

# MAJOR

THE METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA JOURNAL & ONLINE RESOURCE



ISSUE 2 - OCTOBER 2006

## A WORD FROM THE CREATOR

First I want to thank Craig Brain again for his wonderful and tireless efforts when it comes to MA. The man is amazing and there are few people in the world who know more about MA than Craig does. Plans continue to create a new MA tile game that should be printed in December of this year if all goes well. Craig has been consulting me on a new product line for MA for next year and it's just the kind of product I would like if I was running the game. I am indeed running a fun game with role-playing's creator E. Gary Gygax every Thursday night. I'm going to start a short column on that game, but it's a bit unusual for me because I haven't managed to kill any of the characters yet. So let's start digging into this issue and have some fun!

Regards,

James M. Ward

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second issue of the Metamorphosis Alpha Journal & Online Resource. This issue is being released to coincide with our 9<sup>th</sup> of October official release date (well, preorders should have arrived by then in most cases ☺) of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rules. That puts this publication on a bi-monthly release schedule, which may move to monthly if we can get a few regular writers or contributors.

This issue provides three "new" weapons for use with MA4e that players will find are very effective, but with some dangerous side-effects for the unwary. We also provide some details that GMs will be able to use to run adventures in the MA1e "Classic" era. There are even a few tips on using the Laws of Robotics that are provided in the rulebook, and a system for *deliberately* breaking those laws.

Over the coming issues, we intend to make available (in color) each of the Asteroid maps drawn by Ryan Wolfe so that you can print them out and see them as Ryan intended.

Submissions can be sent to me at:

[major\\_submissions@metamorphosisalpha.net](mailto:major_submissions@metamorphosisalpha.net)

With a few extra contributors, I can free up some time to return to writing adventures for MA4e and getting some other material out. Or take up a death sport. This journal is a free download, and it intended that it will remain so. This journal can be subscribed to or downloaded from our forums:

[www.metamorphosisalpha.net/phpbbs/](http://www.metamorphosisalpha.net/phpbbs/)

Again, we hope you enjoy this issue and find the contents of some interest.

Craig J. Brain  
Editor

## IN THIS ISSUE

A Word From The Creator- James M. Ward	Page 1
Introduction - Craig J. Brain	Page 1
Black Ray Weapons - Craig J. Brain	Page 1
Mobile Utility & Logistic Expediter (MULE) - Craig J. Brain	Page 2
MA1e to MA4e Creatures and Mutants Part 1) - Craig J. Brain	Page 4
Breaking the Laws of Robotics - Craig J. Brain	Page 4
Next Issue - Craig J. Brain	Page 4
The Asteroid Map: Side View - Ryan Wolfe	Page 5
Android Character Sheet - Craig J. Brain	Page 5
A Really Big Ad - Metamorphosis Alpha	Page 6

## BLACK RAY WEAPONS

Black ray weapons are banned under WGO conventions; however examples of the technology still exist in some illegal and "exempt" military arsenals. Using advanced creative accounting techniques, a quantity of these weapons were "borrowed" and smuggled onboard the *Starship Warden* by some of the marines. The technology behind the weapons was known to only a few people, but was discovered shortly after the invention of tractor and repulsor beams. It is believed that a modification of this technology was used to create the weapons.

The secret of black ray technology is guarded jealously, with self-destruct mechanisms built into the weapon to prevent tampering. A small energy field prevents the device from being scanned by x-rays, and nano-technology is used to destroy the internal components of the weapon immediately after firing, or if the weapon's case is opened or otherwise tampered with.

These weapons were called "Black Ray Weapons" due to the after-image resulting from the weapon being discharged. These weapons work by neutralizing energy, including heat and light. Even radioactivity can be nullified by a black ray. A radiation suit, force field or radiation shielding will prevent the effects of a black ray weapon.

## BLACK RAY INJURIES & DAMAGE

*Damage to living tissue* - 1d6 per point of target's Constitution, reducing targets body temperature by 1 degree from room temperature after death.

*Damage to Robots* - drains battery power by 1 hr per point of Constitution of target\*. This is negated by radiation shielding.

*Damage to Androids* - Shortens lifespan by 3d6 days per point of Constitution of target.

\*Broadcast power is the exception to this. If a black ray weapon is used on a target that (is working and) operates off broadcast power, the weapon will overload from feedback and explode. Everything within a 15 yard radius of the weapon will be exposed to black ray beams and suffer damage as listed above. The equipment does not undergo the effects listed for unshielded devices listed below.

		IC	WC	Sh	Med	Long	Wt	Power	RoF	MAG	Dam
1	Black Ray Pistol	7	11	20	40	60	7 lb.	2 x V	1	1	*
2	Black Ray Rifle	7	10	45	90	135	15 lb.	1 x Vi	1	3	*
3	Black Ray Cannon	7	9	90	180	270	100 lb.	1 x VIII	3	30	*

RoF Rate of fire (Shots per combat round)  
 MAG Magazine or battery capacity  
 \* See Black Ray Weapon injuries and damage.

A radioactive object hit by a black ray will lose 3d6 + 3 levels of radiation. For every level of radiation the object loses below 0 reduces the objects temperature by 10 degrees. This is only effective in a cone-shaped area out to the weapon's maximum range with a diameter of 10 yards. This effect will be stopped by radiation shielding.

Unshielded electronic equipment hit by a black ray will suffer one of the following effects:

ROLL	EFFECT
1	Power supply exhausted, but device undamaged.
2	Power supply reduced by 50%. Device now has a 2 in 6 chance of malfunctioning whenever used in future.
3	Power supply reduced by 90%. Device now has a 1 in 6 chance of malfunctioning whenever used in future.
4	Power supply exhausted. If device has memory, this is wiped.
5	Device shuts down for one hour.
6	Device now has a 4 in 6 chance of malfunctioning whenever used in future.

1. *Forman Arms Black Ray Pistol (IC 7, WC 11, Dmg. Varies, Energy Weapon):* This weapon has matt black finish, with smooth lines and no sharp edges. It is ten inches long with a green safety mode stud. The barrel of the pistol has a slight bulge at the end, incorporating the open sight, which also serves to counter-balance the weapon. The simple exterior conceals the weapon's high-tech inner workings, such as the nanobot autodestruct mechanism, which activates immediately after the weapon fires, turning the entire weapon into harmless black powder within seconds. The Type V Medium Hydrogen Cell is built into the weapon and can not be removed.

2. *Forman Arms Black Ray Rifle (IC 7, WC 10, Dmg. Varies, Energy Weapon):* Like the Foreman Arms Black Ray Pistol, this rifle has matt black finish, with smooth lines and no sharp edges. It is four feet long with a green safety mode stud. The barrel of the rifle has a slight bulge at the end, incorporating the open sight, which also serves to counter-balance the weapon. The rifle can also be fitted with a laser sight or that changes the rifle's WC to 5. As with the pistol, the nanobot autodestruct mechanism activates immediately after the weapon fires its third shot, turning the entire weapon into harmless black powder within seconds. The Type VI Large Hydrogen Cell is built into the weapon and can not be removed.

3. *Forman Arms Black Ray Cannon (IC 7, WC 9, Dmg. Varies, Energy Weapon):* This devastating weapon is designed to be mounted in a vehicle or strongpoint, on a Robot or used on a tripod. It requires a Type VIII Medium Atomic Power Cell to operate, and can not be powered by a Robot's power supply. If mounted on a Robot, the weapon will count as 3 systems. The weapon resembles a smaller (only 8 feet long) version of a WWII era Bofors anti-aircraft gun, with smoother lines and is completely black in color. Once the weapon has depleted its energy supply, or the autodestruct mechanism has been triggered, the nanobots turn the workings of the weapon into a mass of black glass, leaving the exterior of the weapon intact (making a very convincing decoy).

## MULE

The MULE (Mobile Utility & Logistic Expediter) has been in service as a support utility Robot for a long time (donkey's years). The Robot is not designed to be particularly smart or to have a lot of initiative. It is designed to carry a load and provide indirect fire support when required.

The MULEs, like their organic namesake have a well-deserved reputation for being hardy and stubborn, that is, tough and not giving up easily. There are a number of tales of these Robots continuing their last mission, long after their force has withdrawn or been destroyed, in some cases months and even years!

While commonly used to carry packs, spare ammunition, medical supplies, rations, water and even wounded, the MULE can also be ordered to engage a target using its missiles. As long as someone keeps a laser designator on the target, the Robot can engage a target at the maximum range of its missiles, or it can also be ordered to fire blindly at a GPS marked location, an at anything within range if in direct line-of-sight.

<b>MODEL/NAME:</b> Mobile Utility & Logistic Expediter Mark VI							
CN	30	D	4	MR	10	RR	14
LP	4	AC	8	HP	135	HP/sys	12
<b>Body Type:</b>		B: Cylinder - Large					
<b>Dimensions:</b>		6' long x 3' diameter					
<b>Storage:</b>		1					
<b>Primary AI Type:</b>		T: Mark XII Military		<b>Check Bonus/Penalty</b>		+3 on all military tasks.	

	RP Cost	Physical Sys		Hit Points	Priority
<b>Power:</b>	20	1	B: Improved Battery	12	0
<b>Primary AI:</b>	50	0	T: Mark XII Military	12	1
<b>Laws of Robotics:</b>	30		C: Military		
<b>Software:</b>	40		D: Combat		
-	30		R: Targeting		
-	40		I: General Knowledge		
<b>Body/Size:</b>	80		B: Cylinder - Large		

### Body Features:

- <b>Armor Type:</b>	40	2	IV: Medium	24	4
-	20	1	Radiation Shielding	12	3

### Mobility System:

-	40	2	D: Legs - Quadruped	24	8
---	----	---	---------------------	----	---

### Sensors:

-	45	1	G: Upper & Lower Spectrum Optics	12	5
---	----	---	----------------------------------	----	---

### Communications:

-	35	1	D: Audio & Radio Transmitters & Pickups - High Powered	12	6
---	----	---	--	----	---

### Misc Systems:

-	5	0	M: External Rack	12	9
---	---	---	------------------	----	---

### Weapons Systems:

-	100	3	Medium Missiles	36	7
<b>RP Total:</b>		575		<b>HP Total:</b> 156	
<b>Physical Systems Total:</b>		11			

# MA1E TO MA4E CREATURES AND MUTANTS PART 1

When Metamorphosis Alpha was first published in 1976, the game stated that the ship had been lost for hundreds of years, but did not give an exact date. As the editor of the new edition, I've arbitrarily said "Okay, if we want to play in the MA1e setting, let's look at 2525". Why? Because it fits the requirement and there's a very suitable song about that particular year.

## WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN GAME TERMS?

Well, things change. Generations have passed since the tragedy which struck the Warden and caused it to be lost occurred. New races of intelligent (and not-so) creatures have evolved on the Warden, some creatures have died out or moved on, and humans (*homo sapiens*) are no longer the dominant species. There's some stiff competition.

Not to mention that the education and healthcare systems didn't survive the disaster either, and primitive villages peopled by humans, mutated humans, animals and plants are the norm.

With a combination of genetic structure altering substances and radiation being unleashed upon the crew and passengers of the Warden, the gene pools have been altered permanently. Immediately after the initial alien attack and in the early years afterwards, Darwin's Laws were enforced at an accelerated pace. Some mutated creatures survived better than others, some were extinct within a few years.

Below are the first six creatures to be covered in this series of articles detailing and updating the creatures from MA1e. This series of articles will assist GMs who want to run adventures in the "Classic Era" of MA1e.

The descriptions below provide guidance on the score ranges that these creatures may have. Of note, hit points for these creatures are rolled using the CN score, while the hp stat lists any modifications to that roll, as a result of mutations that the creature may have.

### Hisser (Mutated Alligator)

CN	3d6+4	D	3d6+1	LP	1d6	MR	1d6+1	RR	2d6+3	hp	X	0.75
AC	10			Runs:	2.5 yps					Swims		4.5 yps

**Mutations** – Dormant State, Smaller, Shorter, True Breed, New Body Parts (Tentacles), Immunity (Radiation), Enlarged Body Parts (Legs), Mental Paralysis

**Description** These creatures are much smaller than their non-mutated cousins; with the biggest one ever found being only 4 feet long. They have much longer webbed legs, which make them faster on the land; they have 2 tentacles on their head which cause paralysis at a touch (as a mental attack with a strength of 12), and their skin is resistant to all forms of radiation. They remain solitary creatures except during the mating season when they are especially vicious. They always enter battle emitting a loud hissing noise. Their bite is not used for attacking. Hissers, like their larger cousins are able to wait for periods of hours without moving, in order to trap prey, and may be mistaken for logs by careless passersby.

### Piercer (Mutated Black Bear)

CN	3d6+5	D	2d6	LP	1d6+2	MR	1d6+1	RR	2d6+5	hp	X	1.0
AC	16			Runs:	18 yps							

**Mutations** – Infravision, True Breed, Dormant State, Taller, Quills, Chameleon Powers, Regeneration, Sonic Abilities

**Description** This creature stands about 9 feet tall, with short, bristly fur and rows of 3 inch quills along its forepaws and shoulders (WC 19 1d6 damage). Its forepaws are treated as WC 19 and do damage as per the Claw Attacks Table

using the LG Fore column on Page 87 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook. Piercers have the ability to change color to match the surroundings perfectly and can regenerate damage from wounds. Additionally, the mutant can also emit a sonic blast causing 2d6 damage to everyone within a 10 yard radius.

### Metaled One (Mutated Badger)

CN	2d6+4	D	1d6	LP	1d6	MR	21	RR	3d6	hp	X	1.0
AC	17			Runs:	14 yps							

**Mutations** – Infravision, True Breed, Total Carapace, Oversized Body Parts (Claws), Mental Paralysis, Heightened Mental Condition, Telekinesis,

**Description:** This mutated creature is about 3 feet long with fur that is composed of a hard mineral giving it a protective carapace. Metaled Ones also have large claws on their fore paws (treated as WC 19 and do damage as per the Claw Attacks Table using the LG Fore column on Page 87 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook). They are highly intelligent and can use their Mental Paralysis mutation on any creature within visual range. Fortunately, the creature is near-sighted (6 feet range). Additionally, the mutant has the power of telekinesis, making the creature even more formidable. Strangely, the creature has an irrational fear of intelligent plants.

### Shocker Beast (Mutated Bobcat)

CN	1d6+3	D	3d6	LP	1d6+1	MR	1d6	RR	2d6	hp	X	1.0
AC	19			Runs:	15 yps							

**Mutations** – Infravision, True Breed, Electrical Generation, Lightning Rod

**Description:** This creature is about 3 feet long and appears to be identical to its non-mutated relative except that it is able to cast a single electrical bolt of energy from its eyes that will do 4d6 damage every round (thanks to having both the Electrical Generation and Lightning Rod mutations). The creature can not attack using both mutations at once, and must use its Electrical Generation mutation to recharge its Lightning Rod mutation, unless it has already been "charged" with electricity.

### Cougaroid (Mutated Cougar)

CN	3d6	D	3d6+3	LP	1d6+4	MR	2d6+5	RR	2d6	hp	X	1.0
AC	19			Runs:	15 yps							

**Mutations** – Infravision, True Breed, New Body Parts (Hands), Total Immunity (Mental Attacks, Electrical Attacks), Energy Reflection (Laser Light, Paralyzation Energy), Heightened Intelligence, Dual Mentality (Contrariness)

**Description:** This species of mutated cougar now walks upright and has manipulative hands, allowing it to use human-designed tools and weapons. Many of these creatures possess human-level intelligence. The mutant's fur is resistant to paralysis, lasers, and electrical energy. Its brain is completely resistant to any form of mental attack. The creature's Dual Mentality has left it suffering from Contrariness which (fortunately for the other species onboard the Warden) prevents it from congregating in any number, except for brief periods for mating. For some reason the creature is unable to acknowledge the existence of Robots and will ignore them as much as possible.

### Deer (Mutated Deer)

CN	2d6	D	3d6	LP	1d6	MR	1d6	RR	2d6	hp	X	1.0
AC	18			Runs:	24 yps							

**Mutations** – True Breed, Poison Glands

**Description:** This animal has developed a toxic contact poison which coats its antlers. Depending upon the age and size of the Deer, the WC of the antlers may be 16 (small), 15 (medium) or 14 (large). All Deer's antlers are Talented weapons (see page 77 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook for a description of Talented weapons), and do damage as per the Antlers/Horns/Tusks Attacks Table using the appropriate column on Page 87 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook). It is otherwise normal in all other respects, and quite edible if the antlers are avoided.

## BREAKING THE LAWS OF ROBOTICS

Nobody expects players and GMs to be able to quote the Laws of Robotics verbatim. That is not the designer's intent, anyway. On Page 59 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook, the three installations are printed in a handy format which can be photocopied. GMs are encouraged to be a little "flexible" in how these rules are applied, and to use them as a tool to encourage role-playing opportunities for Robot and Android characters, by creating moral dilemmas and challenges. These are guidelines, and GMs should feel free to modify them as they see fit. The aim of the game is fun, not rules.

Robots have various versions of the Laws of Robotics available for installation. While these laws act to prevent Robots from performing in a manner not as advertised, it is not impossible for the installation of the laws to become corrupted. Sooner or later a player running a Robot character will want to do something that is against the Laws of Robotics that it has installed (well, they *should*, if the GM is doing his job ☺). GMs currently have two choices:

- a. Not allowing the character to break their programming, and forcing the player to figure out a "work-around", or
- b. Allowing the character to break the law, but declaring the Robot as having "gone Rogue" with no laws installed.

This article offers GMs a third option:

- c. Allowing the character to try to break the law, but with side-effects and penalties if successful.

*Step One: Breaking the law.* The player decides the Robot needs to break a law, or the GM allows the character to break the law. Using the Robot's MR Score, the GM consults the Doing Things Table (Page 123 of the Metamorphosis Alpha Rulebook). The first time that a Robot tries to break the law, the task will be treated as Difficulty Level 21. Success indicates that the Robot has succeeded in bypassing the law and the following table is consulted:

MARGIN OF SUCCESS:	MR	LP	OTHER
More than 6 points	-3	+3	Delete Laws of Robotics completely with a 5 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as a rogue.
5 points	-2	+2	4 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as rogue.
4 points	-2	+2	3 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as rogue.
3 points	-1	+1	3 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as rogue.
2 points	-1	+1	2 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as rogue.
1 point	0	0	1 in 6 chance of being reported automatically to Ship's Computer as rogue.
Exact Roll	0	0	

*Step Two: Consequences of success.* If successful, the GM notes that the Robot has succeeded in breaking the Laws of Robotics and reduces the Difficulty Level by 1 level for the next attempt by that Robot. The Robot's MR and LP score are modified as listed in the table above.

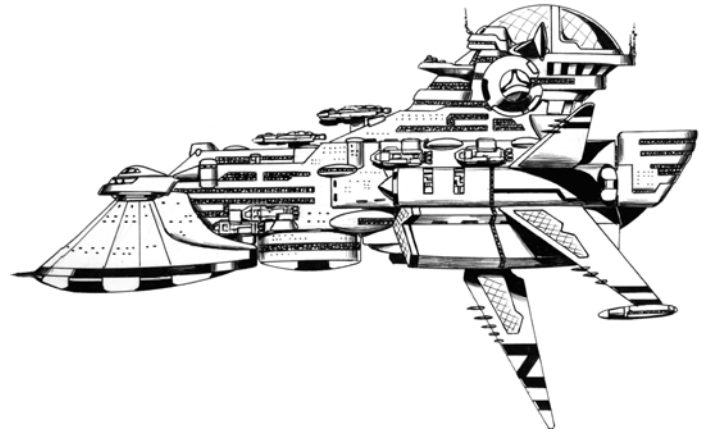
Any other Robot that witnesses a Robot breaking the Laws of Robotics, will attempt to prevent the Robot from acting, and will normally try to report the

Robot as a rogue to the Ship's Computer, unless they wish to attempt to break the law themselves.

If the Robot succeeded in breaking the Laws of Robotics in an area constantly monitored by the Ship's Computer or other functional AI (such as a control room, an armory etc), the Robot is automatically declared rogue, regardless of the result listed in the table above.

*Step Three: Further consequences.* Sooner or later, even if the Robot does not get reported to the Ship's Computer, the Robot will need repairs. Any fully-functional Engineering Robot will reinstall a corrupted installation of the Laws of Robotics on a Robot undergoing repair.

If a rogue Robot is captured or undergoes repair by a fully-functional Engineering Robot, its will be deactivated, its AI will be removed for destruction and a replacement unit installed with a replacement set of programs and Laws of Robotics. In essence, it is a new character with none of the memories of the previous AI. This could be a role-playing opportunity in itself as compatriots try to "rescue" their comrade's AI.



## NEXT ISSUE

We hope you enjoyed this issue. The contents of next issue (assuming that I have not taken up or been beaten by a new death sport) should include the following:

- MA1e to MA4e Creatures and Mutants Part 2
- More Software for Robots
- Point Based Android Construction
- More Mutations
- Another Color Map!
- Mutated Animal Character Sheet

If you have any suggestions or submissions for articles, please contact me.

Craig J. Brain  
Editor



# ANDROID CHARACTER SHEET

<b>NAME:</b>							
<b>MODEL:</b>							
CN		D		MR		RR	
LP		AC		hp		Luck	

<b>Laws of Robotics:</b>	
<b>Skill Suite:</b>	

Skill:	Level:	Notes:

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Effects:</b>

<b>Upgrade:</b>	<b>Effects:</b>

<b>Appearance:</b>	
<b>Skin Color:</b>	
<b>Facial Features:</b>	
<b>Height:</b>	
<b>Distinguishing Features:</b>	

## MUTATIONS, QUIRKS & FAULTS

<b>Mutations:</b>	
Mental	Physical

<b>Quirk:</b>	<b>Effects:</b>

<b>Fault:</b>	<b>Effects:</b>

<b>Other:</b>	<b>Effects:</b>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

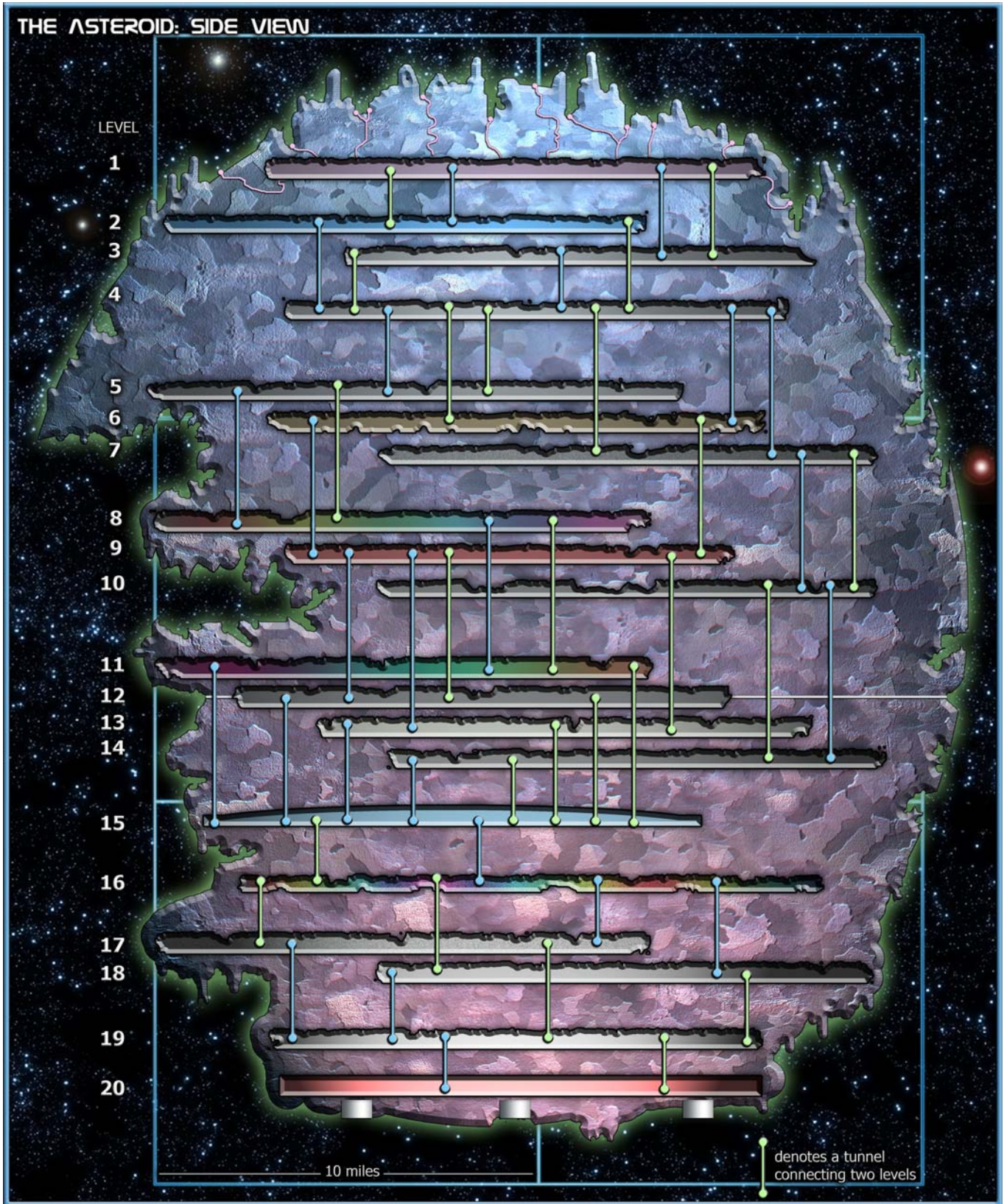
Equipment:	Weight:	Uses / Charges:

<b>Age:</b>	<b>Days</b>	<b>Time Remaining:</b>	<b>/365</b>
-------------	-------------	------------------------	-------------

<b>Killer Virus</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Time Remaining</b>	<b>/24</b>
---------------------	------------	-----------------------	------------

<b>Notes:</b>	







THE RECRUITER TOLD YOU  
THAT YOU WOULD WAKE UP  
ON A BRAVE NEW WORLD,  
HELPING MANKIND COLONIZE  
THE STARS...

THE RECRUITER LIED.



JAMES M. WARD'S <sup>TM</sup>  
**METAMORPHOSIS**  
**ALPHA**  
UNIVERSE

The world's first science-fiction RPG is back! *Metamorphosis Alpha 4th Edition* is 176 pages of hardbound excitement set on the crashed generational colony ship, the *Starship Warden*. Using the **3d6 System**, your marine, mutant or manic android struggles to regain control of a ship gone mad while fighting off everything from insane computer A.I.s to alien invaders.

Now Available  
MPY 1000 \$29.99  
ISBN 0976360128  
[www.mudpuppygames.com](http://www.mudpuppygames.com)  
[www.metamorphosisalpha.net](http://www.metamorphosisalpha.net)

 **Mudpuppy  
Games™**  
SIMPLE MINDS, SIMPLE GAMES