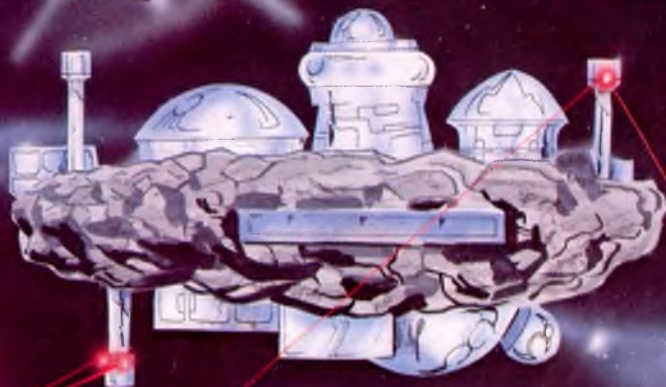


ASTEROID Zero-Four



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TASK FORCE
GAME # 2

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Printing by Standard Printing Company of Amarillo, Texas.

(1.0) INTRODUCTION

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR is a game representing combat between two Asteroid Bases in the Asteroid Belt of the Solar System. It takes place approximately 50 years from the present era. The two players represent the commanders of the two Bases. One commands the asteroid garrisoned by the Russians, maneuvers the Russian units, and is referred to as the Russian player. The other player uses the American units, and commands the American Base. He is known as the American player.

(1.1) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As Man expanded through the Solar System, the need for high-grade metal ores became acute. Fortunately, the Asteroid Belts proved to be rich in metal, and the two major governments on Earth (the USA and USSR) built large and complex mining Bases in the Asteroid Belt. The American Base, known as "MacArthur Station," was built on an asteroid which had been designated as Asteroid Zero-Four in the Asteroid Belt Survey of 2027. The Russian Base, known as "Leningrad Station," was built on Asteroid Zero-Two. While both stations were, ostensibly, under the control of non-military government-owned mining corporations, both were heavily staffed by military personnel from the start.

In 2034, the situation radically changed. Scientists on Earth determined that approximately two years later, massive solar flares would effectively shut down all manned space travel inside the orbit of Mars. Just how long a period this would be, none could be sure, but at least for several months. During this period, both Asteroid Bases would be cut off from Earth, and the military crews of both stations began to be concerned about what would happen during that period. While the ore that was mined could still be sent to Earth in unmanned containers, no manned ships could come out from Earth.

This created a situation in which a complete nuclear war could be fought in space without any interference from Earth. The winner of such a war would dominate the mining of the Asteroid Belt for years to come, and could gain a considerable industrial advantage on the Earth. Naturally, both sides claimed that they were arming their asteroid for "defense" and as a "deterrent," and may have been honest in saying so, but the net result was the same: both sides were armed to the teeth and had little choice but to attack virtually the instant that the flares started.

The Americans built some Missiles into their asteroid, but preferred to depend on manned ships. Their primary vehicle was the FS-30 CONDOR Space Fighter-Bomber, a large ship with long range, heavy payload capability, and high maneuverability. The Russians stocked more Missiles, and fewer Spacecraft. Those that were available included the COMET Space Bomber, with longer range than the CONDOR, higher payload, but far less maneuverability. The METEOR Space Fighter, another Russian design, was highly maneuverable but very short-ranged, and could not carry very many bombs. The Russians also had a few PLANETOID class Space Tankers, which they intended to use on long-range missions.

As the time for the storms approached, tension built to incredible heights as both Asteroid Commanders tried to out-smart their opposite number. Would massive strikes be launched immediately, or would both sides reinforce their defensive patrols and wait for the other to make the first move? What targets would be taken out first? Whose spacecraft would prove superior? How the "war" began, and what happened during its first hours, was endlessly researched and debated by the historians. But there was never any doubt as to how it ended.

(2.0) GENERAL COURSE OF PLAY

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR is a two-player game. Each player represents the commander of a Base constructed on an asteroid measuring perhaps four by six miles. While the purpose of the base is to operate mining ships and to process metal ore mined from other asteroids to be sent to Earth, each asteroid is armed with Missiles and manned Spacecraft. During the course of the game, the players will engage in combat operations in an attempt to destroy the other player's ability to conduct both mining operations and military operations.

Players will notice that at certain points in the rules there are references to other rule sections. This cross-referencing is intended to aid players in both learning the rules and checking rules during the course of the game.

The Mapsheet includes maps of each of the two asteroids (referred to as "Asteroid Maps"), a "Turn Record Track" (to record the turn in progress), and a "Scatter Diagram" (to determine the direction of scatter of weapons). On a separate sheet is found the "Strategic Display."

The Asteroid Maps are used to show the systems which are built into and onto the asteroid. These are also used to calculate and record damage caused by weapons landing on

THE UNDECLARED WAR IN SPACE!

"Large numbers of missiles and spacecraft approaching from the Russian Asteroid. We MUST launch our interceptors NOW, Sir!"

"No sense trying to look peaceful any longer. Go ahead and launch them, and you may as well get our strike forces off this rock before we get plastered!"



Each player commands one of the two Asteroid Bases. At his disposal are Missiles to bombard the enemy Base, and Laser Towers and Space Defense Missiles to defend his own Base. Manned Spacecraft can be used as defensive interceptors or to deliver nuclear weapons. Each warhead that impacts is calculated for yield, burst height and blast radius; resulting in damage to the various installations on the Asteroids. Engineer units on the Base can repair damaged systems, but are themselves vulnerable to nuclear and conventional explosions. The game presents players with a unique challenge — to keep the civilian mining systems operating in the midst of a nuclear war.

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR is an action packed game for two players. Both must allocate their resources to produce the most devastating attack possible. Skill, cunning and a little bit of luck will bring you to ultimate victory.

ASTEROID ZERO-FOUR

- Introductory and Advanced scenarios — playing time: 1 to 4 hours.
- Complexity level — Moderate.