire.
- 6) If other races are prisoners, the chances of a prison riot decrease by 25%

### **Fighters**

The Stellar Crusaders have short-ranged fighters. They are intended to be used from a planetary base or support ships. They are not intended for unescorted long-range missions.

- **Shammah:** – Named after one of David's three mighty men, the Shammah is designed for planetary attacks. Its chameleon skin hull is capable of changing colors in flight to decrease the odds of long-range visual detection.
- **Eleazar:** – Named after one of David's three mighty men, the Ekeazar is designed for base attacks. It is rarely used and Crusader protocol only calls for building them when there is a threat of Borg bases chunneling to one of their planets.

- **Jashobeam:** – Named after one of David’s three mighty men, the Jashobeam is designed for space combat. Compared to most races, the Jashobeam is relatively expensive for a space fighter. This is one of the reasons the Crusaders never developed a carrier.

## Ground Units

- **Manna 3000:** Brought to the Crusaders by some Bird converts, it is identical to the Bird plasmatron. It causes enemy assault craft and fighters to suffer from electronic overloads and shut downs during ground attacks on your base. They also mine metals and can smelt ore cleanly and safely. Each plasmatron acts as one mine and one smelter and has no negative effects on the colonists and natives. Each plasmatrons will decrease the attack powers of enemy assault craft and fighters by 0.5% (with a maximum of 50%) against your own assault craft.
- **Quiver of Jonathan :** – Identical to the Enforcer MI-266H unit.
- **Jerricho Wallcrusher:** – Unique Crusader Design – heavy tank with AA gun.

## Special Base Buildings

- **Broadcast Center:** These centers allow the Crusaders to evangelize over a 300 light year radius from each center. Only 1 broadcast center may be created on each base. They are tech level 5. They cost 100 supplies and 1,000 MCs to produce. They have many effects:
  - 1) .001 of all sentient individuals within the broadcast range (including their own people, not including hive minds) will send them 1 MC per turn. Federation colonists will not send any money because they don’t have any. 30% of these monies are sent directly to the central government (GCs).
  - 2) 3% + 10 of all sentients within the broadcast range (not including their own people, not including hive minds) will come to the Crusader base per turn if a) the Crusader base has an active public spaceport and b) the sentients are in a base with an active public space port.
  - 3) Every ship of sentient individuals (not including hive minds) within the broadcast range has a 3% chance of converting and becoming a Crusader owned ship per turn. If the ship has 10 or more highguard on it, the chance of converting drops to 2%. Solarian ships will explode if their crews change loyalties. If a converted ship has highguard on it, all the highguard will return to their home via their personal shuttles unless Crusader highguards are within 5 light years.
  - 4) All scanners within 300 light years automatically detect any Crusader Base with an active Broadcaster center.

Note: If people are in range of multiple broadcast centers, they will only be affected by the closest broadcast center. This applies to all broadcast centers whether or not they are from one Crusader or multiple Crusaders.
- **Yeast Vats:** Since the Crusaders consist of many races, they have advanced yeast vats and greenhouses that can produce sustenance for virtually all life forms. These vats cost 5 MCs and 1 supply each. A maximum of 10,000 vats are allowed per base. Unlike farms, they don’t produce any MC, but they do produce 1 food unit each. Since they are self-contained, they work in any climate conditions. They are tech level 2.
- **Church Parishes:** These are many individual dwellings centered around a major religious site. Each Parish may hold up to 250,000 colonists (and requires 125,000 colonists to be productive). A maximum of 200 parishes may be built on each world. Each parish produces 200 MCs, 20 GCs, and 500 medical units per turn. It costs 500 MCs and 200 supplies to build a parish. They are tech level 3.

- **Material Redistribution Center:** (identical to Enforcers). I believe it turns contraband into: 1 mc, 1 supply, 3 food and 100 ordnance.

## Special pods

These pods are key elements of the Crusaders' empire. Any pod launcher owned by a Crusader can also launch one of these pods.

- **Scout:** These pods have the same image as an assault pod. They are simply a basic 250 range scanner encapsulated within a pod. As long as the pod has power, the scanner is always on and may be boosted with exotic tech.
- **Minelayer:** These pods are designed to gently explode in space upon reaching their destination. They will distribute their cargo of mines (grav or barbitic) at that time. The resulting minefields work just like minefields created by minelaying ships. The Crusader must choose to load the pod with barbitic or grav mines at the time of launch (default is barbitic). The Crusader must load the pod with between 500 and 5,000 ordnance. (Tim to save time, please default load the pod with the amount of ordnance needed for the maximum size minefield allowed by the host – e.g., 2,500 ord for most games). When loading the pod, the Crusader may also choose between cloaked and active (default is cloaked).

While traveling, the pod has a special control button “deploy now.” If activated, the pod will quit traveling and deploy the minefield at its current location. The pod will also have a cloaked/active switch to allow the Crusader to change how the minefield is initially laid. If someone attempts to capture a minelaying pod, the pod will instantly deploy its minefield.

- **Colony:** The Crusaders use this pod to establish most of their colonies. It can hold up to 50,000 people (no carbon freeze). It can also hold up to 250 supplies, up to 200 food, and up to 7,000 MC.

## Ship Attributes

- Any ship owned by a Crusader may not fire upon bases.
- Any ship owned by a Crusader uses special software to target weapons. Damage done to enemy weapons is doubled. However, the trade off of this specialized targeting results in halving the kill power of all weapons.

## Ship Special Devices

- **Alchemy:** Converts supplies into metals. Twelve supply units are converted into 3 kt of metal, 1 kt of each type.
- **Barbitic Mine Dropper:** Anti-Ship mines
- **Boarding Laser:** Active when a hostile ship to ship transfer of troops takes place. Holes are cut into the hull of the enemy ship killing about half the enemy crew and troops and doing light damage to the enemy ship's hull making it easier to take the enemy ship. The device does its job during movement when a hostile ship to ship transfer takes place. Will not work on Crystal crewed ships.
- **Cloak:** Decreases a ship's sensor image by 50 units. The ship must have less than 25% system damage for the cloak to work.
- **Cloaking Field:** Hide ships near the ship. All object in the area get a -150 sensor image cloaking bonus. Ship itself does not cloak. Device has a range of 100 ly.
- **DTMS-N fuel converter:** Produces fuel from metals and supplies into fuel. It can convert 1 kt of metal into 1 fuel unit or 10 kt of supplies into 1 unit of fuel.
- **Food To Supply Converter:** Turns food into supplies.

- **Gravitonic Accelerator:** Doubles ship's speed. When on scanners will not work.
- **Gravitonic Mine Dropper:** Anti-Hyper jump mines. If a hyper jump ship travels through a gravitonic minefield it will fall out of hyper space.
- **Jumpgate Builder:** Builds a jumpgate, the cost of the game is cost 1,000 molybdenum and 10,000 megacredits.
- **Laser Mining Drill:** Mines ore from a planet's core and produces pure metals. Heats a planet by about 0.3 climate units a turn. Adds between 10 and 60 units of HD stress to the core of the planet.
- **Long Range Mine Detector:** Detects all minefields in a 500 LY radius.
- **Mine Sweeper Array:** Destroys 1 minefield per turn, destroys the whole minefield. Can also be used to recover your own minefields. The number of ord units recovered from your own minefields is proportional to the percentage of energy left in the minefield.
- **Mobile Med Lab:** Converts food to med units and produces 3 free med units a turn.
- **Mobile Ord Factory:** Turn supplies into Ord, makes 100 units of "free ord" a turn.
- **Mobile Parts Plant:** Duranium is converted to repair units. One kt of Duranium yields 100 repair units
- **Ore Processing:** Turns ore in pods or on ground base under ship into metals. Metals are automatically transferred to the ground base.
- **Ram Scoop:** Take in 20 kt of fuel if moving faster than 20 ly per turn Works during movement.

## Ship Super Weapons

None. The Crusaders will not research superweapon technology.

## Ships

For symbolic reasons, the Stellar Crusaders maintain 12 ship types. Many of these are modifications of ships of other races that the converted crews brought with them. These ships were modified to fit the Crusaders philosophy but are obviously variants of the original design. Given the large number of Federation converts, many of these ships were originally of Federation design. The other ships were uniquely designed to around the Crusader theories of warfare. The Crusaders do not use freighters or scouts as they rely upon their fast pods for these functions.

**Elijah Class Envoy** – Almost an exact duplicate of the Empire's Mig Class Shuttle. The Crusaders were unable to replicate the Dust Off technology, so they eliminated this device and slightly upgraded the sensor array.

**Gideon Class Light Cruiser** – Based upon the Bird's White Falcon, the Crusaders eliminated the self destruct device and upgraded the sensor array. They also redistributed the distribution of small weapons and point defense.

**Guardian Class Escort** – Based upon the Lizard Reptile Class Destroyer, this ship was reengineered as an escort ship. The Psi-Opps Hisser Unit was ripped out and the hull was slightly enlarged to support a more powerful shield generator and an increased ordnance hold. Despite their engineering prowess, the Crusaders have not yet found a way to redesign the hull to support one of the better shields, but the new hull design will support a Corber 400.

**Joab Class Frigate** – Loosely based upon the Peep's Cleansing Advanced Destroyer, the Crusaders completely redesigned this ship. The Joab class looks remarkable similar to the Cleansing, albeit at about 60% of the original size, but the resemblance ends there. For

starters, the Crusaders dropped the ability to jump through hyperspace in order to strengthen the hull. The reduced mass of the vessel also reduced the shield strength and firepower of the vessel. However, the Crusaders are happy with their frigate and used the experience they gained in building it as a stepping stone before building their own designs.

**Caleb Class Cruiser** – Chiefly designed by an influx of Centaur engineers, it is a very maneuverable cruiser intended to lead small task forces.

**Noah Class Utility Cruiser:** This is the backbone of the Crusader supply chain. The Noah is not a warship and should be escorted at all times. In memory of St. Pemoht, the first ship of the class was named St. Pemoht and Pemoht is engraved in every Noah class ship.

**Joshua Class Battlecruiser** – The fastest capital ship in the Crusader fleet, it is ideal for guarding borders and discouraging raiding expeditions.

**Samson Class Tug:** This sturdy ship can tow basically anything. Samsons are well built and mine-hit resistant, taking much less damage from mine hits than normal. The slowest ship in the Fleet, it should not be left without an escort. Its primary purposes are jumpgate building and moving Jerusalem Starbases as needed.

**David Class Dreadnaught** – Modified from the Federation Nova design, the main change was strengthening and streamlining the hull to allow for faster speed and the addition of a gravitonic accelerator. The holodeck was dropped as a frivolous waste of energy.

**Goliath Class Dreadnaught** – A psuedo ship designed to perfectly mimic the David Class. However, it is an empty shell intended to frighten enemies away. It is fully automated and moves with no crew on board. It will show as a David Class Dreadnaught and die quickly in battle. The Evil Empire's Dark Sense allows them to distinguish between Goliaths and Davids.

**Good Samaritan Hospital Ship** – This ship may resuscitate those whose died in combat or who otherwise received mortal injuries. However, since there is only a brief window of opportunity to resuscitate people, the Hospital ship must survive the battle in order to resuscitate others. It will resuscitate 20% of the Crusaders and their allies lost in combat. It will also resuscitate 15% of the enemy personnel lost in combat. The difference in effectiveness is strictly due to greater familiarity with allied escape procedures. The revived enemy personnel will be placed in a lifepod as prisoners. Each person revived consumes .1 medical units. It is the skilled crew that resuscitates people, so this ability only works when the ship is crewed by Crusaders. The ship must also be at least 50% crewed in order to resuscitate people. Also, if a Good Samaritan Hospital Ship is in orbit over a Crusader base, that base can detoxify Federations for only .1 medical units per colonists and will not require any MCs to clean the drugs out of their system.

**Jerusalem Class Starbase** – A true starbase, it is the strongest unit in the fleet. Complete with drydock, it is a metropolis in space. However, at a cost of 30,000 MC per hull, their numbers will be limited.

## Playing As

- The Crusaders are unique and you'll need to forget your standard strategies with this race. The biggest disadvantage is the inability to blow up bases from orbit.

- Use your pod launchers for scouting, colonizing planets, and defending your space (with minefields).
- All worlds are good worlds for you. So pick your worlds with in eye for strategic importance not climate. Of course high native worlds are still prime choices.
- Set up broadcast centers near worlds with many natives and/or near heavily populated worlds. If other empires build public spaceports to attract natives, you'll attract some of their citizens. Donations sent to broadcasts centers are the primary source of revenue for you, so ensure you obtain planetary tech 5 quickly. You also need other colonists to expand. Your growth rate is low and you can not increase it with exotic tech.
- Build parishes when your colony reaches 125,000 people and then every increase of 250,000 colonists. Parishes cost more than cities and produce less on a per capita basis, but they don't retard your growth.
- Make sure you build plasmatrons. Until you obtain hull tech 5, they are your only way of mining metals other than your starting Noah. And these units are the only method you have of mining fuel. After you have mined out a world, pod your plasmatrons to other worlds.
- Make sure you send a decent amount of money to your colonies to get them started. Since you can't earn income from farms or cities, your economy will grow more slowly than most until you can build broadcast centers around large populations.
- Diplomacy is very important. Other players will have mixed feelings about you. On one hand, the ethos of the Crusaders is to always keep their word. On the other hand, Crusaders recruit members from the populations of others...
- Two of your non-combat ships have cloaking fields. Occasionally hide task forces within these fields. Use these cloaking fields and some small fleets of Goliaths to keep attackers guessing where your warships are.
- Be warned: Your starting Noah is priceless to you. Without it you have no way of making supplies until you reach hull tech 5. Do not risk it.
- Beware of the Birds. While they are not a natural enemy, they could be a major threat to you. Your minefields should protect you against most cloakers; however, if the Birds learn your UFC you could have real problems. If you start converting a cloaked ship or two in your territory, start blowing up your minefields in that area. Even if they know your UFC, an exploding minefield will still damage them. Just make sure you don't have any small ships within the minefields.

## Playing Against

- Lay minefields and set your ships to target soft to destroy their pods.
- If they build a broadcast center near your planets, close your public spaceports (unless you are Feds – explained later) and don't keep large fleets within their range. The odds of a few ships converting are very low, but if you have many ships in the area, you'll probably lose a few.
- If you have labor camps/mines, Crusader prisoners are safer than most. In addition, they are a great source of income. They will create converts from other prisoners and reduce the chances of prison riots, so your prison income will be high. However, you have to carefully manage them. If you have too few guards (colonists, crew, and troops), the prisoners may convert your base. If you have too many guards, the Crusaders will convert a lot of your people and escape en mass. You are safest when your guards equal between 40% and 200% of the number of Crusaders. The closer toward 40% you are, the less guards you will lose to converts.

- Don't let them build a base on the same planet as any of your major bases. Their conversion ability does not depend upon their numbers. If they establish a base on the same planet, blow it up from orbit.
- Many of the Crusader ships are susceptible to boarding. Their ships are especially vulnerable to cloaked boarders.
- Tell the Borg where the Crusaders are.
- Feds actually cost the Crusaders money and medical units if their colonists join the Crusaders. Set up buffer worlds of breeding colonists between your main empire and the Crusaders. So Feds should not turn off their public spaceports near the Crusaders.

## Natural Enemies

- **The Borg:** The Borg are the single greatest threat to the Crusaders. Since they are a hive mind, the Borg are resistant to conversion. The Crusaders cannot destroy Borg bases from orbit since that would violate their own principles. So they must defeat Borg bases in ground combat. Since the Crusaders are subject to assimilation by the Borg, this is usually a futile endeavor. The Crusaders typically need the help of an ally to survive a major Borg offensive and allies are hard to find for Crusaders.
- **Children of the Apocalypse:** Crusaders consider the COTA to be an abomination and the COTA consider the Crusaders to be "goody-goody" servants of their arch-enemy. The COTA especially hate the Good Samaritan Hospital Ship.
- **Other Stellar Crusaders:** Crusaders may look at other Crusaders as common believers with a minor difference in theology or as heretics that are worse than unbelievers because they confuse the unsaved. Since the impact of broadcast centers is not cumulative, multiple Crusaders ending up competing for scarce resources they vitally need.
- **The Evil Empire:** The Emperor has a personal dislike for the Crusaders due to their use of grav mines and their innate goodness. They can also distinguish between Davids and Goliaths.
- **The Federation:** The relatively large number of Federation citizens that join the politically incorrect Crusaders greatly embarrasses the Federation government. While many citizens of the Federation tend to admire the Crusaders, many of their politically correct government officials consider the Crusaders a threat to the Federation way of life.

## Starting conditions

The Crusader home base starts with 4 parishes.

The Crusader home base starts with 100 yeast vats

The Crusader home base starts with a broadcast center.

The Crusaders start with 1 Noah and 1 Caleb. If the game starts with extra freighters, then they also start with 2 Guardians.