

MY SAVAGE BATTLESTAR CAMPAIGN

Campaign notes

Where should I begin ? Savage Battlestar from John Brown and Rick Petersen was my first brush with Savage Worlds about a year ago. Since I and most of my players are great fans of the re-imaged series I jumped on it and began my campaign, with less preparation than I liked and with more enthusiasm than I hoped...

Since then I expanded the story and worked ahead, soon a storyline began to take shape. Cause I spent so much time with writing for my players, I thought it fair to share it with all of you. Maybe you will play it with your own group, maybe you will just take some pieces and use them for your campaign and maybe it will just entertain you...

Please see my Battlestar Additions posted at www.savageheroes.com for further reference.

If I get the time, and my players aren't so lazy, I will publish their Logs, so you can see how they resolved the adventures.

If you intend to be a player in this campaign, or you are one of my players, don't read any further !!!

But for now I will give you an intro...



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The setting

The first choice I made was that I don't wanted to play on the Galactica. That would have been too much of a replay. So I decided to make a parallel storyline, like that of the Pegasus. After all there must have been many ships out there unaccounted for...

The second choice was, that I wanted a long term campaign. I let my players make novice characters and didn't give them a Battlestar but instead a smaller supportship (see Episode 2). That would give me (and you) and my players (and yours) amply room for improvement.

The storyline

The storyline I plotted began to take shape, as often, while we played. At first I was only one adventure ahead of my players and had to shake things out of the sleeve often. But that was fun and after all you can't prepare for everything. And this produced some interesting side stories.

I layed out the campaign in episodes that plot the main story, the side stories could take place in any episode to enrich them, or to give the players something useful to do between main events.

The tone

Right after the first session I found on the official Scifi Channel website a videomaker toolkit to make your own trailer for Battlestar Galactica (unfortunately this part of the site is down now). So I made a personalized trailer for my players featuring their characters names. Since then I play it at the begin of every session. That is not necessary but it sets the tone for the evening very nicely.

The soundtrack for Battlestar Galactica is nearly a must. There is music for every situation and it fits right in. Some other soundtracks or parts there of might be used as well but in my experience the original is the best.

I encourage banter between the characters and try to bring parts of their background into play. The players aren't meant to be happy about each other under all circumstances, orders have to be given and followed, even if the individual character doesn't like it. Relatives, friends or enemies from the characters background turn up, which further complicates things. That helps you to create side stories of your own right out of nowhere.

The characters

At character creation I let all my players make novice characters. They got a free edge besides the bonus that was granted by their home colony. I don't know if this was intended by John and Rick, but I was soft on that day and it gave my players a slight "Edge". Creation points were spent by the rules in the SW:EX and the exceptions stated in Savage Battlestar.

I let all players draw up a background for their characters, their upbringing, their motivations and their relatives. I intended to (and did already) use some of this material to create side stories.

Regarding rank, I decided to let one player be a Lieutenant, the rest of the fleet personnel began as Ensigns. Our Marine started as Corporal and the only "Knuckledragger" was a Petty Officer 1st Class. This gave a clear command structure in the group, let enough room for advancement and finally let the players go on the missions instead of ordering them.

The main story

As mentioned above I split the story in episodes, some lasted only one session, some two or even three. The idea is that each episode is a concluded adventure that could be played out in one session, that brings the main plot a step further. But the side stories and the usual hesitation of players might prolong them quite a bit.

The side stories

These stories are with a few exceptions unique for my group. But I will give you some that are so general or required for the main plot or the tone of the adventures that you want to use them.

Campaign overview

The players play a storyline parallel to that of the Galactica. They begin play in **Episode 1** hours before the Cylon attack on the colonies and take part in the defense of a spacestation. They flee onboard a Raptor only to find out that its FTL is broken.

In **Episode 2** they are picked up by the military supportship *Trident*. They rescue a civilian ship and their own exodus begins.

In Episode 3 they travel to the Ikarus Anchorage to resupply only to find that the Cylons have arrived before them. But due to the radiation from the nearby neutrino star they are already dead or at least so degraded that the opposition is light. In the wrecked

station they find still some useful things.

In **Episode 4** they go to the Maytoria colony, a small and new colony founded by Sagittaron. Here too the Cylons have arrived, but instead of nuking the colony they have landed and imprisoned over 1000 of the settlers. The players get contact to the ship that guarded the colony and only escaped by the tip of their fingers. Their ship is a little more than a wreck and has suffered many casualties. With the help from them the players are able to fight the Cylons and rescue the prisoners. The original colony ships that are landed nearby are again made spaceworthy and carry the survivors. Their fleet consists now of 6 ships.

A Priestess holds a ceremony for the fallen and refers the first time to "Poseidon's Armsbearer's". These are mentioned in the Scrolls of Pythia.

In **Episode 5** a court martial is held for Maj. Taylor. The players address their fuel problem. They travel to the Hades Asteroid belt, a relative small Tyliummine is there. Again the Cylons seem to be a step ahead of them. A few of the miners have hidden on an asteroid with a freighter and a mining vessel. The players create a diversion and rescue the miners and their ships.

In **Episode 6** the Priestess states that she found too many parallels in the scrolls to be coincidental. She claims that the people aboard the *Trident* are the mentioned Armsbearers of Poseidon and they are destined to find a secret weapon forged by Poseidon himself.

The players go on a recon mission back to Aquarion. They find a secret military base and in its datafiles a hint to a secret project codenamed "Tisiphone".

In **Episode 7** they follow the lead, link up with the resistance on Aquarion. They fight their way through Trikon to get to "Poseidon's seat". There they get their next clue as to the whereabouts of the secret project. Still they have no idea what it might be, they only hope it will be a weapon or something useful to them.

This is as far as I got till today, we have just finished Episode 6. My plan is that the players need 3-5 more Episodes (these will be posted as updates!) to reach their goal and their ultimate prize, a hidden Battlestar! The players will be going from clue to clue, sometimes just following some mystic prophecies, sometimes hard evidence. Time to develop some of the side-stories. This would conclude the first season of my Savage Battlestar.

On the following pages you will find my adventure notes and notes for the side stories. Since I made most of my maps with the hand, only a few are presented, so you still have to do some work ;-) But don't worry, the descriptions give you enough info to do it...

THE SIDE STORIES

I choose to begin with them, so you get an overview of what you can insert in the main plot as you see fit. I detail my uses as addendums to the episodes.

The Traitors

There are several Skinjobs in the fleet. Three of them are onboard the *Trident* and the *Geminon Express* from the start. More (define as needed) have infiltrated the prisoners on Maytoria and are taken along. More could come up with every ship that is rescued. These can be used in many ways, sabotage, psychological warfare and outright destruction.

If you are really cruel you can let one of your players be a sleeper Cylon. I have not yet decided if I use this option.

The Council of Speakers

Soon after the liberation of Maytoria, the civilians begin to demand to have a "voice" in the decisions to be made. One speaker is elected from every ship. This Council addresses the problems of the civilians to the military command. They can be used to hinder any plan, sow doubt or stage an all-out revolt if you like.

The players relatives

As mentioned earlier I had my players draw up backgrounds for their characters. You can let relatives pop up if it fits. This can cause a lot of problems, maybe a relative must be left behind or turns out to be a liability.

The players enemies

These too can turn up if the circumstances are right. Maybe the enemy could be coerced by the Skinjobs to help them if he only can get his vengeance, maybe he will be an opponent for a military position or he will simply harass the player and try to kill him.

The players

I am lucky to have mature **role**players at my table. In real life they get along well. But at the playing table they play out their roles. Orders might be disobeyed, that could lead to a court martial. Quarrels and even fights might break out. They might

contest over a woman or a man. This is something that **you** can't make up in front, but if you know your players well you can create a situation that benefits a quarrel or something like that.

References to the "real" series

If you want, you can link some of the real events from *Galactica*'s storyline to this campaign. E.g. I let the players find a damaged com-drone in the Aquarion system. It recorded the "Case-Orange" transmissions and gives them the hint, that others survived as well (see Episode 6).

I have a plan that the players find the civilian ships that the *Pegasus* stripped and left to suffer the Cylon's wrath.

If unmasked some of the Humanoid Cylons can give away some info about the events around *Galactica* or *Pegasus*.

SAVAGE BATTLESTAR

Episode 1 : “The long night goodbye”

“*Life began out there...*” from the Sacred Scrolls.

Synopsis

In the first Episode the players are playing taxi for a Rear Admiral, see the beginning of the Cylon attack on the colonies, get their first brush with the Cylons and hopefully survive...

Scene 1 : Taxi, Taxi...

It is some hours before the Cylon attack. The players are ordered to bring Rear Admiral Karak to the sensor relais station *Olymp*. The station is an old installation that relays the signals of a chain of sensor-satellites surrounding Sagittaron. The *Olymp* does not use the Command Navigation Program (CNP), that is the reason why the Cylons take out the station shortly before the attack, but more on this later.

The players are in a Raptor and one or two Vipers, depending on their professions. If one of the players is a Marine, he plays bodyguard for the Admiral. Since the Raptor is accompanied by Viper(s) the whole flight is on sublight, taking hours and is boring as hell. But it is a good time for the players (and or characters) to get to know each other, chat a little etc.

After some time the *Olymp* can be made out with the pure eye. Its a disk shaped station approx. 150 yards in diameter. After communication is established the players ships are cleared for landing in hangar bay three.

After landing, the players CO and any Marines accompany the Admiral to the stations CIC. The station consists of five rings of corridors connected by four corridors that run from the outmost corridor to the inmost. Between the corridors are the various rooms, engineering sections, storerooms etc. In CIC they meet Maj. Taylor the stations CO. After a little chat the players are ordered to return to Sagittaron.

Again a long boring trip awaits, or not...?

Scene 2 : “What’s that?”

After the players traveled about 20 or 30 minutes away from the station, let the pilots make **notice rolls**. If successful the register some odd signals just at the edge of their Dradis. It

looks like some kind of jamming. If that doesn't make the players turn around and investigate, throw in a garbled wireless transmission from the *Olymp* "...static...under attack...static...need assistance...static".

When they turn around they see that indeed the Dradis is jammed. After getting nearer let them make another **notice roll**, with a success they see four sensor ghosts, with a raise the signatures look a little bit like the old Cylon Raiders, but how can that be? Shortly after all bets are off, 4 Cylon Raiders (the new ones) can be seen visually and are opening fire. While in combat the players can see that a bigger craft (Heavy Raider) is docked to the outside of the station.

Scene 3 : Old enemies in new dresses

After finishing the Raiders off the players can board the station. The hangar doors are responsive to a colonial override signal (successful **security or repair roll**). Once inside they can again establish communication with the station crew or what is left of it. Totally surprised most of the crew got cut down by the Centurions before any real resistance took place. Even after that it was costly. Major Taylor, P02 Mells and three Marines holed up in the security center near the CIC. They aren't able to get out since the Centurions have pinpointed them. The Major orders the players to come to their rescue.

As they come closer it becomes evident that the fight was one sided. Dead bodies and shell casings lie on the floor. In the distance some shots are heard and an clanking of metal against metal. This sounds comes nearer and suddenly gets quicker. Around the next bend are sprinting two Centurions towards the players.

This is the first time the characters see the new Centurions, this should come as a shock.

Four more Centurions are outside the security center. They have their attention focused toward the blocked door to the security center. If the characters are careful (**successful sneak roll**) they can obtain surprise. After dispatching them the players can free the Major and his people.

Two more Centurions are at large on the station, but the players and the Maj. don't know this. If they want to call for help they soon find out, that the comsystems of the station were taken out when the CIC was overrun (the Admiral was killed there). They have to get back to their Raptor to inform Sagittaron.

If the players left someone to guard their Raptor they are ambushed on route by the remaining Cylons, if not they find them in the hangar bay demolishing their Raptor.

Scene 4 : Raise the alarm

After taking them down the players should hurry, they have to warn the fleet that the Cylons have come back!

Outside massive jamming still goes on even if no apparent source can be found. Soon the players find out that their FTL isn't functioning. Either from damage received from the dogfight, demolishing Centurions, bad piloting or just bad luck the FTL is out. They have to limp back on sublight. The conclusion comes in Episode 2...

SAVAGE BATTLESTAR

Episode 2 “Farewell”

“All of this happened before and will happen again...” from the Sacred Scrolls.

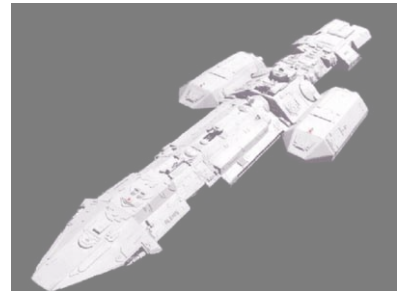
Synopsis

In this episode the heroes catch up with some other survivors, prevent or take part in a mutiny, rescue a civilian ship and in the end have some hard decisions to make.

Scene 1: The Trident

After escaping from the sensor relais station *Olymp* the characters found out that their Raptors FTL drive is inoperable. As they approach the planet on sublight speed they see carnage unfold with the Cylon attack already underway.

Some time later the *Trident* jumps directly in front of them with a civilian spaceliner, the *Geminon Express*, in tow. The Raptors pilot must make a **Piloting check** to avoid collision. The *Trident* looks bruised, parts of the hull are blackened, dents and a few holes are in the armor.



The Trident

The characters Raptor is hailed and after identification procedures are satisfied they are ushered aboard.

The landing deck is covered with debris (**Piloting check** to land safely). There is one lift to the hangar deck still functional and the characters are ordered to use it.

The hangar deck is crowded with other small craft (another Raptor, a few civilian shuttles and two badly damaged Vipers Mk VII) and with people, mostly civilians. Without doubt these are the passengers of the shuttlecraft on the hangar deck. A group of marines tries to get some order in the crowd, a corpsman is tending some minor injuries.

The hangar deck is dominated by the presence of 10 Vipers Mk II that sit in the repair booth of the deck (these were transferred from the *Poseidon* shortly before the attack for scraping, since the *Poseidon* got her last squadron of Mk VII Vipers, the other 10 Vipers of the squadron are on the other hangar deck).

An Ensign is approaching through the crowd in direction of the characters. When he reaches them he salutes and introduces himself as Ensign Ross of the supportship *Trident*. He tells them to follow him to the bridge.

On the way to the bridge it becomes clear that the *Trident* has taken quite a beating. Loose wallpanels, technicians and crewman swarming about to fix various damage, the lights are dim etc.

On the bridge they are greeted by Captain Onslow. He informs them of a Cylon surprise attack on Sagittaron. It seems that they used some kind of computervirus to shut down defenses and numerous ships including the *Battlestar Poseidon* and all of the new Mk VII Vipers, after that it was like shooting fish in a barrel. The remaining ships fought bravely, but the *Trident* is not a combat unit.

He decided to rescue as much civilians that were in transit at that time as he could and to jump away.

Major Taylor is slightly outraged. He tells the captain that it would have been his duty to fight, since the *Trident* is still an armed vessel of the CDF. An argument arises that the characters can join if they want.

Scene 2 : Mutiny ?

Shortly afterwards the com Operator announces an incoming message from the *Battlestar Hydra* and the Captain orders him to put it on the speakers. The message is as follows:

"To all ships in the Sagittaron system, this is Commander Anderson of the Battlestar Hydra.

We are under heavy attack by an unknown number of Cylon ships.

Since Rear Admiral Wright's Battlestar Poseidon has been destroyed, I take command of 7th Fleet as of this moment.

I order all civilian and non combat ships of the Fleet to leave the combat zone immediately.

If your ships are FTL capable jump out of system and wait for..."

A big explosion is heard on the speakers then only static.

"That's it" snaps Major Taylor. *"Captain I order you to bring your ship about and jump back to Sagittaron."*

"Major, with all due respect, you heard Commander Anderson. My ship is NO combat unit, I already lost a quarter of my crew while we rescued those civilians and I will not endanger the rest of my crew and the lives of the civilians aboard in a futile attempt to

change something that can't be changed. Not by me, not by you and probably not even by another Battlestar!" answers the Captain.

"Enough!" bellows the Major. *"I hereby relieve you of your command under Article VII of Colonial Articles of war. Ensign, Lance Corporal* (indicating two of the characters), *escort the Captain to his quarters. Lieutenant* (indicating another player) *you stay with me."* orders the Major and puts his hand to his holstered weapon.

This is a tricky moment for the characters. Only they and the Major (and any surviving marines) are armed. The rest of the bridge crew is not. Will they obey orders?

If they do, the captain will try to convince them on the way to his quarters that the Major is nuts and that they all will die if they jump back. If that doesn't work let them jump back, fight a glorious fight and let them die!

If they disobey in the first place or are convinced by the Captain play the scene tense and for all its worth. Remember any remaining marines of the Major are on the bridge too.

If the characters are convinced by the Captain on their way to his quarters he gets some of his own marines to help depending on the circumstances.

Scene 3 : The Hercules

After the dust has settled on the bridge, there comes a shout from the Dradisconsole *"Multiple Dradiscontacts at extreme range. Five of them Cylon Raiders, one is a civilian transport!"*

"Frak!" shouts the Captain. *"Helm, bring us about, flanking speed. Ensign Ross, set condition one throughout the ship... Ensign* (indicating the Viper Pilot character), *are you any good with a Viper? If so, go down on the Hangar deck, find Ensign Carro, he is one of the Viper Pilots we rescued. I'll tell the Chief to get two of the Birds ready for you."*

As the fight begins all ships or groups of ships are 20" apart, forming a rough triangle. The Cylons are to the port side of the Trident, the transportship, the *Hercules* is to the starboard side. Let the characters aboard the *Trident* roll for her.



The *Hercules*

Hopefully the characters are victorious and the transport survives, after that there are...

Scene 4 : Hard decisions

... to be made. Where should they go? After a FTL jump further out of system Captain Onslow calls a conference of all officers (including the players). The ground is open to discussion how to proceed. A few suggestions of Captain Onslow are :

- Maytoria, a small offspring colony of Sagittaron on the outskirts of colonial space (about 10.000 settlers).
- Ikarus Anchorage, a resupply depot for the BSG`s.
- Promar sector, a sparsly charted territory beyond the borders of colonial space (This is where Galactica went, but don't tell that your players).
- One of the other twelve colonies, in the hope that they hadn't been overrun like Sagittaron

Let the characters debate that for a time, maybe they come up with some other spot to begin their journey.

Whatever they decide, they are responsible for for the people on the *Geminon Express* and *Hercules*. They must consider the need for fuel and consumables. The *Geminon Express* is a spaceliner, a pure passengership for short trips designed, fully FTL-capable but lacking most of the needed facilities for a longer journey. There are 500 passengers and 25 crewmembers on board. The *Hercules* is a containership, hauling various cargo, luckily including foodstuff and a few other useful things. There are 30 crewmembers on board. Depending on there decisions the next Episodes can be interchanged.

Ship stats

The *Trident* (Military freighter/supportship)

Size : Large
Crew : 350 (incl. 32 pilots and 40 marines)
Acc/Top Speed : 100/500
Climb : 25
FTL : Yes
Thoughtness : 70(30)
Handling : +0 (large and maneuver thrusters)
Fire control: +1 (gunnery assist)
Weapons : Rail guns (8) (firelinked), Dam: 4D10, AP30, ROF: 2, Range: 300/600/1200
Missiletubes (2): Dam: 8D10, AP60, ROF: 1 or 2 Range: 500/1000/2000
Point defense (4), Dam: 3d6, AP5, ROF: 6, Range: Firetemplate
Additional Systems: Improved stabilizers
Notes : Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Spacecraft, two landing bays, 4 Launchtubes for Vipers, carries 8 Vipers, 2 Raptors and 4 transport shuttles

The *Hercules* (Freighter)

Size : Large
Crew : 35
Acc/Top Speed : 100/500
Climb : 25
FTL : Yes
Thoughtness : 40(15)
Handling : -1 (large)
Fire control: None
Weapons : None
Additional Systems: None
Notes : Atmospheric, Heavy Armor, Spacecraft, carries 6 cargo containers

SAVAGE BATTLESTAR

Episode 3 : Radiance

“...Poseidons Armsbearers will fight a glorious battle under the rays of a dying sun...” from the Prophecies of Pythia.

Synopsis

In this episode, the players travel to the Ikarus Anchorage, a resupply depot for the Fleet. They are met by a Cylon setup, have some hard work to do and escape with a lot of supplies and some Cylon transponders hidden in the supply crates.

Scene 1 : Hope

As suggested by Capt. Onslow the “Fleet” will jump to the Ikarus Anchorage. The Anchorage is located in a system of a star, which is on the brink to become a neutron star. Already the radiation is high the system. It was thought as security measure against the Cylons.

The station itself is radiation hardened, as are the ships of the fleet, so no problem should arise for a regular supply stop.

Because of this Capt. Onslow hopes that the station has not fallen to the Cylons. He also hopes that other survivors might have fallen back to the Anchorage.

Let the players take part in the operational planning. Maybe they want to send a recon mission up front or have another great idea.

Scene 2 : Shattered hope

At the arrival at Ikarus, it becomes clear that the Cylons where here. The station is badly damaged, a part of the docking ring is blown to pieces. But the radiation got the Cylons afterall. Quite a few Raiders are floating around, with no sign of “live”.

No other Dradis contacts save some debris from the station and maybe from a ship or two are in range.

The cargo areas in the center of the station seem mostly intact. There are 8 hangar bays for shuttles that are still usable. The supplies could still be gathered with the shuttles and Raptors onboard the *Trident*.

The doors to the hangars have to be opened manually though. So a little EVA operation is needed. For the approach the pilot must make a **piloting roll**. After that an **agility roll** is required to get from the shuttle to the hangar doors. To open the doors by

hand a normal **strength roll** is required (if the players thought of bringing the right equipment, otherwise the TN is 6). Once inside the doors can be operated from there. Emergency power for the hangar can be achieved with a successful **repair roll**.

Scene 3 : Scraps

Just after entering the first few cargo areas, it becomes evident that either someone was here before them, or that the supplies of the station weren't refilled. What is there is still enough to last a while. Mostly ammo for railguns in different sizes, quite a few missiles, combat rations, some spareparts and best of all 8 nuclear warheads!

While the players make an inventory they can make **notice rolls**. If successful they can hear clanking sounds from within the station.

The station was boarded by Cylon Centurions after it became apparent, that the raiders weren't capable to destroy it before they shut off. The Centurions prepared some of the supply crates with transponders and now wait for anyone who enters the station. They will sacrifice themselves to make it look "real" and ensure that the transponders are not found.

What follows is a race through the bowels of the station. 10 Centurions are on the station. Their disposition is up to you, depending on the number of players and Extras they brought along. Due to the radiation the Centurions are already degraded (-1 on **all rolls**).

Scene 4 : Resupply

After the Cylons are dispatched, the supplies can be unloaded in eight hours without any further interference. Try to keep the tension up, afterall the Cylons may come again any minute. Let them bring out a small CAP, position a Raptor to get additional sensor coverage etc. Due to the radiation the Dradis is not reliable, you can make up some sensor ghosts or something like that.

The players should make up a schedule for crew rotation etc. for the unloading, maybe they have a brilliant plan to speed things up.

Addendum

Radiation :

While in the system everybody in a Viper or Raptor must make a **vigor check** every hour or gain fatigue as per the standard rules.

Since the Anchorage was damaged and radiation begun to leak in, let everybody on the station make a **vigor check** every 4 hours.

Anti radiation meds grant a +2 bonus.

The civilian ships aren't as radiation hardened as the *Trident*. Maybe the players come up with a good idea, like parking them in the shadow of the station or the *Trident*. Otherwise everybody onboard must make a **vigor check** every 4 hours.

Side stories :

At the start of the episode I decided to integrate my players in the crew of the *Trident*. I made our Lieutenant the XO, one of my Viper pilots squadron leader and the Lance Corporal a fire team leader. I already knew that the XO position won't last long, but I wanted to give them a feel for command and responsibility.

I made up a small ceremony for it. After all the protocol has to be satisfied.

In our play of the episode, my players decided to "board" one of the Raiders to get some intel on the Cylons. They docked with a Raptor using the softseal at the bottom of the Raptor, then they cut through the hull, only to find a mess of organs. I let them all make **gut checks** to prevent them from puking. hilariously the new XO botched the roll and decorated the floor of the Raptor. Since he has a new callsign albeit unofficial..."Puker". However through this they got some insight in the new Cylons and that they are using organic components now.