

STARGRAVE

HOPE ETERNAL



JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH



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SCIENCE FICTION WARGAMES IN THE RAVAGED GALAXY

HOPE ETERNAL



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AUTHOR

Joseph A. McCullough's first brush with writing for games was as co-author of *The Grey Mountains* supplement for the *Middle-Earth Role-Playing Game*, and he has remained passionate about Fantasy gaming since, going on to become an award-winning game designer. He is the creator of the "Frostgrave Family" of skirmish wargames (the Fantasy titles *Frostgrave*, *Ghost Archipelago*, *Rangers of Shadow Deep*, and the Sci-Fi evolution, *Stargrave*) and of the *Oathmark* fantasy battle game and *The Silver Bayonet*, a game of *Napoleonic Gothic Horror*. The latest information on his game design and other writing can be found at: josephamccullough.com.

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome back to the Ravaged Galaxy, I hope you are ready for some epic adventure! The bulk of this book is a single campaign, made up of ten scenarios, designed for either solo or cooperative play. It's an adventure that starts with the independent crews doing a typical data grab mission and ends with a chance to destroy not one, but two, of the pirate fleets that have been menacing the galaxy. Of course, in-between, the crews will have to execute a daring rescue operation, locate a reclusive weaponsmith, obtain some incredibly rare minerals, infiltrate a space-station... well, you'll see!

Hope Eternal is the third supplement for *Stargrave: Wargames in the Ravaged Galaxy*, but it stands alone both mechanically and thematically. Mechanically, all you need to play is the rulebook. While you can use some of the options that have been presented in the first two supplements, they aren't necessary for the enjoyment of this one. Along with the campaign, I have included complete rules for playing either solo or cooperatively, the stats for all the characters and creatures that are unique to this adventure, and even a few special bits of treasure and technology that the crews might find along the way.

While the playstyle of this book is different than much of what has gone before, it is the underlying theme that really sets it apart. The Ravaged Galaxy is a harsh place; there is no getting around that. A war, which led to mutual annihilation, has plunged most of the galaxy into a dark age. But instead of having a chance to heal and rebuild, the survivors are plagued by pirate fleets that continually strip them of anything of value and make sure that no one is allowed to threaten their dominance. In this bleak setting, the game has focused on how small, independent crews can scratch out a living (and maybe even a little profit) while trying not to draw too much attention to themselves. That is, until now!

Hope Eternal gives players the chance to challenge that status quo, to strike a major blow against the pirate fleets, and to bring hope for a better future to a large piece of the galaxy. You see, I have always felt that heroes shine brightest against a dark background. When everything is at its most grim, and most people have given way to despair, it is the few with the courage to strike back against evil that become legends. This is the opportunity this campaign grants your crews.

Generally, when writing wargames, I leave morality to one side, letting the player determine if their figures are good or evil or somewhere betwixt and between. For this book, however, the crews are the good guys, the individuals attempting to bring hope to so many. Sure, they might be a little rough around the edges, and they might also take the opportunity to pick up a few credits along the way, but this is a campaign where the crews are fighting for something bigger than themselves. It's a campaign that has drawn inspiration from the original *Star Wars* trilogy, the dark future of the *Terminator* films, *The Lord of the Rings*, and the *Lost Fleet* novels of Jack Campbell.

Of course, that is just the story as I have laid it out. Players should feel free to change the script to fit with the story they want to tell. It would be easy enough to rearrange the scenarios to tell a different tale, if desired. Additionally, while most of the events are fixed, the look and feel of them is left entirely up to the players. Players who like the gritty feel of the *Dirty Dozen* might see their crews in that light. Others might imagine the pulpy fun of *Flash Gordon*. There is no right or wrong way to imagine it. There is only what makes you the happiest and brings the most enjoyment to your gaming experience.

So, get the minis out of their boxes or fancy display cases, polish up your d20, and print out a fresh crew sheet – it's time to save the galaxy! I hope you have as much fun playing these scenarios as I have had creating them.

All that is left is for me to once again say 'thank you' for your continued support. It is incredible how much enthusiasm and positivity you all have shown towards my games, and that plays a huge part in getting me out of bed and back in front of the computer every morning! As always, if you want to find me online, and hear more about what I'm doing, both professionally, and just as a fan of the hobby, visit me at my blog: www.therenaissanceroll.blogspot.com.



CHAPTER ONE

SOLO AND COOPERATIVE PLAY

All the scenarios in the Hope Eternal Campaign are designed for either solo or cooperative play, meaning either one player takes on the scenario alone, or two players work together to face the challenge. There is no 'opponent' in the traditional sense, just a simple AI system that controls the enemy figures on the table and the random dangers found in each scenario.

This chapter presents the rules modifications you will need for this style of play. Thankfully, there aren't many, as most of the basic *Stargrave* rules work fine.

One thing to remember as you read through these rules and, more importantly, as you play through the scenarios – solo and cooperative play comes with some unique challenges and opportunities. The biggest challenge is that you are essentially in control of the enemy forces opposing your crew. While I present specific rules for how to control these figures, there are times when the simple AI instructions may lead to a move that either doesn't make sense or is less optimal than the obvious move, especially since I don't know the exact terrain or table you are playing on. For the most part, that is fine, as the understanding that individual enemy figures aren't super bright is baked into the challenge level of a scenario. That said, for the sake of fun or challenge, the players are always free to override the AI instructions and move the enemy figure in a way that makes most sense to them.

This then is the opportunity that comes with solo and cooperative play. Since you have no opponent, you are free to modify the game, or a specific scenario, in any way you choose without having to worry about making it 'unfair'. The only consideration that matters as you play through this campaign is whether you are having fun. If you enjoy slightly easier scenarios where your heroes can blast their way through, then reduce the quality or number of bad guys. Alternatively, if you are finding a scenario, or the campaign, too easy, feel free to throw a couple of extra bad guys in there. Bounty hunters are always showing up at the worst possible moment! Again, there is no right or wrong when it comes to how hard these scenarios are – there is only how much you enjoy the challenge.

I have previously written rules for solo play in both *Quarantine 37* and the free expansion, *Dead or Alive*, but I have included new rules here for a couple of reasons. First, I wanted this book to stand alone, so that players wouldn't have to buy or refer to any other supplements while playing. More importantly, I wanted to make some changes to those earlier rules to better integrate with the scenarios contained within this book. So, while there is a lot of overlap between those earlier rules, there are also some differences as well.

CREATING NEW CREWS

When starting off on a solo campaign, you should build a crew following the normal rules presented in the main rulebook. Just be aware that because you won't have a thinking opponent in these scenarios, certain powers may be of lesser utility. 'Cancel Power' for example, is much less likely to get used in these scenarios since you won't be facing an enemy captain or first mate.

Creating new crews for playing the game cooperatively is a little more complex. Essentially, the players have a choice. They can either create one crew together, or they can each create a half-sized crew. If creating a crew together, one player should take on the role of the captain and the other the role of the first mate. The soldiers can be divided equally



among them. This has the advantage of using the crew creation rules in the rulebook exactly as presented but has the disadvantage that one player will play a more powerful character (the captain). Also, some players just don't like to share and want their own, separate crew. In that case, they should use the 'half-sized crews' rules below.

HALF-SIZED CREWS

If creating half-sized crews, then each player must create a crew following these guidelines:

- Create your captain by creating a first mate and immediately level them up 7 times, gaining the improvement for each level. This figure has the normal 6 gear slots for a captain.
- You have 200cr to recruit up to 4 soldiers, a maximum of 2 of which may be specialists.

If using this system, each player has equal forces, but it does mean some thought will have to be applied if players later want to expand these into full crews for use in competitive games. Additionally, players will need to select one of the captains to act as the first mate with regards to activating in the first mate phase, though this can be switched from scenario to scenario.

