

For as long as the oldest spacer remembers, the enigma of the Ebony Eyes has existed. It was discovered accidentally by a tramp freighter, captained by a human named Eboniyes. Over the years the phenomenon became known as the Ebony Eyes, both after the captain and the presence of black holes.

Located exactly halfway between the systems of Dramune and K'aken-Kar on the Frontier Sector Map (p. 51, STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Game Rules), the Ebony Eyes are two unique black holes that orbit one another, lying only 160,000 kilometers (16 hexes) apart. Both singularities are almost equivalent in size and strength.

Anything coming within 50,000 km (5 hexes) of one of the Ebony Eyes is lost, and will fall into the singularity within minutes. Rescue and escape are impossible. It is possible for a ship to take up an orbit around one of the Ebony Eyes at a 60,000 km (6 hex) radius; the ship would move at one hex per turn, and could start a scenario already in orbit around the Eye. An orbiting ship would have a speed of zero. A ship may enter orbit around an Eye by coming within six hexes of it at a speed of one, moving along the proper orbital path, then turning off its engines. A safe "window" exists between the holes (30,000 km wide, or 3 hexes) for ships to travel through without risk of having their flight paths altered by the singularities' enormous gravitational pull.

The two black holes, designated Ebony Eyes Alpha and Ebony Eyes Beta on official UPF astronavigational charts, are relatively small compared to average black holes. But an interesting phenomena occurs around the Ebony Eyes that is known at no other known black hole location.

Because these two black holes are so close together, the temporal and spatial fields around them have been twisted out of shape. This phenomenon causes illusionary duplicates of anything that enters the area to appear. The duplicates (0-3 of them, determined by a d4-1 roll) will appear within a few kilometers of the original object (in the same hex as the object), and will make every move that the original object makes. The duplicates will shoot illusionary weapons if the original does, and the beams and missiles launched will be duplicated as well (though duplicates will have no effect on targets). Energy sensors, radar, and all other detection devices will not be able to tell which object of an identical set is real and which is not.

### Background to the Battle

Every galactic year a special research ship is sent to the Ebony Eyes to check on any changes in their energy patterns and to try new experiments. The ship stays for two standard days and is usually accompanied by a small military escort, since some of the most important scientists in the UPF are involved in the research.

This year a larger than usual military escort was sent with the research ship (the *Ensten*); an increase in Sathar hostilities in recent months brought this about. The military vessels were instructed to protect the *Ensten* at all costs, and also planned to conduct maneuvering and weapons drills in their spare time.

The trip to the Ebony Eyes was uneventful and soon the scientists aboard the *Ensten* were happily taking readings. The crews of the UPFS vessels, however, were nervous because of unusual energy transmissions they picked up as they entered the system. They were also unused to the "duplicating" effects of the local space-time distortion.

Only minutes after taking up positions at the Ebony Eyes, the UPF crews were shocked to discover what appeared to be an enormous Sathar war fleet coming around the side of Ebony Eyes Beta. The

# The Battle at Ebony Eyes

A STAR FRONTIERS®

*Knight Hawks game scenario*

by William Tracy

Sathar had gone undetected as nothing could be seen, visually or using long-range detectors, of what was on the other side of the Ebony Eyes (which are surrounded by whirlpools of matter and dust extending out to 50,000 km). The Sathar were just as surprised, and believed that a major UPF fleet had discovered the base of operations they had established at the Ebony Eyes some months ago, from which they had successfully raided UPF space and eluded discovery.

The famed Battle of Ebony Eyes resulted. It was certainly one of the most unexpected military actions to have taken place with the Sathar, and it proved to be one of the most confusing battles as well.

### UPF Ships

UPFS *Ensten* (research vessel)  
HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70  
Weapons: LB  
Defenses: RH

UPFS *Admiral Clinton* (battleship)  
HP 120 ADF 2 MR 2 DCR 200  
Weapons: DC, LB(x3), PB, EB(x2), S(x4), T(x8), RB(x10)

Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM(x12)

UPFS *Honor* (light cruiser)  
HP 70 ADF 3 MR 2 DCR 100  
Weapons: DC, LB, EB, PB, RB(x6), T(x4)  
Defenses: RH, ES, SS, ICM(x12)

UPFS *Chivalry* and *Faith* (destroyers)  
HP 50 ADF 3 MR 3 DCR 75  
Weapons: LC, RB(x4), LB, T(x2), EB  
Defenses: RH, MS(x2), ICM(x5)

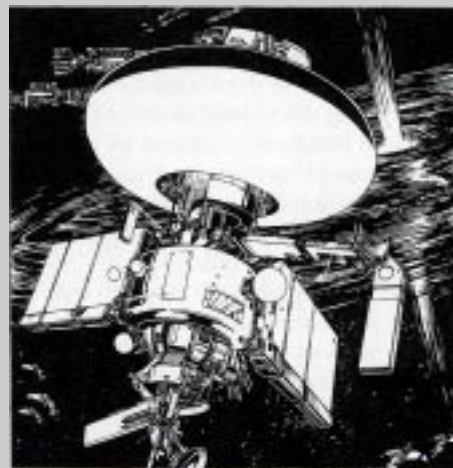
UPFS *Electron* and *Proton* (frigates)  
HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70  
Weapons: LC, RB(x4), LB, T(x2), EB  
Defenses: RH, MS(x4), ICM(x4)

### Sathar Ships

SAVB *Nova* (fortified space station)  
HP 300 DCR 150  
Weapons: LB(x5), RB(x16)  
Defenses: RH, MS(x4), ICM(x12)

SAV *Blood War* (heavy cruiser)  
HP 80 ADF 2 MR 1 DCR 120  
Weapons: LB(x2), PB, EB, DC, S(x2), T(x4), RB(x8)  
Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM(x8)

SAV *Famine* (light cruiser)  
HP 70 ADF 3 MR 2 DCR 100  
Weapons: DC, LB, EB, PB, RB(x6), T(x4)  
Defenses: RH, ES, SS, ICM(x8)



SAV *Disease* and *Apocalypse* (frigates)

HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70  
Weapons: LC, RB(x4), LB, T(x2)  
Defenses: RH, MS(x2), ICM(x4)

The following 10 fighters are based aboard the fortified station *Nova*:

Fighters A-J  
HP 8 ADF 5 MR 5 DCR 30  
Weapons: AR(x3)  
Defenses: RH

### Scenario set up

The following is a list of the ships that fought at Ebony Eyes, with the hex number that each begins the game in and their direction of facing (see below). It also lists their speed when the battle begins. Use the appropriate counters for the ships, upside down planet counters for the black holes, an da miscellaneous ship counter for the *Ensten*.

Direction of facing is indicated by an alphabetical letter, A-F, that follows each ship's hex number. The following diagram shows in which direction a ship will face on the Knight Hawks game map:

Ebony Eyes Alpha: Hex 2019 (stationary)  
Ebony Eyes Beta: Hex 3519 (stationary)

UPFS *Admiral Clinton*: hex 3526 D (full stop)  
UPFS *Honor*: hex 3326 F (full stop)  
UPFS *Chivalry*: hex 2929 E (full stop)  
UPFS *Faith*: hex 4033 C (full stop)  
UPFS *Electron*: hex 3233 D (full stop)  
UPFS *Proton*: hex 4229 A (full stop)  
UPFS *Ensten*: hex 3426 E (full stop)

SAVB *Nova* (in orbit): hex 4119 (1 hex/turn)

SAV *Blood War*: hex 2816 D (2 hexes/turn)

SAV *Famine*: hex 3611 B (2 hexes/turn)

SAV *Disease*: hex 4116 C (1 hex/turn)

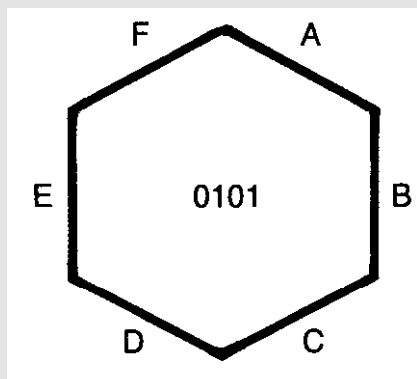
SAV *Apocalypse*: hex 4116 C (1 hex/turn)  
SAV Fighters (aboard the *Nova*): hex 4119

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Ship facing diagram

### Special rules

A referee will be needed for this scenario. At the start of the game, the referee should roll dice and determine how many copies of each ship exist (d4-1), and then inform the players of the results for both their own fleet and that of the enemy. The referee will have to keep track during the game of which ships are discovered to be copies and which are found to be real. This can involve some elaborate bookkeeping.

Targeting computers and personnel will not be able to tell the difference

between real ships and their illusory copies. If a real ship uses a weapon, any copies of it will appear to shoot the same type of weapon. Individual "to hit" rolls should be made for all weapons, both from copies and (of course) real ships. If one of the rolls is determined to hit a target, determine randomly whether the target ship or a copy of it (if any) was struck.

If an illusory weapon hit a real ship, the ship's crew can determine which ship fired the weapon and can disregard that ship when firing back. Thus if a ship and its two copies fired missiles at another ship and only an illusory missile hits, the target ship can disregard the "fake" ship that fired the illusory missile when returning fire, and can thus permanently increase its chances to find which of the copied ships is the real one.

If a real ship is hit by a real weapon, it will take damage and so will its copies. A real weapon hitting a fake ship and a fake weapon hitting a fake ship will produce no effects, but no one except for the referee will be able to tell if the weapon hitting the fake ship was real or not.

### Tactics and victory conditions

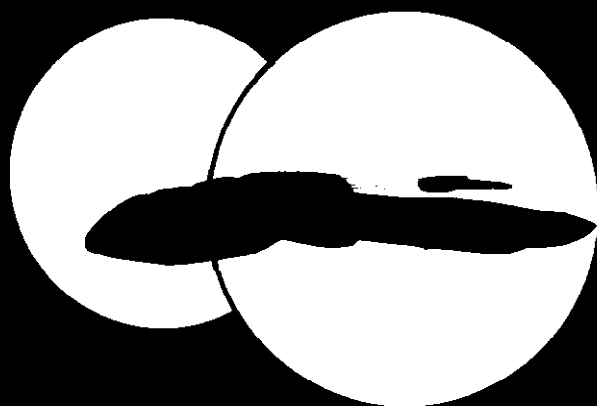
The Sathar will try to knock out the *Ensten's* engines, so that after defeating the UPF ships they can capture the *Ensten's* scientists (they have recognized what the ship is and how valuable its passengers would be).

The *Ensten* alone may attempt to escape the battle; both UPF and Sathar ships will not voluntarily leave the map until one side or the other is conquered. The *Ensten* may escape by exiting the game board from the far left side, between hexes 0101 and 0139. If the Sathar see they will not be able to stop the *Ensten* from escaping, they will center their efforts towards destroying it. The Sathar will follow the *Ensten* until they are destroyed.

To win, the UPF ships must destroy all the Sathar ships, but not necessarily the space fortress, and keep the *Ensten* safe. If the *Ensten* is destroyed, but the Sathar ships (excluding the space fortress) are destroyed, the game is considered a draw. If the *Ensten* escapes but all the UPF ships are destroyed, it is considered a marginal victory for the Sathar (their base is discovered and they must flee). **A**

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