

Blastoff!

The work
is done —
now comes
the fun

by Steve Winter

The STAR FRONTIERS™ game project was ambitious from the start. The problems that appear when designing three complete and detailed alien cultures, a huge frontier area, futuristic equipment and weapons, and the game rules that make all these elements work together, were impossible to predict and not easy to overcome. But the difficulties were resolved, and the result is a game that lets players enter a truly wide-open space society and explore, wander, fight, trade, or adventure through it in the best science-fiction tradition.

The STAR FRONTIERS set includes:

- A 16-page Basic Game rule book
- A 64-page Expanded Game rule book
- A 32-page introductory module, *Crash on Voltarnus*
- 2 full-color maps, 23" x 35" and 10¾" by 17"
- A sheet of 285 full-color counters

The races

A quartet of intelligent, starfaring races inhabit the STAR FRONTIERS rules. New player characters can be

members of any one of these groups:

Humans (basically just like you and me)

Vrusk (insect-like creatures with 10 limbs)

Yazirians (ape-like humanoids able to glide short distances using lateral membranes)

Dralasites (amorphous creatures that can control and even alter the shape of their bodies)

Characters for the STAR FRONTIERS game are created by a system that generates two characteristics at a time. Similar abilities are paired, so no character will ever have (for instance) a high dexterity score and a low reaction speed. In addition, characters can use experience points they earn during adventures to raise their ability scores, to learn one of 13 special skills, or to improve a skill they already know.

The frontier

After communicating via radio messages for years, these four starfaring races meet in a region of space called the Frontier Sector. This vast region, 1,500 cubic light-years, contains 38 star systems. Only 17 of these systems have been explored and colonized when the game starts.

Free enterprise is the law of the Frontier, and corporations compete with each other and local governments to control the most profitable areas and to open routes to unexplored systems. Player characters are placed in this unexplored territory. They can work as corporate or government agents, or can strike out on their own as free-lance adventurers.

Despite their apparent differences, the four races share one thing: a common enemy that came upon them some time ago. Without warning, a fleet of warships attacked Frontier outposts and isolated colonies, destroying whatever they found wherever they went, fighting to the death or destroying themselves to avoid being captured. Only after several battles was it learned that the marauders were the Sathar, an evil race of worm-like aliens from outside the frontier.

In the face of this onslaught, the four player races formed a loose military alliance to protect their colonies: the United Planetary Federation. The second wave of Sathar attacks was met by UPF warships. The invaders were slowly beaten back, system by system, until they withdrew completely, leaving no clues that would lead the victors back to their home world.

Defeated in space, the Sathar turned to terrorism. Humans, Dralasites, Vrusk, and Yazirians were recruited to sabotage frontier bases and destroy the morale of the colonists. These deadly agents now lurk on almost every known planet, carrying out their master's orders and undermining the efforts of local authorities to build up their worlds.

The adventure

With the frontier as its background, the action in a STAR FRONTIERS game focuses on exploring new worlds, discovering alien secrets or unearthing ancient cultures. The rule book includes detailed guidelines for creating adventures, alien planets and the plants, animals, and intelligent creatures that live on them.

Something the game does not contain is rules for spaceship design or combat. Traveling on commercial starlines is covered in detail, but no rules are given for player-owned ships or spaceship weapons. This (admittedly) very important aspect of science fiction was left out because there simply was not enough room in the rule book for it. We didn't want to insert a weak set of starship rules, or raise the price of the first set by increasing the size of the rule book.

Instead, the starship rules will be published as a separate boxed game. This will include rules for star ship design and construction, combat, character skills related to starships, starship deck plans, rules for fleet combat and boarding ac-

Defeated in space, the Sathar turned to terrorism. . . . deadly agents now lurk on almost every known planet, carrying out their orders and undermining the efforts of local authorities to build up their worlds.

tions, and a complete starship boardgame that can be played with or without the original STAR FRONTIERS set.

The long journey

Design work on the game started in the summer of 1979. Dave Cook and Lawrence Schick, full-time designers for TSR Hobbies, were assigned to the project. Their goal was to create a wide-open science fiction role-playing game with a solid scientific base. TSR wanted a game that would satisfy fans of hard-core science fiction, and still be easy to play. Dave and Lawrence started by designing a character-generation system and simple rules for movement and combat. Then they started playtesting, adding and revising.

The game grew and changed for two years, until it was finally submitted for review in the summer of 1981. During those two years, TSR Hobbies grew tremendously. The company had discovered that its games appealed to a much broader audience than wargamers and fantasy fans alone. D&D® and AD&D™ games, for instance, were selling to peo-

ple who had never played a wargame or a role-playing game before. In order to tap this huge market, TSR decided to restructure the STAR FRONTIERS game so it would appeal to people who had never seen this type of game.

This decision meant most of the game needed to be rewritten and reorganized so persons with no gaming experience could buy it, take it home and play it without learning a lot of rules. The number and types of dice in the game were changed, the maps and counters were added, and many realistic but complex rules were sacrificed for playability. In general, there was an overall softening of the game's "hard core."

Another addition was a separate, introductory-level game written especially for newcomers to role-playing games. By de-emphasizing role playing, it allows new gamers to start playing the sample adventures almost immediately, using simple character creation, movement and combat rules.

In order to meet the game's scheduled release date, this revision work was split up among different members of TSR's product development staff. The project was completed in time for its scheduled release at the GEN CON® XV game convention.

The STAR FRONTIERS game in its final form retains the original concepts developed during the first two years of playtesting, but many of the mechanics of play and specific rules are considerably different from the original versions. Although many TSR employees were sad to say goodbye to the original hard-core version, others predict the revised STAR FRONTIERS game will be very well received.

Because of the space that would have been needed, a complete list of credits was not published with the game. For those who are interested in the game's long and fascinating history, the credits are listed below.

Concepts and original design: Dave Cook, Lawrence Schick

Revision: Mike Gray, Allen Hammack, Harold Johnson, David C. Sutherland III, Steve Winter

Crash on Voltturnus: Mark Acres, Tom Moldvay, Doug Niles

Art: Jeff Easley, Larry Elmore, Jim Holloway, Harry Quinn, Stephen D. Sullivan

Editing: Steve Winter, Troy Denning

Playtesters: Mark Acres, Dave Bullis, Brad Cihla, Dave Cook, Helen Cook, Jeff Dee, Don Dexter, Mike Gray, E. Gary Gygax, Luke Gygax, Allen Hammack, Kevin Hendryx, Jeff Herndon, Chris Holmes, John Eric Holmes, Josie Irvine, Harold Johnson, Dave S. LaForce, Frank Mentzer, Tom Moldvay, Will Niebling, Doug Niles, Erol Otus, Jon Pickens, Michael Price, Paul Reiche III, Bill Renter, Evan Robinson, Lawrence Schick, Donald Snow, Stephen D. Sullivan, Phil Taterczynski, Jim Ward, Bill Willingham.

The SF 'universe'

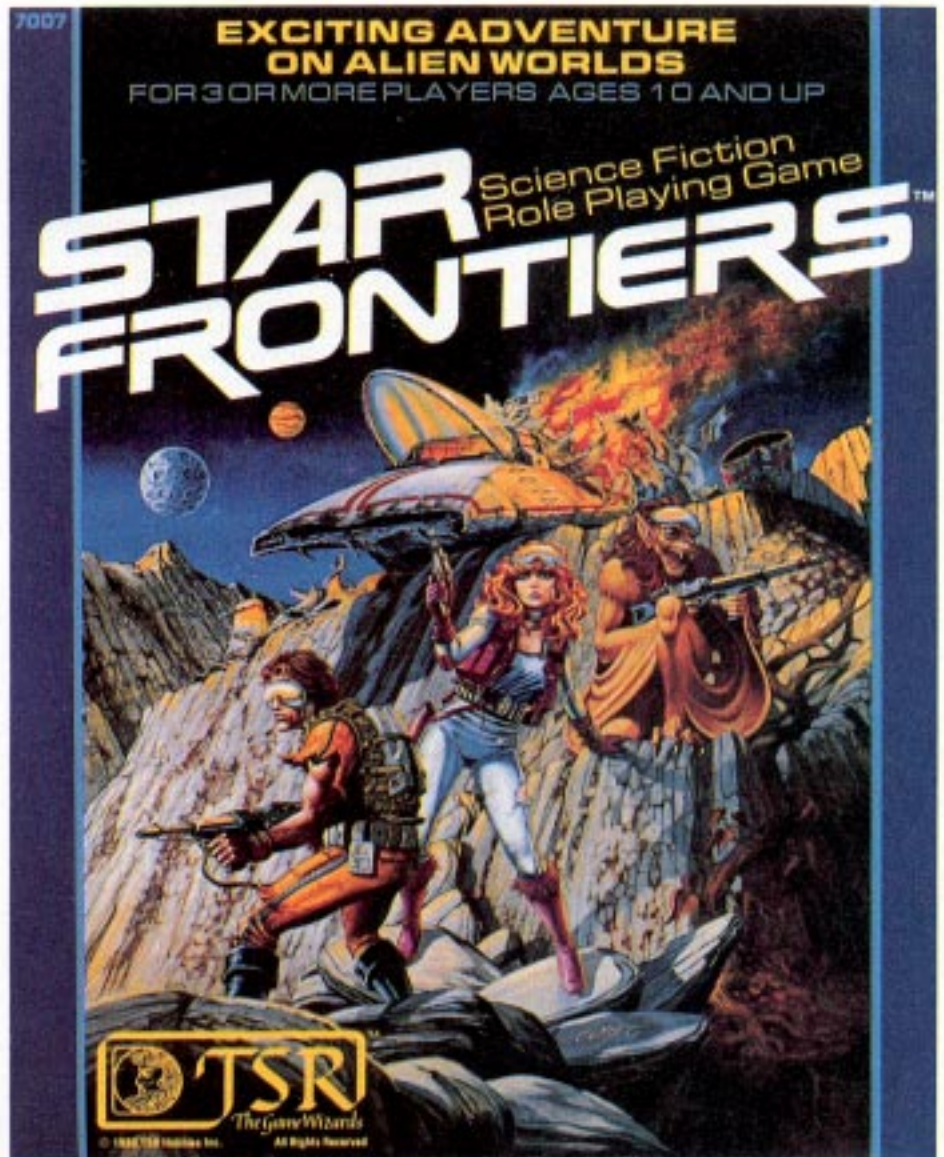
An in-depth examination of the STAR FRONTIERS™ game:

Rules and systems

The game 'world'

*Components
and more*

by Tony Watson



The entry of the STAR FRONTIERS™ game into the science-fiction RPG field is a lot like man's entry into interstellar travel: Maybe man wasn't the first race to go into space, but now that he's there, he intends to make his presence felt.

Likewise, the STAR FRONTIERS game certainly wasn't the first science-fiction role-playing game on the market, but in its first year of existence it has moved into a position of popularity alongside some of the older front-runners.

The reasons for this popularity, and some thoughts on why the game's popularity isn't as high as it might be, are outlined in the text that follows.

Background

TSR had previously published SF-oriented role-playing games, most notably the GAMMA WORLD® game and the METAMORPHOSIS ALPHA game, but these two games are post-apocalyptic visions of the future. GW is set in the

United States after a holocaust. MA takes place on a gigantic colony starship in which the technical and social order has broken down.

While they are certainly interesting, and undoubtedly SF in nature, neither of these games fully realizes the potential of a science-fiction setting. A star-spanning civilization, interstellar spacecraft, strange aliens, and adventures on a myriad of bizarre and challenging new worlds are the elements of a classic SF

framework. The possibilities for adventure in such a "universe" are nearly limitless. The STAR FRONTIERS game, unlike its predecessor SF titles from TSR, is able to appreciate these possibilities.

A variety of science fiction RPGs have appeared over the last half dozen years or so. Comparisons between all of them and the STAR FRONTIERS system are inevitable. And on a comparative basis, it's fair to expect good things from STAR FRONTIERS. The game's late entry into the "outer space race" should entitle gamers to expect a more polished and tighter design than exhibited in some games that have come before. TSR had a fairly long time to mull over its product, at the same time giving other games the opportunity to go first, blaze the trail, and have the first chance at tripping up. As things turned out, some of the earlier SF role-playing games didn't trip up too badly, TRAVELLER® being the most obvious example of success, and the STAR FRONTIERS game will have to acquire and maintain a good reputation among the game-playing public to have a shot at edging out some of the firmly entrenched old-timers.

The setting

It has always been this reviewer's opinion that the setting of a role-playing game is just as important as the design itself. An effective combat system and an

intelligent character creation and development process lose their utility if coupled with a poorly thought out or inadequately described background. The mechanics of a role-playing game are of course very important, but they are, in the final analysis, just ways for the players and the gamemaster/referee to explore, confront, and challenge the dangers and opportunities posited by the game's setting. The fictional framework of any RPG is what attracts the players and latches on to their imaginations; game mechanics are merely modes of inquiry into the game's possibilities.

An enterprising and imaginative referee can get by with a minimum of background material, relying instead on his own hard work, but every set of game rules needs some sort of conceptual skeleton. At the very least, the background can provide some useful parameters for the rules: What is possible and what is not. A fantasy game, for example, is very likely to have some element of magic and the supernatural present; what that power can do is as much a part of the background as the actual limitations placed upon the power by the rules. If the designer sets his fantasy RPG in a world where magic commonly manifests itself, wizards and magical artifacts will abound, and the rules will (or should) reflect this. At its best, an interesting background will give the players a real sense of the imaginary world the designer has created, as well as suggest possibilities for adventures and the style of role-playing and refereeing the participants should employ.

The STAR FRONTIERS game is set in another galaxy than our own, one where the stars are closer together. Despite this non-Terran "future history," a race of Humans, nearly identical to ourselves, serve as the focal point in the game. Sometime before the time frame of the game, these people were able to contact three other starfaring races: Vrusk, large, ten-limbed insectoids; Yazirians, a race of somewhat ape-like humanoids with large, wing-like membranes; and Dralasilites, amorphous creatures something like large amoebas, capable of forming variable numbers of limbs and changing shape.

The four races first met in a region of space known as the Frontier, and there formed a multi-cultural civilization. The needs of the society were met by a large interstellar corporation, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, an entity not unlike some of the charter companies active in colonial areas during the age of exploration in North America.

The four races formed a political body, the United Planetary Federation, when they encountered the worm-like Sathar, who seemed intent on destroying the civilization that had grown up in the Frontier sector. The Sathar are the heavies in the STAR FRONTIERS universe. Unable to defeat the UPF in a straight

military confrontation, they have resorted to the employment of agents from the other races to disrupt commerce and harmony in the Frontier. The Sathar are a good bet to be behind any major plots against the UPF, and thus a fine rationale for any number of scenarios.

To combat the Sathar, the UPF has created a law-enforcement arm, the Star Law Rangers. This is where player characters come into the action, as Star Law Rangers. Playing the roles of Rangers insures that the players' characters will always be in the thick of an adventure situation, and this aspect of the setting aids the referee greatly in setting up scenarios and rationalizing player involvement.

Components

"Everything you need is in this box," says the text on the back of the STAR FRONTIERS package. Statements like this are often suspect, but it's not hype this time. STAR FRONTIERS is complete, including everything necessary to begin play. The amount of material is especially surprising considering the cost; at \$12, the game is a bargain, and compares favorably with other games of this ilk in this regard. The components, briefly described, are these:

Basic game rules — A 16-page, 8½" by 10¾" rule book containing introductory material, the basic game rules, and several beginning adventures. The back cover doubles as a character record sheet and must be photocopied for game use.

Expanded game rules — This 60-page book, of the same page size as the basic rules, contains material on the four character races and the Sathar, a listing of skills and their uses, and guidelines for character development plus extensive advanced combat rules, rules for vehicles, guidelines for the creation and use of creatures, and listings of weapons and equipment. In addition, the book includes brief sections on Frontier societies, how to referee, and the design of adventures.

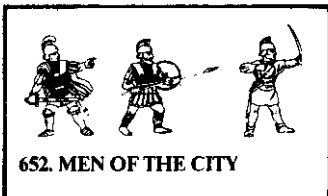
Game map — This attractive item is one of the nicest features of the game. The 23" by 36" sheet is double-sided for maximum utility, printed in full color throughout. One side shows the downtown environs of Port Loren, a star-city on an unnamed UPF planet in the Frontier Sector. The map has a truly extensive display of buildings of various sorts, park areas, monorail tracks and stations, and so forth. The reverse side is a composite of seven different maps of various types of terrain: craters, mountains, forest, ruins, desert, a fort, and a large-scale map of a town. The wide selection of terrain types should insure that one will be suitable for any given encounter. All maps are overlaid with a half-inch grid to facilitate the use of the combat rules.

Counters — The STAR FRONTIERS game includes 408 counters for use with

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the encounter and combat rules. The countermix breaks down into five broad categories: 1) the four character races and NPCs; 2) aliens; 3) creatures and animals; 4) robots; and 5) vehicles. Counter varieties are easily differentiated by color background; each counter also bears an identification number and a drawing (not a silhouette) of the being, creature, or machine represented. I am particularly pleased with the latter feature, since the drawings add considerably to the tactical feeling of encounters, in much the same manner as miniatures do.

Introductory Module SF-0, "Crash on Volturnus" — Beginning players can immediately get involved with the STAR FRONTIERS game in campaign form through the inclusion of this introductory module. The booklet is 30 pages long, surrounded by a stiff "cover" that is actually a double-sided, full-color foldout map. One side depicts the bridge and surrounding cargo bays and staterooms of the starship *Serena's Dawn*, and the other is a detailed hexgrid of a large land area of the planet Volturnus. The module includes encounter materials, descriptions, rules, and a 12-page pullout section of creatures and background information on Volturnus.

Dice — Last but not least are a pair of ten-sided percentile dice, in different colors, and a crayon for filling in the numbers. Since the game uses only these

dice (a commendable choice, given the ease with which odds for endeavor attempts and occurrences can be rendered in percentages), the purchaser is ready to play the game right away and does not need to buy more special dice.

Artwork

In the last analysis, artwork in a game has only aesthetic value. An ugly game can be a good game, but it's much nicer if it's pretty. The artwork and graphics used in a game help to set the tone for play and jump-start imaginations into picturing the scene and the action.

Graphics and illustrations used on the STAR FRONTIERS maps and counters are well done and entirely in keeping with the mood of the game. Colorful and illustrative, they are both attractive and functional. The game rules are profusely illustrated. Many of the drawings are purposeful as well as decorative, such as the diagrams of each of the main races and the pictures of creatures.

Since several artists contributed to the work, the styles and quality vary. Most of the interior work is adequate, though Timothy Truman's all-too-few pictures seem a cut above the rest. Also noteworthy is Larry Elmore's contribution, especially the box cover. The depiction of two humans and a Yazirian defending themselves before their wrecked vehicle on some barren world superbly catches

the tone the game is trying to set: flashy, colorful, and action-oriented.

The basic game rules

Unlike most role-playing games, STAR FRONTIERS has a set of basic rules. Apparently, TSR is aiming the game toward newcomers to RPGs or people coming over from D&D® game playing, and the company has decided that a set of simple rules will serve to get the players involved quickly. The rules are simple enough that the game could be played as soon as an hour after the gamebox is opened. The term "basic rules" is no misnomer: They are *very* simple, but this is good; players will be able to get into the swing of things right away.

The rules begin with a storyboard-style recounting of a brief adventure, and then get into the meat of the matter with a section on character creation. Like nearly all other role-playing games, the STAR FRONTIERS system uses dice rolls to determine characteristics and abilities. The eight qualities possessed by player characters are grouped into the four "ability pairs" of Strength/Stamina, Dexterity/Reaction Speed, Intuition/Logic, and Personality/Leadership. The abilities in a pair have a clear relationship to one another — the second being a derivative of the first, which is more of a characteristic, or quality.

The character's score in each category

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is determined by rolling the dice and consulting a table. Scores run from 30 through 70 in increments of five; the average is 45, and 50% of the results will be either 40, 45 or 50. Unfortunately, a sentence in the early part of this section gives the impression that the range can run from 1 to 100. This is clearly not the case; although the upper limit of 100 can be obtained through character development (and it would take quite a while), there's no way a player character could be so unlucky as to have a score of 1.

Ability values for aliens (as in the D&D® and AD&D™ games, humans are the norm) are adjusted for certain characteristics. Yazirians, for example, tend to be bright and dextrous, but are lacking in strength and stamina. The differences between races are not radical, but sufficient to establish certain tendencies.

Tactical movement and combat are the topics of the rules section following character creation. At this point in its "development," the game is very much like a simple, man-to-man, tactical combat game. Movement and range are governed by the maps' square grids. In each turn, a character may move and fire, reload, or do nothing; each turn represents only six seconds of game time.

Movement is very simple: Each race may move a given number of squares per turn, either walking or running. Curiously, diagonal movement is at the same rate as horizontal or vertical, a distortion attendant to the use of a square grid. Buildings, skimmers (hovercars) and the monorail track (on the Port Loren map) all have an effect on movement.

The combat procedure is equally simplistic: Fire combat is straightforward, and hand-to-hand and melee weapons are ignored. Fire combat is a function of the type of weapon used, the range and the firer's dexterity. A character's dexterity is his base percentage chance of hitting a target at point-blank range. Decreasing chances of success at longer ranges are accounted for by subtractions from this base score, depending on weapon type.

If a hit is scored, the weapon does a certain number of dice worth of damage, which is subtracted from the target's stamina, an ability which functions as hit points in this regard. Unfortunately for the play of the basic game, the weapons do a surprisingly small amount of damage, no more, than one or two dice. Figuring the average of 1d10 as 5.5 and the average stamina as 45, characters will have to be hit about four to eight times (depending on weapon strength) to be knocked unconscious — and this without benefit of defensive armor! Because of this relationship between weak weapons and strong characters, firefights can get a bit monotonous and drag on and on. Not only is this somewhat "unrealistic," but it slows the game down precisely when it should be at its most fast-paced and exciting. The combat section also covers

incidental but important topics such as grenades, ammunition reloads, and cover.

The amount of equipment available to characters in the basic game is small. Four types of firearms (gyrojet, laser and needler pistols, and laser rifles) are available, all illustrated. Some simple items such as communicators, coveralls, pocket tools, rations, and a first aid kit are mentioned. A cost table for all items, including the prices for hospital stays and transportation, is included.

To aid in the understanding of these simple rules, and get the players going right away, the basic rule book has several brief adventures. The first (and longest) of these, "Pan-Galactic Security Breach," is a programmed adventure; one player is chosen to take the part of the "reader," sort of a proto-referee, who will guide the others through the fourteen numbered paragraphs of the story. Each paragraph represents a juncture where the players must make a decision. There is usually a short descriptive passage to set the scene, a listing of any pertinent actions that take place or happen to the player characters, and a set of possible choices for the players to make. Depending on the action selected, a new paragraph is consulted, and so it goes until the adventure is complete.

The scenario story is simple enough: The players are called upon to stop a party of raiders who have breached PGC's security. As the action unfolds, players will use all forms of movement and engage in several firefights.

A second scenario, "Alien Creature on the Loose," is not a programmed adventure. This story involves a gigantic monster rampaging through Port Loren. The scenario can be played several times, using rules for varying the monster's characteristics and powers. Following this mini-adventure is another page and a half of ideas and guidelines for creating new adventures.

A final bit of interesting information is carried on the inside back cover, where a surprisingly complete glossary appears. It defines important terms and often-used concepts, such as initiative modifier or range modifier. This is a handy list that will save some time for beginning players.

The STAR FRONTIERS basic game rules, while hardly a satisfying base to build a science-fiction role playing campaign on, serve admirably to introduce the rudimentary mechanics of the game. The game is simple enough to get even absolute novices involved in play with a minimum of effort and problems, which seems to be its purpose. At this purpose, it excels.

The expanded game rules

Again, the title is no misnomer. These rules are a considerable embellishment and expansion of the basic game. They provide the basis for conducting much

more involved and interesting adventures. One of the major changes is the greatly increased emphasis on the role of the referee. More now than just a simple reader of programmed paragraphs, the referee is expected to handle the myriad of administrative and scenario development tasks we have come to associate with the title. Secondly, the rules greatly elaborate on character abilities and development, combat, and equipment.

While ability scores are rolled up in the same manner as the basic game, players are allowed to shift up to 10 points between the two scores in an ability pair, offering a greater diversity among player characters and their capacities. The eight character abilities are treated in greater depth, and their use in the game is better explained.

The nature of the various races is also dealt with in greater detail. Each of the four player-character races, plus the Sathar, has an entire page devoted to its description. This includes a drawing of the being, with accompanying details of any special features, as well as sections on physical appearance and structure, senses, speech, society and customs, attitudes, and special abilities. The information is quite comprehensive and, taken as a whole, very intriguing. For instance, the Vrusk — despite their insectoid structure — have an internal skeleton. Their culture is based on independent corporations which serve a sort of clan role. The Vrusk get along well with the other three races, and are great lovers of art and beauty. In contrast to that are the shape-changing Dralasites, philosophical creatures with strange senses of humor. Smell is their most important sensory ability, and they breed by hermaphroditic budding.

Unique racial characteristics are translated into game terms via the section on special abilities. Because of their elastic body structure, Dralasites may form new limbs at will, while Yazirians may attempt limited glides using their wing-like membranes. The listings provide the necessary information (die rolls and the like) for implementing these abilities in game play. I found these five pages to be among the best in the rulebook. They flesh out the various races very nicely, imparting to the reader an understanding of the physical structures and capacities, as well as the cultural background, of each. Judicious adherence to the material should enable the players to "get into character" that much faster and enhance the referee's ability to run non-player characters.

In one major respect, the STAR FRONTIERS system follows in the tradition of games like TRAVELLER®, in which the acquired skills (as opposed to innate abilities) of a character are important parameters of what that character can accomplish. The game lists thirteen skills that player characters can learn, grouped into three primary skill areas

(PSAs). These are Military (including Beam Weapons, Demolitions, Gyrojet Weapons, Martial Arts, Melee Weapons, Projectile Weapons, and Thrown Weapons); Technological (Computer, Robotics, and Technician); and Biosocial (Environmental, Medical, and Psycho-social).

Each of the thirteen primary skills is further divided into subskills. The number of subskills within a primary skill varies; for example, the skill of Beam Weapons allows the possessor an advantage when firing certain types of weapons; the way the term "subskill" is used in the rules, each specific weapon within the Beam Weapons category is not a sub-skill. However, the Computer skill is divided into eight distinct subskills: operating computers, writing programs, defeating security, bypassing security, displaying information, manipulating programs, interfacing computers, and repairing computers. Similarly, the Technician skill involves tasks such as operating and repairing machinery; Medical skill covers diagnosis, surgery and the administering of drugs. In total, there are nearly 50 subskills covering a great variety of tasks the characters might attempt.

Subskills are translated into game action by the use of "success rate" formulas. These are based largely on the character's level in that skill (more on how levels are attained in a moment). An example: A character with Medical skill level 2 is attempting minor surgery on a wounded compatriot. The success rate is equal to $40\% + 10 \times \text{level}$ ($=20\%$), or 60%. In addition, if the surgery is taking place in a hospital, 20% is added. Thus, the medic's chance to succeed is either 60% or 80%, depending on the circumstances. This number, or lower, must be rolled on percentile dice for the surgery to produce the desired results.

All applications of skills work in a similar manner, although the base chance may vary from 10% to 100%, and the accompanying paragraph to a "success rate" formula may place special constraints on the application of the skill, such as the availability of tools or drugs. The system is clever in its simplicity; the difficulty of the task is combined with the level of expertise in a simple-to-use method of determining success. The list of skills is complete for the areas covered, though one can think of a number of areas that are ignored, such as most of the "soft" sciences and humanities, and anything to do with spacecraft.

A character's skills, and also his or her eight basic abilities, may be upgraded via the character improvement process. Experience points (XPs) are awarded by the referee after each adventure, or at the end of a session of play, but these points don't come in clumps of hundreds or thousands as in many other games. The rules recommend that the referee award no

more than *three* (3) XPs to a single character at the end of an adventure, and then only to a character who performed excellently and made a great contribution to the success of the mission. Characters who simply survive an adventure without doing anything outstanding are assured of receiving at least *one* (1) XP for the effort.

And this is why XPs are so few and far between, and so valuable: Experience points may be traded in for increased ability on a one-for-one basis; that is, an ability score can be raised one point by expending one XP. Alternately, XPs can be used to learn new skills or raise the character's level of competence in a skill already known. The level of knowledge of a skill can be raised to a maximum of 6, with increasing costs at higher levels.

The character development rules allow players to improve their characters by expanding their abilities and knowledge. While the characters are not locked into certain skills, branching out into different areas is done at relatively high expense, which seems to make sense. The number of points necessary to go up levels in skills is not so prohibitive as to prevent appreciable growth in a campaign game, nor is it so cheap as to encourage the rapid evolution of super-characters.

While the skill rules are among the most interesting in the game, they are certainly ill served by the character record

sheet printed on the outside back cover of the basic rule book. While spaces are provided for recording personal data, weapons and chances to hit, movement rates, racial abilities and current medical status, no provisions are made for registering skills and levels. Given that these are important aspects of a character's makeup, on a par with the ability scores, the suggestion to "record skills and equipment on reverse side" is hardly satisfying. The sheet could have easily been restructured to allow room to note skills and expertise.

The combat rules in the expanded game are considerably more complicated than those introduced in the basic book. Almost a quarter of the book's pages are devoted to combat and supplementary rules.

For the most part, the basic game combat rules are used as the foundation, and then built upon. Where the basic rules considered only a few factors in determining a character's chance to hit with a weapon, the expanded rules mix in such things as target size and movement, bursts and careful aim, skill levels, even using the wrong hand. Special situations such as opportunity fire, more than one shot a turn, and shooting at targets in crowds are addressed. The rules are complete enough to cover damage to structures. The procedure, is a bit ponderous, but players can speed things up as they get



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familiar with using it. On the plus side, the combat system is quite flexible and covers just about any situation that is likely to crop up.

Damage is handled in a much more acceptable manner than in the basic game rules. Because of increased rates of fire and the opportunity to change energy settings on beam weapons, characters can do considerable damage with their weapons in the expanded game, putting excitement and a real sense of danger into combat situations. In addition to damage taken against stamina, some weapons can cause unconsciousness. To help the characters out in this suddenly more dangerous environment, there are several types of defensive suits and screens that can absorb damage from certain types of attacks.

Although I have only mentioned ranged weapons, the expanded rules treat melee attacks with equal thoroughness. Twenty types of melee weapons are listed, from chairs and bottles to sonicswords and vibroknives. The procedure for their use is much the same as that for ranged weapons.

Unlike those in many other role-playing games, the combat rules in STAR FRONTIERS are not abstract. Rather, they are nearly as precise and as detailed as those one would find in a boardgame. Given the emphasis the game's design places on combat, this is understandable.

Vehicles receive an equally detailed treatment. The problem of movement along the square grids of the maps (acceleration, deceleration, turning, special maneuvers and the like) require complete coverage. The problem is intensified at the same time it is being covered; in addition to the "normal" ground cars and hover transports, the rules deal with glijets, aircars and other forms of flying transportation. The role of vehicles of all types in combat situations is also covered.

One of the weak points in the rules is the sections dealing with creatures. Encounters with strange and alien animals are part and parcel of SF adventure, and I think the design of the STAR FRONTIERS game could have dealt with this topic in more depth.

My main criticisms are aimed at the results and examples of creatures provided, rather than the process itself. The randomness and silliness that would result from a system based on die rolls is rejected in favor of guidelines following an almost Socratic method. The referee asks himself a series of questions: What is the creature's purpose? Its size? Its speed? How does it attack and defend? Does it have special abilities? The referee then uses these guidelines to create his beastie, although finishing the creation still makes quite a demand on the referee's imagination.

Ten sample creatures, with all the necessary statistics, descriptions and illustrations, are offered in the rule book. The fantastic nature of some of these examples seems to fly in the face of any sort of biological rules, and some of them remind me of the sort of "homemade" creatures that might pop up in a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® scenario. What's acceptable in a fantasy game can seem a bit odd in a science-fiction setting. But some could turn this argument around on the premise that strange, other-worldly environments could cause creatures stranger than these to evolve, so it's largely a matter of individual taste.

The next major section of the rules surveys the equipment available to adventurers. Two pages of tables list weapons, defenses, toolkits, robots, computers, power sources and miscellaneous equipment, along with their cost and mass. Seven pages of text and descriptions accompany them. Despite their simplicity, I found the rules for computers and robots to be useful and innovative.

The four-page section on Frontier societies raises some questions about completeness. This should be the text that fully fleshes out the Frontier Sector, but the information given is a bit sparse. One full page is a map of the sector. Sixteen systems are listed, coded for population, trade characteristics, and gravity. Curiously, the number of moons circling a planet is given, but a planet's atmosphere — certainly a critical aspect — is ignored. A few slender notes on some of

the planets accompany the data listing, but overall, the amount of information about the Frontier Worlds is rather skimpy. Perhaps a future supplement, devoting itself to a description of the sector, will rectify the situation.

The final parts of the rule book deal with a number of "how to" questions: how to referee, create an adventure, or deal with non-player characters. This sort of information is quite valuable, especially to referees just starting out who might find the task of creating and running an adventure rather formidable. The advice, while often obvious, is sound.

The back cover of the rule book contains one of the most important features of all: a complete index to the rules.

The introductory module

"Crash on Voltornus" is a structured introductory module for use with the expanded game rules. It is intended to start a campaign off, as well as introduce all parties involved to procedures and the style of play. Everything is carefully explained for the referee, and by following these instructions his first attempt at running an adventure should go smoothly. "Crash on Voltornus" also appears to have the secondary goal of providing an example for referees to emulate; it seems to be representative of the sort of adventures one can expect in a STAR FRONTIERS campaign.

Random encounters and planned encounters are joined by a pullout section on NPCs, creatures and special locales. A blank map to help the players keep track of their travels is provided, while the referee has his own full-color display of a large section of the planet Voltornus.

The scenario plays smoothly, thanks to the care that the designers have taken with it, and problems are few. The emphasis is on action. The players will skip from one danger to another, and encounter strange creatures and aliens. They'll be forced to battle for their lives on numerous occasions, and the scenario is certainly tense.

"Crash on Voltornus" seems to succeed on all counts, both as a learning process for players and referee and as an exciting adventure. While some players may balk at several of the premises (a surprising number of alien races dwell on Voltornus, for example) a little willing suspension of disbelief should get everyone into the spirit of things.

Closing comments

Like any good role-playing game, STAR FRONTIERS has a lot about it to like, and a bit to dislike as well; just what will appeal to whom depends on individual preferences and ideas about what a role-playing game should be. The following constitutes this reviewer's general opinions of the STAR FRONTIERS game system.

One of the best aspects of the game is

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its approach to character creation and development. The choices made for abilities seem intelligent, and the question of skills is handled very well. Skills, because of the broad range of subskills and the easy method of their application, add considerably to the game without any real bother. Combine these features with the backgrounds and special abilities for aliens, and you have a system that easily lends itself to character differentiation and role-playing. The procedure for development and new skill acquisition seems fair and reasonable.

The STAR FRONTIERS combat system is extensive and complete. It is certainly one of the key aspects of the game; only character creation seems to be of equal importance. The emphasis on armed confrontation in the rules seems to be an accurate reflection of the design philosophy behind the rules. The STAR FRONTIERS game is very action/violence oriented, more so than most science-fiction role-playing games. One may come away from reading the rules with the impression that the rest of the game was built around the combat system; even so, many opportunities to ameliorate this tendency to "shoot 'em up" may present themselves to thoughtful referees.

On the other hand, the rules have one glaring omission that should strike any science-fiction gamer right away: the almost total absence of anything to do with spacecraft?

The rules devote a couple of paragraphs to space travel, consisting of guidelines on travel time, schedules, and passage costs aboard starliners. But no provisions are made for players owning starships, nor are there any rules for their design, movement, or use in combat.

The referee will have to either improvise, or accept space travel in the manner in which the game defines it: a simple means of getting from one world to another. True, most activity in a game campaign will take place on planets rather than between them. But other science-fiction role-playing games such as UNIVERSE™ and TRAVELLER have devoted lengthy sections of rules to starships, and to good effect. By ignoring this aspect of the science-fiction genre, the designers of the STAR FRONTIERS system have limited not only their fictional universe, but the possibilities open to the players as well. The hope is that this situation will be rectified soon.

Similarly, the material on the United Planetary Federation and the Frontier Worlds in particular is a bit skimpy. If one accepts the points contended earlier about the importance of setting and context, four pages (one of them a map) is too little to build a campaign upon. A supplement the size of the "Volturnus" module could quite nicely add the missing planetary maps, plus data and notes on society and economics, and would certainly be a worthwhile project.

The completeness of the sections on aliens, the expanded combat rules, and the equipment lists is certainly noteworthy. The physical quality of the game is quite good, and the maps and counters are attractive as well as useful.

The STAR FRONTIERS game certainly has a different feel from that evoked by TRAVELLER. Some of the weaker aspects of the TSR game, such as background and starships, are strengths of the TRAVELLER system. GDW's game seems a bit more solid and serious in its approach. Comparing the two is like comparing the movies *Star Wars* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*: both very good, but very different, facets of science fiction. The STAR FRONTIERS system, for its part, improves upon the concept of skills as important components of a character, and has a more versatile combat system than the TRAVELLER rules. The TSR game is the new kid on the block, while TRAVELLER has had five years to entrench itself as the front runner.

A final question remains: Is the STAR FRONTIERS game just a D&D game in space? The pedigree is evident, but I think TSR has managed to avoid trading magic for technology, swords for lasers, and orcs for aliens. The emphasis on action and some of the design philosophy belies the kinship of STAR FRONTIERS to the D&D game, but it is innovative and original in its own right. The similarities will make it easy for D&D players to shift over to STAR FRONTIERS as their first science-fiction role-playing game. This may be the largest single body of STAR FRONTIERS buyers. One very important advantage in the TSR connection is that players can count on the company to support the game with accessories, and TSR's wide distribution network should make these products easy to find.

The STAR FRONTIERS game is fast-paced, accessible, and playable. The design shows thought and imagination, and the product is quite a bargain. While not without its weaknesses, it's certainly a contender in a competitive market and probably a good choice for newcomers to this facet of role-playing. II

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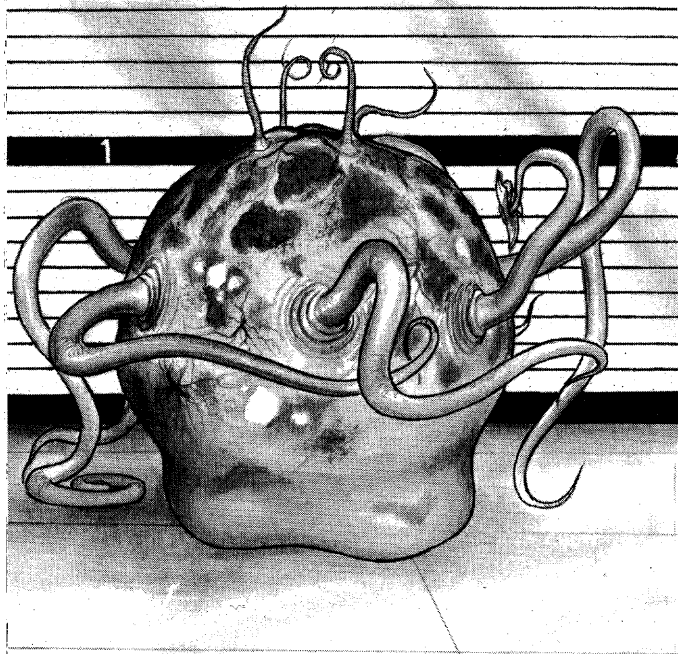
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The Zethra

An NPC race for the *STARFRONTIERS*® game

by Ed Greenwood



From Pan-Galactic File 009887615AR211 Open:

This report is filed upon completion of a preliminary study ordered when Agent 00969H "Quillanson" asserted that the beings Hhon of Prenglar, Stulta of Dramune, and Mlaqaq of Ruane's Star were common members of a single race. Questioning of these individuals, and the beings Urluth and Vrendu of Cassidine, has yielded little information, save that all, though they have no detected regular intercommunication, think of themselves as Zethra, and originated on a single, unknown planet beyond the borders of the Frontier sector in the direction of the Xagy dust clouds.

As far as can be determined, the Zethra (the name is used in singular and plural forms) derived the theoretical knowledge of interstellar spacetravel mechanics, but lacked heavy metals with which to construct spacecraft (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Zethra Briefings"). At length, they acquired a derelict space vessel, thought to be an abandoned Vrusk "Sarsk" explorer starship (Ref: Security File Catalogue, "Vrusk Explorations, Xagy Sector"), mastered its controls, science, and maintenance, and several hundred Zethra set out to explore surrounding space with it.

Information as to their precise route and adventures remains undisclosed, but the ship has apparently moved out of the sector, after leaving an unknown number of Zethra on various Frontier worlds. Such planetfalls seem to have been by choice, rather than by any military or colonization plan, but the intractable and enigmatic nature of the Zethra has

thus far limited the information gathered on this possibly dangerous race. Agents are warned that the Zethra themselves constantly gather information, possibly for future military use, and news of a sensitive nature should on no account be allowed to reach them.

Agents are also warned to beware the personal powers of such individuals when encountered — an excerpt from a report filed by Agent 00616Y "Umbryl," ordered to question Urluth of Cassidine, is appended:

"The alien was initially approached by Agent 00982H 'Samber' and a recording robot 00151R 'Tencode' Level 5 modified Security Type, and it seemed intrigued. It accompanied them to Brazil's Hubstar Saloon, but upon seeing the follow-up guard take position behind it — two Vrusk, four Humans and a Dralasite, all field agents of some experience and good reports — the alien grasped both Agent 00982H and the robot and appeared to shock them with such force that the Human agent collapsed and the robot went haywire, dancing about jerkily on the spot.

"It then forestalled the guards attack by transmitting a jolt through the metal floorplates of the Hubstar's lobby that stunned all seven into unconsciousness. An electrostunner fired by myself from within the Hubstar appeared to do it no damage, and it touched the robot again. The robot spoke, obviously to me and at the command or instigation of the alien: 'Don't try this again. I go now. Do not follow.' Contact with my superior, Agent 00812D 'Asimit,' resulted in orders to do just that. Report concludes with film and robodata. . . ."

Zethra

Physical appearance and structure

Zethra are rubbery, ball-like creatures with high elasticity and durability, possessing a number of tentacle-like appendages. Six of these are retractile, strong, dextrous arms, capable of manipulating both large, heavy objects and tiny, intricate controls or items; their length varies from 1-4 meters. These project from the body in a ring about its widest circumference. A ring or "crown" of four small (.5m long) sensory tentacles projects from one end of the ball, parallel to (but separated from) the ring of arms.

Zethra are a mottled greenish-gray with a few orange patches, but they can alter the pigmentation of their skin cells by rearranging internal supplies of chemical substances, to blend with their surroundings. Although they are able to match all color hues exactly, they cannot alter their low reflectivity or the soft texture of their skin, and so cannot gleam or become rigid.

Of the five major spacefaring races, Zethra most closely resemble Dralasites internally, due to the amorphous nature of their body parts. A Zethra's brain is located beneath its

crown; feelers from the brain's green, oval mass extend down throughout the rest of the body like countless tiny threads, directing body activities and supplying necessary energy. Energy storage nodes, resembling star-like clusters of green threads, are located about a Zethra's body. They can be moved by the brain to avoid loss, if particular body areas are threatened or injured. Zethra move by rippling and rolling their ball-like bodies, pushing themselves along, or pulling at their surroundings for propulsion.

Zethra are hermaphroditic. They mate by tentacle contact, and one or both partners may give birth by budding. A "bud" grows in a bubble-like shape from the skin wall of the parent, until at length it breaks free to become a miniature, independent, and fully capable Zethra.

Particular information on Zethra:

Average size: 1.5m diameter

Average mass: 60 kg

Average lifespan: unknown; thought to be 400+ years

Reproduction: hermaphroditic, budding

Body temperature: 34 C; wide tolerance of changes in environmental temperature

Senses

Zethra sense heat, light, and electrical energy, and can distinguish variations in the same with great sensitivity through their four "see-feelers," or "seeferers" (as Humans call these organs). They can also sense vibrations and energy fluctuations through parts of their bodies, but entirely lack a sense of smell. Like Dralasites, they also lack the ability to see or appreciate colors, detecting them only as differences in shade.

Speech

Zethra have no audible speech, instead using a rapid, complex language of electrical energy pulses with which they communicate with other Zethra through any good conductor (e.g., ferrous metals), or through direct seifer contact. Zethra can communicate with Humans, Dralasites, Vrusk, and Yazirians through a code-like series of "clicks"; they "hear" sounds in return by sensing and interpreting air vibrations.

Zethra create "clicks" by silently tapping someone with a tentacle, or by banging on a surface with a held object. They may also pass electrical pulses or mild shocks through conductive materials (a painful form of communication!), or cause a machine to emit sounds by the use of electrical pulses. Any Zethra who has practiced with a polyvox can cause it to emit a message through the use of energy pulses. They appear to comprehend unfamiliar languages rapidly and with ease.

Society and customs

Zethra appear to be very self-interested and amoral. Rare in the extreme, they seem to lack any organized society or racial goals, although they will readily cooperate with their own or with other races for rewards. Zethra desire supplies of energy, or organic matter with which to produce it.

Zethra also like information, and appear fascinated by trivia from all races and planets: odd bits of poetry, music and lyrics, catch-phrases, rumors, and apparently inconsequential facts. Such information is used for personal enjoyment and to achieve some unknown goal or future scientific development, but they will divulge nothing of their personal plans or preferences. All information can be retained perfectly for later recall and use.

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The few Zethra encountered have readily joined Frontier life. As noted above, they appear to have come from a planet in an unidentified sector, spreading through space by using a derelict spacecraft built by Vrusk, which they found, studied, and then piloted by use of their special abilities. They do not appear to have had the materials necessary to construct their own spacecraft.

Attitudes

Zethra are not allies of any particular race, and refuse to cooperate with either the Sathar or any UPF organization, such as the Star Law rangers, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, or the smaller interstellar companies. Their true feelings are difficult to identify, but they seem to get along with all creatures who do not hinder their activities. Zethra do not appear to understand humor on the part of any creature. Rarely offended by the words or deeds of others, they are commonly thought of as emotionless. They can, however, become the friends or enemies of individuals of other races.

Special abilities

Zethra can, at will, consume organic matter and convert it to energy, using it for continued activity, healing, and rejuvenation. This is done by some inexplicable natural process which remains a mystery to Frontier scientists of all races, even after exhaustive physical and field examinations. Zethra can store such energy in internal battery-like organs, using or releasing it when necessary to move, think, act, manipulate items, or as a weapon against other creatures.

An adult Zethra can store 220-440 SEU in its body, and requires approximately 20 SEU daily for movement, thought,

and functional stability. Prolonged combat, complex mental effort, and the healing of injuries can double a Zethra's daily energy consumption. Zethra can heal minor wounds by resting in the normal fashion, or by expending energy (50 SEU will restore one lost hit point). This represents a return to body stability.

Lost limbs or body organs will regenerate very slowly; a tentacle, for instance, takes 3-6 months to be replaced, and a seefer 1-4 months. Given enough time and food, a Zethra can always rebuild itself so long as most of its brain and at least one "storage-star" cell cluster survives. It will patiently absorb all organic matter around it until able to regrow the damaged parts of its body.

It must be emphasized that Zethra can only absorb organic matter, and will convert it entirely to energy with few by-products. Different materials will, of course, yield different amounts of energy (live intelligent creatures seem to yield the most energy, per given amount of mass, though Zethra will refrain from "eating" companions or obviously intelligent beings unless such beings are enemies).

Zethra can also transmit energy by contact, with great precision, releasing up to their current total SEU, minus 25, in any turn. These pulses can activate or deactivate computers, security systems, and robots. The pulses will duplicate the effects of throwing the "on" switch, or of giving certain command words; they may also simply blast or jolt the machinery past the point of its safeguards. Unfamiliar equipment and large computers often cannot be knocked out in such a manner, but a Zethra can always cause a robot to malfunction by a discharge of 100+ SEU. A Zethra who is familiar with a scanner, security lock, or related device will not hesitate to disable it if it is so inclined, regardless of the wishes of other creatures.

A Zethra discharge is less potent than a beam weapon, doing 1d10 damage per 2 SEU expended. They can elect to put more energy into a given attack, so that a cornered Zethra could well slay half a dozen or more opponents. Zethra discharges must be by direct contact or through a metal conductor (which reduces damage by -2 points per meter of conductor separating Zethra and victim). A Zethra can expend 2 SEU to stun as an electrostunner does, but if a target appears to be protected by an anti-shock implant the Zethra may increase its next attack jolt to 14 SEU, sufficient to both overcome and destroy the implant. A gauss screen can stop a Zethra jolt, but will usually fail under repeated attacks; Zethra cannot burn out such a defense, but know their limited power supply.

Zethra are immune to all electrical and radiant energy (i.e., laser) attacks, and can drain a powerclip, belt-pack, or backpack at the rate of 10 SEU per turn. Laser, electrostunner, stunstick, and shock glove attacks all provide Zethra with energy, rather than damaging them. They absorb 10 SEU per turn given to them by the weapon attacks, conducting away what cannot be absorbed. Fire and sonic attacks do half-

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Additional Data

Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures. . . and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins.

damage to them. Electrical creature attacks (such as those of the Rogue Crystals found on Volturnus) do no damage, and are absorbed in the same way weapon attacks are. Physical attacks do full damage.

For example, if three Star Law marksmen with laser rifles shoot a Zethra with their dials set on 20 SEU, they would do no damage to it, but would instead give it 10 SEU of additional energy (the rest being channeled away). The Zethra could conduct the excess energy to the marksmen or another target through a metal floor, while engaging in some other activity.

Zethra can also serve as a power supply for beam weapons, defensive screens, and machinery wielded by themselves or others. Contacting the necessary powercords with the tips of their tentacle-like arms, they will often recharge the equipment of encountered strangers in return for food and gossip.

Experience

A Zethra's perfect memory, inquiring mind, and reasoning intellect aid it in its understanding of the manufacture, handling, and repair of machinery and mechanical tools or aids. This ability is similar to a Vrusk's Comprehension, but is effective only in dealing with objects and mechanical thinking, not in social dealings. This allows a Zethra to add 1d10% chance of success to its success rate (in addition to its skill level) when using Technical Skills.

Zethra ability modifiers

Zethra NPCs are created in the same manner as characters normally are, according to the STAR FRONTIERS® game rules. The base ability scores are altered by applying the following modifiers:

STR/STA: -5
DEX/RS: +5
INT/LOG: +5
PER/LDR: -5

Zethra movement rates

Normal rolling (=walking): 15 m/turn
"Scrambling" (=running): 35 m/turn
Average movement per hour: 6 km

Consider Zethra movement as "Slithering" for application of Terrain Effects.

Zethra may use all tentacles with equal facility; they have no "handedness." They also lack a back side, and can move in any direction with equal ease, rarely losing control in weightless conditions.

Zethra cannot be stunned, but are otherwise affected by non-electrical beam weapons as noted above. They can bounce as effectively as other creatures leap, but are affected by wounding, falling, and explosives. Zethra swim at the same rate as the other races, but lose no stamina points until their current SEU is 40 or less (then they lose 5 STA per 30 minutes). Absorption of aquatic lifeforms will prevent SEU loss. Water transmits Zethra jolts poorly: -3 points of damage per 10 meters distance, but any creature within the jolt's effective radius in contact with the water cannot avoid damage.

Zethra can tolerate a range of atmospheric pressures (though not the vacuum of space) and absorb any needed materials from surrounding gases through their skins. They have no lungs, and don't require oxygen or other specific gases. They cannot drown unless drained of energy and imprisoned underwater with no food available.

Inert ("noble") gases do not yield the materials Zethra need, but they can tolerate them for short times. Poison, smoke, or doze grenades will not affect Zethra. Stimdose, Staydose, and power screens have normal effects on them, however.

Zethra cannot wear defensive suits, but can wear belts, with pouches, linked from the base of an arm around the curve of their bodies to the base of another arm. In this manner they can carry screens and other items. Some Zethra have ID cards issued by local authorities to keep track of their movements and activities, but Zethra have no distinctive Personalized Recognition Attribute (such as a fingerprint or voice pattern).

Referee notes

The PSA of Zethra are always Technological. Zethra are always after more information, but their goals, plans, and feelings should remain a mystery to other races. If a Zethra befriends a player character, that PC can trust the Zethra not to make any hostile acts, but not to act in a consistent or "sane" manner; the PC may be attacked by space pirates and see his friend wander out into a laser crossfire to inquire of the new arrivals if they know any old songs, or have heard anything about so-and-so's daughter on the planet Kdikit.

Zethra seem very long-lived and know much of past Frontier events and machinery. A typical Zethra will have skill levels as follows: Melee Weapons 1, Thrown Weapons 2, Computer Skill 4, Robotics Skill 3, Technician Skill 6, Environmental 2.

Zethra tend to prefer thrown weapons in combat if they cannot use their electrical discharges effectively. They always try to learn what they can of computers and robots (something local authorities are understandably reluctant to aid or allow, given the unknown aims and flexible loyalty of Zethra).

Naturally adept at Technician subskills, they are of necessity practiced in Environmental Skill. Two subskills here are automatically possessed by all Zethra, regardless of study or training: Analyzing Samples, and Making Tools/Weapons. Zethra often work as fences, barkeepers in spaceports, or as bodyguards to rich and adventuresome spacefaring individuals. Any position where new information is likely to be constantly forthcoming is preferred.

It must be emphasized that Zethra are rare, enigmatic, mysterious creatures. They must always be NPCs, but represent an independent force, rather than an enemy to other races like the Sathar. Zethra seem to like travel and adventure.

Starquestions

Questions, answers, and advice on STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Penny Petticord, Carl Smith, and Roger E. Moore

This column is the science-fiction equivalent of the "Sage Advice" section of DRAGON® Magazine; the information presented here is as accurate as can be found, and comes from TSR, Inc.'s game experts. Readers wishing to contribute questions or problems should send them to: Starquestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Because of our workload, we cannot write back to everyone individually, but we'll answer your questions here.

We are also accepting questions on the GAMMA WORLD® and UNIVERSE™ role-playing games, and we may be able to answer questions on the older SPI science-fiction boardgames as well. Send all questions to the address listed above.

With POLYHEDRON™ Newszine's permission, we are reprinting some of the questions asked about the STAR FRONTIERS game in the "Dispel Confusion" column therein. Read and enjoy, and write to us soon!

General topics

Q: Who created the STAR FRONTIERS game?

A: The original rules were developed by Dave Cook and Lawrence Schick, between 1979 and 1981. The game was revised by Mike Gray, Allen Hammack, Harold Johnson, David C. Sutherland III, and Steve Winter, and edited by Steve Winter and Troy Denning.

Q: I understand that the STAR FRONTIERS game was rewritten before it was first published. Will the original rules developed for the game ever be published?

A: Currently, there are no plans to publish the original version of the STAR FRONTIERS game. Much of the material that was left out was felt to be too complex; playability was



emphasized in the final version over complete realism.

Q: How is the STAR FRONTIERS: Alpha Dawn game different from the STAR FRONTIERS game rules that were first published?

A: There is no difference between them. For various marketing reasons, the game's name was changed to distinguish between the two separate sections of the STAR FRONTIERS game rules printed thus far: the Alpha Dawn character generation and combat portion, and the Knight Hawks space combat rules.

Q: How can the STAR FRONTIERS game be combined with other role-playing games like the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game?

A: At present, there are no set conversion systems to change characters from one game system to the STAR FRONTIERS game, or vice versa. Such conversions will be printed as game variants in the future, if some reader submits such systems to Dragon Publishing.

Alien Races

Q: Can some of the new races described in the STAR FRONTIERS game modules, such as the Ul-mor, Kurabanda, and Enora from the Voltturnus series, be used as player characters?

A: The full statistics and abilities of NPC races haven't been developed and playtested enough to see if they would fit within the game system as PCs. You can use them as PCs if you want, or even create new character races, but you'll run the same risk that players in fantasy games run when they use giants and dragons as PCs: it might be fun, but the PCs might be too powerful for the game to properly absorb. Careful game refereeing could offset this, of course.

Q: Can a Dralasite divide into two or three characters?

A: No; Dralasites are single creatures and can only divide themselves when giving birth, not at their whim. When they give birth, they produce baby Dralasites, not new player characters.

Q: How flat can a Dralasite make itself? Can it go under doors?

A: Dralasites can "squash" themselves as low as 10 cm high overall, but this will take them about an hour to

accomplish. Few doorways have cracks under them that are this high; most would be only a couple of centimeters at most.

Q: Can a Dralasite move if it turns into a big, round ball with no arms or legs?

A: It could roll itself along, but no faster than at its walking speed unless going downhill (a dangerous situation!) It would also not be able to fight, since it couldn't hold or fire weapons.

Q: Can a Vrusk carry another character on its back?

A: It can, but it would be the same as if a human were carrying someone around. Vrusk are not adapted to serving as pack animals, and acting as such could give them serious back injuries and other medical problems.

Q: Can Humans, Vrusk, Yazirians, or Dralasites interbreed and have children?

A: No; the four races are genetically incompatible with one another, and not even advanced biological sciences could crossbreed them.

Q: Could someone use a genetically-altered "superman" character in the game, with heightened strength and other powers?

A: Setting aside the question of whether or not this is possible (and it is doubtful even in reality), such a super-character would throw the game balance out of alignment. Who would want a normal human if one could have a super-human? How would the other players in the game feel about this? The problems that such a character might create would more than offset the enjoyment the player using such a character might feel in running it. Of course, the game referee might use such altered characters as non-player characters (since NPCs are not necessarily bound by character restrictions), and such NPCs might be allied with or fight against the player characters.

Psionics

Q: Why weren't psionics included in the STAR FRONTIERS™ game rules?

A: This was a design decision. It was felt that psionics would not fit with the mechanics of the STAR FRONTIERS game system, so they were dropped from the rules. However, a psionics system for the STAR FRONTIERS game appeared in ARES™ Magazine, Special Edition #2 ("Frontiers of the Mind," by Jon Mattson), and may be worth a look.

Character skills

Q: The cost for gaining skill levels is unclear; how many experience points does it take to get from one level to another?

A: The listed point cost is as stated for every transition. It does not simply require 3 (or 4 or 5) more points each time a new level is gained; instead, it is a progression. For example, to go from level 1 to level 2 in the Military PSA costs 6 points. When the same character goes from level 2 to level 3, it will cost 9 points. To get to level 4 from level 3 costs 12 points, and so forth. The entire progression from levels 1 to 4 will then cost 27 XP.

Q: Could a new PSA, Jack-of-All-Trades, be created? If so, how would it work?

A: You could create such a PSA, though the game system already allows a character to learn many different skills. If you use such a PSA, it would be best to use the doubled Technological PSA Skill Costs for all skills the character wants to learn. Remember, this PSA has not been playtested and may need to be altered for game balance and playability once the campaign has gotten underway.

Equipment

Q: The Expanded Rulebook gives two different costs for the Standard Equipment Pack. Which is correct?

A: The 150 Cr cost given on the equipment list is correct; the 250 Cr cost given under Expanded Game Characters is incorrect.

Q: The rules say a gas mask fits over the wearer's face. How does this apply to Vrusk, who breathe through small nostrils in their undersides, or to Dralasites, who breathe through their skin?

A: The rules were written from a human point of view. A Vrusk gas mask is a harness arrangement that straps to the underside of the body. The filter is a thin sheet of plastic material that covers the nostril area.

The Dralasite gas mask is better called a gas suit; it completely covers the Dralasite. Again, a thin sheet of plastic material filters the harmful gases. Because this limits the amount of oxygen reaching the Dralasite, they may only wear these suits for a short period of time before they become too hot. The Dralasite gas "mask" may be worn with other defensive suits.

Q: On the Equipment List Tornadium D-19 masses 1 kilogram. Does this mean you

get 1 kilogram of the explosive for 50 credits?

A: No; Tornadium D-19 should cost 50 Cr for 50 grams. This should be corrected in the game rules. The 1 kilogram mass assumes that some of that mass is taken up by packing material, and also helps restrict the amount of explosive a character can carry around at one time.

Q: On the equipment lists, what are the masses of unmarked items like grenades? Why aren't they marked?

A: Unmarked items have masses of under .5 kg; they aren't listed individually because of the bother in having characters keep exacting track of every gram of equipment carried. A reasonable amount of such equipment may be carried about (20 grenades, for example) depending upon how difficult such items are to pack away and how many are taken. If lots of items are being taken, an overall mass may be assigned to them by the referee.

Vehicles

Q: How does one manage vehicle-mounted weapons in the game?

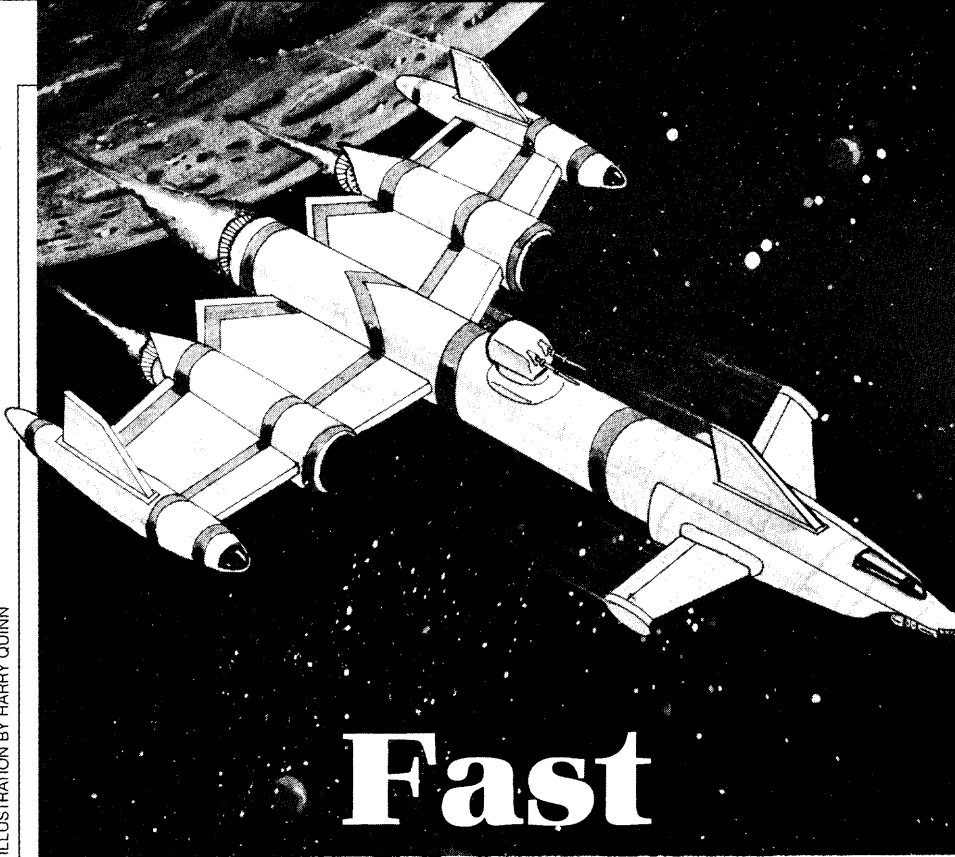
A: The note in the rules stating that vehicle mounted weapons are not covered refers only to fixed and heavy weapons, such as turrets, tank guns, ball-mounted machine guns and lasers, and missile launchers. If the referee allows it, characters may mount a machine gun or similar weapon on a simple ring or post mount on vehicles such as aircars and explorers. This would cost 150 Cr total. Glijets and hovercycles cannot be so mounted.

Mounting a weapon does not change any of the modifiers given in the Vehicle Combat section. The advantage of the mounting is that it allows use of heavier weapons while on a moving vehicle. One major drawback, of course, is that vehicle-mounted weapons are prohibited in built-up, civilized areas; characters driving such vehicles risk immediate arrest.

Modules

Q: What new modules will be coming out in the future?

A: Generally, TSR, Inc., avoids announcing lists of new products to be released, unless such items are almost ready for shipping. The best thing to do is to keep in close touch with your local hobby shop. They may receive a list of "coming attractions" that you can examine.



Fast and Deadly

*New starships for the
STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks game*

by Carl Smith

Viyizzi the Yazirian blinked and adjusted the rangefinder. A blip had appeared on the scanner where nothing could be seen before. Keeping her eyes on it, she called Captain Llewellyn.

"Bogie closing," she said, omitting the "sir" as usual.

Llewellyn left his command chair and moved over to her station. "Is it a Sathar?"

Viyizzi squinted and fiddled with her goggles. "Hard to say. Seems a little small for one." She ran up the magnification in hopes of making an identification, but shrugged.

"That only leaves UPF vessels," Llewellyn remarked. "Can we outrun it?"

"If we don't outrun it, *Lightspeed Lady* gets sold at auction, and we do time for blockade running over corporate lines." Viyizzi bit her lip. "Whatever we're going to do, let's do it now."

Llewellyn nodded grimly. "Let's go, then. *Lightspeed Lady* is a lover, not a fighter — unless we get cornered." Going back to his grav-couch, he punched a few buttons on the console before him.

Engines firing at full speed, *Lightspeed Lady* soon left the closing vessel far behind and vanished into space.

The UPF frigate searched the area around the planet for twenty minutes before giving up the hunt for the *Lady*. The captain sighed, recorded the incident, and gave orders to resume the ship's regular patrol patterns. Once more a privateer had managed to run the blockade at Theseus.

New starships will be available on June 1st, 1984, for all gamers who use the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks game system. The ship miniatures will include yachts and privateers for interstellar businessmen, adventurers, and pirates to use for transportation and space warfare.

Interstellar yachts include commercial vessels as large as liners, as well as smaller, privately owned craft that corporations and wealthy citizens might use. Privateers are privately owned vessels outfitted as protective escorts for company freighters, as government-supported raiders which prey on enemy commerce or Sathar vessels, or as pirate ships that prey on anyone and everyone.

Yachts

The six types of interstellar yachts vary in size. Some are as big as light cruisers while others are only marginally larger than assault scouts. Each yacht listed below is representative of an entire class of yachts, and is described with all relevant game statistics. Abbreviations are used for hull size (HS), hull points (HP), acceleration/deceleration factor (ADF), maneuver rating (MR), and damage control rating (DCR).

Belvedere Class — HS 9, HP 45, ADF 2, MR 3, DCR 47; Weapons: laser battery, 1 laser cannon; Defenses: reflective hull; one lifeboat.

Astro-Blaster III Class — HS 6, HP 30, ADF 1, MR 2, DCR 38; Weapons: electron beam battery; Defenses: reflective hull, interceptor missile battery; no lifeboats.

Imp Class — HS 4, HP 20, ADF 4, MR 3, DCR 32; Weapons: laser battery; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Nova Class — HS 5, HP 25, ADF 2, MR 2, DCR 35; Weapons: laser battery, 3 assault rocket batteries; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

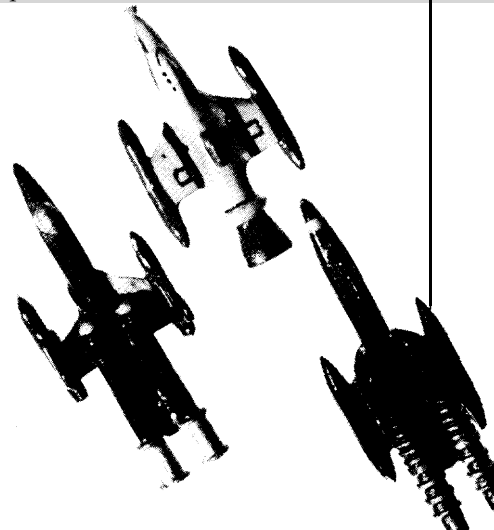
Rim-Song Class — HS 3, HP 15, ADF 4, MR 3, DCR 29; Weapons: laser battery, assault rocket battery; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Nebula Class — HS 7, HP 35, ADF 2, MR 2, DCR 41; Weapons: laser battery, 2 assault rocket batteries; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen; one lifeboat.

Privateers

Privateers are privately owned or corporate vessels especially outfitted for one job — fighting! Privateers are usually yachts, freighters or obsolete military vessels which have been re-armed and upgraded. They vary in size from that of an assault scout to ships almost as large as a cruiser.

Privateers hunt down pirates, protect corporation vessels from Sathar and



other enemy ships, and sometimes act as pirate ships themselves. They can be armed in many different ways. If you wish to alter the ship statistics given below, consult the rules laid out in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks games when creating your variant ship. Each vessel below is representative of an entire class of ships.

Rollo's Revenge — HS 10, HP 50, ADF 3, MR 2, DCR 50; Weapons: laser battery, proton beam battery, 2 electron beam batteries, 4 torpedoes; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen, 3 interceptor missile batteries; 1 lifeboat.

Condor Class — HS 13, HP 65, ADF 3, MR 3, DCR 59; Weapons: disruptor beam cannon, 2 laser batteries, proton beam battery, electron beam battery, 3 torpedoes; Defenses: reflective hull, electron screen, proton screen, masking screen, 2 interceptor missile batteries; 1 lifeboat.

Moonbright Stinger Class — HS 9, HP 45, ADF 3, MR 2, DCR 45; Weapons: laser cannon, 2 seeker missile batteries, electron beam battery, 2 torpedoes; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen, interceptor missile battery; 1 lifeboat.

Thruster Class — HS 2, HP 10, ADF 4, MR 4, DCR 26; Weapons: laser cannon, 2 assault rocket batteries; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Lightspeed Lady Class — HS 4, HP 20, ADF 4, MR 3, DCR 32; Weapons: laser battery, 3 assault rocket batteries; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen; no lifeboats.

Golden Vanity Class — HS 4, HP 20, ADF 3, MR 4, DCR 32; Weapons: 3 laser batteries, 2 assault rocket batteries; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen; no lifeboats.

New Scenarios

I. Incident 47-Q — Attempted piracy

The Belvedere-class yacht *Gaston*, out of Fromeltar, was carrying supplies bound for K'aken-Kar. Entering the Kizk-Kar system, the *Gaston* was approached by two vessels. Bo'kan Yorbb, the Yazirian captain of the *Gaston*, demanded that the vessels identify themselves; no word came back but the starships opened fire moments later from 50,000 km. The attackers were identified as Moonbright Stinger-class pirates.

Captain Yorbb sent an S.O.S. to all UPF vessels in the area, then managed to destroy one vessel (*Darkstar Warrior*) and severely damage the other (which

fled after taking damage). When last seen, the surviving ship (*Midnight Wasp*) was headed in the direction of Madderly's Star. A pirate base is generally believed to be in that area but has not been located as of this date.

Set up: The *Gaston* begins the game 5 hexes (50,000 km) away from the two other vessels. The two pirates should appear at the 4 o'clock position with regards to the *Gaston*. All ships are fully armed; the pirates fire first. The *Gaston* has an initial speed of 2; the pirates start at a speed of 3.

Victory conditions: The *Gaston* must avoid taking over 35 hull points damage, or else will surrender. Each pirate will fight until it takes 25 hull points damage, at which time it will attempt to flee. The pirates must stop firing once the *Gaston* surrenders; the *Gaston* may continue firing at all targets until it surrenders.

II. Incident 114-T — Interception of blockade runner

A Dauntless-class assault scout, the UPFS *Devastator*, was on routine patrol around Theseus when it intercepted an unknown starship attempting to enter the Theseus system. Approaching the vessel as it was 70,000 km from the planet Minotaur, the captain demanded that the vessel identify itself as "distressed" or leave the restricted area under escort.

The vessel, later identified as the *Lightspeed Lady* (of the same class of yachts), took evasive action and headed planet-side. The vessel was intercepted on the *Devastator's* 10 o'clock position. The blockade runner evidently sighted the UPF vessel closing in a 2 o'clock position and opted to escape. After a running battle, the UPFS *Devastator* ran into some asteroidal debris, took moderate damage to her guidance system, and allowed the *Lightspeed Lady* to escape. Rumors support the theory that the *Lightspeed Lady* was transporting illegal armaments to residents of Theseus and did not complete its mission.

Set up: The ships may be set up as described above and begin the game 7 hexes apart. Minotaur lies 10 hexes directly ahead of the *Lightspeed Lady* at the game's start. The *Devastator's* statistics are common to all UPF assault scouts. The privateer has an initial speed of 3; the UPF vessel travels at 4.

Victory Conditions: The *Lightspeed Lady* wins if it can get 10 or more hexes away from the UPF scout. The scout wins if it can inflict 12 or more hull points damage on the privateer, which will force it to surrender.

III. Incident 329-J — Raid on commercial vessel

The Nebula-class yacht *Ch't'kl*, commanded by Captain Vliik Klik'k, a Vrusk, was heading into the Scree Fon system from Dixon's Star when it was intercepted by two Sathar fighters from the assault carrier SAV *Deathknight*. The *Deathknight* was operating on a deep penetration mission into that frontier area. The fighters closed from a distance of 80,000 km, having been screened by a minor asteroid while waiting for the yacht.

The two fighters (*Horror* and *Fear*) closed from *Ch't'kl's* 10 o'clock position and raked the vessel with rockets. The *Ch't'kl* sent out a distress call and received a faint reply from a distant UPF assault scout. The ensuing battle lasted less than an hour's time. The UPF assault scout arrived only to find the shattered and sundered hulk of the *Ch't'kl*. Tapes recovered from her hull reveal that she severely damaged one fighter and traded shots with the other until a "lucky" shot destroyed her propulsion system and sent her into an asteroid.

Set up: The *Ch't'kl* begins the game with an asteroid set 8 hexes to its 10 o'clock position, moving at a speed of 2. The two Sathar craft begin at a speed of 0 (zero), in the same hex as the asteroid (they were only 500 km behind it).

Victory conditions: The Sathar win if they manage to disable the *Ch't'kl* by inflicting at least 30 HP damage on it, at which point the *Ch't'kl* will surrender. The *Ch't'kl* wins if it can put 15 hexes distance between it and the Sathar craft, or if it can destroy or disable the Sathar.

Creating new scenarios

New scenarios may be easily developed for the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks game, using some of the above situations as guidelines. The forces in a game should be evenly matched, though (as may be seen above) they don't have to be set up that way. More experienced or daring players may decide to pit a reduced force against a more powerful attacker or defender managed by one or more less experienced opponents.

It should be noted that during both the First and Second Sathar Wars, neither side massed starship forces larger than ten or so ships per side in a single battle. Of course, there's nothing to keep players from setting up titanic battles with twenty or more ships per side, and with two or more players per team each controlling part of a fleet. Let your imagination run free, and enjoy the new Knight Hawks miniatures.

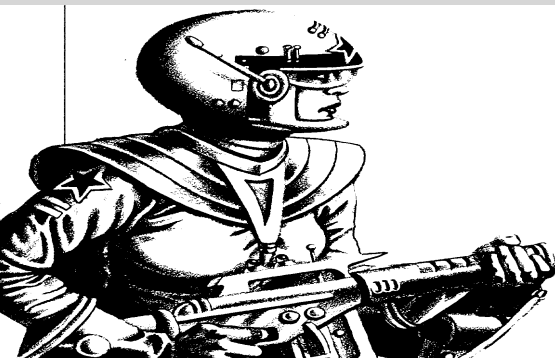
According to the STAR FRONTIERS game glossary, the Star Law Rangers operate as an interstellar police force that "concentrates on finding Sathar agents, but also fights space pirates and other interstellar criminals." We also know that the Rangers have large territorial areas of authority because in the history section we find that Rangers "track the Sathar's agents from planet to planet and fight them on their own terms." Beyond that, there is little for an aspiring STAR FRONTIERS game referee or player to consider when dealing with Star Law forces. The purpose of this article is to fill in some holes that exist about this intergalactic organization and its members.

Before proceeding any further, let's look at a few facts and assumptions that will help define law enforcement and military authorities in the STAR FRONTIERS game.

* The peace of the Frontier region is maintained in space by the UPF Spacefleet (see the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks game). We assume that actual authority in deep space is in the hands of the Spacefleet and not the Star Law.

* The defense of individual planets is the responsibility of their armies and militias. This is certainly true for civilized planets. Whether the armed forces are made up of volunteers, inductees, or mercenaries would depend upon the planetary government, its population and resources, etc. (in other words, the referee). It is safe to assume that matters of immediate local defense (riots, revolutions, massive pirate raids, etc.) usually fall under the authority of a planetary army and the space fleet it uses for orbital defense.

* Every large city will have its own police force to guard its citizenry and maintain law and order. Some planets might have police with wider territorial authority for counties, states, provinces, nations, or continents.



"Freeze! Star Law!"

The interstellar police of the STAR FRONTIERS® game

By Kim Eastland

* Although the interstellar company most often referred to in the STAR FRONTIERS game is the Pan-Galactic Corporation, the Knight Hawks Campaign Book notes that it is only one of a half-dozen similar mega-corporations in the Frontier. It seems obvious that each mega-corp would want their own security force to guard their property and interests, to investigate industrial espionage, etc. No one mega-corp security force would be trusted by any other to always stay within its corporate authority.

* In addition to the above, innumerable other law enforcement agencies would be at work: high-tech mercenaries hired by rich individuals as body guards, private investigative firms licensed to operate locally or planet-wide, and so forth.

As you might guess, the problem of interplanetary security is a big one. If the theft of a Pan-Galactic Executive Vice President's personal belongings occurred, it would bring in Pan-Galactic's Security Force, any private firms that the VP had employed, and (if notified) the city authorities. If the felon was loose on the planet, that might bring in all planetary investigators authorized to keep the local peace. If certain major crimes were committed during the robbery, say the theft of a government shuttle for a getaway, the armed forces might now be involved.

However, if the fugitive leaves the planet and escapes into deep space, would the Spacefleet be involved? What happens if one of the possessions stolen was a device that would be of interest to a hostile alien race? Could a Port Loren beat cop try to arrest a Sathar in deep space? Obviously, there must be a law enforcement agency with far-reaching powers and jurisdiction that can work with different local agencies while transcending their limitations. This is the job of Star Law.

The exact crimes and jurisdictional areas that Star Law would be involved with can be laid out by individual game

referees. What is given here is a suggested organizational structure for Star Law. We hear a lot about the Rangers, a glamorous branch of Star Law, but in fact they are only one small part of a stellar agency dedicated to galactic peace.

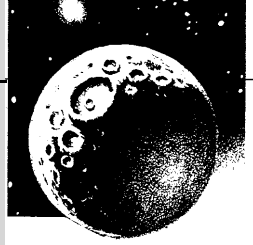
We know that Star Law Headquarters is located in the city of Port Loren on the planet Gran Quivera ("The Hub of the Frontier Sector") in the Prenglar system. We also know there is a Star Law base on Morgaine's World in the same system. Beyond this, we can create some "basic facts" as a foundation for Star Law.

1) A Star Law base exists on every civilized world of any size in the Frontier Sector. These bases range from large complexes to one-man offices, depending upon that world's needs.

2) Star Law itself does not own a great fleet of ships or an army of combat vehicles. Each base would probably have an array of fast, light armed vehicles for planetary and interplanetary transportation, such as flit-boards, rocket bikes, skimmers, etc.

3) Star Law would not have vast armies of combat personnel because the UPF and individual planetary governments would not want a powerful Star Law undermining their own powers and authority. Instead, Star Law would have numerous agents with wide-ranging authority who would not pose a threat to city or regional police forces or planetary armies.

4) Star Law personnel would have the power to call the UPF's attention to major transgressions by city or planetary governments, though they try to avoid matters arising from local politics. They can get military assistance from Spacefleet or other authorities if deemed necessary by the UPF Security Council. An individual Star Law agent's firepower would be impressive since he must often uphold the law when working with few allies. An average Star Law



mission team would include 2-6 members.

5) Any ventures beyond the Frontier "on the Rim" (as the unexplored and possibly dangerous systems are called) or into alien space (neutral or enemy) would be officially undertaken by Star Law. Any unofficial ventures would be made by mercenaries, bounty hunters, etc.

6) Residents of the Frontier Sector who are not of the four main races but who have clean records and initiative might also be Star Law officers. Indeed, when dealing with the Rim, they might be more desirable as agents than one of the major races.

7) All investigations of known hostile races (Sathar, Mechanons, Zuraqqor, etc.) would be made under the authority of Star Law. A Star Law agent's authority level would be very great in this area.

8) Investigations dealing with possible crimes committed by Star Law personnel would be handled by a special branch of Star Law Internal Affairs that answers only to the UPF Security Council.

9) All investigations of other established security forces (Spacefleet, world armies, etc.) or interplanetary governing bodies (such as the United Planetary Federation) would be handled by special investigation committees appointed by the Star Law Captain-General.

10) Under article 15 of the Securities Act, a Star Lawman of Ranger rank or above may commandeer any ship, private or UPF-owned, not engaged in an active defense of UPF space for the purposes of pursuing enemy agents in or out of the Frontier.

11) Under article 12 of the Securities Act, a Star Lawman of any rank can impose Stellar Law in a city, county, or continent if he deems it necessary to maintain civil obedience.

12) Under article 13 of the Securities Act, a Star Lawman of Ranger rank or above may also impose Stellar Law on an entire planet if he deems it necessary to maintain civil obedience.

13) Under article 14 of the Securities Act, the Star Law Captain-General may impose Stellar Law on an entire system if he deems it necessary to maintain civil obedience or UPF security. Only the UPF Security Council can declare Stellar Law on the entire Frontier.

14) Star Law retains its authorities during both peacetime and wartime.

Star Law Ranking

Although there are many different positions within Star Law and various grades within those positions, there are

only a few that STAR FRONTIER game players or referees need concern themselves with. The titles and definitions of those positions are:

1) Star Law Deputy Officer (DO): A Star Law DO is a rookie officer, fresh out of the academy. He or she is in effect a lower-grade City Officer and is assigned to assist someone of a higher rank, usually a full City Officer. After a period of time, usually one to three years, the Deputy Officer is evaluated and may be promoted to a higher grade. On rare occasions a DO might be promoted into positions as high as a Chief Agent, depending upon his background, skills, and abilities. A Star Law DO cannot be immediately promoted to Ranger status, however.

2) Star Law City Officer (CO): A Star Law CO may have many Deputy Officers below him. Usually a CO is a Star Lawman who has authority only over a particular city. COs work only in major cities on highly advanced planets.

3) Star Law Planetary Officer (PO): A Planetary Officer may have many Deputy Officers below him; on major civilized planets, he may command some COs as well. A Planetary Officer cannot exercise his authority on another planet unless ordered to do so by his Commanding Officer at Port Loren.

4) Star Law Deputy Agent (DA): Star Law DAs may command numbers of Deputy Officers, POs, and COs. A Deputy Agent governs investigations that assist other law enforcement and security forces. DAs can command POs and COs in their planetary system only.

5) Star Law Chief Agent (CA): A Chief Agent is one rank above the DA and can command all officers below his rank. He has the power to override the authority of other security forces within his planetary system when dealing with investigations there. A CA is extremely powerful within his system.

6) Star Law Ranger: Rangers are a sort of cross between DAs and CAs in authority, except they can exercise their power in any system within the Frontier Sector. They operate one level above CAs in the Star Law chain of command, but usually work with other security forces rather than commanding them. Rangers are usually called in when hostile alien intrigue is suspected (Sathar plots in particular).

7) Star Law Marshals: This unusual position is usually awarded to Rangers whose jurisdiction extend into the Rim systems. Some Marshals patrol the Rim exclusively. They have authority over other Star Law Rangers and all lower

ranks. Their numbers are few and turnover is high. They usually work alone.

8) Star Law Commanders: A Star Law Commander is a Marshal empowered to venture into alien space. He has complete authority to operate in the UPF's best interests there. In the Frontier and Rim, he can command all of the above levels of Star Lawmen. Commanders are the only persons in Star Law who can legally kill an intelligent lifeform without any evidence but their own word. Only a handful of Commanders exist, and they report to the UPF Security Council along with the Star Law Captain-General.

Other sections of Star Law that might come into play are:

1) Star Law Posse: A group of Star Law Troopers whose mission is to help out Star Lawmen in trouble. They can only be assembled by a Marshal, Commander, or Star Law HQ. Their stats are usually normal for their race, and they should be armed and armored competitively by the referee. NOTE: The posse does not exist to haul the player's "afterburners" out of the fire all the time. They can help if the referee has swamped the players with foes.

2) Star Law Penal Officers: The worst criminals in the Frontier Sector are kept at certain penal colonies. Maintaining these secluded prisons and the transport ships that conduct prisoners there is the business of Star Law Penal Officers. Outside of their penal functions, they operate at Deputy Officer rank.

3) Star Law Internal Affairs Agents: When investigating Star Lawmen, IA agents have the command capability of a Marshal.

4) Star Law Undercover Agents: While most Star Lawmen can go undercover, these agents are in "deep cover." They have maintained their cover for years and may not even reveal themselves to player characters, but can pass information to them secretly. They usually only answer to Star Law Marshals, Commanders, or HQ, and are found in high risk areas such as the Rim.

Star Law Authority

All Star Lawmen have the following powers in addition to those listed above:

1) The authority to detain, pursue, and warn or arrest anyone within their jurisdiction who breaks the law. The decision to warn or arrest is at the Star Lawman's discretion and dependent upon such factors as past record, severity of crime (speeding vs. possession of a weapon), attitude of lawbreaker, etc.

2) The authority to commandeer any



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vehicle and pilot it, or cause it to be piloted, in excess of normal legal regulations, in an attempt to fulfill section 1. This authority does *not* include any overt actions that unnecessarily threaten society.

3) The authority to search a premises in an attempt to fulfill section 1 if due cause exists. In those cases where Star Law Command can be contacted immediately for confirmation, such must be obtained. In those cases where Star Law Command is more than ten minutes communications distance away *and* the Star Lawman decides that this wait is to the detriment of or dangerous to society, the Star Lawman may gain access to the premises in any fashion possible. In cases where a Star Lawman is in pursuit of a criminal or lawbreaker or is witness to a criminal act, then the Star Lawman may gain access to the premises in any fashion possible.

4) The authority to protect society, himself, or private property (in that order), whether in an attempt to fulfill section 1 or in the normal course of his activities, by whatever means necessary excluding measures which may be more harmful than that which is threatening society, himself, or private property.

5) The authority to close down any establishment, business, or operation which is either breaking a law or endangering society and the common good until the appropriate agency, governmental department, or proper level of authority can investigate the problem. (In some instances the Star Lawman himself must investigate the alleged crime).

Obviously, the Star Lawmen have a much greater level of authority than normal law enforcement agents, but they also have a much greater responsibility. Because of this, the screening of Star Law applicants is incredibly detailed and thorough, and includes Telol injections, psychoprobes, and rigorous indoctrination. In the entire history of Star Law (127 years), there has never been a recorded instance of a "bad apple" getting through the screening, though some Lawmen have gone bad after years of stress and exposure to criminal element.

To placate an always suspicious public, recent innovations such as the file computer and recorder helmet have been introduced into the Star Law ranks, especially among Lawmen working in highly dangerous or urban areas. The file computer is a specialized computer that does nothing but record information verbally fed into it by a

Star Lawman. These 15 cm. square devices are then tied into Star Law's mainframe computers at the end of every shift, and their info is dumped into the general information pool. Star Lawmen thus create a running account of their own activities, an open "file" on various suspects, and recordings of eyewitness accounts and testimonies. The info-pool contains a vast wealth of current information that can be made available whenever it is needed to Star Lawmen only.

A recorder helmet operates in much the same way and even has a file computer built in, but it also has a tiny visual scanner/recorder built in that can record the case visually as well. The helmet can either be broadcast to a local recording facility or use micro-discs in the built-in recorder to store the images.

Termination of cases and reassignment

A Star Lawman under the rank of Ranger can be called off a case or have his case closed by either a personal directive or general reassignment, both issued by Star Law Headquarters. Star Law Rangers can only have their cases closed or be reassigned by personal directive from Star Law HQ. Star Law Marshals cannot have their cases closed, but can be reassigned, but only by the Star Law Captain-General, and then another Star Lawmen of equal or higher rank must take over their cases. Star Law Commanders cannot be reassigned or have their cases closed, but they can be recalled by the Star Law Captain-General for briefing or debriefing. Star Law Commanders can be forcibly retired, but another Star Law Commander must take over the case, and the entire casefile and official actions ordered are reported to the Security council to prevent any cover-ups.

Final thoughts

Obviously, the number of scenarios that can be built upon the needs of the different types of Star Lawmen listed above is far greater than those for a "one-level" Star Law. Game referees might wish to start players as Star Law Deputy Officers and bring them "up through the ranks." The point at which PCs are promoted should be determined by the referee and should depend less on PC skill levels than on how PCs conduct themselves on cases. As in any law enforcement organization, the remuneration may not be high, but the excitement and satisfaction of a job well done is often reward enough.



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)

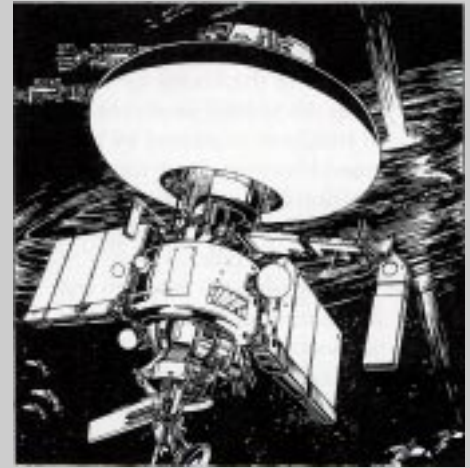
UPFS *Electron* and *Proton* (frigates)
 HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70
 Weapons: LC, RB(x4), LB, T(x2), EB
 Defenses: RH, MS(x4), ICM(x4)

Sathar Ships

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

SAVB *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)

SAVB *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)



SAVB *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, and a 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)

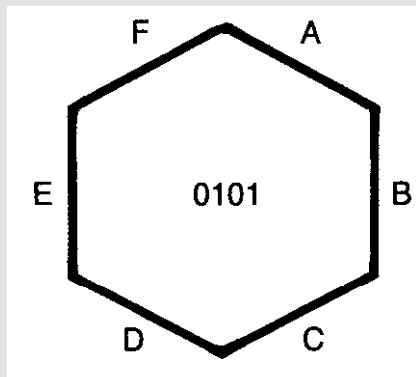
SAVB *Nova* (in orbit): hex 4119 (1 hex/turn)
 SAVB *Blood War*: hex 2816 D (2 hexes/turn)
 SAVB *Famine*: hex 3611 B (2 hexes/turn)
 SAVB *Disease*: hex 4116 C (1 hex/turn)
 SAVB *Apocalypse*: hex 4116 C (1 hex/turn)
 SAVB Fighters (aboard the *Nova*): hex 4119

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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).

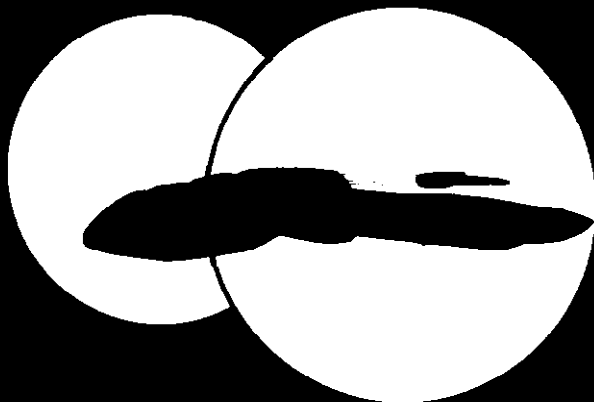
The *Ensten* alone may attempt to escape the battle; both UPF and Sathar ships will not voluntarily leave the map until one side or the other is conquered. The *Ensten* may escape by exiting the game board from the far left side, between hexes 0101 and 0139. If the Sathar see they will not be able to 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). ▲

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Yachts and Privateers Return

*Revised statistics for STAR FRONTIERS®
Knight Hawks ships*

by Douglas Niles

Imagine yourself flashing like a meteor through the void of space with a Federation cruiser on your tail, or picking your way nimbly through the densely-packed asteroids in the White Light system, searching for a pirate base concealed somewhere among the crowded rocks. These are just a couple of situations in which you might appreciate having the controls to a fast and maneuverable ship at your fingertips.

The yachts and privateers introduced to the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks game in DRAGON® Magazine #86 ("Fast and Deadly") represent new vessels designed for jobs such as these. Because of some discrepancies with the game rules contained in that article, some additional explanations are in order.

As several readers noticed, the armament allowed on the yachts and privateers more closely resembles that allowed on military vessels than civilian ones. In fact, these ships were designed as "paramilitary" vessels, and consequently are not restricted by the civilian ships' limitations on armament.

Because of the advanced technology needed to outfit these ships, however, the cost of building them also increased. To simulate this, if players in your campaign wish to purchase or build a yacht or privateer ship, require them to pay double the hull cost listed in the Knight Hawks rules.

The ship statistics given below should be considered official for the various classes of both yachts and privateers. The following abbreviations are used: HS = hull size; HP = hull points; ADF = acceleration/deceleration factor; MR = maneuver rating; DCR = damage control rating. See the Knight Hawks rules for a full explanation of these ratings.

Yachts

The six classes of yachts are listed below. The specific ship statistics are for

the first vessel of each class; these vessels have consequently given their names to the entire class of ships.

Note that the first models of the Yacht class were armed like military ships. Later models have been streamlined considerably for less warlike roles. To simulate this modification, players are allowed to add 1 ADF or MR point for each weapon or defense system that is removed. This is an exception to the Knight Hawks "Modifying Spaceships" rule.

Rim-Song Class: HS 3, HP 15, ADF 4, MR 3, DCR 29; Weapons: laser battery; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Imp Class: HS 4, HP 20, ADF 3, MR 4, DCR 32; Weapons: laser battery, assault rocket battery; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Nova Class: HS 5, HP 25, ADF 2, MR 2, DCR 35; Weapons: laser battery, rocket battery, laser cannon; Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Astro-Blaster III Class: HS 6, HP 30, ADF 1, MR 3, DCR 38; Weapons: laser battery, electron beam battery; Defenses: reflective hull, interceptor missiles (x4); no lifeboats.

Nebula Class: HS 7, HP 35, ADF 3, MR 3, DCR 41; Weapons: laser battery, rocket battery, laser cannon; Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen; one lifeboat.

Belvedere Class: HS 9, HP 45, ADF 3, MR 3, DCR 47; Weapons: laser battery, rocket battery, laser cannon; Defenses: reflective hull, interceptor missiles (x4); one lifeboat.

Privateers

Privateers were designed as powerful, fast ships. Unlike yachts, these vessels have not evolved beyond their original purpose and are still used primarily for combat operations.

Thruster Class: HS 2, HP 10, ADF 4, MR

5, DCR 26; Weapons: assault rocket battery (4); Defenses: reflective hull; no lifeboats.

Lightspeed Lady Class: HS 4, HP 20, ADF 4, MR 4, DCR 32; Weapons: laser battery, assault rocket battery (3); Defenses: reflective hull, masking screen; no lifeboats.

Moonbright Stinger Class: HS 9, HP 45, ADF 3, MR 2, DCR 45; Weapons: laser cannon, seeker missile launcher (2 missiles), electron beam battery; Defenses: reflective hull, interceptor missiles (x6); one lifeboat.

Rollo's Revenge Class: HS 10, HP 50, ADF 3, MR 3, DCR 50; Weapons: laser battery, proton beam battery, electron beam battery, 6 torpedos; Defenses: reflective hull, 6 interceptor missiles; one lifeboat.

Condor Class: HS 13, HP 65, ADF 3, MR 3, DCR 59; Weapons: disruptor beam battery, 2 laser batteries, proton beam battery, electron beam battery, 4 torpedos; Defenses: reflective hull, stasis screen, interceptor missiles (x8); one lifeboat.

Yachts and privateers in your campaign

Despite their relatively high cost, the versatility and high performance aspects of yachts and privateers are causing them to appear more and more frequently throughout the frontier. For example, the space battles fought as part of "Laco's War" have been fought almost exclusively by privateers, and both privateers and yachts promise to figure prominently in the struggles to control trade to mineral-rich Alcazzar as well (see the *Mission to Alcazzar* module for more information – Ed.) Other uses for these nimble ships include duties as pleasure vessels, exploration ships, convoy escorts for corporate or military formations, high-speed freighters, scouts, mercenary transports, and even pirate ships.



StarQuestions

Questions and answers on STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Penny Petticord

This time the column takes another look at the STAR FRONTIERS science-fiction game. If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, PO. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: How high can a character's ability scores be raised?

A: No ability score can be raised above 100, including racial abilities such as Lie Detection and Elasticity.

Q: In ARESTM Magazine #15 there was an article about putting von Neumann machines (those capable of self-replication) into the STAR FRONTIERS game. There are a few questions I have about the article's description of the machine:

1. What hull size is the machine's starship?
2. How long does it take the plant to produce 1,000 hunters?
3. How many structure points does the plant have?
4. How many stamina points does a hunter have?
5. Why are the IM and attack scores for the hunter so low? The statistics given in the article seem to be in conflict with those given in the Expanded Game Rules, p. 26, under "Robots." The hunter's IM is listed as -3 and its attack score is 40%, but the hunter has a third-level computer in it.

A: The machine's starship is hull size 18, with six hatches and six engines, ADF 2, MR 2. It takes one day for the machine to produce 10 hunters, so 1,000 hunters would take 100 days. The whole plant has 1,000 structure points, and the main computer has 200. A hunter has 600 stamina points, making it slightly larger than a heavy duty robot.

As for the hunter's statistics, it must be remembered that the hunter was not designed for combat. The creators of the machine system assumed that the operations would meet no resistance except for local flora and fauna, so they equipped hunters with only a self-defense program. A hunter cannot use weapons like robots designed for fighting; it can only use its arms. Such a robot's normal chance to hit would be 60%, but a -20% modifier is given due to the arms' size and clumsiness. The initiative modifier is also lowered due to size and slow movement.

Q: The White Light System Brief for Clarion (Gollywog) in the "Warriors of White Light" module states that the atmosphere is 16% carbon dioxide. If so, the air is unbreathable without protection. Earth, for instance, has 0.033% carbon dioxide by volume; the dangerous level is 0.5%, at which point humans

will fall unconscious and soon die.

A: Alter the "Atmosphere" section to read, "60% nitrogen, 24% oxygen, 16% other gases." The carbon dioxide level should be considered to be at about Earth's level.

Q: On pgs. 55-56 of the Campaign Book, it states that the ship counters for Outer Reach are white on orange, but none of the counters were printed that way.

A: This was a mistake made in the production of the counters. Just mark the black on orange counters for Outer Reach with a pen to distinguish them from other counters.

Q: On p. 56 of the Campaign Book, under "Frontier Deployment Map - Star Systems," it states that the planets inside the yellow "sunbursts" on the Frontier Deployment Map are labelled by name. They aren't.

A: This was a minor glitch in the game, not critical to play. Players can label the planets if they desire. **A**

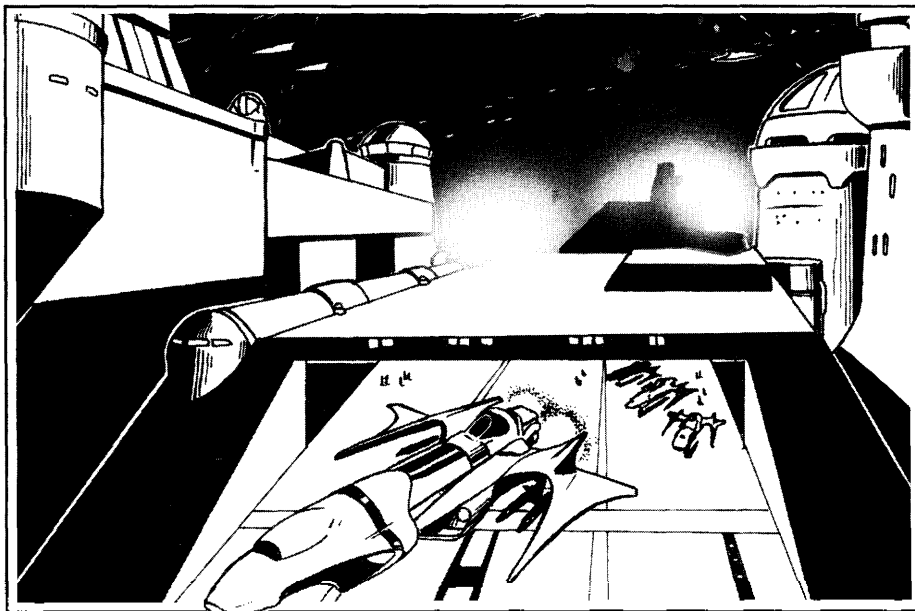


Illustration by Jim Holloway

The Mighty Mega-Corporations

STAR FRONTIERS® game background

by Kim Eastland

STAR FRONTIERS game characters confront a number of identifiable organizations throughout the course of their adventures (Star Law, the Sathar war machine, spy networks, etc.), but one organization stands out from all the rest: the Pan-Galactic Corporation.

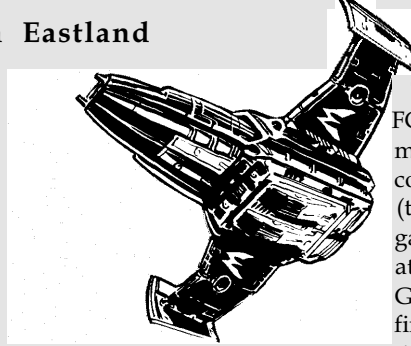
The STAR FRONTIERS Alpha Dawn basic game rules list Pan-Galactic as "the oldest and largest interstellar company." The history section explains how Pan-Galactic was established: "Soon, settled worlds in the Frontier became melting pots for the four races, with dazzling mixtures of architecture and alien cultures. To supply the needs of these worlds, the first interstellar company, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, was formed. It developed interests everywhere, from scientific research to farming to spaceship building. PGC even created its own language, Pan-Galactic, which soon became the most common language of all races on Frontier worlds; Many large companies which started later were modeled on PGC, but none approach the size or power of the Pan-Galactic Corporation."

In the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks game, Pan-Galactic is mentioned as the largest of over a half dozen huge and multi-faceted corporations operating in the Frontier. How and when did Pan-Galactic's monopoly on the Frontier fail? Where did these other companies come from? The status of the mega-corps is the subject of this article.

The establishment of the PGC as the major mega-corporation on the Frontier was designed into the basic rules as a starting point from which game referees could launch their own scheme-of-things for corporate structures. The information given in the original STAR FRONTIERS Alpha Dawn game was applicable for the time of the First Sathar War. The information given for the Knight Hawks game is specifically placed at the beginning of the Second Sathar War, decades later. This article's material is based on the time period after the Second Sathar War, at the start of the Corporate Wars that followed. This allows referees to pick the time period their campaigns will occur in as well as the campaigns' locations.

Corporate History

Before discussing the "current" mega-corps, we should take a look at the past. The first large interstellar company was the Pan-Galactic Corporation; it is no exaggeration to say that the PGC ruled the Frontier in the early days. Like the great railroad corporations of late 19th- and early 20th-century Earth, the PGC was the only fast, safe way to travel through an unknown frontier for the millions of pioneers who yearned for land and their own fortunes. The PGC had its fingers in every pie, controlling financing, transportation, mining, industrial and agricultural organizations, and more on the Frontier worlds.



There is a lot to thank the FGC for in this early developmental period. It founded a common unit of currency (the credit), established the galactic board of trade, created and spread the Pan-Galactic common language, financed innumerable scientific breakthroughs that led frontiersmen further and further into space, and did much, much more.

But there were great problems inherent with the one-company system. Corporate corruption became rife on the less civilized worlds. Often whole planets and races were at the mercy of the PGC's concept of "morality," and too often aesthetic values were lost to financial ones. No competition meant stagnation in many industrial areas and complete control of the economic system by a single entity. Possibly the worst problem, however, was the lack of autonomy on a planetary and interstellar scale because of the overwhelming dependence of the Frontier on one source for all its needs. Because of this last factor, it was inevitable that PGC would lose its monopoly on the Frontier.

During the period between the Sathar Wars, secret financial groups sprang up, investing money in land and various industrial operations and gaining power until their size could no longer be hidden from the PGC's eyes. Many of these initial investments were made in cities, planetary governments and militias, and even in the UPF itself. By the time PGC recognized its potential rivals, it



was too late; their footholds were established, and with them came planetary autonomy. Pan-Galactic's hold over the Frontier was broken at last. The new corporations decided to fight PGC on its own ground, making diverse investments and establishing their operations in the same areas as PGC's own operations.

This last point is very important, because without it, the Sathar could not have presented a serious threat to the UPF in the form of a Second Sathar War. Escalating competition between the larger companies, particularly PGC, the Strel Corporation, Greater Vrusk Mutual Prosperity Institution, and Cassidine Development Corporation, led to armed conflicts that required much of Star Law's and Spacefleet's time and energy to monitor and quell. Many galactic historians agree that without this debilitating distraction, the UPF forces would have been far better prepared for the Second Sathar War. For an example of Star Law's need to keep constant surveillance over the Frontier, see the STAR FRONTIERS® module SF4, *Mission to Alcazzar*.

With the coming of SWII, investments and corporate focus changed radically and swiftly. Many executives and design teams left the established mega-corps to found their own companies, aimed at far more specialized areas. Financing became available through planetary and galactic bonds created to increase local industry and jobs. Because of this shift of talent, many of the established mega-corps decided not to compete with these emerging companies, choosing to shut down those particular operations of their own which were now forced into competition. The logic behind this was based on the larger investment firms' solid belief that specialized companies could not grow to any significant size and, thus, would later be merged back into existing mega-corps.

This was a disastrous mistake by the few mega-corps of those pre-war years and clearly shows the tunnel vision and lack of foresight which permeated the top executive levels at that time. The specialized firms grew at unprecedented rates and reinvested their income in their own specific areas, not in mergers and outside acquisitions. Because of this, within years, the thought of traveling with anyone but Trans-Travel or buying weapons from anyone but WarTech Inc., was all but absurd. They were the best in their fields, were reliable, and were competitive in their pricing lest some upstart company gain an advantage on them. In short, they represented reliabil-

ity in many areas that the PGC could not even compete in.

The single greatest factor preventing those embryonic firms from being swallowed by their richer cousins once they were successful was the UPF Anti-monopoly and Merger Laws, passed during the Second Sathar War. Wishing to discourage centralized industry, the UPF enacted numerous laws that prevented complete monopolies from forming and laid down complicated guidelines for mergers. So effective were these laws in curbing continuing corporate tyranny that they were kept "on the books" following SWII. The animosity some of the older mega-corps felt towards the UPF Governing Council's decision to keep these laws is still felt today.

The Corporate Wars

The term "Corporate Wars" was not coined until a decade after SWII. The first use of the term was by WarTech, Inc., in a special weapons catalog they released for various industries. The media quickly picked up on the term and pumped it to its sensationalistic best (after all, things had been pretty calm since SWII).

The true beginnings of the Corporate Wars are actually decades old. In fact, they started before SWII began. The confrontation that started the war is described in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks game: "Laco's World (Dixon's Star) is the scene of a decade-long conflict between the Strel Corporation on one side and Pan-Galactic Corporation operating through the Galactic Task Force on the other. Tens of thousands of casualties have been inflicted on the planet, and more than a dozen space-ships have been destroyed in what has come to be called 'Laco's War'." This war started and was settled before SWII, the results decided by PGC's extravagant military expenditures. This set the pattern for future corporate conflicts of an "unnegotiable nature."

At first, the UPF could not afford to go to war with every corporation who raised an army or space fleet. With the sudden reintervention of the Sathar, culminating in SWII, corporations ceased their hostilities to combine their efforts against the common foe. But the end of the war quickly brought resumed tensions and private military escalations began anew. This time, however, the UPF was mobilized for such occurrences. New laws gave Star Law more power over corporate infringement on other corporate operations and prop-

erty. Spacefleet was rearmed and could easily intimidate smaller fleets. For a while it looked like the UPF forces could prevent any occurrences leading to further "Laco's Wars."

Unfortunately, the government didn't reckon with the mega-corps greed or resources. A combination of swelled mega-corporate coffers from the Second Sathar War, thousands of unemployed soldiers no longer on the UPF's payroll, and the emergence of specialized companies who thrived on military conflict resulted in an escalation of corporation warfare to a previously unknown level.

In addition to covert Sathar, Mech-anon, and pirate activities, the UPF security forces now had to deal with full scale invasions, sieges, and battles fought by over a dozen mega-corps and conglomerates of smaller firms. It is during this time period that the information in this article (*and the one following in next month's ARES™ Section - Ed.*) applies.

Stages of a Corporate War

To better understand the Corporate Wars, one must go to Star Law and their guideword for rookie Deputy Officers: ICEWARS! This acronym outlines the seven steps of escalation usually seen in a Corporate War:

* *Interest conflict* — A conflict of interest develops between two corporate entities over mineral rights, world development rights, or whatever.

* *Corporate espionage* — Usually an increase in corporate spying takes place after the initial conflict of interest develops. If results indicate the opposing corporations' goals are not in actual conflict, then the entire matter is cleared up immediately.

* *Economic sanctions* — If espionage does indicate a conflict exists, economic sanctions are imposed to pressure the opposing corporation out of the conflict. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn't.

* *Withdrawal* — When economic sanctions do not pressure either side out of a conflict of interest, then a rapid withdrawal of corporate personnel and equipment from the site begins. This "pullout" sometimes confuses opponents into believing the economic sanctions worked. Generally, it is a prelude to war.

* *Armed Conflict* — Once a site is deemed to be vacated by a corporation of any potential "hostage" personnel or material, mercenaries are sent in to "hold" the site while "negotiations" proceed.

* *Reinforcements* — The inevitable hostilities are exchanged and reinforcements are sent in to “protect the corporate interests.” The actual war has now begun and “negotiations” continue to be held while the war continues. The length of the war varies. The shortest war on record was between two moon-mining colonies around Outer Reach in the Dra-mune system. A stray maxi-missile with two high explosive warheads bit a cache of TD-19 in a tin hut and the blast of shrapnel punctured every spacesuit worn in the battle. Actual battle time: 3 minutes. Casualties: 135 dead. The longest war on record is the great PGC-Streel War over Laco in Dixon’s Star system. Actual battle time: 10 years. Casualties: 235,000 dead, 367,000 wounded, 170 tril-credits in equipment destroyed.

* *Stabilization* — When one corporation wishes to withdraw from the conflict, because of the drain on its resources or the inevitability of its defeat, the “negotiations” suddenly become serious and the conflict is usually resolved within a week. Terms of “surrender” range from full reparations for the victorious corporation’s financial outlay to the withdrawal

of the losing corporation’s forces.

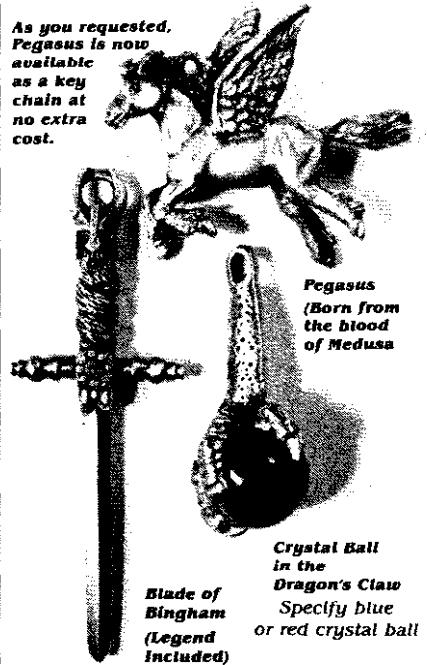
It should be remembered that these wars are no longer fought on developed worlds within the Frontier. Nearly all battles occur on newly discovered worlds and moons. If a corporate war is seriously effecting the health or welfare of a planet on the Frontier, Spacefleet may step in and end the conflict in the swiftest, surest fashion it knows, by space bombardment, blockade, and other procedures. No corporation has ever won a battle with Spacefleet’s forces.

For campaign play’s sake, it is also important for the referee to remember that forces within the mega-corps often make for unpredictable developments. Power struggles between executives are commonplace. The cadres, akin to modern labor unions, are strong in certain industries, and a planetary government certainly affects a mega-corps operating procedures (not to mention the effects of the UPF government and Star Law on corporate policies).

Look for a detailed list of the major mega-corporations of the Frontier in next month’s *ARES™* Section.

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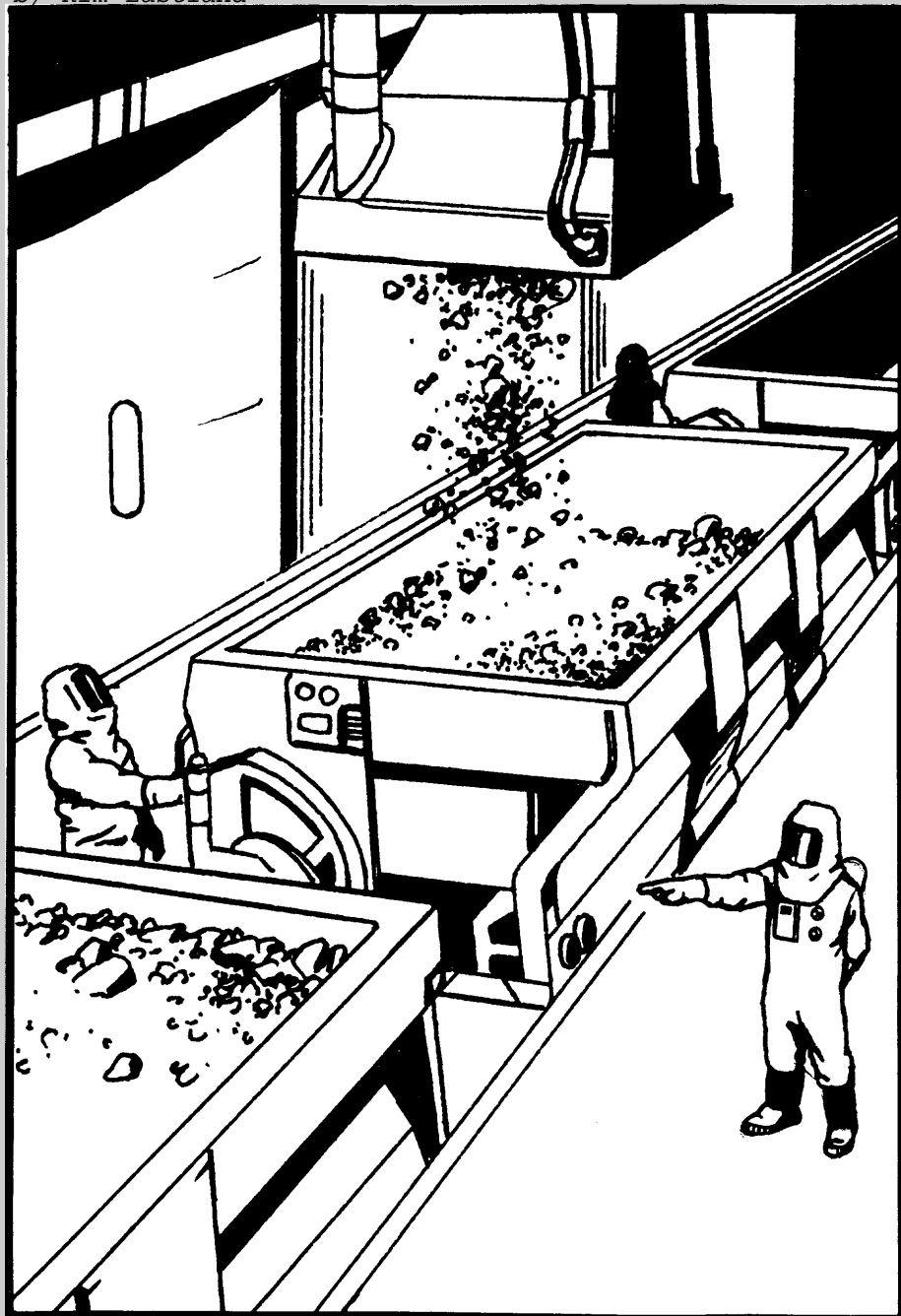


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The Mega-Corporations

STARFRONTIERS® game background

by Kim Eastland



Last month, "The Mighty Mega-Corporations" introduced STAR FRONTIERS gamers to the companies and company wars of the Frontier. This article describes who the mega-corporations are and what they control. The following is a list of "current" (post-Sathar War II) mega-corps, their operations, headquarters, chief executives (if known), subsidiaries, and allies and enemies.

The first five mega-corps share control over their respective areas, and are constantly in conflict with each other.

Pan-Galactic Corporation

Pan-Galactic is still believed to be the largest business entity on the Frontier, but no factual data to support that belief has been released. The PGC has offices on nearly every inhabited planet, but

has now confined most of its operations to financial areas only. Funds for Frontier explorations, business ventures, new governments, etc., are most often supplied by the PGC.

Headquarters: Port Loren, Gran Quivera, Prenglar.

Chief Executive: Chang Kim Lee (Human).

Subsidiaries: No large ones, but PGC owns innumerable small and middle-sized corporations.

Allies: Galactic Task Force, Inc.

Enemies: Strel Corporation, MercCo.

Occasional Opposition: Cassidine Development Corporation.

Strel Corporation

Strel has grown remarkably in the last few decades and is fast approaching the PGC in size and financial power. Strel offices are now spread throughout the Frontier and in the Rim, an area PGC has neglected. Strel specializes in banking systems, savings and loan institutions, and financial backing in real estate and agricultural areas.

Headquarters: Point True, Pale, Truane's Star.

Chief Executive: K'an Ku (Vrusk).

Subsidiaries: The largest are Greater Vrusk Mutual Prosperity Institution, First Dralosite Savings and Loan chain, and the Yazirian Financial Co-op.

Allies: MercCo.

Enemies: PGC, Galactic Task Force, Inc.

Occasional Opposition: Cassidine Development Corporation.

Cassidine Development Corporation

CDC has also grown over the last few decades, but not to the extent of the Strel Corporation. CDC has offices on all major worlds and is starting to expand into the Rim. CDC specializes in insurance companies and in financial operations of a riskier nature, such as planetary and deep space mining operations, archaeological digs, and off-Frontier exploration ventures.

Headquarters: New Hope, Triad, Cassidine.

Chief Executives: Members of the Board of Directors share equal power; most noted Director is Xoprothun (Dralasite).

Subsidiaries: CDC is fronted so well

of the Frontier

that subsidiaries are relatively unknown.

Allies: CDC has had an alliance, at one time or another, with almost every mega-corp except PGC and Streel.

Enemies: None.

Occasional Opposition: PGC, Galactic Task Force, Inc., Streel Corporation, and MercCo.

Galactic Task Force, Incorporated

Galactic Task Force (usually known simply as Galactic, or GTF) has a monopoly on the business of providing non-military or non-security services for other companies. Almost every service imagined can be obtained from them. They also provide military and security services, but they do not have a monopoly in those areas. Their slogan, "Secretaries to mercenaries, Galactic has 'em all!" is known everywhere.

Headquarters: Port Loren, Gran Quivera, Prenglar.

Chief Executive: Vlad Lopez (Human).

Subsidiaries: Rent-A-Drudge, 24-Hour Escorts, Inc., All-Day Medical Services, and Security Forces, Ltd.

Allies: PGC.

Enemies: MercCo, Streel Corporation.

Occasional Opposition: Various small services and security organizations, local militia, pirates.

MercCo

MercCo was created shortly after the Second Sathar War by enterprising individuals who specialized in warfare.

They received financial backing from the Streel Corporation, and in ten years have developed into a mega-corp. MercCo specializes in mercenaries for hire in temporary or permanent security, military, or high-risk positions. While Galactic usually pumps more credits into hardware for their personnel, MercCo generally has personnel with far more combat experience. These two companies are the primary forces involved in armed conflict in the Corporate Wars.

Headquarters: Buckerton, Kdikit, Madlerly's Star.

Chief Executive: Henshaw (Yazirian).

Subsidiaries: ForceCo (military), SecurCo (security), and RiskCo (high-risk operations of any type).

Allies: Streel Corporation.

Enemies: Galactic Task Force, Inc., PGC.

Occasional Opposition: Various small security organizations, militia, and pirates.

The following mega-corporations have monopolies in their respective areas (60%-70% control of their industry). Although they are involved in armed conflict with smaller companies and pirates, they seldom battle each other except for possession of land, mineral resources, conflict of interests, etc. They have no set allies, enemies, or occasional opposition except for various dealings with pirates.

Trans-Travel

Trans-Travel is a planetary corporation; that is, it is a corporation composed of many different companies all headquartered on the same planet, Terledrom. All of these companies specialize in some form of transportation or the manufacturing of transport vehicles or machines. Trans-Travel itself, as a conglomerate, controls 80% of non-military space travel. This includes transportation of raw materials, processed goods, passengers, etc. Trans-Travel's slogan, "Your safest route is with Trans-Travel," is as much a warning to other mega-corps as an advertisement. T-T considers smuggling a serious crime and will punish it by death if given the chance.

Headquarters: Sengsen, Terledrom, Fromeltar.

Chief Executives: Ruled by a council of Vrusk companies and elected Dralasites.

Subsidiaries: Frontier Spaceship Manufacturing Corporation, Interstellar Vehicles Co., Zeb Aircars, Inc., Hickman Hovercraft, Ltd., Niles Company (automobiles), Grubber Aircraft Industries, Mohan-Johnson Aquatic Vehicles, Stewint Land Transport Company, Curtis Cycle Corporation, Dobson Security Vehicles, Ltd., Angrey Walkways and Pneu-tube Corporation, and Moore Research Labs.

Synthetics Corporation

Synth-Corp provides the vast amount of food, beverages, and "over-the-counter" drugs for the Frontier. It owns many agricultural coops, vast manufacturing facilities, and dozens of pharmaceutical

laboratories. Almost all independent agricultural and dairy operations deal with Synth-Corp, but they are all on very good terms with each other. Synth-Corp has possibly the best reputation of any mega-corp for fairness and quality.

Headquarters: Synthtown, Inner Reach, Dramune.

Chief Executive: Krondot (Dralasite).

Subsidiaries: Thousands of small and middle-sized companies.

Interplanetary Industries

I.I. specializes in high tech, non-computer or communication devices. More galactic patents are held by I.I. than any other mega-corp, and its research labs are the finest and most heavily guarded on the Frontier. Industrial spying is a way of life with most mega-corps and I.I. is no exception. Its private security corps is one of the best.

Headquarters: Lake Vast, Triad, Cassidine.

Chief Executive: Harlan Tho (Yazirian).

Subsidiaries: None.

Nesmith Enterprises of Triad

The NET, as it's called, holds the monopolies on computer and communications equipment. Competition between the NET and I.I. is strong, but it has not erupted into a full scale war, though both mega-corps would like to expand into their counterpart's market. This is a volatile situation that Star Law is doing everything to contain. The NET holds the all-important patent on programming units and body computers, plus the circuitry for most communicators and radiophones. Because of these patents, most other mega-corps have never even considered competing with the NET.

Headquarters: Malicon Valley, Triad, Cassidine.

Chief Executives: The identities of the Board of Directors are not widely known.

Subsidiaries: Hundreds, but all are closely identified with NET (e.g., NET-Progit Industries, NET-Communicator Industries, NET-Computer Labs, etc.).

Universal Households

Universal Households specializes in two distinct areas: textiles/clothing and buildings. Their synthetic apparel resists grime and wear and is inexpensive, but UH also controls the fashion industry; though made to last longer, their apparel

goes out of style yearly. UH buildings are in the areas of pre-fab dwellings and offices, industrial and professional facilities, and other non-specialty facilities. Specialty buildings are expensive and are designed and constructed by architectural engineers (see GOD Co., below).

Headquarters: Hyyay, Hakosont megacorps: Planetary Structures, Inc., and Kostiz Fashions, Inc.

Starplay Enterprises

Leisure time activities are the concern of Starplay Enterprises, and most legal intoxicants, confectionaries, exotic cuisine, sporting goods, sports events, gambling and recreational equipment and facilities, and general entertainment are provided by them. Under UPF laws, no single corporation can hold a monopoly in the tri-vid, holograph, or publishing industries, but Starplay comes as close as it legally can to doing just that. It offers dozens of orbiting broadcast stations for subscriber channels, and publishes hundreds of periodicals in all known languages. Many believe Starplay will be the next number one mega-corp.

Headquarters: Maze, Minotaur, Theseus.

Chief Executive: Zsa-Nin (Vrusk).

Subsidiaries: Most major sports leagues and sports facilities, Price Publishing, and the Stellar Entertainment Network.

Tachtion Instruments

T.I. controls most of the Frontier's industrial engineering businesses and, more importantly, almost all of the robotics industry. T.I. holds the patents on the Freeswing Gyroscope, which is necessary for the operation of cost-effective bipedal robots, and on the Marilyn Cybernetics Cortex, without which cybernetics would still be a theory.

Headquarters: Tachtion, Lossend, Timeon.

Chief Executive: Margaret Bouvia (Human).

Subsidiaries: Raupp Robotics, Elmore Electronic Enterprises, Asimov Positionics, Parkinson Cybernetic Industries, Easley Androids, Ltd., Meyer Robotics, LaForce Industrial Engineering Corporation, and Dawck Factories.

Referee note: it is rumored that T.I. is performing research in time manipulation, though with what success no one knows.

Galaxy Overall Development Company

This is the newest mega-corp and is referred to as GOD Co., by the less reli-

gious. It is located on Hentz, which is ruled by a religious clan, the Family of One. Although not an overly fanatic or expansionistic religion, it does require that everyone who lives on Hentz or works for GOD Co., must wear a uniform showing his or her job and position. GOD Co.'s specialty is architectural engineering and terraforming. Architectural engineering is a lucrative business, but it is the planet-altering terraforming work that has really propelled GOD Co., into a mega-corp. Since the Cassidine Development Corporation funded them and the Capellan Free Merchants underwrote the loan, GOD Co., is particularly indebted to them. With the creation of terraforming, the structure of the Frontier, and even the Rim, may change drastically in the next twenty years.

Headquarters: Onehome, Hentz, Araks.

Chief Executive: Yeppir (Yazirian).

Subsidiaries: None.

WarTech, Incorporated

The entire WarTech, Inc., military/industrial complex controls about 80% of all weaponry sold, and has virtually eliminated planetary or galactic military escalations. Planetary warfare on the Frontier and on the Rim is usually conducted by mercenaries from Galactic, MercCo, planetary militia, or pirates, who all buy their supplies from WarTech. It is rumored that certain "Doomsday" devices were created by WarTech, but they were deemed too dangerous for "public consumption."

Headquarters: Heston, Hargut, Gruna Garu.

Chief Executive: Yvor Yeeny (Yazirian).

Subsidiaries: Interstar Weaponry, Nova Explosives Unlimited, Newar Laboratories, and the Zik-kit Ordinance Industries (Z.O.I.).

Referee note: WarTech, Inc. is actually the largest mega-corp in terms of annual income.

Eversafe Enterprises

The motto of Eversafe, "Live eversafe and eversecure!" gives some indication as to the hardware available from this mega-corp. Eversafe produces 90% of all available defense suits, power screens, force fields, shields, vehicle plating and defensive attachments, and internal and external security systems. From time to time, Eversafe field tests new defenses through Star Law or MercCo.

Headquarters: Moline, Gollywog, White Light.

Chief Executive: E. LeRoy Lange-Pierce (Human).

Subsidiaries: Wokeekoo Scanner Manufacturing Corporation, Armorall Unlimited (defense suits and screens), Guardall Incorporated (security devices), and The Mikococ Cardlock Manufacturing Company.

Capellan Free Merchants

This unusual conglomerate of retail outlets, distributors, manufacturers, and trading ships is much larger than most Frontiersmen realize. The most identifiable race connected with the conglomerate is the Ifshnits from the Capella System (out in the Rim). These tiny (one meter, at most) merchants organize the hundreds of planet-hopping trading ships that ply the spaceways with their wares. The Free Merchants have a clear understanding with Trans-Travel and will only transport their own materials and personnel on their ships (attempts at smuggling are up to the referee).

Any being can belong to the Free Merchants, but he must pass a five-year apprenticeship first. Entry into the apprenticeship program requires sponsorship by an already established Free Merchant. The Capellan Free Merchants have been known to venture past the Rim in search of new and exotic items, and many wondrous devices can be found in a Free Merchant's tent, stall, shop, or ship.

Headquarters: Red Island, Bazaar, Capella, The Rim.

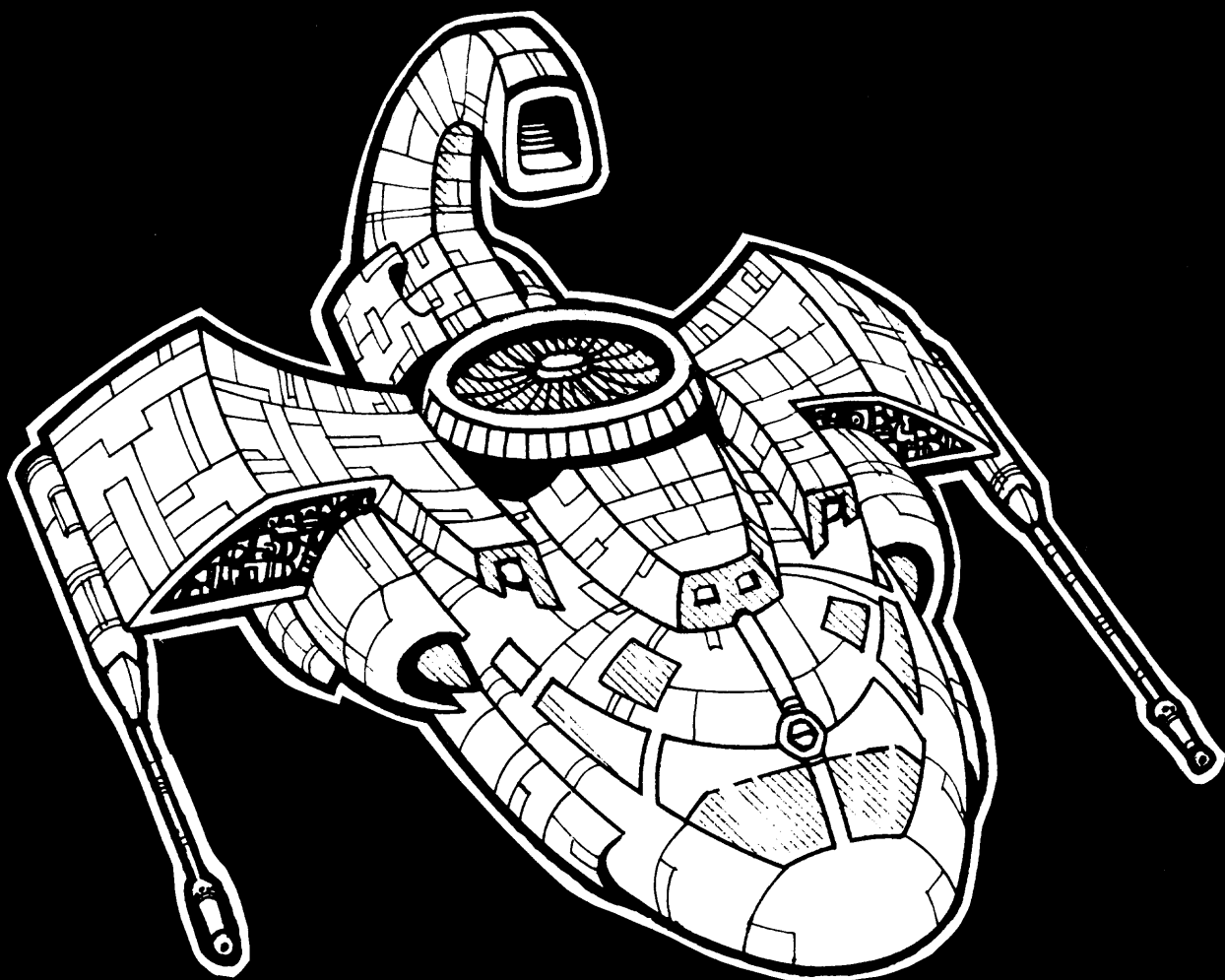
Chief Executives: The Council of Twelve, a revolving membership drawn from the Capellan elders who have been Free Merchants.

Subsidiaries: None.

Referee Note: The Capellan Free Merchants seem to be an exception to many rules about mega-corps, such as not really being an exclusive manufacturer of materials and being able to avoid the Trans-Travel monopoly. This is because they were granted a UPF charter to do so, the only one of its kind, in gratitude for the Free Merchant's help in the rough days following the First Sathar War.

Final notes on the corporate wars

The Corporate Wars began in earnest in the year 100 A.F. (after Frontier). "Alien influence" on the Frontier, from trading with the Rim, is on the increase. The future of the Federation and the Frontier is uncertain, but one thing is agreed upon by experts in many fields: the mega-corporations and their wars may make, or break, the UPF and its citizens.



Day of the Juggernaut

A *STAR FRONTIERS*® *Knight Hawks* scenario by William Tracy

In the weeks following the famed Battle for Voltornus (detailed in module SF 2, *Starspawn of Voltornus*), the Sathar made no threatening moves against the Frontier. The atmosphere in the UPF was tense for weeks, but gradually calm returned and military forces were taken off their heightened alert status. Just as the races of the UPF were feeling safe again, the Sathar initiated a new attack.

While an assault scout from Scree Fron was on patrol on the outer edge of that star system, the scout came under attack from a gigantic ship that had just exited the Void nearby. The scout was able to send out a distress call before being destroyed, and it reported that the

huge ship was heading for the inhabited world of Hakosoar.

Whether by pure good fortune or with the knowledge of the Sathar (who may have seen this as a test of their fighting vessel), a recently reorganized Strike Force NOVA was present at Hakosoar. Instantly, the force admiral ordered his fleet to defend the planet at all costs, and the fight was joined.

Unknown to the UPF, the gigantic ship was an experimental Sathar war machine, a prototype completely automated and commanded by onboard computer systems and robots. Its mission was to reach Hakosoar and orbit the planet three times, bombarding the

major cities with space-to-ground missiles. Though of horrifying size, the war machine was the only one of its kind. The Sathar had built only one *Juggernaut*, since the cost was enormous, but they were willing to consider building other robot ships if this one proved itself against the Federation's best.

Sathar forces

SAV *Juggernaut* (robot warship)
 HP 480 ADF 1 MR 1 DCR 300
 Weapons: DC, LB (x8), PB (x2), EB (x4),
 T (space-to-ground missiles) (x16),
 RB (x20)
 Defenses: RH, ES, PS, SS, ICM (x24)

The *Juggernaut* carried a new type of robotic short-range fighter, known to the Federation as the *Scorpion* (hull size 2). The fighters were programmed for launch the moment a UPFS vessel came within 100,000 km (10 hexes) of the *Juggernaut*.

20 *Scorpions*

HP 10 ADF 3 MR 3 DCR 29
Weapons: LB
Defenses: RH

UPFS forces (Strike Force NOVA)

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 *Zamra* and *Grak* (heavy cruisers)
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)

UPFS *Courage* and *Glory* (light cruisers)
HP 70 ADF 3 MR 2 DCR 70
Weapons: DC, LB, EB, PB, RB (x6), T (x4)
Defenses: RH, ES, SS, ICM (x8)

UPFS *Shimmer*, *Zz'Nakk*, *Z'Gata*, and *Driadia* (frigates)
HP 40 ADF 4 MR 3 DCR 70
Weapons: LC, RB (x4), LB, T (x2)
Defenses: RH, MS (x2), ICM (x4)

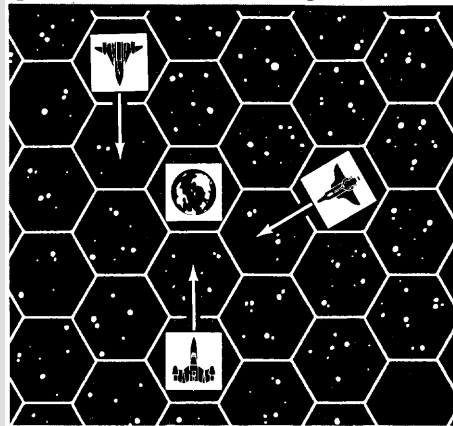
UPFS *Scimitar*, *Dagger*, *Rapier*, *Lancet*, and *Razor* (assault scouts)
HP 15 ADF 5 MR 4 DCR 50
Weapons: AR (x4), LB
Defenses: RH

Scenario set-up

A planet counter should be placed in hex 2819, in the center of the Knight Hawks space map; this is the planet Hakosoar. [Editor's note: *Hakosoar* has five natural satellites, but for the purposes of this scenario they need not be placed on the mapboard.]

The *Juggernaut*, with all fighters aboard it, will enter the game map from either of the "shorter" sides of the rectangular map. Initially, it will have a speed of 5 hexes/turn, and will be decelerating so that it may enter orbit around Hakosoar. Once a spacecraft has reached a speed of 1 hex/turn and moves into a hex adjacent to Hakosoar (without heading directly into the planet), it may take

up orbit around that world at a constant speed of 1 hex/turn (see diagram).



The upper ships may enter counterclockwise and clockwise orbits; the lower one may go either way.

The UPFS player may place his starships anywhere on the game map; the ships may start the game traveling at any speed up to 5 hexes/turn, facing in any direction. The UPFS player automatically knows in which direction the *Juggernaut* is approaching and may arrange his forces accordingly.

Tactics and victory conditions

The *Juggernaut* will head immediately for Hakosoar, and will (initially, at least) let its *Scorpions* take care of the UPFS

ships. It will not fire any of its space-ground missiles until it reaches the planet, then will fire 1 missile per turn at the planet as it orbits the world, bombarding the major residential and industrial centers. The ship may, of course, fire any of its weapons systems at attacking UPFS ships while bombing the planet.

Once it finishes firing all of its missiles, the *Juggernaut* will attempt to flee. If it leaves the mapboard, regardless of how many UPFS ships are chasing it, it is assumed to have escaped and made it into the Void without further damage. If the *Juggernaut* is destroyed or leaves the map at any time, the *Scorpions* will self-destruct and will not attempt to be picked up by their parent ship.

If the UPFS ships destroy the *Juggernaut* before it reaches Hakosoar to begin its bombardment, the Federation wins the battle. If the *Juggernaut* is able to orbit the planet but fires fewer than six missiles before it is destroyed, the Federation wins a marginal victory. If the UPFS ships cannot stop the *Juggernaut* from bombing the planet six or more times, but destroy the war machine before it can leave the map, the game is a draw. If the *Juggernaut* can escape from the mapsheet, the Sathar have won.

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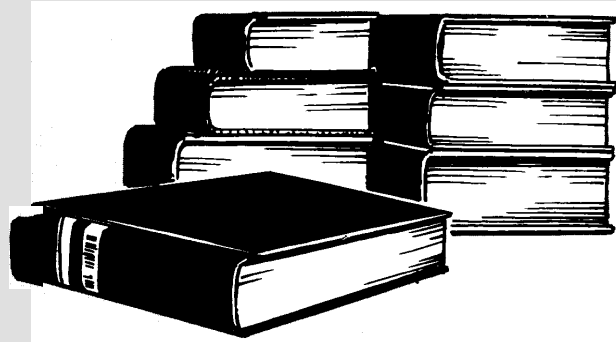
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Careers in Star Law



More on interstellar law enforcement

by Alex Curylo

In his article "Freeze! Star Law!" (DRAGON® Magazine, issue #87), Kim Eastland detailed the organization of Star Law in the STAR FRONTIERS® game. A number of details required so that player characters can follow a career in Star Law were not discussed, however. The following is an addendum to "Freeze! Star Law!" and presents new material on enlisting and serving in the Frontier's police force.

Enlistment

All Star Law officers must be above average in several respects. Four of their ability scores must be at least five points above their racial average (see the Expanded Rules, p. 59), two of which must be their Intuition and Logic scores.

Example: A player wants his Yazirian character, Simba (ability scores STR/STA 40/40, DEX/RS 40/40, INT/LOG 60/60, PER/LDR 40/40), to become a Star Law officer. Checking the table, he sees that the Yazirian average for Intuition and Logic is 50. Therefore, Simba's scores must be at least 55 in those areas; they are, easily. His other scores are not good enough to qualify in the DEX/RS or PER/LDR areas. Luckily, the Yazirian average for Strength and Stamina is 35, so Simba is qualified to enter Star Law.

All admission procedures take place at Star Law headquarters (Port Loren, Gran Quivera), and characters must furnish their own transportation there. If this rule causes problems, it can be declared that a qualified character who is interviewed at any Star Law planetary office and passes a Personality check will be considered an excellent candidate by the Planetary Officer and will receive free transportation to Port Loren.

The admission procedure is tough. The character will be doped with Telol and psycho-probed while being examined on every facet of his beliefs, attitudes, and history. All interviews are monitored by hidden cameras and sonic analyzers so that any attempts to use Hypnotism or Persuasion skills will be

detected. Any character who uses those skills, or who has a criminal record or subversive beliefs (including a "bad attitude"), will never be admitted to the academy. The referee should enforce this strictly — after all, the characters won't be able to beat a system that hasn't failed in 127 years.

If the character passes the screening, he will be granted an interview with the Admissions Director of the Academy. If the candidate makes a favorable impression (passes a Personality check), he is accepted as a cadet. If he fails, he may try again next year.

Training

The Star Law Academy is situated on Morgaine's World, in a huge complex which includes hundreds of hectares of land enclosed in climate-controlled domes that simulate adverse conditions found on various worlds for the purpose of combat and survival training. The cadets undergo extensive physical and tactical training, and are taught all available information on Sathar capabilities and subterfuge tactics, the culture and history of the known races, and anything generally useful to their line of work (which means practically everything). The training period lasts one year, during which cadets receive free room and board, but no pay.

Graduates of the academy receive a number of benefits. The continual physical training improves the characters; they may add five points to one ability of the STR/STA pair and one of the DEX/RS pair. They will also have acquired extensive skills during the program, depending on their PSA and desires. These skills are listed below.

Technological/Biosocial: One 5th-level skill and one 3rd-level skill from the appropriate PSA, a 2nd-level ranged weapons skill (usually beam), and 1st-level in a non-ranged weapon Military skill (usually Melee),

Military: Two 5th-level weapon skills, 2nd-level Martial Arts, 1st-level Demolitions.

It will be noted that these skills are rather powerful. Referees may wish to tone them down somewhat, but should keep in mind that even low-level Star Law officers are rather awe-inspiring and formidable.

Once graduated, the new Deputy Officer must be assigned to a world. The referee may pick a world at random or by design. Generally, Star Law Deputy Officers are assigned to worlds where they fit in well with the inhabitants; Dralasite agents, for example, would stand out on a world inhabited almost exclusively by Yazirians. Some exceptions are made as the need arises, and the policy is not particularly strict.

Advancement

In Mr. Eastland's article, it was said that "after a period of time, usually one to three years, the Deputy Officer is evaluated and may be promoted to a higher grade." A good rule, and very realistic. However, the players in all groups I've gamed with would loudly and persistently accuse the hapless referee of favoritism or maliciousness (depending on their viewpoint) in all subjective decisions, such as the period of time before evaluation, the merits of the character under consideration, and the appropriate level of promotion.

| Star Law rank | xp needed | Daily pay (cr) |
|-------------------|------------|----------------|
| Deputy officer | (graduate) | 50 |
| City officer | 25 | 75 |
| Planetary officer | 50 | 100 |
| Deputy agent | 100 | 125 |
| Chief agent | 150 | 150 |
| Ranger | 250 | 200 |
| Marshal | 300 | 250 |
| Commander | 350 | 300 |

To eliminate this inevitable dissension and also for greater consistency with official rules for Spacefleet advancement, it is suggested that Star Law ranks be treated like Spacefleet ranks, in that a certain number of experience points

must be "spent" to achieve each rank. At least one level must be gained in at least one skill before another rank can be achieved. The table lists the x.p.s required, and also notes the salary that each rank receives.

Miscellaneous data

When the Deputy Officer graduates from the Academy, he receives his dress uniform, his duty uniform (a military skainsuit in Star Law blue), and regulation weapons for his assigned planet — typically a sonic stunner and a stunstick, but certain planets such as Outer Reach require more powerful weapons as standard issue, and perhaps a defensive screen as well. Of course, when on an assigned mission, agents will be issued whatever weapons, defenses, and equipment are appropriate and reasonable.

Star Law agents are respected throughout the Frontier. Whenever an NPC must make a Leadership check vs. a Star Lawman, the agent gets a +5 bonus per rank.


Since the agents often have to rely on their own resources, Star Law encourages them to develop their personal skills. This policy has a practical side: Star Law will provide hypno-training (see Expanded Rules, p. 11) for any

agent wishing to gain new skills or skill levels.

Star Law agents are often called upon to perform undercover work. These assignments will be of two basic types. The first is *infiltration*, where the agent attempts to join an organization, "become" an enemy agent, or other similar action. In such a case, Star Law will fabricate a history for the agent right back to his birth records, and will alter computer databases and hypnotize key people so that almost any amount of checking will not discover anything unusual about him.

The other type of assignment is *replacement*, where an enemy agent has been neutralized, but Star Law does not wish that fact to become known or wishes to plant its own contact inside the organization. For this type of assignment, setup will include plastic surgery, voice and carriage training, and memory overlays so the agent has instant access to most of his model's memories.

Star Law agents are a special group of beings. Though the work of defending the Frontier is demanding and dangerous, Star Law agents thrive on it. Their courage and dedication have resulted in their becoming the universally admired folk heroes of the Frontier.



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StarQuestions

*Questions, answers, and advice on STAR FRONTIERS®
gaming*

by Penny Petticord and Ed Greenwood

This time this column takes another look at the STAR FRONTIERS science-fiction game. In addition, a number of readers wrote to ask questions about the Zethra, an alien NPC race detailed in DRAGON® Magazine issue #84 (p. 76-80); these questions are answered at the end of this article. If you need some answers to help your science-fiction gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: In the STAR FRONTIERS Campaign Book, the prices listed for shipping cargo (p. 451) are unclear. Are they the costs to buy the cargo outright and to sell it, or are they the prices to ship it?

A: The chart assumes that the hauler (probably an independent one) will buy the cargo outright, haul it to another planet, and resell it. Haulers who work under a company charter do not have to use this chart, as they are paid for their services only. The "Price per Unit at Source" column tells you how much it will cost to purchase a load of a given cargo.

The character then loads the cargo on his ship, carries it to another planet where there is a good market for the item, and resells it at the price given in the "Price per Unit at Destination" column. (Cargo cannot be resold at the source.) The hauler must then pay his operating expenses (crew salaries, supplies, fuel, maintenance, etc.) out of the money taken in from the sale.

Prices given assume that the cargo has been hauled a moderate distance at a moderate risk. If the run is shorter and less dangerous than an average one, the referee should adjust the resale value accordingly to keep the campaign economics in balance. After all, if an independent hauler is making too large a profit margin on a given run, another hauler or company will certainly undercut the character's prices and take his business away.

Q: The players in my campaign want to start a planetary or interstellar business. How would they go about doing this?

A: Passenger transport, freight transport, and mining businesses are detailed in the Campaign Book, as is obtaining a charter from a large

corporation. Players who wish to start some other type of business should design a detailed plan for its initial set-up and operation, then present it to the referee for approval. The referee is responsible for making sure the enterprise does not disrupt campaign balance, and may impose whatever legal restrictions, taxes, tariffs, and other external controls he deems necessary. The player may have to revise the plan if problems appear with the set-up he envisions.

Q: Will a timeline history for the STAR FRONTIERS game ever be made, as was done for the GAMMA WORLD® game in DRAGON® Magazine, issue #88?

A: An article on that topic has, in fact, been done and should appear in these pages within the next few issues.

Q: What are the statistics for the Zebulon and K'tsa-Kar systems and their inhabited planets? The Expanded Game Rules did not describe them.

A: The statistics for these systems were accidentally dropped from the rules. An article will appear soon in the ARESTM Section in which these

systems, as well as other inhabited systems of the Frontier, are described.

Q: What were the original homeworlds of the Dralasites, Vrusk, Yazirians, and Humans of the STAR FRONTIERS game?

A: Placement and description of the homeworlds of the four races were slated for inclusion in a future product. As of this time, only rough development has been done, and the information is not ready for release.

Q: What are the game statistics for a flamethrower?

A: A hand flamer appeared in the original rules, but was dropped in editing. It was similar in size and weight to a small needler, and it operated on a replaceable fuel cartridge. Statistics are as follows: Damage - 6d10; Ammo - 1 shot cartridge; Rate - 1; Defense - inertia; Range - no medium, long, or extreme, with statistics as per a sonic disruptor for point blank and short.

Q: In "The Battle at Ebony Eyes" in issue #88, the SAV *Apocalypse* and *Disease* are in the same hex (4116). Is this correct?

A: Yes. The duplicates that would appear of each ship might initially confuse the UPF player into believing that only one ship (or more than two) are in that hex.

Q: Can player characters be pirates, robots, or cybots?

A: Player characters can become pirates, although no special provisions are made for starting out as one. Pirate characters run extreme risks and may become the target of all law enforcement agencies in the Frontier (particularly Star Law).

Robots and cybots cannot be player characters; they have personalities but have no free will. Freedom of choice puts excitement into the game. No one would want to run a character that could only do what someone else told him to do.

Q: What would be the cost, mass, and combat statistics for crossbows, nunchucks, and Chinese throwing stars?

A: For mass and combat statistics, treat a crossbow as a musket, nunchucks as a nightstick, and a throwing star as a knife. These are very rare and archaic weapons, so their cost will vary with availability; prices will be similar to the comparison weapons listed above, but could rise to extreme levels.

Q: Are there mutants in the STAR FRONTIERS universe?

A: Perhaps, although none have been reported or detailed for game use as of yet. The referee is free to create mutants for use as NPCs, but he is on his own for specific designs and game balancing. The game system is not designed to handle mutant PCs who have exceptional powers, so use caution in this area.

Q: In the Knight Hawks rules, the decks of a starship are arranged perpendicular to the ship's main axis so that the ship's nose is "up." This provides for a sense of gravity for the crew when the vessel is accelerating through sect internal gravity when the ship is on a planet's surface? (Note: see illustration of the *Osprey's* orientation on the "Warriors of White Light" module, which indicates that the interior of the ship is lying on its side.)

A: The illustration in question is not quite accurate. Ships capable of landing on planets (such as shuttles, system ships of hull size 5 or less, assault scouts, and other scout-class starships) always land *nose up* so that the interior of the ship is oriented normally. Larger ships cannot land on planets, so they would have no orientation problems. The orientation of a ship does not matter when it is docked at a space station, since docked ships would be subject to the same artificial gravity as the docking bay of the space station.

Q: Can stargates exist in the STAR FRONTIERS game?

A: It isn't clear what you mean by "stargates." Certainly, a referee may add extra features like "stargates" (however you conceive of them) to his campaign if desired. If by "stargate" you mean a teleportation device capable of transporting spacecraft instantly from one star system to another, you should be aware that this may undo a large portion of game's inherent balance, and may cause serious problems unless you alter other parts of the game rules at the same time.

The game mechanic for quick intersystem travel is "jumping through the void," which accomplishes the same thing as a "stargate" would.

Q: How many different native races exist in the Frontier?

A: Seventeen. However, you may make up as many as you want. Some unofficial races may be presented in the ARES™ Section from time to time, such as the Zethra (see below). You may expand them as you see fit.

Q: Can ships be made with hull sizes larger than 20?

A: Yes, but they would have to be custom-designed and built from scratch by experts, an expensive process since the hulls would be non-standard. Maintenance would also be far more expensive than usual, since such hulls might not use any standard parts. You can extrapolate statistics from the information in the Campaign Book to get base figures for building costs and the like. Note that the SAV Juggernaut (from last month's ARES™ Section) was built around a hull vastly larger than size 20. Building it was a tremendous financial drain on the Sathar, and they never tried it again.

The Zethra

Q: If they lack the ability to see or appreciate colors, how are Zethra able to match all color hues exactly by altering the pigmentation of their skin cells?

A: Zethra distinguish different colors only as differences in wavelengths of light reflected by all surfaces, in the same way that they sense other radiations (such as heat, light, and electrical energy). They are thus able to alter their coloration to match that of surroundings perfectly — without seeing colors as we do. This is somewhat akin to seeing all colors as varying shades of gray (as Dralasites do); with practice, one can readily tell one hue from another without being able to view or appreciate colors as others do.

The "seeing" of a Zethra is performed only through its tentacle-like "see-feelers" or "seeferers," and thus it can only match hues within 5 meters of (or touching) its seeferers. A Zethra who has learned the names of various colors could describe patterns, contrasting or complimentary colors, and so forth perfectly to others, but would fail to appreciate the aesthetics of colors, or "see" them as others can.

Q: Why is the damage done by Zethra discharges only modified by -2 per meter between a Zethra and target when conducted through metal,

whereas water (which "transmits Zethra jolts poorly") only causes a modifier of -3 per 10 meters separating Zethra and target?

A: A Zethra's discharges are believed to serve only secondarily as weapons (one Zethra, after all, cannot harm another Zethra by such means), and are not offensive "bolts" or lightning strikes. They are strongly affected by the nature of the conducting medium through which they pass. In the case of metals, which conduct electrical currents by means of electron flows, a Zethra discharge is lessened in both directional accuracy and force more than in water. It is thought by a number of scientists that Zethra discharges contain many sub-atomic particles that react readily with free electrons and that this makes metal of any type a poorer conductor of Zethra discharges than of artificially-generated electrical currents.

It must be emphasized that these creatures are still poorly understood and that studies continue only slowly due to the difficult nature of Zethra. Recent filings by the scientist Arlume of Cassidine (not yet verified by Pan-Galactic Information Central's own agents), indicate that a Zethra's discharges do have a limited range even in still waters — the cumulative modifier of -3 per 10 meters rising to -1 per additional meter after a distance of fifty-two meters is exceeded.

Q: A creature that directly converts matter to energy seems impossible. If one existed, it would probably be most efficient in such conversions, and thus eat very seldom — perhaps, to most observers, seemingly never. A "direct converter" would prefer non-organic matter to organic; while there may be (slightly) more energy in organic substances, such substances are also more resistant to conversion and produce many more by-products, a number of which would likely be poisonous. How exactly do Zethra consume matter?

A: Zethra matter-to-energy conversion is done by some natural process which remains a mystery to Frontier scientists of all races, even after exhaustive physical and field examinations. Classified computer files exist on this creature, and the information therein is considered sensitive for good reasons. Scientific study continues, and some further, as-yet-unverified results have been

filed by various scientists in the "Active & Ongoing" computer banks of Pan-Galactic Information Central (PGIC).

Oversee of such files by PGIC personnel reveals several key entries:

1) Duthin of Prenglar has not yet positively identified any instance of a Zethra converting inorganic matter to energy, and has found few suggestions of such occurrences in existing Pan-Galactic files, but reminds inquisitors that the tendency of Zethra to convert organic matter has been established by observation.

2) The frequency of Zethra matter-energy conversion was deemed "seldom" (as compared to human frequencies of eating) in separate reports by scientists Marakson of Dramune, Orlag of Duane's Star, and Niuu of Cassidine. Detailed observations of such conversion are contained in all three reports; none seem likely to alter the present file's measurements of 220-440 SEU storage in Zethra bodies, and approximate common daily requirements of 20 SEU.

Orlag's report, however, raises the question of conversion by-products.

Some, he asserts, are used as "raw material" for Zethra body repair or growth and expansion; others may be eliminated, in subatomic form, in Zethra electrical discharges. Other methods of by-product elimination are possible — expulsion in fluid form through the skin, for example, is thought to occur automatically when Zethra are immersed in moving water. Possible by-products poisonous to Zethra are rumored to exist, PGIC personnel admit, because the last two tapes of Orlag's researches dealing with by-products were designated "classified" in the initial scan, and Pan-Galactic Security refuses to discuss the issue. Inquiries have led professionally curious individuals to ask (or even attempt to test) the Zethra on this issue, but no verifiable information has yet been uncovered.

Niuu of Cassidine warns that these creatures should not be judged or analyzed purely by Frontier standards and science. All unclassified material entries on the Zethra, both verified and tabled awaiting verification, bear the closing note "VRC" (meaning, "various researches continue").

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Rare wines and ready cash

Agricultural trade in the Frontier
by Tony Watson

Both the Alpha Dawn and the Knight Hawks rules for the STAR FRONTIERS® game system touch on the subject of agriculture and trade within the Frontier Sector. Alpha Dawn describes certain worlds within that region as having agricultural economies, while Knight Hawks provides a section in its spacecraft design rules for outfitting agricultural ships. Despite this, the system for conducting interstellar trade gives cargo charts only for resource-producing and manufacturing worlds; agricultural planets and their goods are virtually ignored.

Given the assumption that the produce of agricultural worlds, especially the unique and rare items such as wines, spices, and drugs, will be viable commodities in the STAR FRONTIERS milieu, then a trade table for agricultural goods, similar to those appearing on p. 45 of the Knight Hawks Campaign Book, is needed.

The brief table on the Frontier Sector in the Alpha Dawn Expanded Rules lists eight worlds as agro-planets: Yast, Inner Reach, Rupert's Hole, Groth, Ken'zah Kit, Kidikit, New Pale, and Hakosoar. These planets are the primary sources for agricultural cargos, entitling the prospective trader to roll on the "Cargo Acquired at Agricultural Centers" table. Such cargos can be marketed at industrial and resource centers.

Players will note that these colonies represent each of the four Federation member races. Presumably the colonies offer a wide variety of agro-goods, many of them unique. Agricultural production methods in the Frontier need not follow the Terran pattern. Farming can take place underwater or in subterranean caverns. Animal husbandry can be practiced on flocks of balloon-like creatures on high-gravity worlds with a dense atmosphere.

Similarly, star color might affect the nature of crops and herds raised on planets. What sort of strange plants might flourish under the red-orange sun of Hakosoar's star, Scree Fron? For simplicity's sake, only one table of cargos is provided, but the referee is encouraged to modify the description of individual cargos to reflect the unique nature of a world, for both the sake of variety and the feeling of local color.

Cargo Acquired at Agricultural Centers

| Die roll | Type of cargo | Price per unit | |
|----------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | At Source | At destination |
| 01-08 | Grain | 5,000 Cr | 7,000 Cr |
| 09-16 | Vegetables | 7,000 Cr | 10,000 Cr |
| 17-22 | Fruit | 10,000 Cr | 15,000 Cr |
| 23-24 | Exotic fruit | 30,000 Cr | 60,000 Cr |
| 25-31 | Meat | 25,000 Cr | 35,000 Cr |
| 32-36 | Poultry | 20,000 Cr | 30,000 Cr |
| 37-43 | Fish | 15,000 Cr | 20,000 Cr |
| 44-46 | Cheese | 15,000 Cr | 25,000 Cr |
| 47-52 | Sugar | 15,000 Cr | 20,000 Cr |
| 53-55 | Coffee | 25,000 Cr | 40,000 Cr |
| 56-62 | Lumber | 8,000 Cr | 12,000 Cr |
| 63-64 | Decorative plants | 20,000 Cr | 40,000 Cr |
| 65-70 | Textiles | 35,000 Cr | 60,000 Cr |
| 71-76 | Liquor | 50,000 Cr | 90,000 Cr |
| 77 | Rare liquor | 75,000 Cr | 150,000 Cr |
| 78-83 | Wine | 45,000 Cr | 75,000 Cr |
| 84 | Rare wine | 100,000 Cr | 200,000 Cr |
| 85-88 | Spice | 60,000 Cr | 100,000 Cr |
| 89 | Rare spice | 80,000 Cr | 150,000 Cr |
| 90-92 | Herbs | 50,000 Cr | 75,000 Cr |
| 93 | Rare herbs | 75,000 Cr | 135,000 Cr |
| 94-96 | Medicinals | 70,000 Cr | 125,000 Cr |
| 97 | Rare medicinals | 100,000 Cr | 200,000 Cr |
| 98-00 | Furs | 60,000 Cr | 140,000 Cr |

Notes on the chart

The types of cargos on the chart are intended to be generic, stressing general types of goods over specific items. Hence, "grain" might refer to wheat, rice, or corn, but could be construed to include any sort of mass-harvested staple, perhaps even algae harvested from the sea. The referee should use imagination in describing the cargo obtained. For example, a roll of 30 on the chart indicates a cargo of meat — but what sort of meat, from what sort of creature? A load of textiles could represent a sort of plant fiber analogous to cotton, or the "wool" of some strange star beast.

The rare and exotic categories were included to denote special cargos of exceptional quality, value, and rarity; they offer the opportunity to trade in high-value cargos, something that agricultural-produce charts tend to lack. The "rare liquor" and "rare spice" categories might include substances with medicinal, hallucinogenic, or age-prolonging properties. "Medicinals" represent organic materials used purely for health-care purposes or in pharmaceutical production, and might include items such as buds, flowers, pollens, and animal or plant extracts.

Some colonies offer a wide variety of unique agro-goods.

The prices used in the chart were set arbitrarily, using the existing Knight Hawks commodity tables as guidelines and extrapolating from modern-day pricing structures. The profit-to-cost ratios are in line with the resource and industrial cargo tables, but tend toward the lower end of the scale for most of the goods. Hence, most agricultural goods are pretty cheap, especially compared with other cargos. No one is going to get rich dealing exclusively in grain or vegetables. The upper end of the table is the exception: herbs, spices, liquors, and furs are luxuries and are priced as such.

Farming

The Knight Hawks rules provide guidelines for hydroponic farming aboard Ag ships. Given the information provided on the agricultural cargo table, a few

modifications are in order. The kinds of crops that can be farmed aboard Ag ships should be limited to things such as grain, vegetables, fruit, and coffee. Meat and lumber can be raised, but the time required to "harvest" the produce would have to be lengthened considerably.

Liquors, wines, herbs, and medicinals should be limited to planetary cultivation; one can safely assume that singular planetary conditions create the value of these goods, and these conditions are too difficult and expensive to replicate aboardship. Allowing characters to grow high-value crops on ships could also upset the economic balance of the campaign.

Rules for on-planet farming have been omitted from this article for several reasons. First, devising a system to portray such an enterprise with even moderate accuracy is beyond the scope of this piece. More importantly, the players shouldn't be encouraged to take on the roles of farmers — after all, they're supposed to be adventurers!

The prices, guidelines and commodities presented here are just suggestions. Referees should let their imaginations run free, changing things in order to derive the most in their role-playing sessions.

KALI: An American super-villainess with a background in crime and mysticism. She is wanted and has a long criminal record.

Identity: Sheena Grey Age: 20
Side: Evil Level: 1

Powers:
1. Heightened Expertise: Martial arts, +4 to hit
2. Special Weapon: Power-chuks, HTH +3 to hit, +1d6 damage, carries a Power Blast
3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

Other Weaponry:

Katana, HTH +2 to hit, +1d6 damage

6 Shuriken, HTH +3 to hit, +1 damage, with a 13 inch throwing range.

Weight: 130 lbs.
Strength: 16
Endurance: 13
Agility: 13
Intelligence: 12
Charisma: 15
Dam. Mod.: +1
Accuracy: +1
Hit Points: 9
Heal: .9
Car. Cap.: 351
Basic HTH: 1d6
Power: 54
Movement: 42"
Det. Hidden: 10%
Det. Danger: 14%
Invent. Pts.: 1.2
Inventing: 36%



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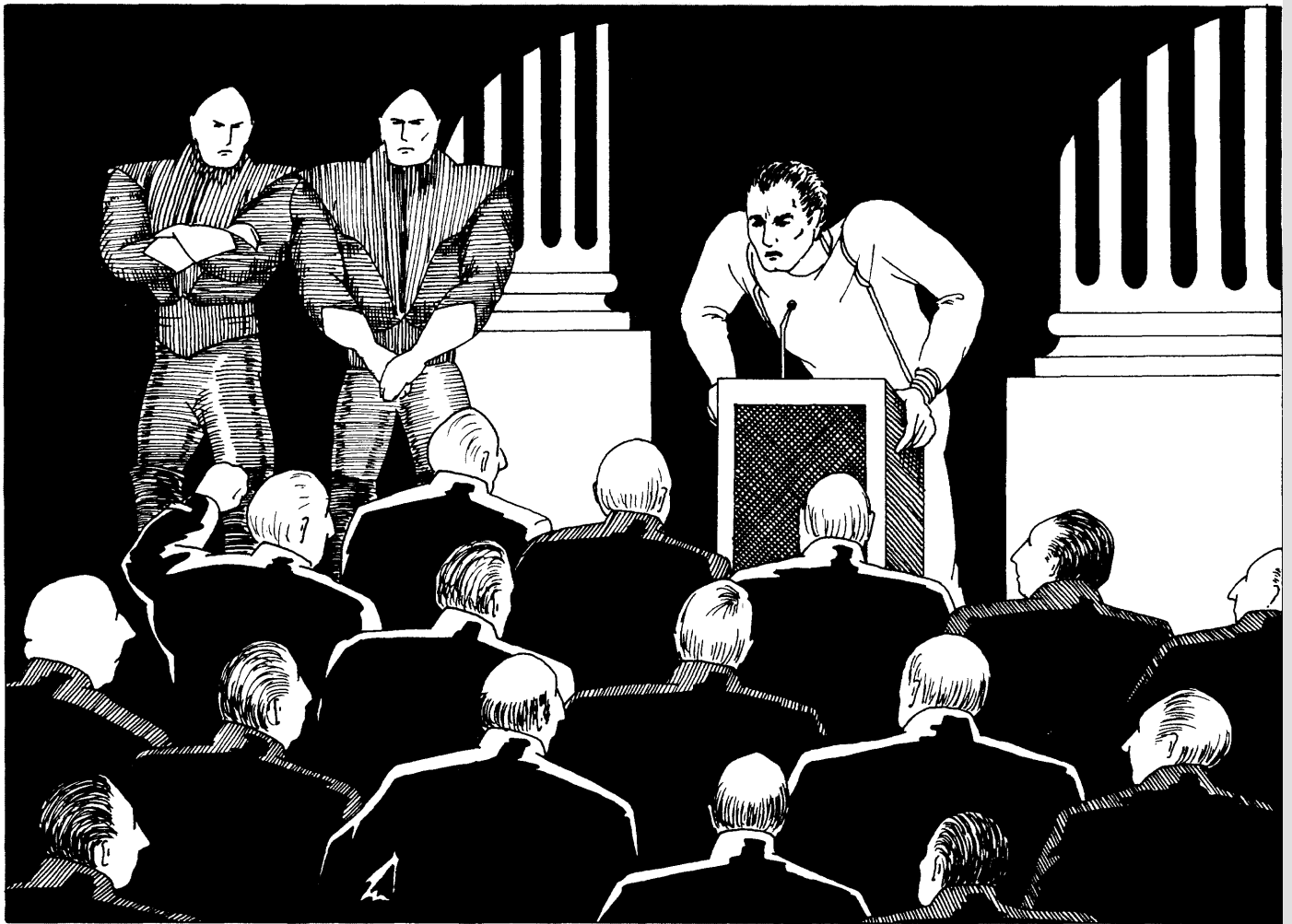
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From Anarchy to Empire

Interstellar governments in the STAR FRONTIERS[®] game

by David Cook

[Editor's note: David "Zeb" Cook was one of the original designers of the STAR FRONTIERS[®] game system. This article is "official" STAR FRONTIERS game material, though its principles may be applied to many science-fiction games.]

What lies beyond the Frontier? Eventually, the characters in a STAR FRONTIERS game campaign will start probing the reaches beyond the known star systems, and the referee should keep up with them by designing new sectors of space for the group to explore.

When preparing a new sector map, the referee should think about the governments that will control the planets in the sector. How many governments will

there be, and what will they be like? How will the different governments get along? These are just a few of the concerns that a referee must consider when devising interstellar governments.

Interstellar governments

Interstellar governments ruling planets in several different systems (as the UPF does) may or may not exist in a sector, as the referee desires. Some basic types of interstellar governments that may be used in the referee's sector are described briefly, with notes on how they work and what their aims or goals might be.

Trade federation: Under this govern-

ment, each member planet rules itself and has its own laws, but all the planets will have signed a trade agreement. This agreement promises free trade between all the member planets and also serves as a mutual peace treaty. The different planets will try not to interfere with each other's business. If one planet is attacked, the other planets will join with it to fight the enemy.

Trade federations are delicate and easily upset, since each member is in the federation for a profit. If a planet or a group of planets decides it can do better on its own or with another group, it may pull out of the federation. An example of a trade federation today is the European Common Market.

Galactic empire: All of the member planets are controlled by one government, usually based on one planet which is considered the heart of the empire. All other planets may be treated as colonies, provinces, or states of the empire. Because an empire tries to control everything from one place, it is often corrupt or loaded with layers of bureaucracy.

An empire stays in power by keeping its subjects (the people) happy and by the liberal use of military force. Since empires have a way of getting in trouble if they stand still, they are often trying to expand their frontiers by colonization or by military control. The ancient Roman Empire is an example after which interstellar empires may be modelled.

Political federation: Each member planet rules itself; however, all planets belong to one loose governmental body, and all must follow certain standards of conduct. The United States of America and the UPF are political federations.

More possibilities exist, of course. The referee should feel free to create any other interstellar government he wants.

Planetary governments

When designing a planet, the referee needs to think about the government controlling the world. Even though the planet may be part of an interstellar union, it may have its own laws and elected officials. Many sorts of governments operate among human worlds, and alien races may have governments that humans have never been able to make work. Some of the possible planetary governments are given below.

Anarchy: No organized government at all. Some Dralasite worlds do very well with this type (or lack) of government.

Company-owned world: A planet controlled by a company or corporation and run for profit. This system is common on Vrusk worlds.

Confederacy: A number of smaller areas banded together under one loose planetary government. Yazirian clans often form confederations.

Democracy/república: A government run by elected representatives. Humans and Dralasites favor this option.

Dictatorship: Absolute rule by one leader. Humans sometimes have this government.

Monarchy: Rule by a king or queen, usually of one family. Only Humans use this type of government.

Plutocracy: A government run by those with the most wealth — another popular government used by the Vrusk.

Socialist state: The state owns and controls most activities for the equal good of all people. Such states are often used by Humans and Dralasites.

Stratocracy: Rule by a nation's military leaders. Yazirians will often form this type of government, using the military leaders from each clan.

Syndicracy: Rule by an organization of the most powerful corporations on the planet. Vrusk favor these governments.

Theocracy: Government by religious leaders, sometimes seen among Humans and Yazirians.

An empire stays in power by keeping its subjects happy and by the liberal use of military force.

Many variations and combinations of these basic governmental structures are possible. A little research into Human history will turn up many more ways to rule a planet (or portion thereof).

Human and alien societies

A society is the way a group of people lives together — how members deal with each other, what they believe in, what they consider important, and how they work. Societies do not have specific natural laws to follow and seldom have written laws or regulations. People in a society generally know what is correct or incorrect; they learn this by experience as they grow up. This section gives general guidelines and suggestions on how to create interesting societies in a STAR FRONTIERS game.

To gain specific ideas on creating planetary societies, the game referee should check out some books on Earth-Human history and present societies. Human civilization is filled with examples of many different societies and cultures that may provide ideas for gaming.

Societies are formed from several different forces — the planet's races, governments, current laws, religions, climate, landforms, history, etc. To ask a referee to think out all these areas is far too time consuming. Instead, the referee should work with what he already knows about the planet.

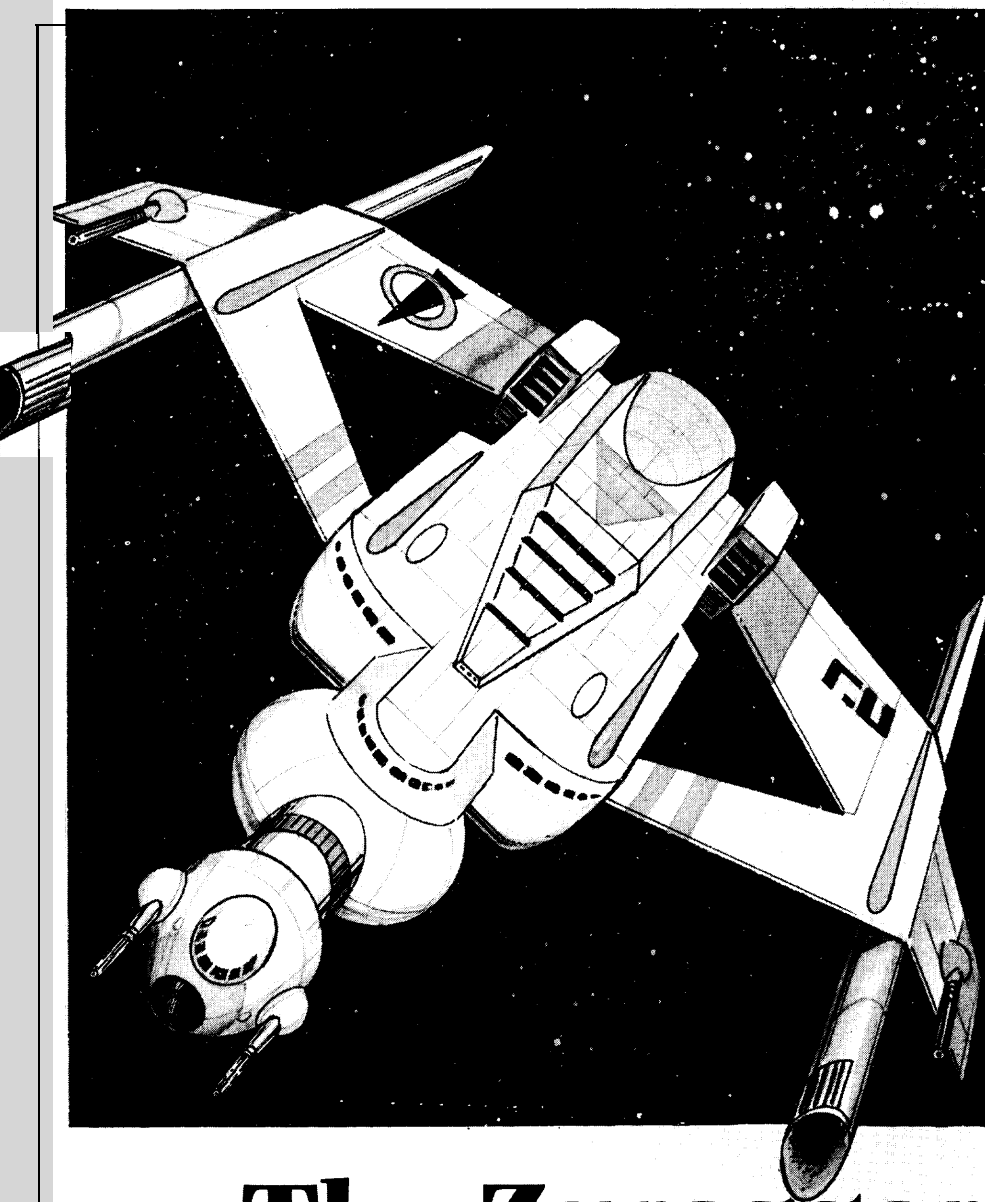
The race of the inhabitants affects the society with its particular needs, likes, and dislikes; these, then, play a part in any planetary society of that race. If the referee creates a new race, he should write down what that race considers important and consider how that affects the culture.

The physical conditions on a planet affect how people live and what they consider important for their survival. If a planet has very little water, water becomes very important. People who waste water would be "bad," and bathing would be a luxury saved for special events. Swimming and boating might be terrifying for the average dry-lander. If a planet has a great deal of water, people who couldn't swim might become social misfits. The referee should think about the planetary conditions that might affect the society.

The government of a planet also affects the society's customs. A planetary dictatorship is rarely likely to tolerate free speech; people of such a planet may be unwilling to speak their minds. Under an anarchy, those citizens supporting an organized government may be considered dangerous or "strange." Atheists in a theocracy are bound to have difficulties with the focal government. The laws of the planet also make a difference. A theocracy has more laws dealing with religious crimes, while a dictatorship has laws to control free speech, and a plutocracy has laws to protect the very rich.

When creating a society for a STAR FRONTIERS planet, it helps to start by listing a few notable customs of the planet's citizens. These customs should be interesting and obvious to the player characters. The Dralasites of Inner Reach in the Frontier Sector dye their skin every day, for example. As the characters become more involved in the life on the planet, they will probably want to know why the Dralasites do this. By having the players ask such questions (and by giving them answers), the referee will slowly build a description of the society on the planet.

The referee should remember that it is not necessary to have every detail of a society worked out in advance. Significant customs and laws should be prepared, but playing the game and having the player characters get involved with life on the planet often helps the referee focus on the social elements he needs to evolve. The referee should make each planet distinctive and unique whenever possible, to enhance the enjoyment gained in playing the game.



The Zuraqqor Strike Back!

*Alien starships for STAR FRONTIERS®
Knight Hawks gaming*

by Brian Valentine

Knight Hawks, like any other game, needs variety to keep it exciting. This article can add some of that needed variety by reintroducing the Zuraqqor, one of the Sathar's allies. The Zuraqqor first appeared in the STAR FRONTIERS® mini-module *Assault on Starship Omicron*. They are a race of intelligent, bipedal insects, each having small, vestigial wings, two compound eyes, and two antennae. Zuraqqor are thought to originate from a world near Zebulon, as all assaults on Federation shipping have been made in that area since the new trade route was opened.

Zuraqqor culture was well described in *Assault on Starship Omicron*. Only a few relevant details will be repeated here, Zuraqqor society has five classes: worker, warrior, technician, king, and queen. Technicians perform all technological labor, and their political power rivals that of the Zuraqqor kings and queens.

The kings rule the warriors, each Zuraqqor hive having one king. All hive kings vote on a district king, and district kings vote on a planetary king. All planetary kings vote on a nonpolitical organization that the kings have. Zuraqqor are very

group oriented and will rarely, if ever, be found alone or acting individually.

Zuraqqor warships consist of two main types: battle cruisers and fighters. Four classes of cruisers are known to exist and are classified as classes A, B, C, and D (class A being the largest). Zuraqqor fighters are also known as "ground strafers" because of their frequent use in planetary assaults.

All cruisers are built large and slow: large because the Zuraqqor believe that their shipboard crew organization should resemble the hive organization as closely as possible, making the cruisers resemble huge, floating fortresses; and slow because the Zuraqqor see no need for speed. Cruisers use ion engines, while all fighters use small atomic engines.

Though slow, cruisers are nonetheless very maneuverable. They usually travel in groups of four, except during certain war situations in which much larger groups have been used. Because no space stations have been detected around Zuraqqor worlds, these warships are assumed to be built on small moons or asteroids. Ships the size of their cruisers could never lift off from a planet of any major size. Cruisers are thought to take several years to build.

Class A cruisers are each equipped with a mine-neutralizing mechanism that deactivates all mines within 30,000 kilometers (three hexes) of the ship. This device cannot be duplicated by any other race at this time. Class A cruisers also each have one fighter bay that can carry one to five fighters.

Zuraqqor ship statistics

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class A
HS 15 HP 80 ADF 1 MR 2 DCR 150
Ion engine type A (x4)
Weapons: 2 LC, LB, EB, PB, DC, S (x2),
T (x4), RB (x8)
Defenses: RH, EPS, SS, MS (x2),
ICM (x8)

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class B
HS 13 HP 75 ADF 1 MR 3 DCR 120
Ion engine type B (x4)
Weapons: 2 LC, LB, EB, PB, DC, T(4),
RB (x6)
Defenses: RH, ES, PS, MS (x2), ICM (x6)

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class C
HS 11 HP 70 ADF 1 MR 3 DCR 100
Ion engine type B (x3)
Weapons: LC, LB, EB, PB, T (x2),
RB (x4)
Defenses: RH, ES, MS (x2), ICM (x6)

Zuraqqor Battle Cruiser, Class D
 HS 9 HP 65 ADF 1 MR4 DCR 75
 Ion engine type B (x2)
 Weapons: LC, LB, EB, T (x2), RB (x4)
 Defenses: RH, MS (x4), ICM (x4)

Zuraqqor Fighter
 HS 2 HP 10 ADF 5 MR 5 DCR 50
 Atomic engine type C (x1)
 Weapons: AR (x4), LB
 Defenses: RH

Scenario 1: The Zebulon Raid

In this scenario, the UPFS ships are making a run to a military base on Volturnus (off the right side of the star map), and they begin the game in formation near the left-hand side of the star map. They only want to get to Volturnus and will try to escape any attacks. On the other hand, the Zuraqqor's orders are not to return until the UPFS ships are destroyed. Ship statistics for most of the UPFS forces may be found in the boardgame rules for the Knight Hawks game.

UPFS Forces

UPFS *Arcturon* (destroyer)
 Location: hex 0618
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Arrow* (assault scout)
 Location: hex 0821
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Remora* (assault scout)
 Location: hex 0522
 Speed: 5

UPFS *Anaconda* (freighter)
 HS 17 HP 85 ADF 2 MR 1 DCR 71
 Weapons: T (x4)
 Defenses: RH, MS (x2)
 Location: hex 0521
 Speed: 5

Zuraqqor Forces

ZMS (Zuraqqor Military Ship) *Brtz'krgr*
 (class-B cruiser)
 Location: hex 3439
 Speed: 7 (heading toward hex 3338)

All UPFS ships are heading horizontally across the mapsheet. The Zuraqqor ship is moving along a diagonal to intercept the UPF convoy.

Any UPFS ship that makes it off the right side of the map is assumed to have safely outrun the Zuraqqor cruiser. The Zuraqqor ship wins if all UPFS ships are destroyed or suffer over 50% loss of their hull points. The *Anaconda* and at least one other ship must survive for the UPFS player to win. Note that it is possible for both sides to win in this scenario. (Such are the fortunes of war.)

Scenario 2: The Volturnus Incident

This battle occurs a month after the Zebulon Raid. The Zuraqqor are attacking the only station in orbit around Volturnus, effectively cutting off the on-planet mines and military installations from the PGC and Galactic Task Force. The statistics for the Pan-Galactic ships were previously given in the DRAGON® Magazine issue #88 ("Yachts and Privateers Return"), but are repeated here for the benefit of those who lack that issue.

The planet Volturnus is located in hex 1520 on the star map and does not move during the course of the game. The *Tarnagis* just leaving Volturnus, having undocked from the space station and pulled out of orbit.

Pan-Galactic Forces

PGSS *Tarnag* (Nova-class yacht)
 HS 5 HP 25 ADF 2 MR 2 DCR 35
 Weapons: LC, LB, RB
 Defenses: RH
 Location: hex 1921
 Speed: 1 (heading toward hex 2021)

PGSS *Brigadoon* (Condor-class privateer)
 HS 13 HP 65 ADF 3 MR 3 DCR 59
 Weapons: 2 LB, EB, PB, DC, T (x4)
 Defenses: RH, SS, ICM (x8)

Location: hex 1519
 Speed: 0 (docked at space station, in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

PGSS *Drag Net* (Thruster-class privateer)
 HS 2 HP 10 ADF 4 MR 5 DCR 26
 Weapons: AR (x4)
 Defenses: RH
 Location: hex 1519
 Speed: 0 (docked at space station, in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

PGSS *Miner's Central* (PGC-owned space station at Volturnus)
 HP 30 DCR 23
 Weapons: 2 LB
 Defenses: RH, MS (x4), ICM (x4)
 Location: hex 1519 (in orbit, moving counterclockwise)

Zuraqqor Forces

ZMS *Ktr-Bltz* (class-B cruiser)
 Location: hex 5420
 Speed: 8 (heading toward hex 5320)

ZMS *Drlp'mrzt* (class-C cruiser)
 Location: hex 5523
 Speed: 8 (heading toward hex 5423)

The first side that destroys or inflicts over 50% damage on all of the other side's ships wins, with the PGC station counting as a ship. Neither side can retreat from the star map.

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The Coming of the S'sessu

A new alien race for the *STAR FRONTIERS*[®] game

by David Cook

[Editor's note: David "Zeb" Cook was one of the original designers of the *STAR FRONTIERS*[®] game system. Though future releases from TSR, Inc., may make no reference to the S'sessu, gamers may adopt them into their games as player characters if the referee so allows and if care is used in setting them up in the campaign.]

First contact with the S'sessu occurred shortly after a brief skirmish between the S'sessu and the UPFS frigate *Hellscar*. The *Hellscar*, severely damaged in an encounter with two Sathar ships, made an emergency jump and re-entered normal space off Phri'sk, one of the two settled worlds belonging to the S'sessu. Orbital stations registered the arrival of the warship, and an interplanetary scout was sent to investigate.

The *Hellscar* established visual contact with the scout and refrained from offensive action, since the scout was of an unknown design. Hailing signals from the *Hellscar* were returned on an unused frequency in an untranslated language. When televisual ship-to-ship communication was established, the *Hellscar's* captain, believing he had stumbled onto a Sathar base, opened fire on the scout vessel.

Fortunately, the frigate's fire-control systems were damaged and the shots missed. The scout vessel returned fire and managed to cripple the frigate, though the smaller ship's weapons were technologically outmoded by UPFS standards. The frigate's captain broadcast a long-range distress call to the Federation, but he and his crew were unable to resist a boarding attempt by the S'sessu.

Several weeks later, an attack/rescue fleet arrived off Phri'sk. The UPFS fleet was large enough to suitably impress the S'sessu, a remarkable achievement considering their racial tendencies. Having determined by talking with the *Hellscar's* captain that the aliens were not Sathar, the fleet commander organized the first diplomatic missions and formal

contact between the S'sessu and the Federation proceeded unhindered. The S'sessu refused to give up the frigate, which they considered a prize ship; because of this and the frigate captain's familiarity with the S'sessu from his captivity, the *Hellscar's* captain was designated temporary ambassador to the S'sessu worlds.

Physical appearance

S'sessu are almost identical in appearance to Sathar, the most obvious difference between them being body coloration. A Sathar's skin is yellow or brown, but a S'sessu has a bright pink- or green-tinted skin. The S'sessu do not have the patterns of dots or stripes on their heads that the Sathar have. Otherwise, all other descriptive information on Sathar can be applied to S'sessu.

Senses

A S'sessu's sense of hearing is equal to a Human's. Its sense of taste is slightly better than a Human's, but its sense of smell is somewhat less well developed. A S'sessu's double pupils give it superior all-around vision, allowing it to see in several directions at once. A S'sessu always has a +2 Initiative Modifier because of its excellent vision.

Speech

S'sessu speak with a hissing lisp. They have quickly learned Pan-Galactic since their existence was discovered, and they can speak it normally. They can also speak the language of their own race.

Society and customs

In general, S'sessu are extremely competitive and self-centered. Each individual does what it wants, caring little for others except for those who can help the S'sessu achieve its goals. Power and possessions are only for those S'sessu who can take and keep them. This would seem to create a society where murder and violence are rampant, but this is not the case. Indeed, at times S'sessu can be highly organized and

cooperative, and violent crime is an uncommon occurrence among them.

If a S'sessu believes there is some sort of personal gain to be had in doing so, it will work cooperatively with other beings. A group of S'sessu might pool their money to build an interstellar spaceship, and another group might hire a police force to protect them from robbery or murder by others. However, S'sessu will have only one leader among them in most situations. Thus, a S'sessu company is controlled by one extremely powerful boss; the captain of a S'sessu spaceship is the absolute leader of all beings aboard that ship. S'sessu philosophies are based on getting and keeping power, not on what is right or wrong. To a S'sessu, the only actions that are "wrong" are those that keep it from reaching its goal in the best and safest manner possible.

The discovery of the S'sessu has presented a puzzle for xenobiologists. The S'sessu have no explanation for their similarity to Sathar and were in fact unaware of the existence of the Sathar until contact with the UPF. The current theory held among scientists is that the S'sessu are an offshoot of the Sathar race, and this seems well-supported. If this is true, the separation between the Sathar and S'sessu would have to have occurred more than 20,000 years ago, long before the Sathar or the S'sessu are known to have developed space travel. It has been speculated that an ancient unknown race of aliens (possibly the group known to xenoarchaeologists as the Tetrarchs) transplanted a small group of S'sessu to their present homeworld at that time.

S'sessu only hold claim to a small region of space, consisting of two stellar systems (each with one small inhabited planet) lying ten light years from the Gruna Garu system, on a line running from Dixon's Star to Gruna Garu and on to the S'sessu worlds. Due to their similarity to the Sathar, it was only through luck and careful diplomacy that they were not immediately attacked as hostile

aliens by the rescue force that found their homeworld. Little is known about the S'sessu's history, as friendly diplomatic relations have only recently been established.

The S'sessu are extremely aggressive business dealers. In their attempts to gain an equal footing with the other races in the Frontier Sector, they have hired adventurers to spy on, infiltrate, steal from, or suppress activities the S'sessu deem "unfriendly" in the Frontier systems closest to them. This has caused Star Law to take an active interest in certain foreign and business affairs of the S'sessu, though the race as a whole is not regarded as dangerous or hostile.

Attitudes

The S'sessu are essentially amoral (neither knowing nor caring about the difference between good and evil). It is a good bet that a S'sessu will always do exactly what is best for it, even to the extent of betraying others without a second thought to save itself. This "every-worm-for-itself" attitude makes the S'sessu disliked, especially by the Vrusk (who have suffered in certain business dealings from the S'sessu love for "dirty tricks").

Nonetheless, the other races have learned to work with the S'sessu, often with great success and mutual benefit for both sides. S'sessu adventurers often work well as team members, especially if they see their chances of finding personal gain and wealth are improved through cooperative effort. Of course, a better offer might always be made by someone else, leaving the door open for possible treachery.

Special abilities

Ability Insight. Because of the extremely competitive nature of S'sessu society, individuals have developed the ability to judge the strengths and weaknesses of opponents. All S'sessu start with a score of 5% in this ability. This is the percentage chance a S'sessu has of learning one ability score or skill level of a being he observes. The S'sessu must see his opponent actually doing something related to that ability score before he can make this judgment.

For example, Asphenomenas, a S'sessu, sees a smuggler outside a spaceport. The smuggler is trying to shoot a beam weapon at a guard robot. Asphenomenas secretly watches the smuggler, and the player tells the referee that Asphenomenas wants to use his *Ability Insight* to determine the smuggler's DEX

score (based upon the smuggler's shooting ability). The referee secretly rolls percentile dice. If the die roll is 05 or under, Asphenomenas will have learned

Power and possessions are only for those S'sessu who can take and keep them.

the smuggler's DEX score. A roll over 05 would indicate uncertainty and no knowledge gained. *Ability Insight* may be increased by spending experience, just like any other ability score may be raised. This ability may only be used

once per game hour, simulating the intense concentration required to use it.

Creating a S'sessu character

S'sessu characters are created in the same way as other characters. The following Ability Modifiers are used when creating a S'sessu:

STR/STA: +0
DEX/RS: +0
INT/LOG: +10
PER/LDR: -10

S'sessu have the same movement rate as Sathar do. They walk at 10 meters per turn, run at 20 meters per turn, and move long distances at 3 kilometers per hour.

The following Racial Reaction Modifiers may also be used when dealing with S'sessu:

Humans have a -5 reaction penalty to S'sessu.
Vrusk have a -10 reaction penalty to S'sessu.
S'sessu have a +5 reaction bonus to Sathar.
S'sessu have a -5 reaction penalty to Vrusk.

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StarQuestions

Answers and advice on the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Penny Petticord

If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: Is it necessary to have some level of "weapon skills" to use a weapon?

A: No. Characters without weapons skills simply use the basic chance to hit ($\frac{1}{2}$ the DEX score, rounded up) to resolve combat with a ranged weapon; and, $\frac{1}{2}$ STR or $\frac{1}{2}$ DEX is used for combat with melee weapons.

Q: Wouldn't an automatic rifle fire more shots than an automatic pistol would in a burst, since rifles are bigger?

A: No. The basic designs of the two weapons are very similar, giving them nearly identical mechanical characteristics (such as ammo capacity and rate of fire). The main difference is that the rifle has a longer barrel, which gives it the advantage of greater range.

Q: Couldn't a bullet belt be used instead of a clip on an automatic rifle? For example, a bullet belt for a rifle could have 100 rounds, a mass of 3 kg, and a cost of 30 credits. The weapon could then fire 20 shots in a burst, or 6 shots per round.

A: The standard automatic rifles sold throughout the frontier are not designed to accommodate belt ammo. A weapon such as you suggest could be custom-made, but it would be cumbersome enough to require a tripod mount for proper firing, just like a small machine gun.

Q: The rule book states that a Dralasite may fire two weapons. But later it says that firing two weapons will give the character a -10 modifier to hit. Is this true with Dralasites? If a Dralasite can fire two weapons, should he be able to fire a weapon that needs mounting?

A: Dralasites are able to fire two weapons at once with the -10 modifier, as any other character can. They can also handle two-handed or

mounted weapons normally. (In fact, a Dralasite with 3 "arms" might conceivably have an easier time handling a mounted, belt-fed weapon than a two-armed character.)

Q: Dralasites are able to make their body parts one centimeter in diameter. Should they be able to "ooze" under a wall that has a hole under it, or through holes in a fence?

A: The minimum diameter for a Dralasite's body is that of a limb: 10 cm. A Dralasite can conceivably flatten its entire body to a cylinder of that thickness, but it could become no thinner lest its internal organs should be crushed. Although it can extrude 1-cm-diameter "fingers," it cannot compress its whole body to that extent.

Q: How could I make an encounter involving pulsars, black holes, a supernova, or a magnetic nebula?

A: So far, those major spacefaring dangers haven't been defined in the game system or its accessories. When you want to build an adventure around a concept outside the scope of the current rules system, you must design it from the ground up, using the rules and known facts as a framework on which to build. Start by doing some research at your local library on the known scientific attributes of such space anomalies. This will give you the realistic basis for your scenario. Then, using your understanding of the STAR FRONTIERS game mechanics, convert the attributes to usable game terms. (It is not necessary for the final design to be 100% realistic to be playable.) Be sure to keep any new design elements in balance with the rest of the game system and your existing campaign.

Q: How many rockets can a rocket battery hold? How many seekers can a seeker rack hold? How many torpedos can a torpedo launcher carry?

A: A standard rocket battery holds 24 rockets. Seeker racks and torpedo launchers are merely devices for

firing, not storage containers. There is no set limit to the number of seeker missiles or torpedos you can carry, except the capacity of your ship.

Q: Can anything else besides a mine layer carry, seekers for mines?

A: Seekers can be carried and deployed by minelayers, heavy cruisers, and battleships, but only minelayers can carry mines.

Q: How often are new star systems charted?

A: Most of the Frontier remains uncharted. Beyond the information on known space given in the set and modules, the referee is responsible for developing additional portions of the universe for campaign use. Future modules and supplements may feature an occasional new charted system, but making up your own planets, systems, and creatures is part of the fun, because your players will never know exactly what to expect.

Q: Will the Sathar ever fight deep-space battles?

A: Sathar ships fight the good guys in space occasionally (see the Advanced Game scenarios in the Knight Hawks Tactical Operations Manual for examples). Face-to-face conflict with the worms is far more rare, though not completely unheard of. Sathar prefer to win their victories through subterfuge, sabotage, and infiltration, rather than direct combat, whenever it's possible.

Q: Is it possible to modify a starship with a hull size of 5 or greater to land in water? If not, why not?

A: Starships cannot land on planets at all; they dock at space stations to take on personnel and supplies. Only small ships and shuttles can land on planetary surfaces. Any airtight spacecraft that can land on the ground can drop into an ocean, but the spacecraft will immediately sink unless it has been made especially buoyant like a submarine.



The Volturnus Connection

Building background for the Volturnus campaign

by **Stephen Bonario**

A referee starting a new STAR FRONTIERS® campaign with the Volturnus module series has many questions about the historical background of the Volturnus adventures which need to be answered. The answers provided in this article are unofficial, but are given to help the beginning referee tie up the loose ends and to help the campaign

grow beyond the initial series of adventures.

This article attempts to deal only with those questions that relate to motivations or rationales important to the series. The motives of the Eorna and the Sathar are well defined in the Volturnus modules. But why are the pirates on Volturnus? What real interests does the Truane's Star government have in the planet? What follows is a possible account of what happened to cause the

circumstances present when players begin SF-0, *Crash on volturnus*.

In Frontier Year 44 (for more information on the Frontier time system, see the Expanded Game Rules, p. 52, and SFKH-1, *Dramune Run*), there was a human merchant named Seccitte Zebulon, who regularly made shipments to the Truane's Star system. His ship accidentally misjumped when leaving that system, and Zebulon found himself in an uncharted and mysterious new star system.

Upon return to Pale, Seccitte decided to sell the astrogational information he and his crew acquired while charting their way back. He sold the location of the system to the government of Pale, which promptly paid Zebulon by giving him a private luxury island (where he lived very comfortably — under the government's watchful eye, so he could not resell the information elsewhere).

The Truane's Star system was divided at the time. Pale was the first local planet colonized because of its great mineral wealth. Pale is a cold planet with seasons defined only by the movement of polar ice over its equatorial oceans. New Pale is an Earth-like planet rich in vegetation and animal life. However, this planet is *far* more dangerous than Pale; huge, vicious dinosaurs roam its plains, jungles, and skies, very much like prehistoric Earth. New Pale was settled by humans to supply food to Pale.

The governments of these two neighboring worlds were independent of each other, yet cooperated well. Pale knew its existence depended on the continuation of food supply shipments from New Pale, the cheapest available external food source. New Pale relied on this demand for its food as its main source of income.

In F.Y. 45, Pale's government created a Planetary Research and Development division to open up the "Zebulon Star Route." Pale launched a deep-space probe to explore the system, now named Zebulon after its discoverer. The probe reported astrophysical data on the system and its only habitable planet (now called Volturnus). When it was discovered that great mineral wealth existed on Volturnus, Pale became eager to colonize the planet. Because Pale itself was an ore-rich world, it already had many mining companies in operation on it. The Research division began taking development bids, and the resulting competition was fierce.

The contract to develop Volturnus was



awarded to a healthy company called MINER (Mining for Industrial use of Natural Earth Resources). Plans and negotiations went on for a year, and MINER planned to begin settlement of Volturnus in early F.Y. 47.

Two calamities struck the project at this time, causing the whole thing to fall through. First, New Pale began to receive non-human colonists from Pale. A majority of humans on New Pale were HUSPs (a slang term for persons believing in a racist political philosophy called Human Superiority). The HUSPs preferred this racially isolated planet and didn't want it "contaminated." But Pale used military force to bully the weaker government into allowing other races to settle there. Pale saw this as a way to increase food production on New Pale and perhaps drive food costs down. Several months later, the HUSPs banded together and began terrorizing the new colonists, also attacking Pale's "colonial protection" forces. New Pale thus declared itself to be in a state of war with Pale.

The result of this was Pale's transference of money from "unnecessary" projects to the direct defense of its critical food supply source. Money from the Planetary Research division was diverted to this cause because it was felt profits from Volturnus operations would not be realized fast enough to help the war effort. Pale also believed that, if it could gain full control of New Pale, it could become a much more powerful stellar government.

The other calamity that struck was the kidnapping of the head of MINER, a Vrusk, who was later reported killed when the demanded ransom was not paid. His body was never recovered, and his will called for the liquidation of MINER, with all monies then deposited into a private bank account. It was widely believed that a rival company was responsible for his death.

This was a turning point for Volturnus. It gave the Eorna another twenty years to fulfill their Great Mission, but it also brought the Star Devil to

Volturnus. The former head of MINER secretly retained all the classified information on Volturnus and the Zebulon star system. He had rigged his kidnapping and death, then assumed a new identity as the Star Devil. His initial intent was to set up an illegal mining operation on Volturnus before the government of Pale could do so. To help realize his plans, he drew on the private bank account his will had set up. But as time went on, he instead became involved in pirating operations. He didn't know then how much his "business" would affect Volturnus's future.

The war on New Pale consisted of a series of HUSP-led terrorist attacks on food service shipments to Pale. Pale was forced to continue to spend money on ensuring its food supply remained secure. This became difficult in the early 50s because Pale had an overabundance of resources that were also low in demand. It suffered an economic depression, and many Pale-based mining companies went out of business. One mid-sized corporation, based in Point True, Pale's capitol, began to acquire these small companies hoping to gain a planet-wide monopoly. The corporation was Streele; by F.Y. 53, Streele completely controlled all mining operations on Pale.

Aware of this, the Star Devil approached the Pan-Galactic Corporation and worked out an agreement with it. The Star Devil, using bases in the Gruna Goru, Prenglar, and Dixon's Star systems, ran weapons shipments from Wartech Corporation to the HUSPs on



New Pale. Pan-Galactic financed the cost of the weapons, while the Star Devil furnished the ships. Gun-running proved profitable for both PGC and the Star Devil, allowing the latter to become a potent force. The Star Devil was able to develop Volturnus before Trauna's Star could do it, while keeping Strel busy investing money in the war effort instead of in business projects like PGC did. This activity went on from F.Y. 54 to F.Y. 63. The Star Devil expanded his pirate bases to the Araks, Athor, and Scree Fron star systems. In F.Y. 63, he began putting his Volturnus mining plans into operation. This particular year also saw the end of the Pale-New Pale war.

Strel struggled through those nine years of war, yet continued to grow into a larger corporation despite it. In F.Y. 63, in cooperation with the Pale Militia, Strel made an effort to end the war by pouring millions into the militia's coffers. Confronted by an army of far superior quantity and quality, the HUSPs were soon crushed out of existence, despite the best efforts of PGC and the Star Devil to save them. New Pale became a stabilized planet. Its new gov-

ernment then joined Pale's, and the two began united rulership of the Truane's Star system.

By F.Y. 64, Strel became aware of the long-deserted Zebulon colonization attempt. It urged the new government to develop the system claimed twenty years ago. Strel even helped finance a new Planetary Research division. The division sent an exploratory team three and a half months (140 days) into F.Y. 64. Nine months (360 days) later, a second team was assembled — the player characters.

This is where your campaign is set to begin. Using the previous information, you can provide information about the past to characters who manage to gain access to the pirates' computers. You can now use the Star Devil's many bases as expansion for further adventures. It is almost inevitable that a party will want to get even with the pirates, who may have been responsible for the deaths of party members or who may have escaped Volturnus with prisoners who are player characters. What happens next will be up to the referee and players. Using the rationale provided here

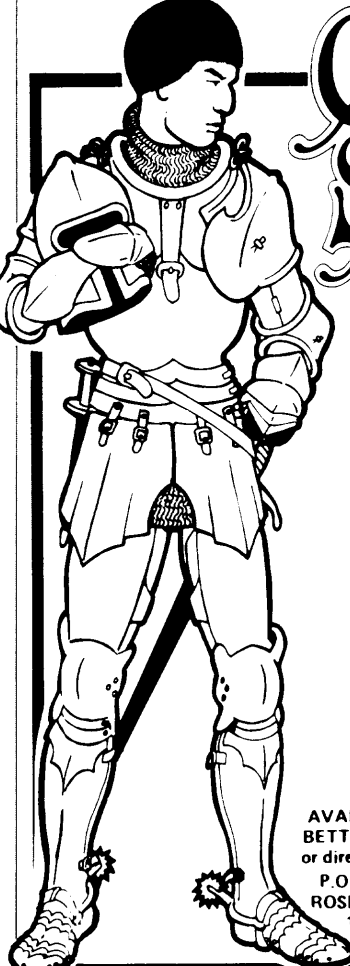
will flesh out the campaign and make it more logical and consistent.

It is also suggested that gamers use the following additional information:

1. The captain of the *Serena Dawn* was working with the pirates, but his reward for delivering the second team to them was his death and the destruction of his ship and crew. The player characters, of course, escaped.

2. PGC has been buying the Star Devil's ore mined on Volturnus. PGC knows of this operation and deals with it despite its illegality. Should characters discover this information, they could sell it to Strel for a handsome price. However, it is quite likely PGC will learn of the sale and send out a few agents to deal with the characters. . . .

I hope this article has demonstrated the need for rationale in any kind of campaign to new and old referees alike. By having a consistent set of motives for the major influences in a scenario, the referee can draw on them and "wing it" with ease when necessary, yet remain true to the pre-planned course of events. Players are an unpredictable lot, and answering their questions becomes easier when you know the answers.



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StarQuestions

Answers and advice on the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Penny Petticord

If you need some answers to help your gaming campaign, write down your questions and mail them to StarQuestions, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Q: Can supernatural things happen on STAR FRONTIERS® game worlds?

A: Only if you (as referee) are willing to make up rules to cover it. The STAR FRONTIERS game universe is based on technology and science rather than on superstition and magic. That is not to say that such cannot exist, but it is most often encountered on backward planets without access to "civilized" ways. Referees wishing to use so-called supernatural effects in their campaigns should first establish a logical basis which does not contradict the game system. (For example, a referee might choose to introduce effects which appear to be magical, but which can be done by technological means.) Once your means of dealing with the subject is set, you're pretty well stuck with it, so try to foresee any major balance problems the new addition to your system will generate.

Q: What do you do after gaining six levels of experience in a skill?

A: Consider adding additional skills to your repertoire, or spend your experience points to improve ability scores. Never let experience points go to waste; there are always plenty of good ways to use them.

Q: On p. 8 of the Knight Hawks Campaign Book, it states that the damage control rating is equal to three multiplied by the hull size plus twenty, but in the second column at the top it gives an example which is obviously in error: $(3 \times 8) + 20 = 32 + 20 = 52$. Should I multiply the hull size by four or change the example?

A: The sample calculation is incorrect. It should read:

$(3 \times 8) + 20 = 24 + 20 = 44$

Q: In the basic rules, it says that characters start with 10 credits and a standard equipment pack. But in the expanded rules, it says to roll 1d10 and add 50 credits for starting capital. Which is correct?

A: The former is correct for the basic game, and the latter is correct for the expanded game.

Q: Can you choose two starting skills from a character's main PSA, or does one have to be from a different PSA?

A: As long as at least one of the skills chosen is from the main PSA, the other may be chosen from the same one or a different one, at the player's preference.

Q: I found "whip" on the equipment list (p. 40 of the Expanded Game Rules at the very bottom), but I could not find it on the Melee Weapons Chart, Weapons Table, or in the Weapon Descriptions (p. 42). Could you give some information about it?

A: The whip is described on the Weapons Table and p. 43 under the heading "Chain/Whip". It does 1d10 points damage and has a modifier of -5. Inertia screens and skeinsuits absorb half the damage.

Q: Could heavy lasers be mounted on a fighter? What damage and range would such a weapon have?

A: Heavy lasers cannot be mounted on fighters. See the Tactical Operations Manual for sample ships and the weapons that can be carried by each.

Q: Please comment on the possibility of trading a ship design for a commission.

A: Commissions may be granted as rewards for a variety of things, at the referee's discretion. Conspicuous valor, efficient handling of a sticky situation, and a new weapon or ship design are all good ways to gain a promotion. The referee should evaluate the individual's performance in the way that a superior would before recommending such an

action, though. For example, a new ship design must be practical and not too expensive to build and maintain, or it would not be profitable to use it. A prototype must be built and tested (test flights, crash tests, and battle simulations) before it is approved for use. (The referee can and should require the player to redesign portions of the ship that do not meet the specifications of the "customer" before granting a commission.) Once it passes all the requirements, the character who designed it would be eligible for a reward of some type, but it might take considerable time, since the the wheels of bureaucracy *do* turn slowly.

Q: The front cover art on *Sundown on Starmist* and that on p. 4 show a double moon system, when p. 3 and p. 24 (System Brief) clearly state the Starmist has no moons! Various other parts of the text imply poor lighting at night. Was the planet supposed to have moons?

A: No, the illos are incorrect. Starmist has no moons.

Q: In module SF3, if the fans of the war tank hit water, do repairs take 2 days (as on p. 25) or 1 day (as on p. 13)?

A: Repairs take one day.

Q: The rules say a ship can be controlled by a pilot, an astrogator, and an engineer. Yet on p. 6, it says that a freighter's crew numbers about the hull size of the ship. What are the extra crew members used for? And what are the skills needed by those extra crew members?

A: It's usually convenient on long space flights to have cooks, technicians, weapon specialists, and medical personnel, even though such individuals are not necessary to operate the ship itself. Security personnel are needed for transport of passengers or valuable cargo. (See POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #22 for Roger Moore's article on shipboard personnel, for more information.)

Tanks a lot!

Vehicle combat in STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Alex Curylo

Simba the Yazirian and Dandel the Dralosite crested the second-to-the-last dune before the Streel outpost — and almost bumped into a perimeter guard. Simba's sonic sword cut the man in half before he even raised his weapon.

"As I was saying," the unrattled Dandel continued, "the problem with this war is that it's boring. We watch Streel, they watch us, and occasionally somebody gets shot. What we need is some excitement. We need something like—"

Suddenly, the stutter of a machine gun sounded ahead. Simba and Dandel hurriedly climbed the last dune and unslung their magnigoggles. All was clear at the base, but a firefight was in progress along the base highway.

A hover transport with Streel markings was trying to reach the base as an Explorer with GTF insignia gained on it. A jet of oil splashed from the truck; the Explorer fishtailed through the slick, barely keeping control. Slowing down, the Explorer released a guided missile from its roof rack. The transport driver tried to dodge, but the missile hit and the truck rolled over twice under the blast, landing upright but flaming.

As the Explorer approached, one of the truck's turrets turned to face it. Fire from a heavy flamethrower licked over the Explorer's roof, setting off the three

remaining guided missiles in a red ball of fire and light.

"Now that," said Simba, "is exciting!"

The STAR FRONTIERS® combat rules are excellent, but some areas were omitted — the most unfortunate omission being vehicle-mounted weapons and armor. Armed and armored vehicles would be used extensively by the Frontier mega-corps, Star Law and other law-enforcement agencies, explorers of planets with hostile native life, and those earning a living by illegal means. Since these categories include virtually all player characters, the need for vehicle combat rules is obvious. This article attempts to rectify that problem.

Defenses

The basic vehicle defense is armor. Its effectiveness depends on its composition, method of fabrication, location, thickness, and angle of slope. For the game, all these considerations (as well as details like bulletproof windshields and wheelguards) are neatly integrated into *coats of armor*. Each coat provides a -2 modifier when rolling on the appropriate Vehicle Damage Table (Expanded Game Rules book, pp. 32-33). Every 5 coats will reduce crash injuries to occupants by -1 point per die. The cost per coat and the maximum coats applicable vary for each vehicle type; these are

noted on the Vehicle Table below. Also noted (after the slash) are the number of coats that are concealable (i.e., that an observer will not notice as armor on the vehicle). Likewise, the price after the slash is the price for a concealed coat.

A vehicle can be painted with reflective paint. This costs the same as an armor coat and provides an additional modifier of -10 from vehicle damage rolls due to laser attacks. Note that these coats are not concealable.

A defensive screen can also be added to a vehicle. There are two types of vehicle screens:

Albedo: This screen uses 1 SEU per minute of operation, and it absorbs all laser damage at a cost of 2 SEU per die of damage absorbed.

Inertia: This screen uses 1 SEU per minute of operation, and it reflects half the dice of damage done by ballistic attacks (and crashes) at a cost of 1 SEU per die of damage reflected.

Example: A hovercar and a jetcopter are slugging it out. The car's universal turret fires a heavy laser (set at 20d10 damage) straight up and hits the jetcopter. The jetcopter's albedo screen absorbs it at a cost of 40 SEU. The jetcopter then drops a heavy bomb (50d10 damage) which hits the car. The hovercar's inertia screen reflects half the dice (25) at a cost of 25 SEU. Its driver now rolls on the Damage Table with a +25 on the dice.

Power screens are powered by the power econopack — 250 SEU, 25 kg, 1250 Credits; 4 weapons adapters, 1 screen adapter, 5 miscellaneous adapters. The cost for a screen varies with the size of the vehicle, as shown on the Vehicle Table.

Weapons

Many new weapons are available to mount on vehicles, as detailed on the Weapon Table below. All headings are the same as found in Expanded Game Rules statistics (p. 271, save for spaces and *mounting fee*, described below.

Spaces: Each vehicle's capacity to carry weapons is rated in spaces, as shown on the Vehicle Table. All weapons mounted in the vehicle's body or in turrets have their space rating subtracted from this number. When a vehicle's rating reaches 0, no more mounted weapons can be added to it.

Mounting fee: This is the cost to mount this weapon on a vehicle. All mounts are recessed, and it must be decided when mounting whether a



weapon faces the front, back, right, or left side of a vehicle.

Descriptions and notes for these weapons are presented below.

Portable weapons: These include heavy lasers (HL), machine guns (MG), recoilless rifles (RR), and rocket launchers (RL). They can also be mounted on a post or swivel mount; this only costs 150 Credits, but these weapons cannot be fired by a gunner inside the vehicle. Normal ranged combat is used if somebody hangs from a hatch to use one of these, but anybody doing that and wearing a screen will interfere with the vehicle's defensive screen (if any). Post-mounted weapons are not charged against the vehicle's space total – but reasonable limits should be placed on this by the referee.

Flamethrowers: These were omitted from the rules. The version here is the one-man backpack sort. Vehicle-mounted versions should not face the front of the vehicle. If fired while the vehicle is traveling faster than 40 meters/turn, the flamethrower will subject the vehicle to an attack from its own flame.

Vehicle MG: A larger calibre (12.7 mm) weapon with a greater muzzle velocity than a portable MG. Baffles surround its barrel so that the muzzle flash is not visible at night.

Vehicle RR: This is similar to the version in the Expanded Game Rules book, but it has a larger calibre.

Vehicle RL: This uses longer, larger rockets than the Expanded Game Rules version. Note the different rocket calibres; one vehicle RL cannot fire both. Also note that in jetcopter and aircar weapon pods, the rockets are each mounted in a separate tube; any number of rockets may be fired in a single turn.

Vehicle HL: Lacking a clear prototype, the heavy laser statistics were designed to keep it competitive with other weap-

ons. It runs off the same powerpack as scenes.

Vehicle FT: The tank version. Remember the caveat above about front-mounting flamethrowers.

Cannon: This is your basic 30 mm cannon.

Howitzer: This tank weapon is included for the sake of sheer overkill.

Guided missiles: GM platforms come in four sizes. The smallest holds 1 missile, takes up 1 space, and costs 300 Credits to mount. The largest holds 4 missiles, takes up 4 spaces, and costs 1200 Credits to mount. All GMs available can be fired in one turn if so desired. They are an exception to normal combat rules. The cheap missile 1000 Credits/30d10) is guided by joystick movements of the gunner and finalizes its own aim with infrared sensors. The basic chance to hit is the gunner's DEX +20, as a percentage. All modifiers are applicable; range modifiers are reduced three categories if the gunner is wearing magnigoggles. The expensive missile (3000 Credits/60d10) is programmed with a target before launching, and is totally self-guided. Programming takes three turns during which the gunner can take no other action. The chance to hit is 95%, and no modifiers are applicable. Missile acceleration is 150 meters/turn/turn, top speed 1500 meters/turn; a jetcopter or aircar with a head start might be able to outrun a missile for its 10 km range.

Bomb: This is a dropped weapon, mounted on jetcopter or aircar pylons. Statistics for light and heavy bombs are given.

Minedropper: A shot from this weapon drops 5 mines on the road behind the vehicle. Distribution is determined by speed and maneuvers during the dropping turn. If any vehicle subsequently passes over them, the mines will detonate on a 50% activation roll. The

5d10 damage figure is per mine. This is a generally useless weapon for flying vehicles; the mines spread too much when dropped and explode on impact if dropped over 5 meters.

Sprayer: Various vile substances can be loaded into this. The most useful three substances are smoke, paint, and oil. A smokescreen forms a 50-meter-diameter cloud, blocking vision and IR sights but not radar. It lasts 5 turns; any vehicle going through it is sightless for 1 turn.

Paint sprays cover an area 10 meters x 3 meters behind the vehicle, and they block vision (but not IR or radar) by coating windows with paint. The paint lasts until scrubbed off. Paint will also completely ruin a coat of reflective paint; it cannot be removed without also removing the reflective paint beneath it.

Oil jets form a 20 meter x 2 meter slick. The driver of a vehicle traveling faster than its Turn Speed who encounters a slick must make a Reaction Speed check or lose control of the vehicle. An Explorer has a +20 on the control roll. Hover vehicles are not affected at all.

A limitation of recessed mounting is that weapons can only face one direc-

Equipment Table

| <i>item</i> | mass (kg) | cost (Cr) |
|---------------|--------------|-----------|
| Cyberlink | 5 | 5000 |
| Ejection seat | 15 | 500 |
| IR cameras | 8 | 800 |
| IR jammer | 4 | 500 |
| Radar | 10 | 1500 |
| Searchlight | 8 | 500 |

Turret Table

| <i>size</i> | <i>spaces</i> | <i>cost (Cr)</i> |
|-------------|---------------|------------------|
| Small | 1 | 2000/2500 |
| Medium | 2 | 4000/5000 |
| Large | 4 | 8000/10000 |

Vehicle Table

| <i>vehicle type</i> | <i>maximum coats</i> | <i>cost/coat(Cr)</i> | <i>cost (Cr)</i> | <i>screen spaces</i> | <i>maximum turrets</i> |
|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Hovercycle | 2/0 | 1500/n.a. | n.a. | 1 | 1S |
| Groundcycle | 3/0 | 1500/n.a. | n.a. | 2 | 1SM |
| Hovercar | 6/3 | 4000/6000 | 10000 | 4 | 1 SM |
| Groundcar | 8/3 | 4500/7000 | 10000 | 6 | 1 SML |
| Hover transport | 15/5 | 10000/13000 | 25000 | 16 | 2 SML |
| Ground transport | 18/5 | 11000/15000 | 25000 | 20 | 3 SML |
| Explorer | 15/5 | 7000/9000 | 15000 | 12 | 1SML |
| Jetcopter | 12/3 | 8000/10000 | 15000 | 2 | 1 SM |
| Aircar | 20/5 | 11000/13000 | 25000 | 4 | 1 SML |

Weapon Tables

| <i>weapon type</i> | <i>spaces</i> | <i>mounting fee (Cr)</i> | <i>damage</i> | <i>ammo</i> | <i>SEU</i> | <i>rate</i> | <i>defense</i> |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| Flamethrower | 1 | 500 | 3d10* | 10 | — | 1 | none |
| Vehicle MG | 2 | 750 | 15d10 | 20 | — | 1 | inertia |
| Vehicle RR | 2 | 750 | 18d10 | 15 | — | ½ | inertia |
| Vehicle RL | 2 | 750 | 20d10 | 20 | — | ¼ | inertia |
| | 2 | 750 | 30d10 | 10 | — | ¼ | inertia |
| Vehicle HL | 2 | 750 | 1d10/SEU | 500 | 5-30 | 1 | albedo |
| Vehicle FT | 2 | 750 | 8d10** | 10 | — | 1 | none |
| Cannon | 4 | 1250 | 25d10 | 15 | — | ¼ | inertia |
| Howitzer | 8 | 2500 | 75d10 | 10 | — | ¼ | inertia |
| Guided missile | 1-4 | 300-1200 | 30d10 | 1-4 | — | 1-4 | inertia |
| | 1-4 | 300-1200 | 60d10 | 1-4 | — | 1-4 | inertia |
| Bomb | 1 | 50 | 25d10 | 1 | — | 1 | inertia |
| | 2 | 50 | 50d10 | 1 | — | 1 | inertia |
| Mine dropper | 2 | 500 | 5d10/mine | 10 | — | 1 | inertia |
| Sprayer | 2 | 500 | variable | 10 | — | 1 | variable |

Range (meters)

| <i>Weapon type</i> | <i>PB</i> | <i>Short</i> | <i>medium</i> | <i>long</i> | <i>extreme</i> |
|--------------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Flamethrower | 0-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-45 | 46-70 |
| Vehicle MG | — | 0-100 | 101-350 | 351-750 | 751-1500 |
| Vehicle RR | — | 0-200 | 201-1250 | 1251-3000 | 3001-5000 |
| Vehicle RL | — | 0-200 | 201-500 | 501-1000 | 1001-2000 |
| | — | 0-200 | 201-500 | 501-1000 | 1001-2000 |
| Vehicle HL | — | 0-150 | 151-750 | 751-1500 | 1501-3000 |
| Vehicle FT | — | 0-25 | 26-50 | 51-100 | 101-150 |
| Cannon | — | 100-1000 | 1001-2000 | 2001-3000 | 3001-5000 |
| Howitzer | — | — | 250-3000 | 3001-7000 | 7001-15000 |
| Guided missile | 50-500 *** | 501-1000 *** | 1001-2000 *** | 2001-5000 *** | — *** |
| Bomb | 0-10 | 11-30 | 31-60 | 61-120 | 121+ |
| | 0-10 | 11-30 | 31-60 | 61-120 | 121+ |
| Mine dropper | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Sprayer | varies | varies | varies | varies | varies |

Ammunition

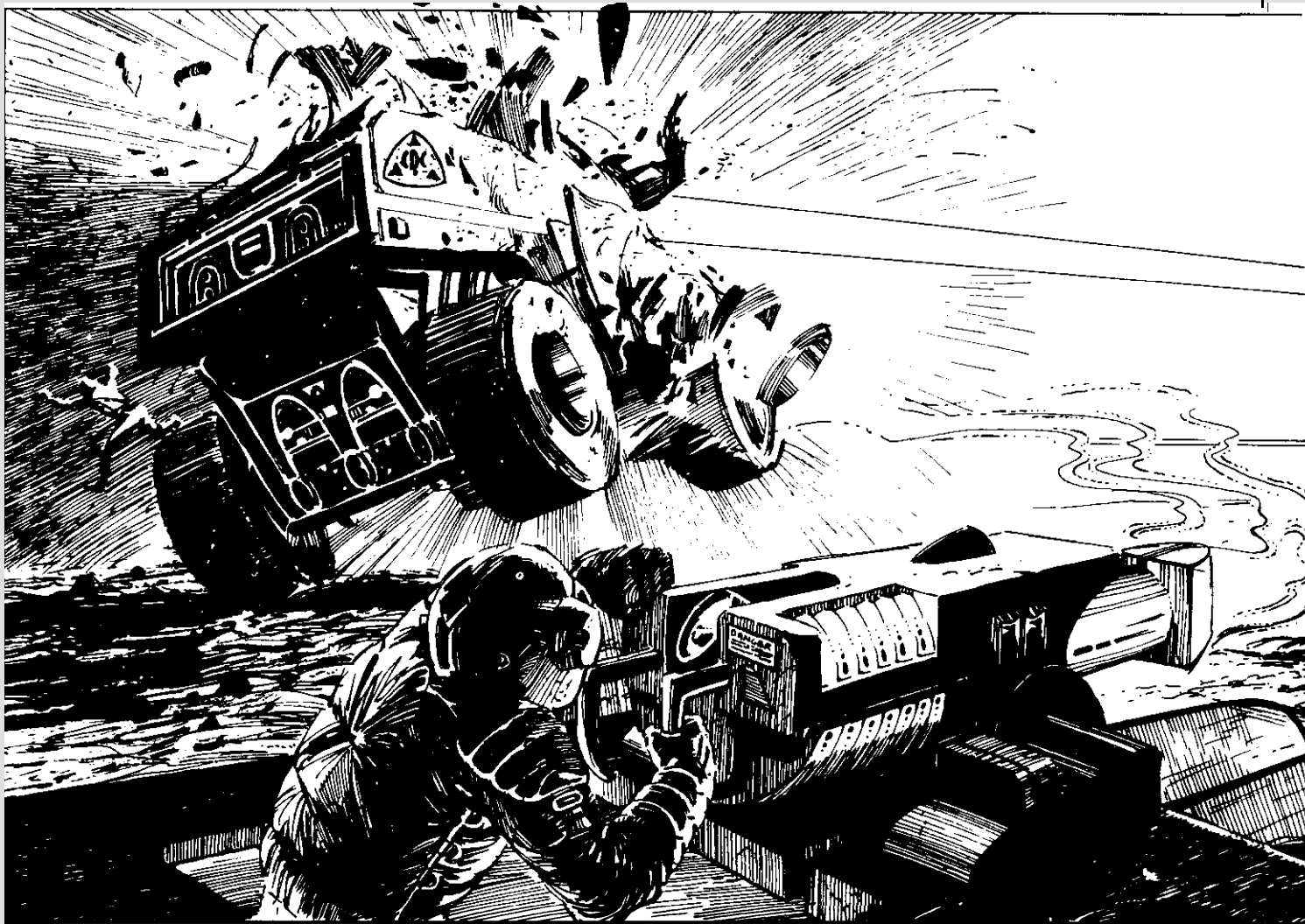
| <i>Weapon type</i> | <i>cost (Cr)</i> | <i>mass (kg)</i> | <i>type</i> | <i>cost (Cr)</i> | <i>mass (kg)</i> | <i>rounds</i> |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Flamethrower | 3000 | 15 | napalm | 50 | 10 | 10 |
| Vehicle MG | 3000 | 22 | bullet belt | 125 | 12 | 400 |
| Vehicle RR | 5500 | 20 | shell | 15 | 2 | 1 |
| Vehicle RL | 6000 | 17 | rocket | 25 | 6 | 1 |
| | 8000 | 20 | rocket | 40 | 10 | 1 |
| Vehicle HL | 7500 | 25 | pack | 1250 | 25 | 500 |
| Vehicle FT | 5000 | 25 | napalm | 150 | 30 | 10 |
| Cannon | 10000 | 100 | shell | 50 | 5 | 1 |
| Howitzer | 25000 | 350 | shell | 200 | 20 | 1 |
| Guided missile | 200-800 | 5-20 | missile | 1000 | 30 | 1 |
| | 200-800 | 5-20 | missile | 3000 | 60 | 1 |
| Bomb | n.a. | n.a. | bomb | 50 | 15 | 1 |
| | n.a. | n.a. | bomb | 100 | 30 | 1 |
| Mine dropper | 750 | 10 | mine | 250 | 25 | 50 |
| Sprayer | 1000 | 20 | varies | 100 | 10 | 10 |

Note: Any portable weapon may be mounted in a turret; it will take up one space, and will have a mounting fee of 500 Credits. All other statistics are as per the Expanded Games Rules.

* — Fire from a portable flamethrower will do 1d10 damage/turn to a target for the next three turns after the turn in which it was fired.

** — Fire from a vehicle-mounted flamethrower will do 1d10 damage/turn to a target for the next five turns after the turn in which it was fired.

*** — The second kind of guided missile has no range modifiers, and is good out to a 10 km range.



tion. To get around this, weapons are installed on turrets. Turrets have a 360° field of fire, and can spin the full 360° and still fire each turn. Universal turrets can also elevate from -15° to +90° (straight up). Turrets have a minimum range of 10 meters due to their elevation from the ground (this does not apply to universal turrets).

Turrets come in three sizes, as shown on the Turret Table. The second price (after the slash) is for a universal turret. These prices include the mounting of a turret in a vehicle, but the regular weapon mounting fee must still be paid to mount a weapon in a turret. Concealing a turret costs double the price shown, but weapons in the turret are automatically concealed.

The maximum number of turrets on each vehicle type and their possible sizes are shown on the Vehicle Table. Note that cycle turrets are actually sidecars, and only have a 180° field of fire on one side. Also note that putting weapons in a turret does not add to the spaces in a vehicle.

Example: Simba is mounting a turret on his groundcar. According to the

table, he can mount a small or medium turret. He chooses a medium universal turret (2 spaces) and decides to mount a vehicle machine gun (2 spaces) in it. It costs 3000 Credits to purchase the vehicle MG, 750 Credits to mount it in the turret, and 5000 Credits to buy a turret and mount it on his car. If he wants a pop-up turret, it will cost him another 5000 Credits. (The vehicle MG is automatically concealed.) Either way, he now has 4 spaces left to mount a cannon (or whatever in his car.

Jetcopters and aircars are a special case. Their weapons are most commonly mounted not in the body or in turrets, but in weapon pods attached to pylons. These pods add space to a vehicle. A jetcopter can have two pods, each holding 2 spaces worth of weapons, while an aircar can have 4 pods, each holding 4 spaces of weapons. A small (1-space) pylon with post costs 200 Credits; a medium (2-space) one costs 400 Credits; and, a large (4-space) one costs 800 Credits. (Of course, regular weapon-mounting fees must still be paid.)

Example: Dandel is arming his aircar. He mounts a vehicle MG and a vehicle

FT coaxially in a large, underbody turret. This fills up the vehicle's body spaces (as shown on the Vehicle Table). However, he can still add up to 4 pylons of up to 4 spaces each, under the wings, so the total weaponry on his aircar could be 20 spaces.

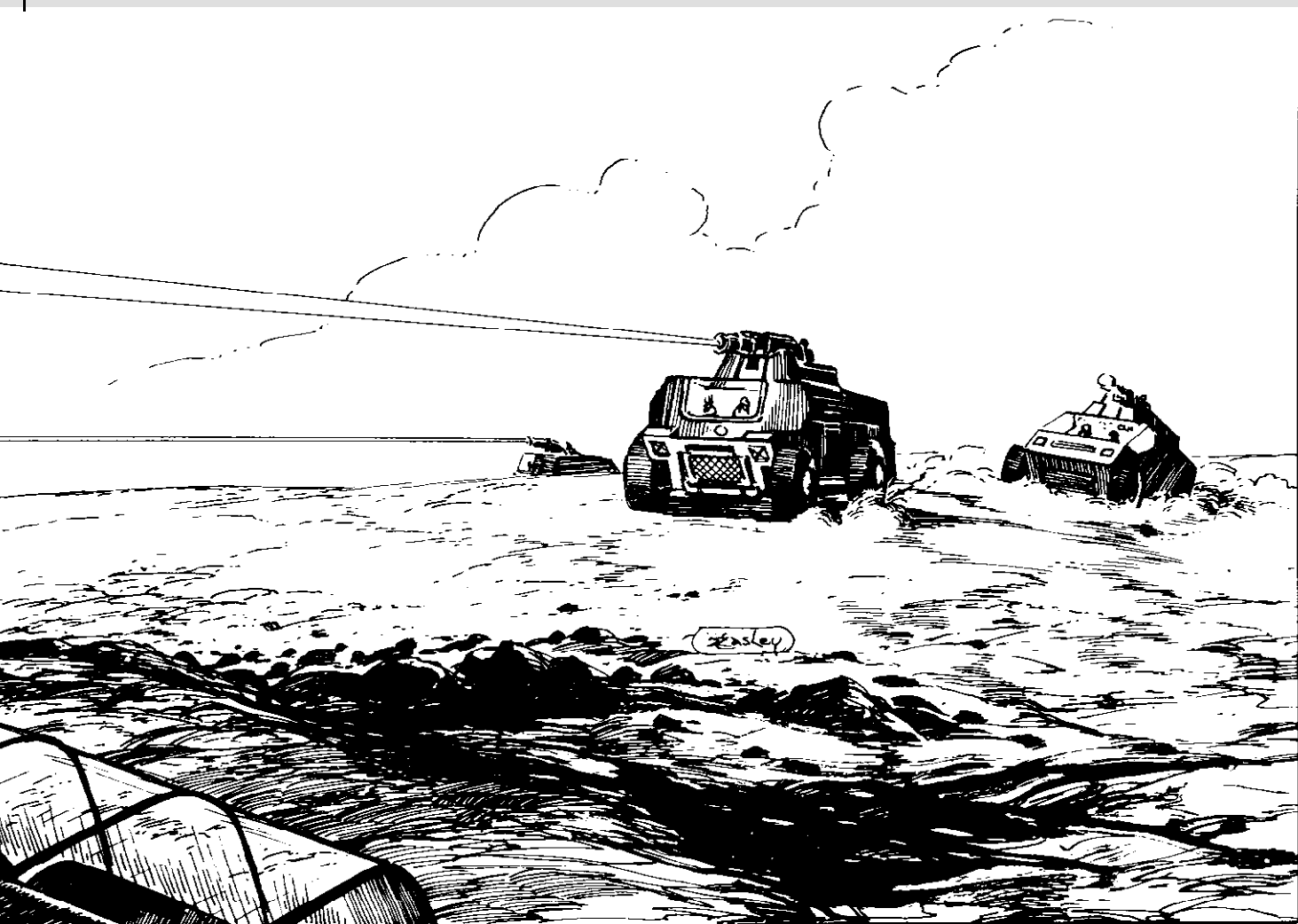
Note that pods are fixed, forward-firing weapons.

Equipment

Other pieces of equipment that are useful in vehicle combat are given here. These are listed on the Equipment Table and described below.

Cyberlink: This is a direct mental hookup (by computer) to a weapon to control its firing. Up to 5 weapons can be controlled by one person (3 by a driver) at no penalty for firing multiple weapons, but each weapon requires a separate link. Each link also guzzles 2 SEU per turn of operation.

Ejection seat: Upon manual activation, this slides back a roof panel and ejects the seat 20 meters straight up, where a para-wing opens to carry the passenger to safety. Safety features prohibit activa-



tion when the vehicle is not upright.

Infrared cameras: IR cameras project a 360° image of heat sources around the vehicle, to permit driving without lights at night and seeing through a painted windshield. They use 1 SEU per minute of operation.

Infrared jammer: IR jammers make the vehicle invisible to IR sensors, and they give guided missiles a -20 modifier to hit. They use 2 SEU per minute of operation.

Radar: Radar enables sight through any interference, but objects show up only as blips on a screen. It uses 1 SEU per minute of operation.

Searchlight: One can be mounted in a turret for 200 Credits (using 1 space) and can be used as a weapon to blind opponents. Blindness duration is 1d10 turns, or 1d10-3 if the searchlight is over 500 meters away. Light range is 1 km. SEU use is 3 per minute.

Combat

The Combat Sequence for vehicle combat is the same as for all other STAR FRONTIERS combat, the only difference being in the procedure used to deter-

mine hit probability. This is given below.

1. 1/4DEX / 1/2 DEX. The basic percentage chance to hit is 1/4 the gunner's Dexterity, since he has no control over the aim (only when to fire). If he is controlling a turreted weapon, the base percentage chance increases to 1/2 his Dexterity.

2. + 5% / Tech level. If the vehicle is moving, 5% is added for each Technician level of the driver, since he can position the vehicle for the most favorable shots.

3. + 5% / skill level. 5% is added for each skill level the gunner has with the weapon being fired.

4. -x% range. See Expanded Game Rules book for range modifiers.

5. +x% size. Cars, Explorers, air vehicles: + 5% (Large). Trucks: + 10% (Giant).

6. -x% movement. -10% if speed is 10. 150 meters/turn; -20% if speed is over 150 meters/turn. This applies to both attacker and target.

7. -x% cover. See Expanded Game Rules book for cover modifiers.

8. -x% dodging. The driver can weave and otherwise try to present a harder target. Subtraction is -5% per Tech level

of the driver. This applies to attacks on and by his vehicle, and it eliminates modifier #2 above.

9. -10% / extra weapon. If firing multiple weapons, a gunner has a -10% penalty "to hit" per weapon, for every extra weapon over and above the one weapon he considers his main weapon. A driver has a -10% penalty "to hit" per weapon on each weapon he fires.

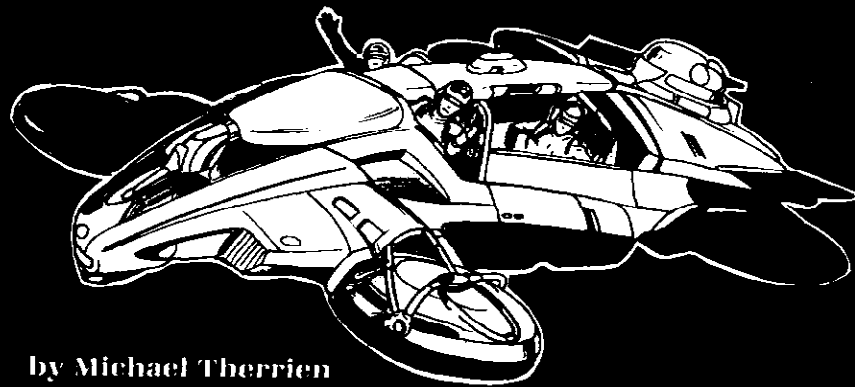
Example: Simba and Dandel are trying to bring down a Streeel jetcopter. Simba (the driver) is firing two weapons; he has a -20% on each roll. Dandel (the gunner) is firing three weapons; he also has a -20% on each roll.

Once an attack succeeds, apply screen effects (if any), and find the number of dice of damage caused by the attack. Roll 2d10, add the number of dice, and subtract 2 for each coat of armor the vehicle has. Finally, add vehicle modifiers (+ 2 for cycles; -2 for Explorers), and consult the appropriate Vehicle Damage Table (pp. 32-33, Expanded Game Rules book).

Best wishes in your dueling, and may you never find yourself staring down a howitzer barrel.

SilverTwin!

High-tech crimefighters of the Frontier



by Michael Therrien

TO: All concerned planetary officials
FROM: Security Council
Star Law Laboratories
Port Loren, Morgaine's World
Prenglar

Honored sirs:

It has come to the Council's attention that the phenomenal success of the SilverTwin project (entire background included) has led to a flood of requests for such services. It must be understood by all that such projects are extremely expensive. Most local police agencies hardly have the funds to keep themselves in uniform, let alone to pay out 2,000,000 Cr for a pair of vehicles and six more personnel, regardless of how well skilled they are!

Captain-General Dwart Uol has asked all planetary heads to reconsider their many requests. . . .

History

After the Second Sathar War, white-collar criminals from several outlaw organizations began to stir things up in the Frontier, using gangs of moderately armed thugs. Hundreds of serious crimes were committed by these gangs each week. The crime lords behind these groups of thugs hoped to occupy Star Law's forces on an increasingly planetary level, thus reducing the organization's strength in open space and permitting the growth of piracy. Their ploy failed miserably, for their actions led to the development of the SilverTwin project.

Star Law Laboratory (Morgaine's World) reacted to the demand by officers throughout the Frontier for heavily armed combat vehicles. The SilverTwin project was revealed nearly a year ago; since then, it has been installed and activated in three Star Law planetary branches. With the widespread fame of

this highly effective arm of law, the requests for many more SilverTwin units have reached the attention of the Security Council. The cities that so far have had a SilverTwin module included in their arsenal are Port Loren (Morgaine's World, Prenglar), Jancaith (Triad, Cassidine) and Tarnath's Realm (Truane's Star).

SilverTwin is the code name for a pair of all-terrain vehicles, both well armed and screened, which have been created for special missions of law enforcement. They are experimental in design and would only be used in conjunction with the law agencies of major cities, acting on orders from a Star Law Planetary Council, Planetary Officer, or higher authority.

A SilverTwin unit itself is composed of two vehicles: one car and one cycle. Both have the capability of being able to change from hover movement to ground movement. The speed limitations (see p. 30, Expanded Rules) are better than most racing vehicles. A look at the basic statistics below will reveal a greater turning speed, better acceleration, and a faster deceleration. Also noted under each vehicle description is a Vehicle Damage Modifier (VDM). When a SilverTwin vehicle has been fired upon, subtract the VDM from the dice roll before consulting the vehicle damage table on p. 32, Expanded Rules. This represents the armor quality and high-stress engineering which were incorporated into the SilverTwin project.

Talon (ground/hover car)

Speed:

Accel.: 90 m/turn Decel.: 45 m/turn
Top: 260 m/turn Turn: 85 m/turn

Cargo: 100 kg, 1 cubic meter
VDM: -5

Onboard systems:

- * Two turreted laser-rifle cannons: setting of 1-20 SEU/shot, 1d10 damage per SEU, range of a laser rifle
- * Grenade launch tube: 6-grenade magazine (usually 3 doze and 3 smoke), ranges of 0/30/55/120/235
- * Standard radiophone: compatible with Gemini helmet chronocom and most local radio channels
- * Albedo defensive screen: 3 SEU/minute, plus normal drain on hits
- * Inertia defensive screen: 3 SEU/hit, half damage done to Talon
- * Holo camouflage screen with feedback loop: 2 SEU/minute, normal (20% chance) of detection
- * Hostile environment seals: protective against water (no depth over 2 meters), poison gas, and all grenade smokes. It will also function as an oxygen tent, sustaining four persons for ten hours.
- * RENDER: computer system access and analysis panel
- * Public address system

Details:

A Talon, as mentioned above, can use either hover or ground movement, depending on the situation. The change

from one mode to another takes two turns (twelve seconds) of complete motionlessness.

Four crewmen ride inside a Talon under normal circumstances: a pilot (driver), copilot (weapons operator), coordinator (uses radiophone to coordinate actions between SilverTwin and other agencies or allies), and defender (uses RENDER to operate screens, monitor levels of ammunition, and perform damage control). The positions are listed according to where each person sits in the vehicle, moving clockwise from a left-handed driving seat. A Talon can carry two extra passengers (none of them Vrusks), though only with cramming.

The cargo storage space has a false bottom, beneath which is a hidden weapons cache containing 10 power belt-packs, 3 laser pistols, 2 spare grenade magazines, a disguise kit (for four people, two different identities each), survival rations for 6 (lasting one week), 10 sticks of tornadium D-19 with variable timers, a freeze field, and a water-pack. This is the normal equipment carried on a Talon, though additions or changes may be made in special circumstances.

Talon will, while on a stakeout or similar operation, usually have the holo screen either offer camouflage or the image of a normal car, depending upon the situation.

Claw (ground/hover cycle)

Speed:

Accel.: 110 m/turn Decel.: 45m/turn
Top: 270 m/turn Turn: 100 m/turn

Cargo: 20 kg, .5 cubic meters

VDM: -3

Onboard systems:

- * 2 laser barrels: 1-10 SEU discharge, range of a laser pistol
- * 4 heavy projectiles: do 5d10 structure points, range of an automatic pistol
- * Albedo defensive screen: 2 SEU/minute, plus normal drain on hits
- * Inertia defensive screen: 2 SEU/hit, half damage done to Claw personnel
- * Spur (coordination computer between Claw and Talon)

Details:

A Claw is a cross between a ground cycle and a hover cycle. The switch between modes can be made if the Claw is traveling over 60 m/turn or is at a standstill. It takes one turn of the pilot's actions to activate the change, during



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which time the Claw cannot fire (since the driver/pilot operates the sighting controls of the weapon systems) or turn more than 30 degrees in any direction. A Claw has a parattery type 2.

A small weapons cache is included, in which are 4 power beltpacks, 2 normal laser pistols, a disguise kit (for two people, for four different disguises each), a survival kit (rations for 20 people for one day, plus 1 liter of water, toxy-rad gauge, 2 all-weather blankets, compass, everflame, flashlight, and three holoflares), and 4 sticks of tornadium D-19 and a like amount of variable timers.

The survival kit is a standard model and can be purchased for 50 Cr. However, different companies have different ideas as to what a person needs to survive, and the price will vary according to the contents.

Twinsuit

A Twinsuit is a special combat uniform, made exclusively for the crew of the SilverTwin modules. They are fitted to the team members, with no chance of them being usable any other being. The methods of creating Twinsuits are kept completely secret. Each has a lock keyed to the brainwave patterns of its host, which cannot be duplicated, permitting only the person for which the suit was fitted to use it.

Twinsuit equipment:

- * Exoskeleton frame: normal operation (p. 48, Expanded Rules)
- * Anti-shock implant: on the team member, not a part of the suit
- * Built-in albedo and inertia armor: This very special armor is a unique weave of albedo and inertia fibers into a tight mesh suit. The specifications of this weave are kept highly secret.
- * Built-in holo screen: standard model
- * Gemini helmet: A specially designed helmet, with the following additions: chronocom, magnigoggles, a small infra-red jammer, and a vocal print distorter (VPD). The VPD will alter the wearer's voice beyond all possible chances for identification by voice print.
- * Laser/stunner: This pistol is a normal laser pistol with a sonic stunner attached. It takes one combat round to change the setting from laser to stunner or back. The stun setting will drain 2 SEU per shot.
- * Sonic sword: normal in all respects.
- * Four power beltpacks: normal in all respects.
- * Gas mask: normal in all respects, and fastened to the front of the Twinsuit.

Twintams

Because of the limited space for seating on the Talon and Claw vehicles, Vrusks could not be considered for membership on a Twinteam. However, Vrusks do make sizable contributions to the SilverTwin project, particularly in the area of design. Vrusks now make up nearly 45% of all SilverTwin technical crews. The Twintams identities are known only to the Star Law Security Council, the Planetary Council (if there is one), and the Planetary Officer.

A tight team feeling is highly stressed when developing a Twinteam. The chosen few will live together for more than two years after attaining Star Law Ranger rank, becoming accustomed to their partners. They live and train inside a special set of huge domes on Morgaine's World.

Players who wish to join a SilverTwin project must be Star Law Rangers (see DRAGON® issues #87 and 91). They then have the option of either joining a Twinteam missing a member or two, or beginning their own team (six people only). Those needing details on the Star Law ranking system should refer to Alex Curylo's article, 'Careers in Star Law,' in issue #91.

The following are the names, races, abilities, and skills of the first and foremost Twinteam, which operates inside Port Loren, Morgaine's World, Prenglar. These people made the SilverTwin project a success for Star Law. The referee will note that this Twinteam is very powerful; it has trained extensively for the benefits SilverTwin has to offer.

Blarg Dramiloud: Dralosite (STR/STA 61/85, DEX/RS 56/55, INT/LOG 69/83, PER/LDR 86/86, PS 4, IM 6). PSA: Technological. Technician 6, Computer 5, Robotics 5, Beam weapons 5, Melee 6. Talon pilot.

Yalik Califor: Female Yazirian (STR/STA 56/76, DEX/RS 65/60, INT/LOG 65/77, PER/LDR 81/81, PS 3, IM 6). PSA: Technological. Technician 5, Computer 5, Robotics 6, Beam weapons 5, Melee 6. Claw pilot.

Lucretia Xerxes: Female Human (STR/STA 57/71, DEX/RS 76/85, INT/LOG 63/71, PER/LDR 77/77, PS 3, IM 9). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 6, Projectile weapons 6, Computer 5, Melee 5, Martial arts 5, Demolitions 4. Talon copilot.

Garlib Rampous: Dralosite (STR/STA 60/84, DEX/RS 60/55, INT/LOG 64/74, PER/LDR 74/74, PS 3, IM 6). PSA: Biosocial. Beam weapons 5, Medic 6, Environmental 4, Melee 6, Psycho-social 4, Computer 2. Garlib works Spur, riding on the back of Claw.

Fraw Talm: Male Yazirian (STR/STA 65/70, DEX/RS 66/65, INT/LOG 71/69, PER/LDR 72/72, PS 4, IM 7). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 5, Melee 6, Computer 6, Technician 6, Martial Arts 4, Demolitions 4. Fraw operates RENDER from inside Talon.

Johnathon Killbear, Male Human (STR/STA 85/94, DEX/RS 69/63, INT/LOG 60/65, PER/LDR 71/71, PS 5, IM 7). PSA: Military. Beam weapons 5, Thrown weapons 5, Martial arts 5, Demolitions 5, Medic 6, Environmental 4. John coordinates Talon, Claw, and the local law force with a radiophone in the back of Talon.

A Twinteam member has all the legal power of a Star Law Ranger. All legal powers and restrictions are listed in DRAGON issue #91. Twinteam members will not, under any circumstances other than to save a life, break the law.

SilverTwin scenarios

It is readily apparent that SilverTwin is a powerful tool for the forces of planetary good. Numerous scenarios may be built around it, with the player characters either supporting, fighting against, or being a part of a Twinteam. The first encounter with a SilverTwin force should be in a large city, with the PCs watching from the sidelines as a SilverTwin force stops a major robbery or hijacking. PCs may help, though the Twinteam will prefer not to have civilians involved in their operations unless the situation is dire. The Twinteam will use all resources available (within legal limits), including calling in the local law enforcement agency and military forces if necessary.

SilverTwin is meant for adding more excitement to your STAR FRONTIERS® gaming. It represents the best that Star Law has to offer, and as such it requires special handling in adventure creation. The referee should carefully work out scenarios that will challenge Twinteam PCs, without making things entirely too easy for the team. After all, SilverTwin was created to fight a menace — and the more menacing, the better!

The Saurians

A new race for STAR FRONTIERS® campaigns

by Jeffrey Bouley

[The Saurians are presented here as an NPC race, though players may use them as player characters if the campaign referee so allows it. It is assumed that the Saurians are very rarely seen, so they have little overall impact on events in the Frontier. The Saurians' history may be altered to fit the circumstances of a particular campaign. — Editor]

The Saurians hail from the planet Kischen, an oceanic world many light-years from the Frontier. For a time they lived in peace, enjoying profitable trade with nearby races. Soon, however, the Sathar became aware of the Saurians and regarded them as both a threat and a challenge to be overcome.

The Sathar descended in waves on the unsuspecting planets, destroying whole populations in the process. The Saurians, unused to full-scale war, fought bravely against the worms, but to no avail. With their defenses decimated and racial destruction imminent, the Saurian governments prepared dozens of starships to transport hundreds of thousands of citizens on a large-scale exodus to new worlds. To save as many beings as possible, all of the starships were filled to capacity with passengers placed in stasis.

The majority of the computer-guided vessels were launched in the direction of the Frontier, although ships were sent out in many other directions. The Saurians had earlier intercepted radio signals from the Frontier that were part of a plan by the Pan-Galactic Corporation to contact other sentient races, in hopes of developing more interstellar trade. The Saurians did not send all of their ships in that direction, though, lest the signals prove to be a Sathar trick.

The main body of Saurian starships eventually entered the Theseus system and were boarded by alerted UPF vessels. Only a few thousand Saurians were brought out of stasis at first, until space could be found on other worlds on which they could settle. At present, two

hundred thousand Saurians now live and work throughout the Frontier, but nineteen Saurian starships (with over five hundred thousand colonists aboard, in stasis) remain in solar orbit at Theseus. Finding space for these beings is still a problem, though plans are underway to ship them to Lossend (Timeon).

Appearance and structure

Saurians are bipedal reptilian humanoids that stand **2.1** meters high. Each of them has two hands, each with three fingers and an opposable thumb. Each foot has four toes; feet, as well as hands, are webbed. Saurians have small scales, as per their reptilian ancestry, but they are warm-blooded as mammals are. Saurians are omnivorous and have rather flat teeth.

Being semi-aquatic creatures, Saurians feel at home both above and below water. As part of their aquatic adaptations, Saurians have a gill slit on each side of their throats which filter oxygen out of fresh and salt water. Saurians also possess underwater vision of exceptional quality.

Saurians still have certain physical defenses inherited from their prehistoric ancestors. One of these is the set of claws on fingers and toes. Although these claws have degenerated, they can still be used to some effect. When a Saurian uses its claws, consider the attack to have punching damage but add **1** hp extra damage. The tail can also be used as a weapon; it has a **-10** to hit any target, but it does **2d10 damage** on a strike.

The internal structure of a Saurian is similar to that of a Human, with the functions and positioning of a Saurian's organs approximating those of a Human's. The respiratory system is adapted for air and water breathing, and no Saurian organ corresponds to a Human appendix.

Saurian races

The Saurians evolved from a highly adaptive creature that Humans have called a land dragon. This creature was found in a variety of habitats on Kischen and developed into the four known races of Saurians: the Kavak, the Kamier, the Talsoi, and the Vanar.

The Kavak: These Saurians have green scales, a long tail, and a short, curved horn protruding from the top of their skulls. The horn varies in color from one Saurian to another, from white to green; it is light-colored at birth and darkens gradually as the Saurian grows older. This horn can be used as a weapon, causing **1d10** damage. However, for every **.1** meter by which the opponent is shorter than the Saurian, reduce the chance to hit by **5** (to a minimum of a **10%** chance).

The Kavak evolved from a grasslands-dwelling dragon that used the horn for defense and the green coloration for camouflage (allowing them to approach prey more easily).

The Kamier: While the other races of Saurians have small but visible scales, the Kamier have the appearance of smooth skin, their scales being visible only under magnification. Coloration is green to green-brown, and this variety of Saurian also sports a large crest of red or orange skin that runs from the **base** of the neck to the tip of the skull. The claws of the Kamier are more developed than those of the other Saurians, doing **+ 2** hp damage to punching damage, as opposed to the **1** hp damage cited above. In addition, the tail of a Kamier is covered with horny spikes which add **2** hp damage to tail attacks (**4-22** hp). Another unique feature of the Kamier is its snout, which is much shorter than those of the other races, being almost flat.

The Kamier evolved from a swamp-dwelling land dragon that had to contend with particularly dangerous swamp predators. The head crest, which resem-

bles a native marsh plant, was used to help the Kamier with concealment.

The Talsoi: A Talsoi has beige to dark brown scales, a heavy tail (+1 hp to tail damage), and a horny ridge running from its extended snout to the tip of the tail. They developed from the forest- and plains-dwelling land dragons, that used the coloration for camouflage to improve their hunting skills. Talsoi enjoy freshwater rivers, seas, and lakes.

The Vanar: Vanar are bright to dark green and have a very narrow, whiplike tail (1d10 + 1 hp damage). They are descendants of the land dragons that were native to the jungles and rain forests of Kischen. Vanar have thin limbs and are lighter than other sorts of Saurians.

Senses

Saurian senses are roughly equivalent to those possessed by Humans. They have a slightly more acute sense of vision and, as noted before, can see well underwater. Saurians do have a more acute sense of smell than humans, about equal to a Vrusk's.

Speech

Saurians are able to speak in the same manner as Humans, and many can communicate in Pan-Galactic, Human, and Yazirian languages with ease. Saurians tend to lisp, though their hissing voices are distinctly unlike those of the Sathar. When angered, Saurians hiss loudly and bare their teeth.

Society and customs

Saurians stress two beliefs above all others in their society: individuality and the freedom of choice. Saurians detest dictatorships and prefer very loosely structured governments, having an uncaring attitude for authority, though they will obey it if convinced it is for the common good. Their belief in self-reliance made it hard for the Saurians to accept the aid of the UPF at first, though they really had little other choice. Saurians in the Psycho-Social field will not hypnotize unwilling beings; only the most evil and vile of Saurians would do so.

Saurians have large extended families. Because their young develop so rapidly (reaching adult size in five years), "nuclear families" would be short-lived. Education and socialization of the young are handled within each clan, or *svik*, which may consist of hundreds of individuals living within the same general area. Saurians are interfertile despite



Kavak

Talsoi

their racial types, and a *svik* may have members of all four races within it. *Svika* may compete with each other over business or personal matters, but violent crime among them is almost unknown; they are too aware of their own near-extinction as a race from the Sathar's attacks.

Saurians are extremely touchy about comments regarding them as a species. Any insult against a single Saurian is easily taken as a slur against the race as a whole, even if the Saurian in question belongs to another *svik*. Saurians tend to be overprotective of their fellow clan members, even as they recognize the importance of standing on one's own two feet. This causes such stress for them that they will not willingly discuss it with someone of another species, such as a Human or Yazirian.

Saurians are something of a paradox to other races, as they are both gentle and kind as well as vengeful and brutal. Among friends and their *svik*, a Saurian is pleasant, cheerful, and absolutely loyal. But in the presence of a hated enemy such as the Sathar, a Saurian's rage and fury can be frightening (although Saurians do not receive any

bonuses for rage in combat). A wrong done to a Saurian will not be forgotten by any of them, and making amends can be difficult (or impossible, depending on the offense). Should the offending party make an appropriate apology, the Saurians will grudgingly accept it and continue with the business at hand — though forgetting about the incident will take months or years.

The horrifying losses that they took in their war with the Sathar have made Saurians a militant race. They tend to purchase large quantities of arms, and groups of them have expressed interests in creating their own military force, with which to raid Sathar bases and ships. Saurians hope to someday locate the Sathar homeworld and destroy it; they also wish to return to their old homeworld of Kischen and retake it from the Sathar. For cultural reasons, Saurians have a marked fondness for weapons that others see as archaic (swords, pole arms, crossbows, etc.).

Saurians have from three to four names. The first two are the common and *svik* names, comparable to a first and last name. If the Saurian performs an important deed, he or she may



Vanar

Kamier

receive an honorific to signify this accomplishment. The most important of all names, however, is the *tarish satimu* ("sacred name"). According to Saurian religious beliefs, the *tarish satimu* is a part of the owner's very soul. Only the individual Saurian and his *svik* will ever know the Saurian's sacred name. Should someone somehow discover a Saurian's *tarish satimu*, it is considered an insult of the most terrible kind, and the Saurian will try to regain his honor through a duel of some sort, often to the death. This practice has eroded under contact with the races of the Federation, though sacred names are still considered very important.

Attitudes

Saurians are respectful of the other races, but they particularly enjoy and are fascinated by Dralasites. They respect Vrusk for their drive, but find it hard to make friends with them; the Vrusk are too practical and structured. Saurians find Humans fairly easy to get along with.

Yazirians are another matter. Though Yazirians and Saurians are alike in cer-

tain social, political, and family matters, the Saurians find the former to be rude, insulting, and pushy. Fights between individuals of the two races have tended to turn into widespread brawls as clan members from either side are drawn into the conflict, and even in the short time that Saurians have been in the Frontier, several remarkable feuds have developed. When it happens that a Yazirian and a Saurian become friends, however, they become friends for life.

Saurians dislike S'sessu greatly (see DRAGON® issue #96), because of the latter's similarity to Sathar and amoral business practices. S'sessu dislike Saurians in turn. Other races are generally friendly toward the Saurians, despite their touchiness, but some Humans are slightly nervous around Saurians, particularly if they have an aversion to reptiles. This reaction is fortunately rare.

Special abilities

Because of their nervous structure, Saurians have a pronounced resistance to hypnotism or mind control of any

kind. A Saurian will receive a + 15 bonus in his favor to resist the control, depending on the exact nature of the mind-affecting power. In addition, a Saurian has a + 15 bonus to any roll enabling him to notice the control attempt (or to a normal Intuition roll if the noticing roll is not normally allowed). Note that if experience is used to increase this resistance, the bonus to notice the attempt will not automatically be increased (and vice-versa). Each ability must be given experience separately.

Miscellaneous information

Average size: 2.1 m tall
 Average mass: 100 kg (male), 90 kg (female)*
 Average lifespan: 240 years
 Reproduction: Heterosexual; oviparous
 Body temperature: 26°C

* – Vanar are 15 kg lighter.

Saurians have the following ability modifiers, regardless of sex and racial type.

STR/STA: + 10
 DEX/RS: -10
 INT/LOG: + 0
 PER/LDR: + 0

Saurians walk at 10 m/turn, run at 30 m/turn, and move at about 5 km/hour.

Racial reaction modifiers follow.

| race | reaction to Saurians | Saurians' reaction to race |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Human | -5 | 0 |
| Dralasite | 0 | +20 |
| Vrusk | 0 | 0 |
| Yazirian | -10* | -15* |
| S'sessu** | -5 | -20 |
| Zethra*** | 0 | -5 |

* – If favorable reaction is gained, discard the use of this modifier on future rolls regarding the individuals in question.

** – See DRAGON issue #96.

*** – See DRAGON issue #84.

Concluding notes

All Saurians encountered in the Frontier will be able to speak Pan-Galactic, since they were hypo-trained in its use after they were released from stasis. They were also taught some of the common cultural idiosyncracies and customs in order to integrate them into society.

Some Saurians have remained aboard their old starships, which are hull size 16-20, and are using them as transports in their own commercial dealings.

Tanks again!

More material on STAR FRONTIERS® vehicle weapons

by Alex Curylo

["Tanks a lot!" DRAGON® issue #99] proved to be one of the most popular STAR FRONTIERS articles we've run in a long time. Alex Curylo, the author of the piece, sent us a few corrections, clarifications, and bits of new material to add to the original article. These are given below. — Editor.]*

Corrections

The power econopack holds 250 SEU, as stated in the article, not 500 SEU (as stated on the charts under "Ammunition").

Mines from a minedropper weigh 5 kg apiece, not 25 kg as given on the charts under "Ammunition."

The heavy version of the guided missile weighs 45 kg, not 60 as given on the same chart.

Bombs cost 500 Cr (light) and 1000 Cr (heavy), not 50 and 100, respectively, as given on the ammo chart.

Clarifications

The vehicle MG only fires bursts of 20 bullets apiece. This could have been deduced from the charts (the vehicle MG has 400 rounds of ammo, but only 20 shots), but should have been stated explicitly.

Reading the descriptions of the sprayer, one gets the impression that one multipurpose sprayer fires smoke, oil, and paint. This is not so. Each type of sprayer is a separate weapon, but all are the same size and cost. Also note that sprayers on jetcopters and certain air vehicles will have their jets broken up by the rotor wash, making them ineffective at best.

The ranges given on the charts for cannons and howitzers are both for indirect fire. Both weapons can also be used in the direct-fire role; a cannon has the range of a vehicle rocket launcher, and a howitzer has the range of a vehicle recoilless rifle.

The programmed guided missile cannot be used to hit a moving target. It can

be aimed at where you think your target will be, but this subtracts two levels from the firer's GM skill.

Cyberlinked weapons all fire at the same time. Weapons not able to aim at the gunner's target will miss automatically, but still fire and use ammo.

Extensions

The dimensions given for oil and paint jets assume that the vehicle is traveling at its turn speed. If the referee wishes the extra work, he can assume that traveling slower widens and shortens the slick, and traveling faster extends and narrows it. No more than 50% alteration of either length or width should be allowed.

The question of applicable weapons skills was basically left untouched in the article. Obvious extensions of Expanded Rules weapons use the same skills as used for their smaller cousins. Cannons and howitzers use Projectile Weapons skill; if either is used as an indirect fire weapon, use the new Military skill of Indirect Fire. (This skill could also be used to fire mortars, rifle grenades, and other indirect-firing weapons.) Flamethrowers use Flame Weapons skill. Bombs use Dropped Weapons skill, which is applicable to anything dropped from a moving air vehicle. Sprayed weapons and minedroppers don't require a weapon skill; add 5% per Technician level of the driver to half of his DEX for an attack roll if these weapons are being aimed at a pursuer.

For greater consistency with these rules and official game rules, guided missiles should use skill-oriented rolls also. The wire-guided missile should then have a base chance to hit equal to the gunner's DEX, + 5% per level of Guided Missile skill. The programmed missile should have a base chance to hit of 35%, + 10% per level of Guided Missile skill. Note that absolutely no one without at least one level of Guided Missile skill has any chance at all to hit with these weapons.



Star Law Returns

A new look at a STAR FRONTIERS® agency

by Matt Bandy



Over the past year or so, Star Law has been the subject of much attention in the ARES™ Section. [See *DRAGON*® issues #87 and 91. – Editor] Some of these articles, however, seemed to sacrifice a bit of reality for the sake of playability. Star Law, as previously presented, is ideal for campaigns in which player characters are members of the organization, as PCs are granted more freedom of action as individual Rangers.

A law enforcement agency with the responsibilities of Star Law, managing an area the size of the Frontier, needs to be larger and more tightly organized. The Star Law agency presented here may be useful for campaigns in which player characters are not members of the force, so the lawmen of the Frontier serve as NPC encounters. Parts of this article may be incorporated into an ongoing STAR FRONTIERS® campaign as desired.

General information

Star Law was created during the First Sathar War as a counterintelligence agency, to check the Sathar espionage organization. After the war, when the Sathar retreated to lick their wounds, the number of enemy agents in the Frontier was reduced significantly; this left Star Law overstaffed. The United Planetary Federation (UPF) Security Council chose to take advantage of the situation by expanding the scope of Star Law's responsibilities to include the control of marauding pirate bands that had arisen in the Sathar's wake. At the present time, Star Law also intervenes in minor corporate skirmishes on occasion.

One of the provisions for membership in the UPF is that Star Law be allowed to carry out its duties on member planets and their territorial possessions without interference from their governments. It must, however, obtain warrants to search private property in situations not covered by the "hot pursuit" exception.

If the investigation of a suspected Sathar agent, escaped convict, or other

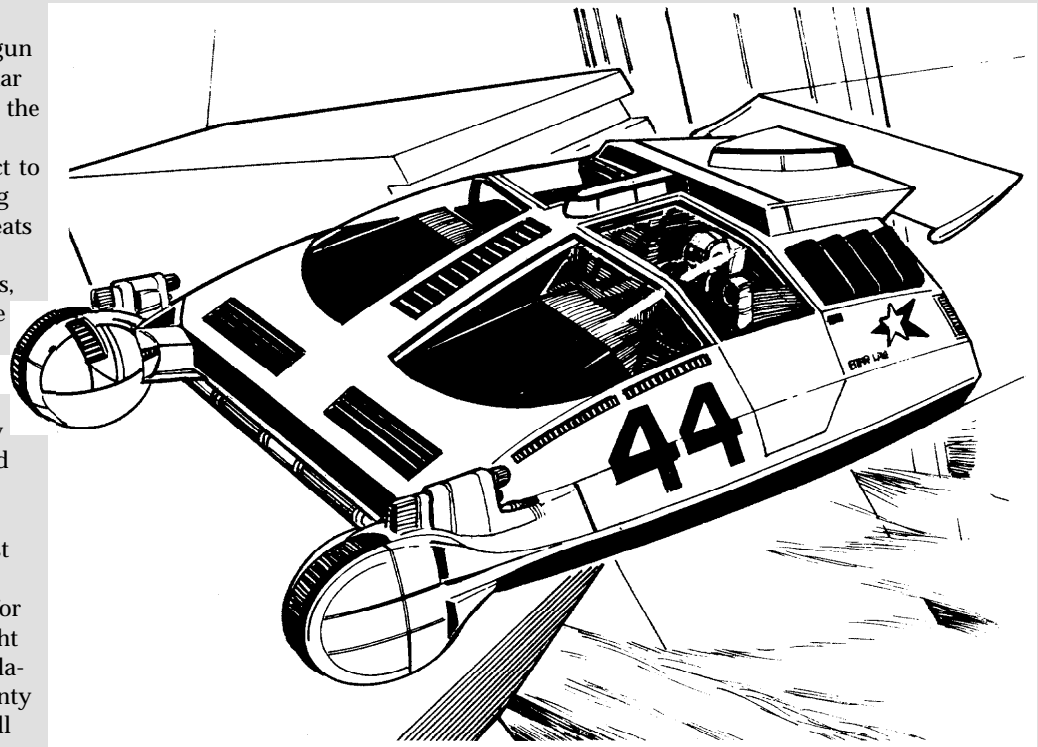
lawbreaker threatens to turn into a gun battle in a densely populated area, Star Lawmen are trained not to fire upon the suspect if there are innocent beings about. Agents must follow the suspect to a deserted area or arrange for getting innocents out of the line of fire. Threats against fugitives (in hopes of making them surrender) are generally useless, as most lawbreakers are aware of the limitations placed upon Star Law personnel by the regulations of their organization.

Freelance law enforcement (bounty hunting), without proper training and licensing, is not encouraged by Star Law. To obtain a bounty hunter's license, a character must have at least one 4th-level ranged-weapons skill. Bounties are almost never awarded for dead bodies; suspects must be brought to the proper authorities alive and relatively unharmed. Anyone with a bounty hunter's license may obtain a list of all beings wanted by Star Law and the rewards offered for their capture. Bounties are set by the referee.

The rarity of treason cases recorded within Star Law is due to the intense screening of Academy applicants. Any disobedience of orders is dealt with swiftly. Severe disobedience results in the offending party being relieved of duty and court martialed (the results of which are decided by the referee).

The Star Law Academy, located on Morgaine's World, offers one of the best educational programs in the Frontier Sector. In order to apply for admission, a being must complete a series of forms at a local Administrative-branch office and pass a personality check. The applicant must also have four ability traits higher than his or her racial average, and must never have been convicted of a criminal act. The applicant will be notified within two months of acceptance or rejection by the Academy, and must provide his own transportation there if accepted.

Once at the Academy, the being must select a PSA, if he hasn't already done so, and make a Logic check. Failure to make the check indicates that the being has washed out of the Academy. After four years of study, the cadet gains one 1st-level spaceship-related skill, one 2nd-level skill within his PSA, and one other 1st-level skill. All skills required in order to possess the spaceship-related skill chosen are also granted. After graduation, the being emerges at the lowest rank of his chosen branch, and is then posted on a planet of the referee's choice.



Organization

Star Law is split into four branches: Administrative, Penal Intelligence, and Special Forces. Each has its own responsibilities integral to the workings of the agency.

Administration coordinates the other branches of Star Law, organizes the information given over by them and by other law enforcement agencies, and recruits and trains agents in the Academy. Most Star Law offices which are open to the public are Administrative in nature; the whereabouts of other bases are generally kept out of public view.

The rank structure within the Administrative division is fairly simple. The Coordinator is in charge of the workings of the branch. It is not necessary to go into depth about the ranks within this branch, as PCs will not become heavily involved with it on most occasions. Some of the more important and most often encountered ranks are given below.

| <i>rank</i> | <i>xp needed</i> | <i>pay (Cr/day)</i> |
|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Coordinator | 300 | 350 |
| Department head | 150 | 150 |
| Data processor | 0 | 100 |
| Computer operator | 0 | 80 |
| Radio operator | 0 | 60 |
| Secretary | 0 | 40 |

The Coordinator, as the head of the Star Law organization, answers to no

one but the UPF Security Council. There are three department heads within the Administrative branch, one for each of the other three Star Law branches. Each person reviews all ingoing and outgoing information of major importance, and personally handles all internal directives for his branch.

Data processors sort relevant information from irrelevant material. Any data deemed to be of importance is entered into the Administrative information pool. Computer operators are responsible for entering this data into computer systems and later retrieving it for persons who request it and possess the proper security clearance. Radio operators communicate with personnel on a particular planet or planets, taking information from them and giving orders to them; as no interstellar radio exists, radio operators (using the term "radio" loosely, to include other forms of electromagnetic communication as well) are grouped by planet, as are many computer operators. Secretaries, of course, are responsible for compiling appropriate reports, maintaining correspondence, filling out purchase orders and requisition sheets, and running accounting and payroll.

The **Penal** branch oversees the punishment of beings convicted of major felonies by UPF-member planets, through their judiciary systems. Only certain major felonies, such as mass murder, major arson, interstellar piracy, mass counterfeiting, espionage for unfriendly powers (such as the Sathar or Mechanons), nuclear or biochemical

extortion, kidnapping which involves murder, major industrial espionage (classed as a felony due to the widespread influence of corporations in the Frontier), treason, spacecraft or metropolitan sabotage with loss of life, assassination of law enforcement or government officials, and the like, are considered here. Sentences are rarely commuted after conviction, except in extraordinary circumstances, and parole is virtually unknown. It must be demonstrated that rehabilitation is not possible for the criminal in question. If death is the penalty for a crime, the prisoner is executed on the world where he was tried and convicted, and is not shipped to a penal colony. Sentences for penal colony inmates range from a minimum of 5 years to life.

Penal colonies are established by Star Law on uninhabited or sparsely populated worlds. The perimeter of a penal colony is lined with guard towers which project an energized field between them. This barrier is powerful enough to stun anyone touching it into unconsciousness, and it will disrupt the electrical field of any vehicle passing through it, causing the vehicle to stop (or crash, if it was in flight). Each tower (standing about 100-200 meters apart) is heavily equipped with laser weapons to discourage attempts by pirates and criminal gangs with starships or air cars to free prisoners. The guards themselves are heavily armed, and the entire compound is kept lit by ground and air light systems. It isn't uncommon to have a small town spring up a few kilometers from the prison, housing the prison officers and their families as well as all support personnel. A small military base, funded by a local government, may also be present.

The ranks and pay scales of penal officers follows.

| <i>rank</i> | <i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i> | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Coordinator | 350 | 300 |
| Senior Warden | 250 | 250 |
| Junior Warden | 150 | 150 |
| Guard | 0 | 150 |

The Coordinator is the top authority in the Penal branch of Star Law. A Senior Warden directs the activities at each of the penal colonies. Each Senior Warden is assisted by a number of Junior Wardens, each of whom supervises the staff and operations at a guard tower. Each tower has 2-4 guards. Academy graduates in the Penal branch of Star Law begin their tours of duty as guards.

Each penal colony has a reserve staff of 10-20 guards to replace those on leave or who are injured. Unit guards perform administrative duties when not serving directly as guards. The guards themselves are rotated from active (tower) duty to reserve (desk) duty once every 30-60 days.

In order to become a guard, one must graduate from the Academy with one technical skill and one ranged-weapons skill. To attain the status of a Junior Warden, a guard must acquire a 4th-level skill as a technician, for a Junior Warden pilots the air car assigned to his guard tower.

The Intelligence branch of Star Law is concerned with the gathering of information for the purpose of sniffing out Sathar agents (and other unfriendly spies). On occasions, the information is useful in preventing unwanted occurrences like a corporate war or smuggling operation. The ranks in the Intelligence branch of Star Law are as follows:

| <i>rank</i> | <i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i> | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Coordinator | 300 | 300 |
| Deep-cover agents | 150 | 200 |
| Agents | 0 | 150 |

The Coordinator runs the Intelligence branch of Star Law and answers only to the Administrative Coordinator and the UPF Security Council. Deep-cover agents are those who have been hypno-trained to know all there is to know about the organization that they are infiltrating, so they quickly arise to positions of authority. They may spend years developing their cover and will be reluctant to jeopardize their missions.

An agent is a generic operative of the Intelligence branch and must have a 2nd-level skill as a computer operator. In the course of normal duties, an agent may be called upon to perform a breaking-and-entering mission or interrogate prisoners.

Star Law is believed to have several deep-cover agents in every major organization in the Frontier, though it has been estimated that only 200 such agents exist in all. Typically, the number of agents is related to the population level of a world, though in systems such as Outer Reach, the number is proportionately higher.

The Special Forces is the largest branch of Star Law, and is responsible for nullifying the activities of pirate bands in the Frontier Sector. Ranks for Special Forces are as follows:

| <i>rank</i> | <i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i> | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| Coordinator | 400 | 300 |
| Marshall | 300 | 260 |
| Captain | 200 | 220 |
| Lieutenant | 150 | 180 |
| Sergeant | 75 | 140 |
| Trooper | 0 | 100 |

The Coordinator is the Supreme Commander of the Special Forces branch. Thirteen marshalls are in existence, each commanding two captains. A captain is in charge of two lieutenants; each lieutenants are in charge of two sergeants, and each sergeant is in charge of five Troopers (fresh from the Academy). The term "Ranger" is a generic designation for all Star Law personnel in Special Forces.

Special Forces uniforms are gray skeinsuits with blue marking to denote rank and deployment; dress uniforms are dark blue with red markings. Typical armament for a Ranger includes a laser pistol, a stunstick, and a belt pack with two power clips each. Extra weaponry is assigned to the Rangers as befits individual missions. Rangers are organized into strike forces, battalions, squads, and units, as follows:

| <i>force</i> | <i>commander</i> | <i>assigned spacecraft</i> |
|------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| Strike Force Battalion | Marshall | 2 frigates |
| Squad | Captain | 1 frigate |
| | Lieutenant | 2 assault scouts |
| Unit | Sergeant | 1 assault scout |

Planets are assigned different organizational groups depending upon their needs and populations. An outpost world might receive only one unit, while a moderately populated world might host a battalion. About 50 personnel are assigned to Morgaine's World as staff and security elements for Star Law Academy.

A unit must include at least one Ranger with each of the spaceship skills. All Special Forces personnel must be accomplished in at least one technical and one military skill area.

Equipment assigned to planetary stations includes one vehicle, usually an aircar fitted with a heavy weapon, a small arsenal, and a spacecraft. Other equipment, such as toolkits, are supplied to each individual Ranger.

These variations on the Star Law organization are offered as an aid to game play, and may be altered as desired. Hopefully, they will serve as an alternative or supplement to the previous articles on the subject.

Expanding the Frontier

Exploring new worlds in the STAR FRONTIERS® universe



by William Tracy

One of the most exciting challenges in the STAR FRONTIERS® game comes with the exploration of an uncharted planet, facing dozens of unexpected dangers. This can be a great source of adventure, and there is a chance that the characters will make a pretty good profit – if they survive.

Of course, the characters will need a

spaceship to get to the planet. If they don't own one, there are still some ways to get one legally. The PCs might buy or get a starship on loan, if they have enough money. If they don't, their financial backers will purchase or rent a ship for them. In any case, if a starship is rented, all characters concerned will be required to accept a tracer implant (p. 41, Knight Hawks Campaign Book). The procedure for renting a spaceship

getting a financial backing is the same as that for getting a loan (pp. 40-42, Campaign Book).

An expedition team to an unexplored planet must contain at least one character who has Environmental skills. But if the characters are financially backed by someone else, the character with Environmental skills must have a skill level of at least 4, or the backer will refuse to finance the expedition. If this happens,

the characters will have to employ an NPC with the proper qualifications, who should then receive an equal share in the profits.

Financial backing

It takes a relatively large amount of money to finance such an expedition. If the characters are not able to support such an expedition themselves, they can be financed by a corporation, government, or a group of private citizens. The *Eleanor Moraes* (from the "Beyond the Frontier" module series, SFKH 2 through SFKH 4) was financed by the United Planetary Federation, with a little megacorporation assistance.

If the characters have their own ship, they still might want to find a backer who can pay for the special equipment needed to explore a planet. The backer can also pay for any special modifications to the characters' ship that are needed to explore planets. A backer always requires that the characters accept a tracer implant.

Characters will often be granted funds for exploration work by a megacorporation. Corporations are usually on the lookout for planets with valuable commodities, such as mineral ores, new types of drugs or food delicacies, or habitable land. Of all the corporations, the Cassidine Development Company backs the largest number of expeditions to unexplored planets, since this is the company's specialty and main source of income. Pan-Galactic Corporation also sponsors a number of trans-Frontier expeditions to new worlds, and a generally friendly rivalry has developed between agents of the two companies.

The UPF, as noted in module SFKH 2, has become more aggressive about exploring newly-discovered planets since the Sathar Wars. Worlds with colonization potential and those with potential (or existing) Sathar bases are of special concern. The Planetary Survey Administration was created to govern the exploration of such new worlds, but the PSA is rumored to have been infiltrated by agents of PGC and CDC, who funnel off selected information for use by their megacorporations.

Planetary governments, eager for colonies which can supply them with new resources (as was Pale in "The Volturnus Connection," in DRAGON® issue #98), also finance certain exploration missions. However, such missions are almost always crewed by members of that world's space navy and armed forces, and are considered to be exten-

sions of the government's space fleet.

Sometimes a group of private citizens might back an expedition. They are generally interested in establishing a special political, religious, or anti-establishment colony with their pooled resources, and hire the characters to find a suitable planet for them. Such groups are usually called "pilgrims."

Joining an expedition

Sometimes characters are hired by a ship captain who needs a crew for a planetary expedition. They are promised an equal share in the profits. Unfortunately, this does not happen often. The competition is tough to win a berth on such an expedition, since such trips have been known to enable a character to permanently retire on his earnings. A character must have at least one skill level of 4 before he or she can even be considered for the position.

The type of ship used for such expeditions are called exploration ships (p. 8, Campaign Book). Occasionally different types of ships are used; the *Eleanor Moraes* was a modified exploration ship that resembled an assault scout ship. Referees may invent new starships and deck plans as they desire.

A variety of special exploration equipment can be found on pp. 21-22, in the Campaign Book. Some of this equipment can be rented, but some of it (like atmoprobos) must be purchased outright, as they are one-use-only devices. Any rental equipment that is destroyed must be paid for by the characters, unless prior arrangements are made by the persons backing the expedition. Anyone renting equipment must accept a tracer implant, if the equipment costs more than 100,000 Cr.

To explore a star system and its planets efficiently, three new pieces of equipment need to be introduced. These new items are the Radar Mapper (RM), the Planetary Scanning System (PSS), and a special Planetary and Star System Exploration (PSSE) computer program.

The RM package contains both a special attachment for a ship's radar system and a special computer program. The whole package costs 15,000 Cr., and it cannot be rented. The computer program is considered to be level 2 and takes up 12 function points. The RM package produces an accurate relief map of a planet's surface, using the ship's computer and special program. It takes $1d10 + 5$ GST days to produce this map while the ship orbits a given

world. Pilot expertise may speed things along; subtract the pilot's skill rating from the number of days needed to make the map. It always takes a minimum of three days of checking and rechecking to map a world accurately.

The PSS package consists of a special sensor attached to the outside of the ship's hull and a special computer program. The sensor itself is too small to affect a ship's ADF or MR. The computer program is level 3 and takes up 25 function points. The whole package costs 50,000 Cr., and it cannot be rented. Like the MR system, the PSS is used while the ship is in orbit.

The sensor scans and photographs the planet, feeding the data into the computer. The special computer program uses the data to forecast the planet's climate and general weather patterns, and to pinpoint areas where one is likely to find deposits of mineral ore. Colonization sites may be located, and evidence of existing civilizations may be found. Natural hazards, such as volcanoes, fault lines, geysers, swamps, waterfalls, landslide zones, and so forth may also be detected. Energy sources such as natural radioactive ores and artificial power stations may be found, too.

To find out how many days of orbiting it takes to get a complete scan of the planet, roll $2d10 + 8$. This roll cannot be reduced by the pilot's skill level, as bad weather (obscuring details of the ground) is beyond his control.

The Planetary and Star System Exploration (PSSE) computer program is considered to be level 3 and takes up 35 function points. This special program data-links the computer to all the equipment used to explore and classify star systems and their planets. This includes the geoscanners, vaporscanners, bioscanners, the RM and PSS components, atmoprobos, laboratory equipment, landing drones, remote probes, energy sensors, and any special information typed in by the characters. The program correlates all the data from these sources and organizes it into a hard-copy Star System and Planetary File. The characters must have this information for ground exploration they perform.

Exploration procedure

Upon entering a new system, an exploration team follows a general basic procedure. Each planet in the system is orbited long enough for the Planetary Scanner System and the Radar Mapper to do a complete job. Atmoprobos are

then launched at each planet, and other standard observations are made.

Meanwhile, the pilot and astrogator make navigational observations and feed them into the computer. This includes information such as the jump program to the system, descriptions of the astronomical bodies in the system, and the stellar type and nature of background radiation (as it applies to communications and radio interference) — in other words, all the astronomical information that an astrogator and pilot need to travel to and through this system.

Any planets indicated by scanning that are capable of supporting life must be explored further by a landing party. Remember that only ships with a hull size of 3 or less can land on a planet with an atmosphere. If an exploration ship is not able to land on a planet, the characters must use a shuttle or lifeboat to descend, or they must use landing drones or remote probes to explore the planet's surface.

The expedition's environmentalist must land on several different regions of the planet so that a total view of the planet's eco-system can be obtained. To find out the number of different regions the character must visit, roll 2d10 and subtract the skill level of the chief environmentalist. At least two different regions must be visited. To find out if the character has successfully analyzed the ecosystem in each region, see pp. 15-16 of the STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Rules Book. Be sure to add all the bonuses due to mechanical aid, especially if the character has a laboratory.

If the planet has a previously undiscovered intelligent species living on it, the PCs have their work cut out for them. They are responsible for making first contact (and making sure the contact is peaceful and positive), and their actions could literally make or break all future contact with that culture. The UPF emphasizes to its research crews that one thing the Frontier *doesn't* need is another enemy race like the Sathar to fight. Megacorporations emphasize the loss in profits taken when a potential customer and ally turns into a threat.

A character with a Psycho-Social skill of at least 4th level is required to study the species adequately. The character must study the species for 10d10 days to develop a first impression of the race and to establish minimal contact with them, if such is desired. At the end of the time period, the character must roll his Logic score or less. If he succeeds, the character is able to give a complete

description of the race, including all relevant customs and superstitions. If he fails, he has the impression that he hasn't missed anything important, but (of course) at least one thing of critical and vital importance might have escaped his notice (e.g., Dralasites are spitting images of the local beings' most beloved deity, and all Humans appear to be "demons" from ancient mythology, bent on destroying the world).

After receiving all the data, the computer prints a complete System Brief, Alien Creature Update File, Alien Culture Background Reports, and maps of the planet. An incomplete report results in a deduction in the character's profits, as well as possibly causing terrible problems later on for other research crews.

Planetary types

The variety of planetary types is endless, but very few planets are capable of supporting carbon-based life-forms. Of course, planets unable to support carbon-based life might support a new type of life form, such as silicon- or fluorine-based life. On such strange planets, the characters may have to wear spacesuits in order to survive. Even if a planet isn't habitable, it might still have large deposits of valuable ores which can be mined by enclosed colonies or by robots.

Planets that can support carbon-based life-forms possess many types of terrain. Occasionally, a planet is discovered that is almost completely covered by one type of terrain, such as water, desert, swamp, forest, or jungle, but this is very rarely seen. Referees should map out these new worlds before the PCs arrive, and should have detailed descriptions of each planet's particular features. Global maps may be patterned after those used for Alcazzar in SF 4, *Mission to Alcazzar*. More detailed surface maps may be generated of particular features that the referee believes the PCs may want to investigate (such as alien ruins).

The peculiar nature of each planet dictates the sort of special equipment needed by exploratory crews. High-gravity worlds require the use of exoskeleton suits; all-water worlds obviously require scuba gear or the like. Certain other pieces of equipment may need modification, as desired by the referee.

Hazards of exploration

Many dangers face the explorers on strange planets. Characters have to deal

with carnivorous or annoying animal and plant life, geophysical disasters (volcanoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.), astrophysical disasters (solar flares, meteorite strikes, radiation increases from various sources, etc.), and even new alien races and cultures. The planet might already be inhabited by Sathar and their agents, or it might be used as a base by pirates, Mechanons, Zuraqqor, or other unfriendly forces. Crews can mutiny, equipment can break down, and ships and vehicles can run out of fuel or spare parts.

Even after leaving the planet, the characters might still face unusual threats. Their financial backer might try to get rid of them after getting their report. A rival of the characters' backer might try to bribe or steal the report from the characters. If the characters try to hold an open auction, any of the participants might try to steal the report. If the characters attempt to cheat their backer, a price may be put on their heads. (Remember the tracer implant?)

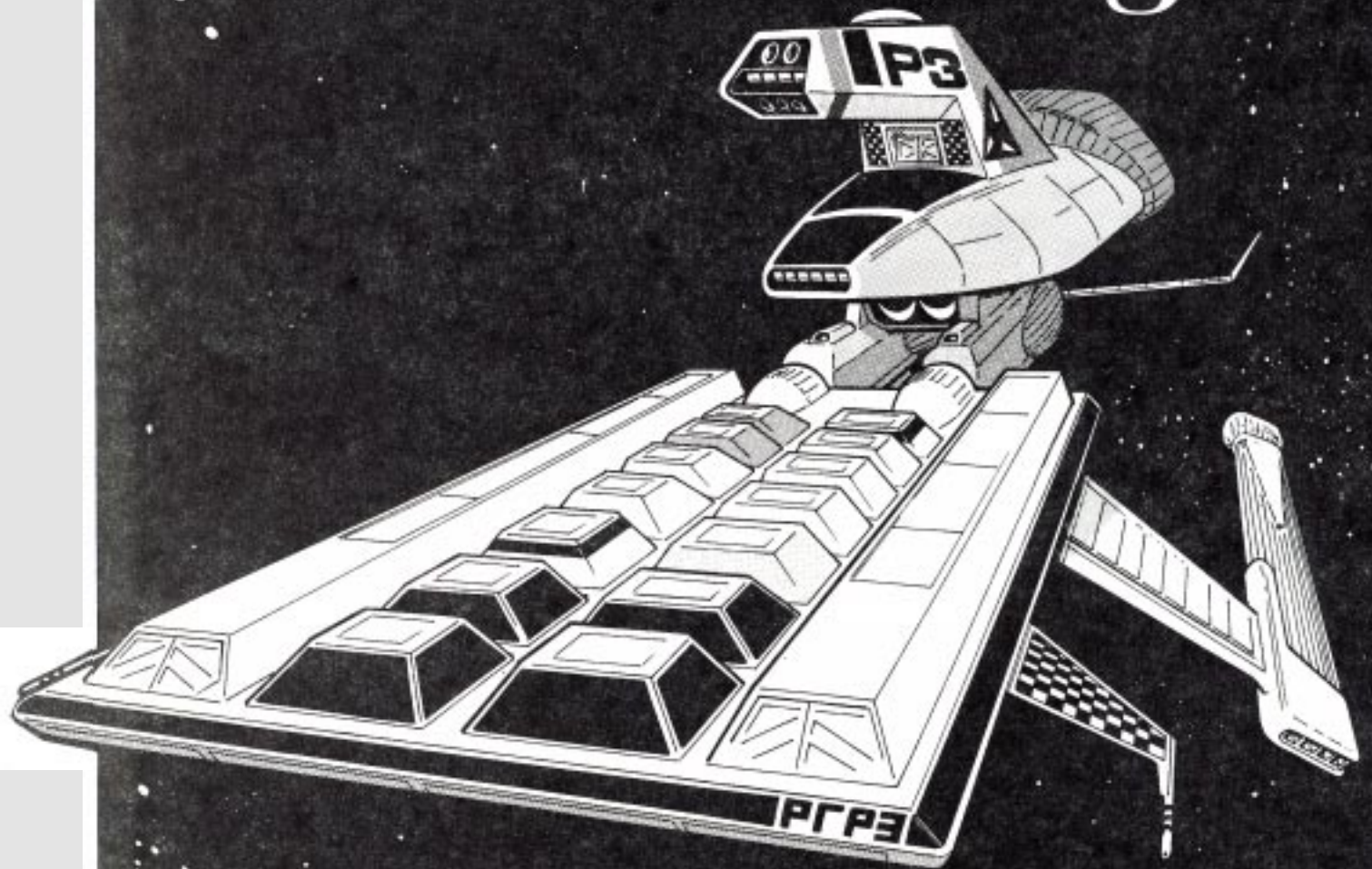
Rewards and pay

The final payment for a System Report, including the coordinates and the calculations for the jump route to the world, varies a great deal. There is no set formula for figuring out the price because of a variety of factors. On the average, a complete System Report (noting the location of valuable ore deposits and a habitable planet) goes for 250,000 Cr.

This sum can be modified according to the situation, due to a variety of factors. The amount of valuable ores that can be safely mined, the presence of pirates, Sathar, or other hostile races in the system, the completeness of the report, and the presence of dangerous life forms (of the unintelligent sort, including bacteria and viruses) that would inhibit colonization are all taken into consideration.

If the characters hold an open auction for the report, they can usually get a 1-10% increase in the price. If the characters work for the Cassidine Development Corporation, add 15% to the character's final profit. Future sources of income from the report might even include being hired to transport equipment and people to the new planet. And if the characters gain a monopoly on transport to the world, they may be able to set themselves up for life.

"Tote that barge!"



A short guide to interstellar economics

by Matt Bandy

In the futuristic and business-oriented society of the Frontier Sector, trade is essential, and freighters, being the instruments of trade, are very important. Freighters are the Frontier's answer to the middleman of modern society, buying goods in one star system and transporting them to another for resale.

The life of a freighter captain is a gamble: he either becomes very wealthy or very bankrupt. A good captain can predict price swings in a star system's economy and use that knowledge to further his own ends.

The rules regarding the purchase and resale of cargo in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks rules are well-conceived, but fail to take into account the laws of supply and demand and all the factors that influence it. This article attempts to

revise the existing system to consider supply and demand, and at the same time to provide a framework upon which an individual referee may construct the intricate interplanetary economics of his campaign.

Supply and demand

Supply and demand is simply a comparison between the available supply of a certain material object with the consumer's need or desire for it. Whenever the supply of a substance exceeds the demand for the same, the market is glutted and prices of the material plummet. The opposite is true when demand exceeds supply. If a shortage of said substance occurs, a bidding war begins and prices rise.

In many ways, freighter captains resemble players of the stock market. They purchase items at a low price and

transport them to a location where prices are high, making a hefty profit in the process. Often, many freighter captains will begin buying low-priced materials simultaneously, creating an increase in demand and subsequent price rise. In this way, freighters aid the economy of the Frontier by saving many small companies which could have become bankrupt had the glut lasted much longer. On the other side of the coin, freighters occasionally converge on a high-price center and begin selling, glutting the market. Most freighter captains are experienced enough either to arrive at the center before the glut occurs or to anticipate the effects of a glut on other planetary economies, predicting the resulting price changes. By these methods, freighters have an equalizing effect on the economy of the Frontier, causing economic fluctuations to be short-lived.

A glut usually results in a 2-40% (2d10) price decrease and a shortage in a 2-40% price rise. Both phenomena last only a short while, returning 1-10 percentage points toward the base price every day. The base price is listed in the STAR FRONTIERS rules. The point of departure price in the Knight Hawks rules is the base price for bulk loads.

The direct results of an excess of supply or demand on local economies are fairly obvious, but what about the economies of those planets that purchase from the victim of a shortage? (Gluts do not effect prices of the afflicted planet.)

If an industry were forced to pay a high price to obtain raw materials, would not the finished product price be raised to cover the companies' initial purchase of raw materials? An agricultural shortage could result in inflated food prices, which in turn could force unions to demand cost of living raises from their employers, who could raise the prices of their products to cover the raises they had given their workers. Inflation along this line is often irreversible. To prevent it from occurring, governments of agricultural planets buy up most of the surplus crops and then sell them when a

food shortage exists. This way, they also prevent agricultural gluts and shortages from developing.

Import and export

When a glut or a shortage occurs, it is essential to know what and to where the victim exports in order to determine the effect these events have on the economies of other planets and solar systems. The web of export-import connections along major shipping lanes is illustrated in the following table.

Import table

| Planet | Imports | Origin | Planet | Imports | Origin |
|---------------|---------------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| Hentz | 15% agricultural products | Hakosoar | Zik-kit | 20% industrial products | Kdikit |
| | 50% agricultural products | Yast | Kdikit | 70% raw materials | Gollywog |
| | 90% raw materials | Hargut | Gran Quivera | 60% raw materials | Gollywog |
| Yast | 90% industrial products | Hentz | Morgaine's World | 50% agricultural products | Ken'zah Kit |
| Rupert's Hole | 85% raw materials | Outer Reach | | 100% industrial products | Gran Quivera |
| Triad | 25% agricultural products | Rupert's Hole | | 50% agricultural products | Ken'zah Kit |
| | 25% agricultural products | Kdikit | Hristan | 60% industrial products | Hakosoar |
| | 40% agricultural products | Inner Reach | Hakosoar | 40% raw materials | Hargut |
| | 75% raw materials | Outer Reach | Minotaur | 75% raw materials | Gollywog |
| Laco | 95% industrial products | Gran Quivera | Lossend | 20% agricultural products | Kdikit |
| Inner Reach | 85% raw materials | Outer Reach | | 10% agricultural products | Kdikit |
| Outer Reach | 95% agricultural products | Inner Reach | Pale | 30% raw materials | Gollywog |
| Groth | 90% industrial products | Terledrom | New Pale | 90% agricultural products | New Pale |
| Terledrom | 20% agricultural products | Groth | Gollywog | 85% industrial products | Pale |
| | 75% raw materials | Zik-kit | | 40% industrial products | Minotaur |
| Hargut | 30% agricultural products | Hakosoar | | 20% industrial products | Lossend |
| | 30% industrial products | Gran Quivera | | 10% industrial products | Triad |
| | 30% industrial products | Hentz | | 30% agricultural products | Kdikit |
| | 15% agricultural products | PGC Ag Ships | | 10% agricultural products | Ken'zah Kit |
| Ken'zah Kit | 70% industrial products | Zik-kit | | | |

These percentages assist the referee in determining the result of a shortage or a glut on his campaign's economics. For instance, if accelerated pirate activities exist in the White Light system, a smaller than usual amount of raw materials will be processed and shipped resulting in a shortage. This shortage will in turn cause a price increase of

35% (shown by die roll) on all raw materials exported by Gollywog. The recipients of these materials are revealed to be Lossend, Minotaur, Gran Quivera, and Kdikit by a quick glance at the Imports Table.

Lossend imports 30% of its raw materials from Gollywog. This means that 30% of its total raw materials stock is

increased in price by 35%. 30% x 35% equals a 10.5% (rounded off to 11%) net cost increase on all incoming goods. To make up for this cost increase, industries on Lossend increase the price of other products by 11%. This cost increase affects Gollywog in turn because it imports 20% of its industrial products from Lossend.

Minotaur imports 75% of its raw materials from Gollywog. The shortage results in a 26% ($75\% \times 35\% = 26.5\%$, rounded off to 26%) net price increase, which in turn affects Minotaur's industrial prices. This price increase affects Gollywog, which imports 40% of its industrial products from Minotaur.

Gran Quivera imports 60% of its raw materials from Gollywog, so the shortage results in a 21% ($60\% \times 35\% = 21\%$) net cost increase on its raw materials. This cost increase would be passed on in varying degrees to Laco, Morgain's World, and Hargut.

Kdikit is handled in a similar manner. Due to strict price controls imposed by the UPF, prices on all domestic goods do not rise to match those of imports.

Economic fluctuation types

Random economic fluctuation generation and the random determination of victim planets are accomplished through the use of the following tables.

Economic fluctuation table

d100 event

- 01-40 no event
- 41-55 industrial glut
- 56-70 resource glut
- 71-85 industrial shortage
- 86-00 resource shortage

Roll on the Economic fluctuation table once every 20 days. Once the type of fluctuation is determined, roll on the appropriate planetary table.

The referee may find it useful to decide upon the cause of a specific fluctuation. This makes the game more enjoyable to players traveling in or through the affected solar system. A detailed example follows.

Day 1: A roll of 63 on the Economic Fluctuation Table indicates a resource shortage on the planet of Hargut (selected by a d100 roll on the Resource Planetary Table). A price increase of

Industrial planetary table

d100 planet

- 01-08 Hentz
- 09-16 Rupert's Hole
- 17-25 Triad
- 26-33 Inner Reach
- 34-42 Outer Reach
- 43-50 Terledrom
- 51-58 Zik-kit
- 59-66 Kdikit
- 67-74 Gran Quivera
- 75-82 Hakosoar
- 83-90 Minotaur
- 91-95 Lossend
- 98-00 Pale

Resource planetary table

d100 planet

- 01-20 Outer Reach
- 21-40 Hargut
- 41-60 Zik-kit
- 61-80 Pale
- 81-00 Gollywog

21% (2d20 roll) results on all raw materials on Hargut.

Day 2: The 21% price increase reaches the planets of Hentz and Hakosoar. Hentz imports 90% of its raw materials from Hargut, so 90% of its raw materials are increased in price by 21%. This results in a 19% ($90\% \times 21\% = 18.9\%$, rounded off to 19%) net cost increase on all raw materials on Hentz. The planet's industries are forced to raise their prices by that amount to cover their purchase of raw materials and retain the same profit margin. Hakosoar imports 40% of its raw materials from Hargut, so a net cost increase of 8% ($40\% \times 21\% = 8.4\%$, rounded off to 8%) results on all raw materials bought or sold on the planet. This forces its industries to raise the prices of their finished goods by a similar percentage.

The initial cost increase of 21% on Hargut is reduced to 14% ($21\% - 7\%$, the result of a d10 roll).

Day 3: Yast and Hargut (surprise, surprise!) receive industrial price increases from Hentz. Yast imports 60% of its industrial products from Hentz, so a net price increase of 11% ($60\% \times 19\% = 11.4\%$, rounded off to 11%) falls upon all industrial products on the planet. Hargut, the one that started it all, imports 30% of its industrial goods from Hentz, so a 6% ($30\% \times 19\% = 5.7\%$, rounded off to 6%) net cost increase on this type of product results.

Hristan imports 60% of its industrial goods from Hakosoar, so a net cost increase of 5% ($60\% \times 8\% = 4.8\%$, rounded off to 5%) results on that type of goods on the planet. The inflation on Hentz and Hakosoar is reduced to 13% ($90\% \times 14\% = 12.6\%$) and 6% ($40\% \times 14\% = 5.6\%$), respectively, as the reduction of the price variation reaches them. The raw materials cost on Hargut is reduced by another 9% to only 5%.

Day 4: The inflation on industrial prices on Yast, Hargut, and Hristan is reduced to 8% ($60\% \times 13\% = 7.8\%$), 4% ($30\% \times 13\% = 3.9\%$), and 4% ($60\% \times 6\% = 3.6\%$), respectively, because the first reduction of the price variation finally reaches them. The industrial and raw material inflation on Hentz and Hakosoar is reduced to 5% ($90\% \times 5\% = 4.5\%$) and 2% ($40\% \times 6\% = 2\%$), respectively, as the second reduction of the economic fluctuation arrives. The raw material inflation on Hargut is reduced to zero by a roll of 8.

Day 5: The industrial price increases on Yast, Hargut, and Hristan are reduced to 3% ($60\% \times 5\% = 3\%$), 2% ($30\% \times 5\% = 1.5\%$), and 1% ($60\% \times 2\% = 1.2\%$) as the second reduction of the fluctuation reaches them. The industrial and raw material price increases on Hentz and Hakosoar end.

Day 6: The industrial inflation on Yast, Hargut, and Hristan ends.

Some closing notes

For the sake of simplicity, I have ruled a time lapse of one day for price increases (and reductions on those increases) to move from planet to planet. In actuality, it would take one day for every light year between the planets — a change that referees may make in their campaigns.

A flow chart or procedure table was not included for the simple reason that it would be complicated into incompre-

hensibility. It is much easier to deduce the procedure from the examples. (I tried to create a procedure table, but it was too long and undecipherable!)

For an added touch of realism, referees may want to include an availability modifier in certain systems. This is a price change of +5% on all imported goods.

Each type of cargo may be obtained only at a center of the appropriate type (e.g., raw materials at resource centers).

Since agricultural gluts and shortages are very rare, agricultural cargoes are bought and sold by the prices given in Tony Watkin's article "Rare Wines and Ready Cash," in DRAGON® issue #93.

Readers will notice that this system requires a great deal of work on the referee's part, but it pays off, especially if one of the PCs owns a freighter. It's much more challenging than the system in the Knight Hawks rules, thus proportionately more fun to use.

Old Yazirians Never Die

(They just go permanently grounded)



Age and aging in STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Peter C. Zelinski

One question unanswered by the STAR FRONTIERS® rules is this: What happens when a character gets old? Average lifespans are given for all four player character races, but nothing is said about the effects of aging and growing up

This is unfortunate, for aging adds to the fun and realism of the campaign. What is the point of turning to the aged for advice when they are no wiser than the

young? How realistic is a 230-year-old Dralasite who can still bench-press 145 kilograms? What about a 150-year-old Vrusk who can dodge missiles just as well as the time he was knee-high to a winged ripper? True, such examples are always possible, but they should not be the norm.

Presented in the text below is a solution to the problem. Players of the AD&D® game will recognize its aging system as the inspiration and source of reference used in compiling this article.

NOTE: Time is given in Galactic Standard Years throughout the article. One GSY is about 91% as long as one of our Earth years.

Starting ages

Before a player character enters a STAR FRONTIERS campaign, his starting age must be known.

| Race | Starting Age |
|-----------|----------------|
| Dralasite | d10 + 24 years |
| Human | d10 + 19 years |
| Vrusk | d10 + 17 years |
| Yazirian | d10 + 13 years |

NPC starting ages need not be so restricted. An NPC Human adventurer could stow away on a star freighter at age 14 or give up a cushy desk job in favor of a daring life in space at 43.

Age brackets

When a character enters a certain age bracket, his ability scores must be modified according to the instructions given in the age categories table below. This is not to say that all Humans receive additional strength and stamina along with their presents on their twentieth birthday. Instead, ability score modifications are a simulation of the effects of gradual maturity, with the resulting benefits or deterioration.

Modifications due to age are as follows:

Mature: Add 5 to STR, STA, INT, and LOG scores.

Middle-Aged: Subtract 5 from STR and STA; and, add 5 to INT and LOG scores.

Old: Subtract 10 from STR, STA, DEX, and RS; and, add 5 to INT and LOG scores.

Venerable: Subtract 5 from STR, STA, DEX, and RS; and, add 5 to INT and LOG scores.

No young-adult bracket is given because, unlike in the AD&D game, no STAR FRONTIERS PC can ever fall into this category (see starting age above).

Death due to aging

Except in a very long campaign, the prospect of a PC dying of natural causes is not something to worry about, because of the long lifespans of all four races. Nonetheless, when a player rolls up a character, the referee should randomly determine the age at which that character will die and keep it a secret from the controlling player. This may prove useful if the character is unnaturally aged by technological devices or processes, or by disease or infection. The maximum-age table is given below. The results are based upon the average lifespan figures given in the Alpha Dawn Expanded Game Rules.

| Race | Mature | Middle Aged | Old | Venerable | Race | Age at Death |
|-----------|--------|-------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Dralasite | 25-75 | 76-115 | 116-175 | 176+ | Dralasite | 195 + 10d10 |
| Human | 20-60 | 61-90 | 91-140 | 141+ | Human | 156 + 8d10 |
| Vrusk | 18-50 | 51-80 | 81-125 | 126 + | Vrusk | 136 + 7d10 |
| Yazirian | 14-40 | 41-60 | 6-100 | 101+ | Yazirian | 107 + 6d10 |

Patriots, Terrorists, and Spies

More Frontier cults for
STAR FRONTIERS® gaming

by Kim Eastland

As noted in *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space*, Volume 1, *cult* is the term used for any radical political, terrorist, religious, or other self-interest group in the STAR FRONTIERS® universe. Some cults are legal and some are not, but too often they present a real threat to the harmony of the Frontier and provide extra work for law enforcement and security personnel.

The year FY 111 marked the Grand Celebration of the Frontier. Social events, political rallies, fund raisers, and so forth were planned for all the planets on the Frontier that year to celebrate the 111th anniversary of the signing of the UPF treaty. What was not planned was the sudden appearance of dozens of new cults that decided the year of the Grand Celebration was the perfect time for them to make themselves known to the public. Though hundreds of cults "went public" in FY 111, the following ones seem to have grown the fastest and have the most clout.

The **Alliance for the Rights of the People** is a legal, liberal, political organization dedicated to upholding the rights of the citizens of the Frontier. While this appears to be a noble cause, the ARP has recently enacted a policy of political pressure to limit the authority of Star Law and other local law-enforcement groups. This campaign includes holo-vid promotional advertisements portraying law-enforcement agents as looming shadows that are always waiting for the average citizen to slip up.

The ARP also feels that the practice of maintaining penal colonies (currently located on asteroids) is cruel and that criminals should at least be kept planet-side, within the influence of civilization. On the other hand, ARP also has been the leading organization defending Rim immi-

grants who wish to live in the UPF space against those cults who want them deported.

The ARP has its headquarters on Laco. It sometimes allies itself with the Frontier Peace Organization.

The **Defenders of the Divine Will** is a unique conglomerate of various religious groups that believe that the divine will of their individual deities formed and evolved planets perfectly. They are vehemently opposed to GODCo's terraforming practices, and some members have even threatened violence if it does not cease. Currently, they are considered a legal organization. Mega-corps are worried that the DDW's beliefs may spread to eventually encompass any business that alters the original form of nature (including mining, forestry, and other operations that alter a planet's surface; cosmetics, plastic surgery, and other products or services that alter the body's appearance; etc.).

The **Supporters of Mechano** is a growing political organization that includes members of all the Frontier races. The Mechanites, as they are called, believe the Mechanons are a sentient, sapient race (though of artificial origin) that deserves full citizenship in the UPF. Though the Mechanites began as a completely peaceful organization, their many encounters with the Sliver Death Cult and the Anti-Satharian League have resulted in the death of many Mechanites and the formation of their own security forces. It is rumored that some extremists within the organization are forming a radical splinter group that believes the end justifies violent means.

Since one of the charges constantly being leveled against the Mechanons is their cooperation with the Sathar in subversive activities, many Mechanite investigations are aimed at discovering the truth behind these terrorist activities, with an

eye on clearing the Mechanon name.

The Mechanites have centers on every civilized planet. Their leader, a human named Mathias Pritchard, is extremely charismatic (PER/LDR = 99/99) and the driving force behind the cult.

The **Liberators** is a terrorist organization that is dedicated to "liberating the oppressed masses from the chains of mega-corporate tyranny." This is an extremely violent, illegal, quasi-political/economic cult that has already taken credit for hundreds of deaths due to bombings and terrorist raids, usually on mega-corporation headquarters. Star Law suspects the Liberators are backed by a few rich individuals or another cult, but they have no leads yet on who or what finances them. Though the identity of the leader of the Liberators is also unknown, certain terrorist members have been identified and their faces and descriptions are broadcast regularly throughout the Frontier.

The **Clear Thinkers** is a reactionary political group with militant leanings that seek to banish (or destroy) Mentalists and enlightened characters in the Frontier. They have strong financial backing and fund projects that will develop items, drugs, and robots designed to thwart mental disciplines or seek out discipline users. This group has the most political savvy of all the cults, has been careful to stay inside the law with its public activi-



ties, and is starting to run Clear Thinker candidates for various political positions, including seats on the Council of Worlds. The leader of the Clear Thinkers is a smooth Yazarian politician named Hased Kor. He is one of the most powerful individuals on Yast/Astor and expects to be President of the Council some day.

The **Free Thinkers** is a new cult that has grown in response to the Clear Thinkers movement. This non-profit organization is made up of various races and individuals, both psionically gifted and non-gifted. The organization fights its battle in a legal, honest, and public manner. It funds promotional campaigns aimed at educating the masses about the benefits of having psionically gifted individuals in society. It has established legal aid clinics, educational grants, help lines, and other programs to aid both Mentalists and enlightened characters. It works with the authorities whenever possible to aid in the location of psionically gifted individuals who can help solve crimes. The Free Thinkers have recently begun to open small offices in every major city, but their headquarters is on Morgaine's World.

The **Zenk** (Vrusk for "family") is a Frontierwide criminal organization that currently is responsible for most high-credit criminal activities on the Frontier. The Zenk sells its services to anyone, but it nearly always operates in its own best interests. There is no criminal activity that

the Zenk cannot perform, though it prefers to stay away from anything directly related to Star Law, Spacefleet, or Landfleet. No one knows who governs the organization, but referees should create NPCs who run local operations, as player characters may want (or be forced) to tangle with them at some time.

The Zenk is divided into eight different sections:

Acquisitions: robbery, forgery, embezzlement, etc.

Administration: executives, crime planning, accounting, etc.

Eliminations: murder, arson, body disposals, etc.

Enforcement: strong-arm activities that do not usually involve killing, security, etc.

Information: blackmail, hugging, spying, computer crimes, etc.

Leisure activities: providing illegal intoxicants and entertainment, etc.

Research and development: creation of new items or methods that help the other sections, maintaining the Zenk's equipment, etc.

Support services: activities that support the other sections but that are not included in the definitions of those sections, such as fencing stolen goods, buying off the authorities, etc.

An interesting note on the Information section is that it supposedly has personnel working within most law-enforcement agencies. On the other hand, most law-

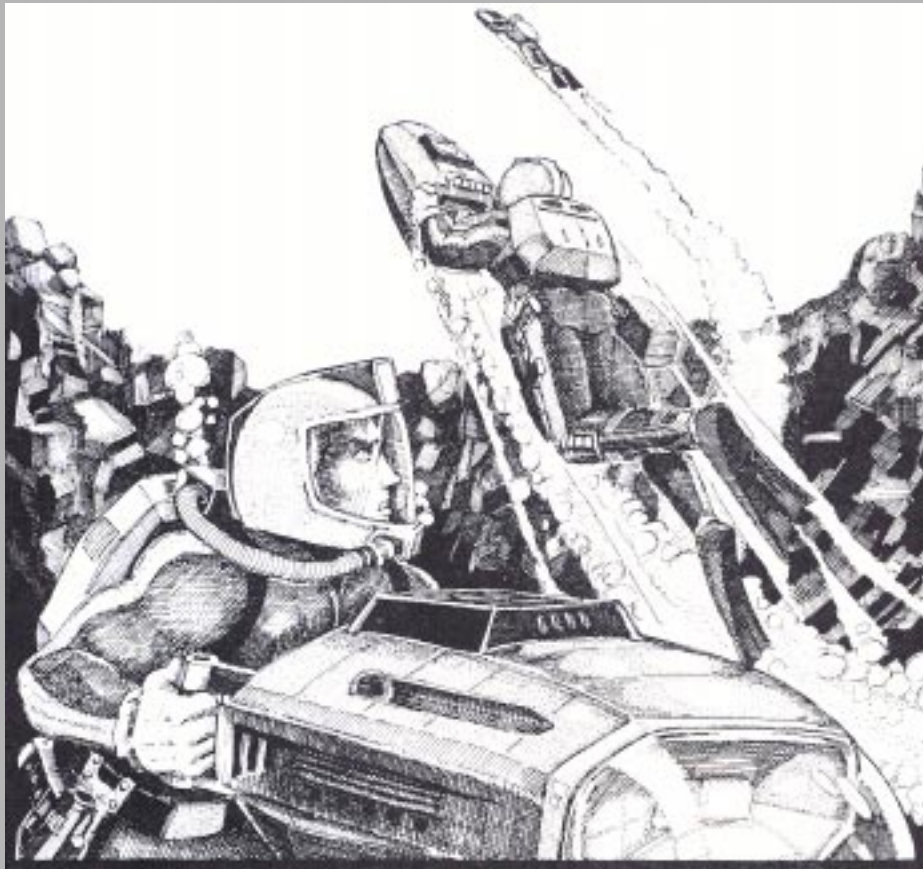
enforcement agencies, especially Star Law, have personnel working within the Zenk. Consequently, information obtained by both sides is sometimes planted or altered in efforts to flush out spies on either side.

The **Firsters** is a quasi-political/terrorist faction that believes all of the Rim races should be sent back to the Rim. Their slogans are such cliches as "The Frontier for the Founders" and "Kick a Rimmer Today." At first this organization was not taken seriously by most habitants of the Frontier and became the butt of many a joke, but recent militant activities aimed at members of the Rim races and their businesses have sobered the public to the reality of violent racial prejudice. The ARP organization is the greatest opponent of the Firster movement.

No Firster headquarters is known to exist, as its operations are completely covert. While none of the leaders are known, a rallying figure is known to be a dead Vrusk named G'rch B'on. B'on was a member of the Firsters when they were still a tiny cult. He attacked an Ifshnit couple one night, but died in the assault. The coroner's findings indicated B'on tripped over his own feet and broke his neck in the fall. The Firsters insist that witnesses (other Firsters, incidentally) saw the Ifshnits pick the fight, then kill B'on. B'on is now a martyr for the Firster cause and a rallying symbol for anyone who dislikes beings from the Rim.



Going for a swim?



Underwater action in STAR FRONTIERS[®] gaming

by William Tracy

During the course of a STAR FRONTIERS[®] campaign, a group of adventurers might want or need to enter an underwater environment. Unfortunately, the rule books contain no rules for underwater play. This article attempts to rectify that situation, and some additional equipment usable in undersea environments is also presented.

Using these rules, adventures could be created in which characters must reach an underwater city covered by a pressurized dome, escape from a damaged submarine, or swim in search of a sunken ship or

crashed spacecraft. They might also encounter a sentient race that lives underwater, and they could trade, fight, or otherwise interact with that race.

Artificial gill suits

To survive underwater for long periods, characters must employ a breathing apparatus known as an artificial gill suit (AGS), which covers the wearer's entire body. It is made of a material that is similar to that used in skeinsuits, and it may be left transparent or colored as the manufacturer desires. Normal goggles may be worn by Humans, Vrusk, and Yazirian divers. The AGS will absorb one-fourth of all damage caused by projectile and gyrojet weapons,

fragmentation grenades, explosives, and melee weapons. It cannot be worn with any other suit of armor, but a screen may be used with it. When the AGS has taken 35 points of damage, it will be ruined and useless as armor.

The AGS for Humans, Yazirians, and Vrusks conforms to their basic physical shape. The AGS for Dralasilites will stretch to accommodate their shape-changing abilities. A Yazirian AGS covers the glide-wing membranes without hampering their use in swimming (see below).

Much of the exterior of the AGS is covered by a series of microfilters, all made of tough, translucent plastic. These microfilters draw oxygen from the water, pumping the gas mixture through small tubes to the area of the body where the wearer inhales air. The waste gases produced are released directly from the suit. The whole system is regulated by a computer chip and powered by a small energy cell good for five hours before it needs to be recharged.

The AGS also has a small digital display which can easily be seen by the wearer. The display shows the diver's depth, time in the water, and the amount of power left in the suit's energy cell. The suit also has a built-in low-frequency radio system, which has a range of one kilometer.

The AGS weighs five kilograms and costs 800 Credits. The suit can be safely used at a maximum depth of 110 meters on Earth-like planets. If a deeper dive is attempted, there is a cumulative 5% chance per 10 meters below the safe limit that the AGS will malfunction. This chance must be rolled for every five minutes, with an additional 1% chance of failure added for every additional five-minute period spent beyond the first.

The wearer will also take one point of damage for every 10 meters he dives past the maximum safe depth. This damage will be taken every minute and is caused by increased pressure. Dralasilites will not start taking pressure damage until they reach a depth of 160 meters, due to their elastic abilities.

There is also a 10% cumulative chance per 10 meters of depth beyond the maximum safe limit, checked for every 10 minutes, that a Human or Yazirian character will have vivid hallucinations for five minutes as a result of nitrogen narcosis. A check against the character's Logic score lets him disbelieve the hallucinations.

If the AGS malfunctions, the character wearing it must hold his breath until he can reach the water's surface. A character can hold his breath for a number of turns equal to the character's Stamina score divided by five. If the character is still underwater after running out of breath, the character will take 2d10 damage for every turn spent under water until death occurs from drowning.

If a character dives deeper than 10

meters, the character must ascend slowly (at a rate of five meters per turn) or risk getting a case of the bends. Bends are caused by nitrogen bubbles forming in the bloodstream, due to the quick change in pressure. This can cause intense pain, doing one point of damage per round until the character is placed in a freeze field or a decompression chamber to stop the loss of Stamina points. The damage from decompression will never exceed 40 points, though death can still occur as a result of it. Note that there is a chance of dying as a result of the bends, independent of the amount of damage taken, as per the table below. Dralasites do not get the bends.

Chances for contracting the bends

| Rate of ascent | Chance to get bends | Chance of death |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 6 m/turn | 10% | 8% |
| 7 m/turn | 40% | 16% |
| 8 m/turn | 60% | 24% |
| 9 m/turn | 80% | 32% |
| 10+ m/turn | 100% | 40% |

If death is indicated, it will occur in 10 minutes. During these 10 minutes, the character will lose one-tenth of his current hit point value (rounded up) every minute. This procedure can be stopped by a freeze field or a decompression chamber.

A character must stay in a decompression chamber for a number of minutes equal to the lowest depth in meters that the character reached. If a character dives below 60 meters, even if he did not contract the bends, he must spend some time in a decompression chamber. If the character does not do this, he will get a case of the bends, like that described above, within 1d5 hours.

Dralasite characters will never contract the bends due to their unique physiology. If characters need to dive deeper than their limits, they will have to use a submarine or an AGS designed for greater depths.

Movement

Characters can swim at a rate of 10 meters per turn (or one kilometer per hour). If a character swims longer than one hour, he will lose five Stamina points for every 30 minutes he continues swimming. These movement rates can be affected by obstacles such as seaweed or coral (or alien equivalents thereof).

If a character swims through seaweed, he must move at a rate of four meters per turn. If a character tries to move faster than that, he may become entangled (a cumulative 10% per every turn of movement). This should be checked for every third turn. The character will be entangled for 1d10 turns (1d5 if the character

has a sharp instrument with which to free himself).

If a character swims through areas containing coral reefs, he must swim at a reduced rate of five meters per turn. Faster speeds allow for a 10% chance per turn traveled that the character will be cut by the sharp edges of the coral, causing 1d10 damage (half of which can be absorbed by an AGS suit).

Another factor that might affect movement is the presence of underwater currents. Such currents usually have speeds ranging from 1-12 meters per turn, but they can only be found at a depth of 60 meters or less. Characters may enter a current on purpose to increase their

speed. To get out of a current, a character must roll his Strength (minus 2% per meter/turn of speed the current has) or less on percentile dice. The character can attempt to leave the current once every five minutes. After a number of attempts equal to the character's Stamina score divided by five and rounded down, the character must rest 30 minutes before making any more attempts to escape the current.

The characters' movement rates might also be increased with special equipment, such as jet scooters, jet fins, and submarines. A jet scooter is a streamlined cylinder made of light alloys, one meter in width and two meters long. It has a built-in jet turbine which enables it to go 20 meters per turn. The character lies on top of the scooter and steers it with a steering rod, which controls small fins on the sides of the scooter. The scooter weighs five kilograms and costs 300 Credits. It is powered by a small rechargeable energy cell, which can power the scooter for five consecutive hours.

Jet fins work on the same principle as the scooter. Jet fins enable a character to move at a rate of 13 meters per turn without requiring rest breaks every hour. A pair of fins weigh .5 kilograms and cost 50 Credits. They are powered by two small, rechargeable energy cells good for two hours of use.

A submarine can also be used by the characters, but it can only be operated by a Technician with a skill level of five or better. This article will describe the most common type of submarine, which can be bought or rented by non-military charac-

ters. If the characters want larger or armed submarines, they must either be working with the government or willing to acquire one illegally. A typical explorer submarine costs 20,000 Credits, but usually rents for 100 Credits, plus a 250-Credit deposit, per day. The submarine has a top speed of 250 kilometers per hour, with an average cruising speed of 20 kilometers per hour. Six passengers may be accommodated aboard it, though in VERY cramped comfort. The sub carries four in relative comfort. The cargo limit is 1000 kilograms, within a space of two cubic meters.

This submarine is powered by a parabolic battery (type II) which has to be recharged every 200 hours of use. The submarine's movement rates are not affected by coral reefs or seaweed, though visibility is affected.

This type of submarine can be used to a maximum depth of 200 meters. If it is used at greater depths, there is a cumulative 10% chance per 10 meters below the maximum depth that the submarine will spring a leak. This chance should be checked for every five minutes spent below the maximum depth. If a leak occurs, a person with Technical skills can repair it, but first the submarine must move to the surface. If the leak is not fixed, the submarine fills with water in 10 minutes. The submarine contains six AGS suits in case of emergencies, but donning one in a cramped, sinking submarine can be tricky.

Structural damage of 100 points or more to one area will cause a leak in the sub, which has a total of 400 structural points. If a submarine is involved in undersea combat, a referee might want to create a modified form of the Vehicle Damage Table, found on page 32 of the Expanded Game Rules book, which would cover the sub's specific shape and details.

Character effects

The characters will be entering a new type of environment beneath the sea, and will be affected by it mentally and physically. First of all, a character's ability scores change while underwater. A character's Dexterity and Reaction Speed scores are reduced by 25 points; also, a character's Strength score is reduced by 35 points when figuring the effects of melee on the Punching Table (page 25, Expanded Games Rules). A minimum score of 10 applies in all cases.

The STAR FRONTIERS races are each affected differently by the underwater environment. Dralasites do not care for adventuring undersea, because the AGS does not let them use their senses of touch and smell. They are not greatly affected by increases in pressure (and never get the bends). Humans are not bothered by the new environment, but Vrusks are very

nervous underwater. Vrusks swim awkwardly and, when dealing with underwater races, a Vrusk's chance to comprehend social dealings is halved. Yazirians are uneasy at first, but they come to enjoy swimming because it is somewhat like gliding. Their glider membranes grant them great maneuverability while underwater. This will be discussed later.

A character's skills and their results are also affected while underwater. The effects on Weapon skills is discussed later. The Demolitions skills work as long as the timers used are built to work underwater. Blast radii are doubled due to the increased powers of shock waves underwater. The Martial Arts skill will work underwater with a 30% reduction on the success rate. Technician skills work if the equipment and tools are designed to work underwater. Environmental skills work normally underwater if they apply to the situation. There will be a 20% reduction on their success rates while underwater. None of the Medical skills work underwater, except for Diagnosis which has a 30% reduction on the success rate. All Psycho-Social skills work when applicable, with a 30% reduction on success rates due to communications problems.

Underwater combat

While underwater, characters will have to deal with various modifications to the combat system. The Ranged Weapon Combat Procedure Table, on page 22 of the Expanded Game Rules book, should have the following additions and modifications when combat occurs underwater.

| | |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Swimming target | -5 |
| Dodging target | -8 |
| Dodging Yazirian target | -10 |
| Target using jet fins | -3 |
| Target riding jet scooter | -6 |
| Attacker using jet fins | -2 |
| Attacker riding jet scooter | -5 |

Sighting distance is also modified while underwater. The AGS is designed to enhance the wearer's vision so that it is not distorted. Even so, a character's vision will not be as good as when on the surface. Visual range can also be affected by the amount of sediment and plankton in the area, the amount of light shining on the surface of the water, the depth, and passing schools of fish or other lifeforms.

It can be assumed that within 10 meters of the surface, a character will have a maximum visual range of 40 meters, if the view is not obstructed and if it is daylight. If it is at night, the character will only be able to see one meter away at best. The referee should use this as a basic foundation when trying to decide a character's visual range underwater. The final visual range is left up to the referee.

For 50 Credits, a wide-beam underwater

flashlight can be found. The flashlight will be attached to the AGS, around the character's chest. The flashlight's energy cell can go for 100 hours before needing a recharge. The flashlight enables the character to always have a minimum visual range of two meters, except in extremely murky water. It illuminates a cone-shaped area, ranging from .5-2 meters at the widest part of the cone.

When fighting underwater, characters must use modified versions of the ranged weapons they usually use. These weapons cost 50 Credits extra for underwater modification. Such weapons act normally above water unless otherwise noted. Laser weapons are not used underwater, as they are too inefficient.

Underwater versions of gyrojet weapons are available. When used underwater, they have the following alterations made in ranges (the rest of the statistics are normal when used underwater).

| Weapon | PB | Short | Med. | Long | Extr. |
|----------------|----|-------|------|-------|--------|
| Gyrojet pistol | — | 0-3 | 4-30 | 31-60 | 61-90 |
| Gyrojet rifle | — | 0-3 | 4-50 | 51-90 | 91-130 |

Sonic disruptors and sonic stunners are both produced in versions that can be used underwater. These weapons have double normal ranges undersea, because of the effects of the denser medium through which the sound waves pass. The damage for the sonic disruptors is doubled accordingly.

Modified versions of grenades can be used underwater. They can't actually be thrown, but they may be dropped on characters that are at a greater depth than the attacker. Unless surprised, the victim may be able to get out of the grenade's blast radius. The grenades will drop at a rate of six meters per turn. Grenades can also be delivered with grenade rifles modified to work underwater. Such weapons have the following ranges when used underwater: PB — Nil, Short — 0-15, Medium — 16-30, Long — 31-55, Extreme — 56-100. Underwater grenades will not work in air, but the grenade rifle can fire the regular type of grenades when used on land.

Underwater versions of the poison grenade and the doze grenade can be found, but they only have a blast radius of one meter. They release a colorless liquid into the water, which enters the micro-filters of an AGS and then affect the wearer as per normal. For 50 Credits, special filters can be attached to an AGS which will keep poisons from getting to its wearer.

Underwater versions of tangle grenades and smoke grenades can also be found. They work like the regular ones, but they only have a one-meter blast radius. The smoke cloud produced by the

smoke grenade has only a 15-meter blast radius, clouding the water, and it could be broken up by underwater currents.

The underwater version of the fragmentation grenade works just like the regular version, except that it only has a three-meter blast radius.

Finally, underwater characters may make use of a new projectile weapon: the spear gun, which uses compressed air to shoot a heavy arrow. A compressed-air clip can fire four arrows before becoming empty. The spear can be fitted with a special head that explodes upon impact like a grenade. A regular spear does 1d10 damage, while a spear with an exploring head does 2d10 damage. The spear gun has the following ranges: PB — 0-5, Short — 6-10, Medium — 11-20, Long — 21-30, Extreme — 31-40. A cost and weight table follows:

| Device | Cost (Cr.) | Weight(Kg) |
|---------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Spear gun | 100 | 4 |
| Spear/arrow | 5 | 1 (for 5 spears) |
| Compressed air clip | 10 | 1 (for 3 clips) |
| Exploding warhead | 30 | 1 (for 3 spears with heads) |

Melee combat is also greatly affected while underwater. Characters cause no damage with punches, and a character's punching score should not be added to the damage caused by non-powered weapons while underwater. Only sharp melee weapons are useful underwater: short axes, knives, stabbing polearms (spears), sonic knives, sonic swords, short stabbing swords, and vibro-knives. A person using a sonic weapon underwater will not be able to surprise an opponent. The damage done by these weapons is reduced by half because of the friction of the water. These modified versions of melee weapons cost 30 Credits extra and function normally above water. Electrical weapons are not produced for underwater use because water is such a good conductor for electricity. Modified power screens that work above and below water cost 100 Credits extra for the water-proofing.

Final notes: Any combat which draws blood might also draw any nearby predators in the area (like sharks or beings with similar temperaments and appetites). While refereeing underwater combat, a referee should take into account the different altitudes of the combatants; those attacking from above gain a +5 bonus. A referee might wish to use the rules for weightless combat (page 26 of the Expanded Game Rules book) when conducting underwater combat, if high-recoil weapons are used without bracing.

Underwater equipment

When going underwater, characters can take a variety of equipment modified to

work in that environment. A water-proofed compass can be found for 20 Credits. A special underwater flashlight, which works like the one attached to the AGS, can be bought for 10 Credits. An underwater version of the toxyrad gauge costs 25 Credits; its functions are slightly different from the regular type, and it will not work above water. If the red light shines, it means that there is a chemical in the area that can affect the character through his AGS, but the special filters mentioned earlier can filter them out before they reach the character. A flashing blue light indicates that there is dangerous radiation nearby. A flashing yellow light indicates that there is a chemical in the area that is so powerful that even the special filters mentioned above can not filter them out.

An underwater version of the exoskeleton can be found for 2500 Credits; this version also works above water. While wearing the exoskeleton, a character is able to swim 20 meters per turn without having to rest. While underwater, the character has a +10 bonus to hit in melee, and does five additional points of damage. The exoskeleton is designed to be worn outside the AGS without hampering any of the suit's functions.

Because of the heat-absorbing properties of water, an AGS cannot have built-in

infrared vision capability. Freeze fields cannot work underwater, either.

An underwater radiophone can be bought for 550 Credits, and will work regularly above water. It only has a range of 50 kilometers underwater, and is connected to the communications system of the user's AGS.

Underwater Solva-Way comes in small plastic bulbs which must be crushed by the entangled victim. It then spreads out and dissolves the threads, remaining potent for one turn. A bulb of underwater Solva-Way costs 15 Credits, and it will not work above water.

Regular Tornadium D-19 works underwater, but special waterproofed Variable/Timer Detonators must be used. They cost 7 Credits each and work above water, too.

Finally, special power backpacks (300 Credits) and powerclips (150 Credits) can be bought that work underwater

Final notes

This article assumes that the area where the characters are diving has a fairly comfortable climate. If the characters dive in water with extremes in temperature, an AGS can be bought with a heating/cooling system. This modification costs 100 Credits extra and adds two kilograms of weight to the AGS. This system is powered

by a small energy cell which works for four hours before needing a recharge. The system protects the character in water with temperatures ranging from -35—C to 70—C.

Special AGSs may be created if the characters are going to dive in waters which contain dangerous chemicals or poison. These AGS must be tailor-made for the body of water in which the characters are going to dive. Such suits cost an average of 1000 Credits.

The modified weapons and equipment mentioned earlier have a tendency to malfunction due to powerful pressure from deep dives, as do AGSs. Weapons and equipment must be further modified if taken into water containing powerful chemicals; this modification will cost a further 50 Credits.

The natural gravity of a planet will also effect the pressure at deeper depths. For every tenth of a gravity less than one, the AGS is able to dive 10 meters deeper before a chance for malfunction occurs. The opposite is true if the gravity is greater than one. This rule applies to the weapons and equipment, too.

This article may be used as the basic foundation for running an adventure underwater. It should not be considered a strict set of rules. The final judgements are up to the individual referee.



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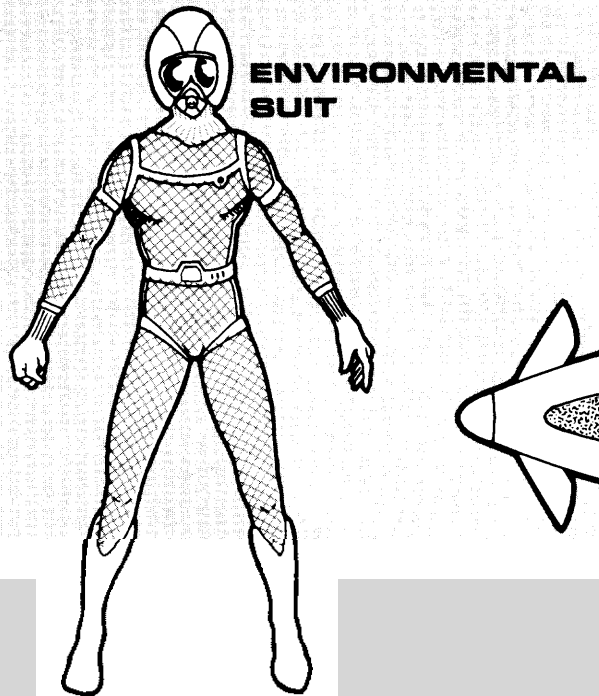
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For a Fistful of Credits



Editor's introduction — We've received a lot of requests for more equipment that can be used on star-faring expeditions, and this article will hopefully fill in some of the gaps. The following material was produced before SFAC 3, *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space*, was released. It fits in with the original STAR FRONTIERS® game system, and it may be used by gamers who do not have access to the former product. Some modifications will be required if the *Zebulon's Guide* revisions are being employed in a campaign.

Gyrojet ammunition

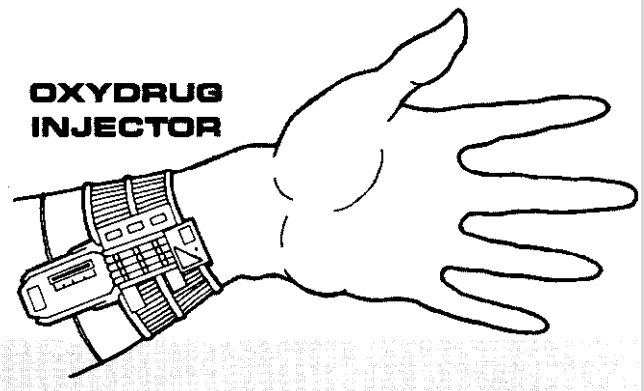
Doze jetclip. The doze jetclip is loaded with 10 rockets, each carrying a small amount of doze gas. The rockets burst on impact, causing no damage, but filling a one-meter area with doze gas. The target must pass a current Stamina check or fall unconscious for 1-100 turns. The doze gas is only effective on the round it is fired. These rounds are often used by police or security forces to take suspects alive.

Poison jetclip. The poison jetclip also has 10 rockets, each carrying a small dose of poison gas that will affect a one-meter area. When the target is hit, no damage is done, but a current Stamina check must be made. Those that fail will be affected by a S5/T10 poison. If the character passes the check or is wearing a gas mask or spacesuit, he will not be affected. A shot of antitox will neutralize the poison so no further damage is taken.

Tangler jetclip. This jetclip has 10 rockets filled with tangler fluid. No damage is caused when a target is hit, but a one-meter area is filled with tangler threads. The target may avoid being caught in the threads if a Reaction Speed avoidance roll is made. Otherwise, the threads will last for 30 minutes. Creatures with more than 100 Stamina points may break free in one turn.

Defensive Suits

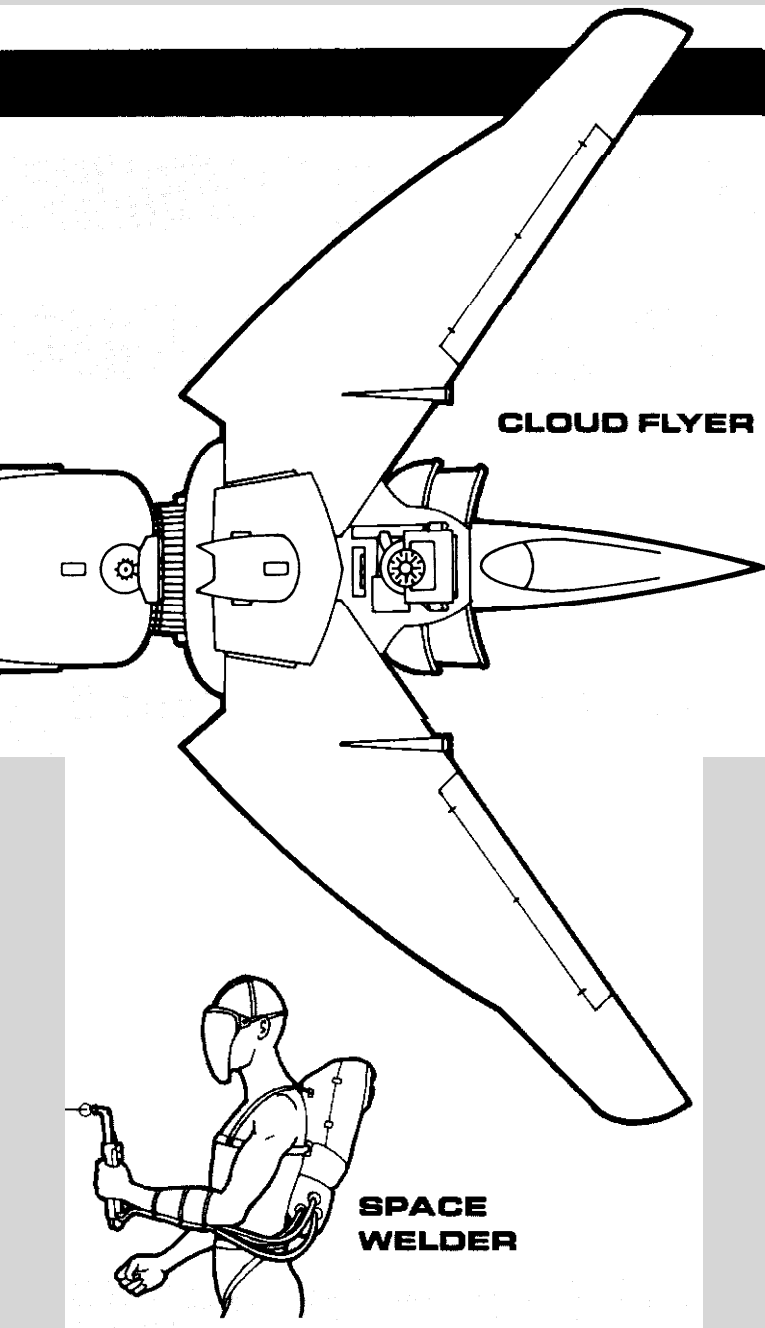
Slipsuit. A slipsuit is a tight-fitting suit made from a special low-friction polymer. It covers the entire body. The hands and feet are made from normal material, allowing the character to grip, punch, and walk normally. The slipsuit makes its wearer harder to hit with most weapons in melee combat. The attacker is -20 on his chance to hit a character wearing a slipsuit, unless he is attacking with a sonic knife or sonic sword. Tangler grenades and tangler rockets will not stick to a character wearing a slipsuit, making it impossible to tangle a character wearing one. A slipsuit will be ruined once it has taken 100 points of damage.



Organic computers are the cousins of the standard STAR FRONTIERS computer. Like normal computers, they are used to store and analyze information. However, they have many important differences.

Unlike a normal computer, which is made of electronic circuits, superconductors and specially formed crystals, the organic computers is grown from molecules. These are organic molecules, the same kind that form the building blocks of plants and creatures. This makes organic computers much smaller than the normal computers. Organic computers, however, are not considered to be living consciousnesses.

Since the organic computer is grown, it cannot be expanded like a regular computer (by adding function points). Instead, an organic computer has a function point potential. This is the maximum number of function points an organic computer can use at one time (and therefore the maximum number of programs that can be used at one time). However, programs can be entered and then later removed from an organic computer without damage to the computer or the program. It takes one turn to change the program of an organic computer. Unlike normal programs, when



different from a normal computer; it is surgically placed inside a person or creature and becomes part of that person's brain. Its power is obtained from the food the person eats. An implanted computer interfaces with other computers by a micro-transmitter/receiver that is part of the implant. The computer interfaced to will require a similar transmitter/receiver as part of its equipment. Programs for an implanted computer are read by the person and "stored" in his memory. The implanted computer then draws these programs out of the person's memory. A character may have as many programs memorized as his Logic Ability divided by 10. These programs may be of any level. If the character is ever injured to zero Stamina points or below, the implanted organic computer is destroyed. This is true even if the character is placed in a freeze field and later revived.

For example, Zir-Zak (our Vrusk friend) has an implanted level 1 organic computer. His Logic Ability is 65, so he may store up to seven programs in his mind. The programs can be of any level, but Zir-Zak may only use 10 function points at any one time.

Important: Characters with implanted organic computers do not become supermen! They simply have access to a computer at all times. If a character attempts to have his computer solve something with too many variables, it will be beyond the abilities of the program. With any program, the character must still supply exact instructions and data. Computers cannot guess outcomes or predict events without a great deal of information.

Organic computers may only be implanted at the largest of hospitals with the most advanced of techniques. The process is very expensive and requires one month of hospital time for each level of the computer. The table below lists all the information on function point potential, size, and costs.

New equipment: Cost and mass table

| Item | Cost (Cr) | Mass (kg) |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Gyrojet ammunition | | |
| Doze jetclip, pistol | 20 | — |
| Doze jetclip, rifle | 30 | — |
| Poison jetclip, pistol | 50 | — |
| Poison jetclip, rifle | 100 | — |
| Tangler jetclip, pistol | 30 | — |
| Tangler jetclip, rifle | 60 | — |
| Defenses | | |
| Slipsuit | 600 | 1 |
| Computers | | |
| Organic computers | * | * |
| Computer receptor implant | * | * |
| Computer programs | | |
| Infiltration | * | * |
| Medical technology | | |
| Accelerator drug | 10 | — |
| Anesthetic drug | 5 | — |
| Cloning | * | * |
| Experiential matrix analysis | * | * |
| Intensive healing | * | * |
| Oxy drug injector | 500 | — |
| Oxy drug refill | 30 | — |
| Regeneration | * | * |
| Universal antibody | 100 | — |
| Vehicles | | |
| Cloud flyer | 40,000 | 4,000 |
| Miscellaneous equipment | | |
| Density scanner | 500 | 5 |
| Environmental suit | 100 | 2 |
| Enviro-proofing | * | * |
| Portable space welder | 300 | 20 |
| Thermosign generator | 1,000 | 100 |

* — See description.

a character buys an organic computer program, he is buying a set of pre-recorded instructions that tell his organic computer what to do. He is not buying the hardware needed to run the program. Different programs may be used at different times, but the potential cannot be exceeded by programs that are in use. The function points used by programs are the same as those listed for standard computer programs.

For example, Zir-zak, a Vrusk adventurer, has a level 2 organic computer. Its function point potential is 30. He is using the computer to manage certain areas of his spaceship. He could have a level 4 computer security program (16 function points), a level 2 life support (8 function points), and a level 2 installation security (6 function points) running at the same time. If he landed on a planet and wanted to use a language program, he would have to change one of the programs in the organic computer to do so. In this case, he decides life support is not needed and replaces it with a level 4 language program.

An organic computer may either be housed or implanted. A housed organic computer is much like a normal computer. The actual processing part of the computer is kept in a small tank filled with nutrients. Connections to it allow the computer to be interfaced with other computers and machinery. Its advantage is its extremely small size. An implanted organic computer is much

Organic computer information table

| Computer Level | Function Point | Cost (Cr)/Mass (kg) | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| | Potential | Housed | Implanted |
| 1 | 10 | 10,000/- | 100,000/* |
| 2 | 30 | 35,000/1 | 400,000/* |
| 3 | 100 | 125,000/2 | 1,000,000/* |
| 4 | 250 | 300,000/2 | 2,000,000/* |
| 5 | 600 | 700,000/3 | 5,000,000/* |
| 6 | 1500 | 2,000,000/3 | 10,000,000/* |

* – Implanted computers are extremely small. They will have no effect on the carrying capacity, health, or appearance of the character.

Computer receptor implant

The computer receptor implant will allow the user of the implant to be in contact with his computer at ranges up to five kilometers. The user simply “thinks” his request to the computer. The computer (if it has the proper program) will then send an answer to the user, where it will be “heard” as a thought in his brain. So long as the user stays within range, he will be in contact with his computer.

When a character buys a computer receptor implant, he is actually buying a special implant, an attachment to his computer, and a special transmission program. The implant is a micro-transmitter/receiver with special connections that attach to the nerve cells of the user. This implant must be surgically attached to the character (just under the skin). This work can only be done at an advanced hospital (referee’s decision where) and takes two weeks. The computer attachment is a similar transmitter/receiver that connects to the computer. The transmission program allows the two transmitter/receivers to talk to each other, and uses one function point. This program has no levels. The computer receptor implant costs 50,000 Cr. Transmitter/receivers that attach to other computers cost 2000 Cr each.

Computer programs

Infiltration. Infiltration programs are designed to help a person with computer skill defeat the security on other computers and detect security overrides. There are six levels of infiltration programs. Each level will add 5% to the character’s chance of success. The amount of time needed to defeat security or perform a security override when using an infiltration program is changed to 10-100 minutes. To be used, the computer with the infiltration program must be successfully interfaced to the other computer. Defeat Security is not required to make this interface. Infiltration programs require the same amount of function points as computer security programs.

Medical Technology

The following items are new pieces of medical equipment and new medical processes. The processes may only be performed at hospitals with sophisticated medical equipment.

Accelerator drug. This drug speeds up the body’s actions. Only a medic may administer this successfully. When under the effects of the drug, a character adds +2 to the initiative die roll (in addition to normal bonuses) and can make one extra attack per turn in melee combat. The effect will last for a number of turns equal to the character’s Stamina score (at the time the drug is taken) divided by 10. Each turn the character is accelerated, the person will lose four Stamina points. Lost points are healed like normal wounds.

Anesthetic drug. This drug works exactly like a doze grenade, except that it must be injected into the target. Anyone may give the injection.

Cloning. This process is very rare, performed at only the most advanced hospitals. When a character is to be cloned, tissue sam-

ples are taken of various parts of the character’s body. These may be held for any length of time. From these samples, a new body may be grown when requested. Growing a clone takes 500 days and costs 1,000,000 Cr. Physically, the clone will be identical in appearance to character from which the tissue samples were taken, save for scars and other uninherited physical traits. The clone will have average scores in Strength, Stamina, Reaction Speed, and Dexterity. It will have no Intuition, Logic, Personality, Leadership, or Special Abilities. A clone may be supplied with these abilities through an experiential matrix (giving the clone the scores recorded in the Matrix, see below). If a matrix is fed into a clone different from the person from whom the matrix was taken, the Strength, Dexterity, Reaction Speed, Personality, and Leadership scores are reduced by 20 points. No score may be reduced below a level of six in this case. Clones and cloning are illegal on some worlds.

Experiential matrix analysis. Living characters may undergo an experiential matrix analysis. This process will record all memories and experiences of the character up to the time of the analysis into a special computer storage. The process is mainly used to transfer memories to a clone, and may only be done at an advanced hospital. This process is dangerous as it involves severe strain on the character; there is a 20% chance that the following abilities will be permanently reduced whenever an analysis is made: Stamina, Logic, Intuition, Reaction Speed, Personality, and Leadership. One check is made for each ability. If an ability is to be reduced, the character will lose 10-50 points in that ability. All abilities (except Stamina) may not be lowered to less than six points. If the Stamina ability is reduced to zero or below, the character is permanently dead. The referee should record the reduced Ability Scores of the character analyzed and keep this information for later use. Reduced abilities may only be increased by use of experience points. The analysis takes one week and costs 50,000 Cr.

Intensive healing. Intensive healing may only be done at sophisticated hospitals. The referee should decide if a hospital is able to do intensive healing. Intensive healing will allow the character to heal 40 Stamina points a day. The cost is three times the number of points healed per day plus 500 Cr. Healing 85 Stamina points would take three days and cost 755 Cr.

Oxy drug injector. This slowly releases oxygen into the bloodstream, supplying all needs for twelve hours. Oxy drug injectors are usually worn on the wrist, feeding the drug directly into the blood. The injector must be attached at a hospital. Once the injector is attached, the character may refill it with oxy drug as needed. The cost of a refill is noted on the price list. Note that an oxy injector will not protect a character in space; a spacesuit MUST be worn.

Regeneration. This process allows lost arms, legs, fingers, and toes to be regrown by the use of special medical stimulation procedures. It may only be done at the most advanced hospitals. The patient, obviously, must be alive (or in a freeze field) when brought to the hospital. Regeneration takes 30 days for a finger or toe (costing 50,000 Cr) or 90 days for a complete arm or leg (costing 200,000 Cr). How the character lost the limb in the first place is left entirely up to the referee. If the referee does not want to deal with this, the game problem of limb loss and regeneration may be ignored. Since Dralasites do not have any specific limbs, they do not need regeneration.

Universal antibody. This antibody helps protect the person from any type of disease. It may only be injected at a hospital. Characters with the universal antibody have a +20% chance to resist any disease (if the chance to resist the disease is 0% (nil), the character is given a 20% chance). This product is a great boon to galactic tradesmen and explorers of new worlds.

Vehicles

Cloud flyer. The cloud flyer is an atmosphere craft specially designed for use in hostile environments. It has a completely pressure-sealed cabin and cargo area to protect the occupants and

equipment from the environment. A cloud flyer's main wings are swept back, and it has a shorter pair of wings, or canards, mounted near the nose.

Cost: 40,000 Cr (rental fees - 200 Cr down, plus 100 Cr/day)

Top/cruise speed: 400 kph/150 kph

Passengers: 6

Cargo limit: 3,000 kg, 3 cubic meters

Miscellaneous equipment

Density scanner. This device consists of a bulky backpack connected to a large cameralike set of goggles. The user wears the goggles, which show the scene in front of him. The density scanner checks emissions from the electromagnetic spectrum and computes the density of the items observed. It can only give very general readings. The scanner is often used for locating hidden cables and wiring for repairs. The scanner does not really "see through" things. It only gives the density reading of the surfaces of things. The density scanner must be supplied with SEU to operate, and it uses 1 SEU for every 10 minutes of operation.

Environmental suit. This suit is designed to protect its wearer from the weather and other conditions on habitable planets. It is made of lightweight, quilted cloth. The suit covers the entire body and has a built-in gas mask, goggles, and a small heating/cooling system. This will keep the suit cooled to a comfortable temperature on hot planets and warm on cold planets. The suit also protects against tainted atmospheres, airborne irritants, and dust and sandstorms. Any field may be used with the suit, and it may be worn under an albedo suit or skisuit. It may not be worn under a slipsuit. The environmental suit itself gives no protection from attacks. The suit may be powered from a power pack or power-clip. It uses 1 SEU per day, if the heating/cooling system is used.

Enviro-proofing. This treatment may be given to any article of equipment or vehicle except hover vehicles. Enviro-proofing pro-

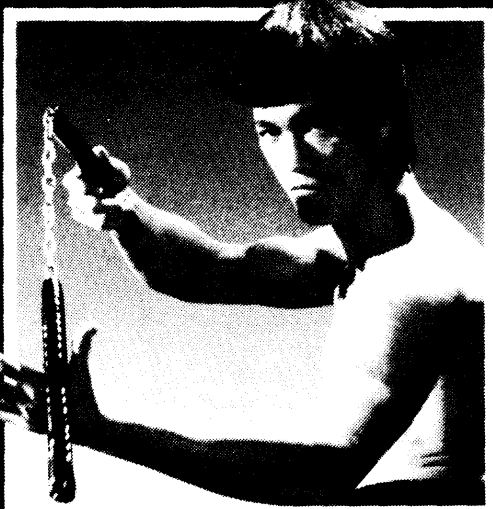
tections these items from the extremes of heat, cold, dust, submersion, tainted atmospheres, and vacuum. The referee should note that there are no specific rules for equipment failure in the STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Rules. Enviro-proofing is provided to protect equipment in situations in which the referee feels weather may affect the item. It is up to the referee to create other planets and situations where it would be useful. Enviro-proofing may be done when the item is bought or at some later time. The cost to enviro-proof an item is 10% the cost of the item.

Portable space welder. The portable space welder is an all-environment welder. It will work in all conditions, including in vacuum, underwater, and in poisonous or tainted atmospheres. It is similar to a modern oxyacetylene torch and uses an open flame for its welding and cutting. It may be used to weld metals and hardened plastics or to cut through these materials. It takes the welder one turn to make a weld or cut 50 cm (.5 meters) long. The welder may cut through up to 3 cm of material. The welder may only be used in melee combat and no bonus is added for Melee Weapons skill. If a hit is scored, the target will suffer 5-50 points of damage from the flame. A fuel tank is required to operate the welder. One tank will fuel the portable space welder for one hour.

Thermosign generator. The thermosign generator is an advanced form of the infrared jammer. It creates an infrared image of something that is not actually there by generating the proper heat patterns. This image will be seen on all infrared goggles and sensors. The thermosign generator has a 10-meter radius; it may create nothing larger than this radius. Creatures and items inside this radius will not be seen on infrared sensors. An image disc is required for the generator to create the infrared image. These discs must be custom-made and cost 100 Cr each. The generator is approximately a one meter cube. It requires a parabatery to operate. The generator uses one SEU each hour of operation.

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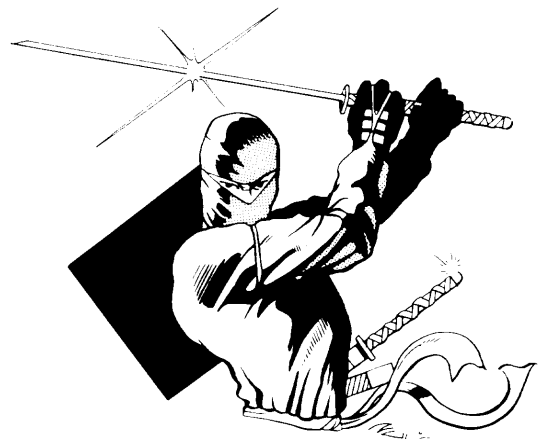
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An Interstellar Armory

*New defenses and weaponry for
STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks gaming*

by Gus Monter

Veteran Knight Hawks gamers may find the usual fare of interstellar combat goes better with a touch of the unexpected. This article presents a number of new devices for starship battles in the STAR FRONTIERS® game setting, all of them experimental in nature but certainly worth a try.

New Defenses

Energy shield

Energy shields (E-shields) do not so much deflect attacks as absorb them. This defense activates a plasma field that neutralizes destructive energy entering it. However, the plasma itself is neutralized when it absorbs the barrage. In this way, the shield overloads and becomes useless after so many attacks. E-shields are effective against all laser weapons, shatter drones, and disruptor-beam cannons. An E-shield acts as a reflective hull when activated.

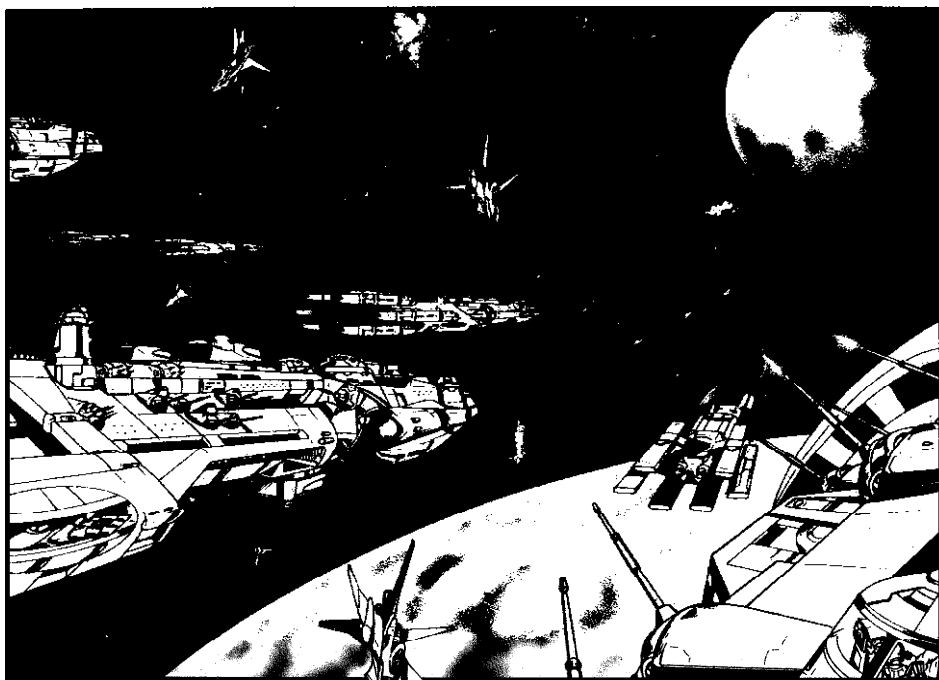
The shield must tap energy directly from the ship's generator in order to function. The total amount of SEU that can be drawn for a shield is equal to the ship's hull size (HS) times 50. The following table indicates how many SEU are required to absorb one hull point of damage from a weapon. Weapon types are from this article and from the Knight Hawks Tactical Operations Manual, page 14.

| | LP ¹ | LB | LC | SD ² | DC |
|-----|-----------------|----|----|-----------------|----|
| SEU | 5 | 10 | 20 | 40 | 30 |

¹ Laser piston (see below)

² Shatter drone (see below)

For example, a light cruiser finds itself in the unfriendly company of two corvettes, which promptly fire their laser cannons at it. The player of the light cruiser announces that he is activating his E-shield at an SEU of 200. The corvettes both roll hits, then damage is rolled and totalled to



the sum of 10. The shield can absorb (200/20 = 10) 10 hp damage, so the shield is wiped out in absorbing the full barrage. However, the ship still has 400 SEU to place in the E-shield (HS 12, 12 x 50 = 600, 600 - 200 = 400).

Masking field

This is a form of cloaking device that effectively camouflages a ship from detection systems. However, due to the delicacy of its effect, the field instantly drops if the masked ship moves or fires any weapons (this includes the launching of probes, decoys, shuttles, and fighters). It cannot be reactivated until two turns later. Also, the field has a tendency to create 1-4 ghostly holographic images of the hidden ship within a one-kilometer radius of the ship, on a 1% cumulative chance per turn of operation. These images cannot jam detectors, but they work well in fooling them. Of course, once an enemy sees a "ghost ship," it knows that a real ship is in the area as well. . . .

Mine damper

The mine damper is essentially like an E-shield, except that it is only effective against mines. It must be activated before the player's ship enters a mined hex. For a normal mine, 20 SEU are required to absorb a point of damage. It takes 100 SEU to absorb a screen mine.

Reinforced hull

This additional internal framework of struts and bulkheads adds greatly to the ship's ability to handle internal stress. When a ship is down to half its hull points, a -15 modifier is added to the ship's chance to break apart (see Tactical Operations Manual, page 13, "Hull Hits").

Seeker jammer

A seeker-missile jammer is a device that broadcasts a charge which causes a seeker missile to detonate in its current hex. The device has 1-3 charges and has an effective

New defenses: Table of equipment

| Defense | Cost (Cr)* | MHS* * | Availability | Program level | Function points |
|-----------------------|------------|--------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Energy shield | 3,000 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 12 |
| Contact deflectors | 1,000 | 5 | 1,2,3 | 2 | 9 |
| Masking field | 4,000 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 18 |
| Seeker jammer | 1,500 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| Armor plating | 1,500 | 6 | 1,2 | NA | NA |
| Armor plating (heavy) | 3,000 | 12 | 1 | NA | NA |
| Reinforced hull | 800 | 1 | 1,2,3 | NA | NA |
| Mine damper | 2,000 | 1 | 1,2 | 2 | 9 |

* The price listed must be multiplied by the ship's hull size for the final cost.

** Minimum hull size

range of 20,000 km per charge (i.e., it can have a range of 60,000 km if all the charges are used up). The jammer works as long as it is in range of the seeker missile. A charge only affects one seeker missile.

Armor plating

This is a relatively common form of protection on warships. The armor is made up of two layers of plasteel beneath tritanium surfacing. It is effective against laser pistons, laser power torches, rocket

batteries, and mines, giving these weapons a -15% chance to hit. It adds 200 structural points to the hull.

The heavier form of armor is essentially the same as the lighter one, except it has a special ceramic alloy between the two plasteel layers. It adds 300 structural points and is also effective against laser cannons, laser batteries, and electrical beam batteries, giving these weapons a -15% chance to hit and penetrate, -20% against the attack forms affected by the lighter armor plating described above.

Contact deflectors

This is a precautionary device used by starships entering combat, asteroid belts, gas clouds; and uncharted regions. Basically, it insulates the ship from contact with minor asteroids, meteorites, crashing ships, and other forms of space debris. When passing through an asteroid belt, a ship with contact deflectors adds a bonus of 30 to the result in step A in the asteroid movement procedure (see the Knight Hawks Campaign Book Expansion Rules, page 34).

New weapons: Table of equipment

| Weapon | Cost (Cr) | MHS | Avail. | PL | FP | DTM | HDR | FF | RD | MPO | LTD | RA |
|--------------|-----------|-----|--------|----|----|-----|------|----|----|-----|-----|----|
| Laser piston | 1,500 | 1* | 1,2,3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 1-5 | FF | RD | | | 6 |
| Tractor beam | 35,000 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | | RD | MPO | | 3 |
| Fusion bomb | 3,000 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | -20 | 5d10 | | | MPO | LTD | 0 |
| Screen mine | 5,000 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | | | | LTD | 0 |
| Maxi-missile | 3,000 | 5 | 1,2 | 1 | 2 | -5 | 3d10 | FF | | MPO | LTD | 5 |

Abbreviations at the top of table are: cost in credits, minimum hull size (MHS), availability, program level (PL), function points (FP), damage table modifier (DTM), hull damage rating (HDR), forward firing (FF), range diffusion (RD), moving player only (MPO), limited supply (LTD), and range (RA).

* Maximum hull size of 2

New combat table

| Weapon | Percentage chance to hit against this defense | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|-----|--------|--|--|
| | No | RH | PS | ES | SS | MS | AP | AP (h) | | |
| Laser cannon | 75 | 60 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 25 | | -15 | | |
| Laser battery | 65 | 50 | 65 | 65 | 75 | 20 | | -15 | | |
| PB battery | 60 | 60 | 25 | 70 | 40 | 50 | | -15 | | |
| EB battery | 60 | 60 | 70 | 25 | 40 | 50 | | -15 | | |
| Disruptor cannon | 60 | 60 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 50 | | | | |
| Torpedo | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 75 | 50 | | | | |
| Assault rocket | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | | | | |
| Rocket battery | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | -15 | -20 | | |
| Mine | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 80 | 60 | -15 | -20 | | |
| Seeker missile | 75 | 75 | 75 | 75 | 90 | 75 | | | | |
| Laser piston | 60 | 45 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 15 | -15 | -20 | | |
| Fusion bomb | 70 | 70 | 70 | 70 | 80 | 70 | | | | |
| Screen mine | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 80 | 60 | | | | |
| Maxi-missile | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 70 | 50 | | | | |
| Tractor beam | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 50 | 60 | | | | |

Weapon Percentage chance to hit using gunnery skills

| Weapon | No | RH | PS | ES | SS | MS |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Laser piston | 55 | 40 | 55 | 55 | 55 | 10 |
| Fusion bomb | 60 | 60 | 60 | 60 | 70 | 60 |
| Maxi-missile | 40 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 60 | 40 |
| Tractor beam | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 50 |

In other cases (including ramming), dice are rolled, and a score of 15 or less indicates the ship has been hit – but the contact deflectors were useless because the ship was hit head-on. This outcome can be avoided by using the pilot's evasive maneuver ability (3% x pilot skill level) or a ramming pilot's chance to maneuver (10% x pilot skill level). However, if the roll was higher than 15, the deflectors have a 20% chance to avoid ramming damage. For this rule to apply, the ramming ship must be HS 4 or less.

For example, a fighter is down to 2 hull points and the ship's level -4 pilot decides to ram a destroyer head-on, thereby making the destroyer's contact deflectors useless. The base chance is 15%; after adding the pilot's skill (10 x 4 = 40, 40 + 15 = 55), it becomes a 55% chance; but the destroyer's level -5 pilot attempts to evade (3 x 5 = 15). Therefore, the ramming pilot has a 40% chance to hit head-on. He fails his rolls; the destroyer player rolls a 15, so the fighter ship explodes harmlessly against the destroyer's hull.

New Weaponry

Laser piston

The laser piston is essentially a miniaturized version of the laser cannon. This

weapon is often used on vehicles, from fighters to hovercycles. A fighter using a laser piston must forsake any other weapons except a fusion bomb or an assault rocket.

Tractor beam

The tractorbeam is not really a weapon. It is a powerfully energized electromagnetic beam which draws large metallic objects toward it. The object is held just within the beam's range and can be drawn in at a rate of two hexes per turn. The beaming ship must cut its speed to zero before it can draw in the "tractored" object. Spaceships can use this device on any ship eight hull sizes less than the beaming ship's own hull size. The beam must make a roll to hit (modified by the defending ship's pilot's chance to evade), after which the tractored ship can only break free by accelerating to a rate of 10 hexes per turn, at which point the captured ship moves away at one hex per turn. Accelerating to further multiples of ten allows the captured ship to move away at rates reduced to 10% of the ship's acceleration; thus, a ship accelerating at 20 hexes per turn moves at two hexes per turn, etc.

For example, a light cruiser chasing an Imp-class yacht comes into beaming range and, after a successful roll, locks onto the yacht. Because it was not at top speed and

its ADF matches the light cruiser's, it is doubtful that the yacht can escape in time before it is boarded. Instead, it fires its laser battery at the beaming ship, which will draw the yacht into boarding position in about one turn.

Maxi-missile

The maxi-missile is essentially a rocket with 3-5 warheads. Therefore, while it has a lesser chance to hit than an assault rocket, it does more damage on contact.

Fusion bomb

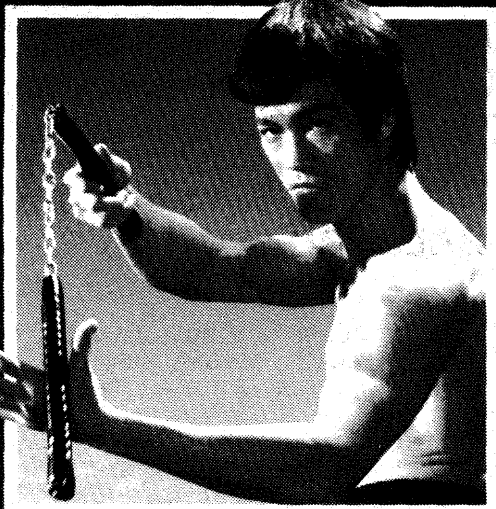
The fusion bomb is so deadly a weapon that it is "dropped" rather than fired at an enemy. The bomb's unstable nature is such that reaction drives places near it could trigger the bomb before it reaches its target. Thus, the range of this weapon is merely the same hex as the launching ship. A popular fighter ship tactic is to make repeated bombing runs along a larger vessel, with the result being a chain of explosions eventually consuming the target.

Screen mines

Screen mines operate like other mines, save that their effect upon contact is to destroy any activated screens, fields, or E-shields.

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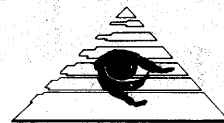
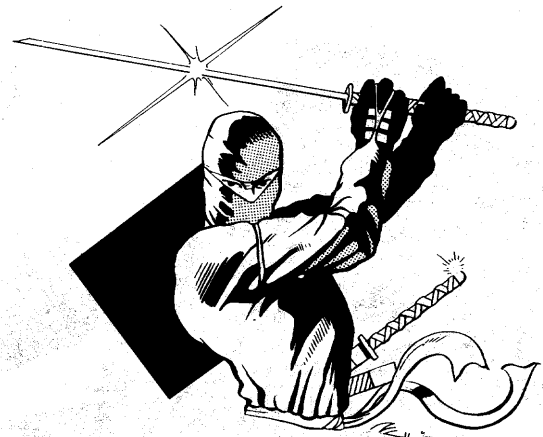
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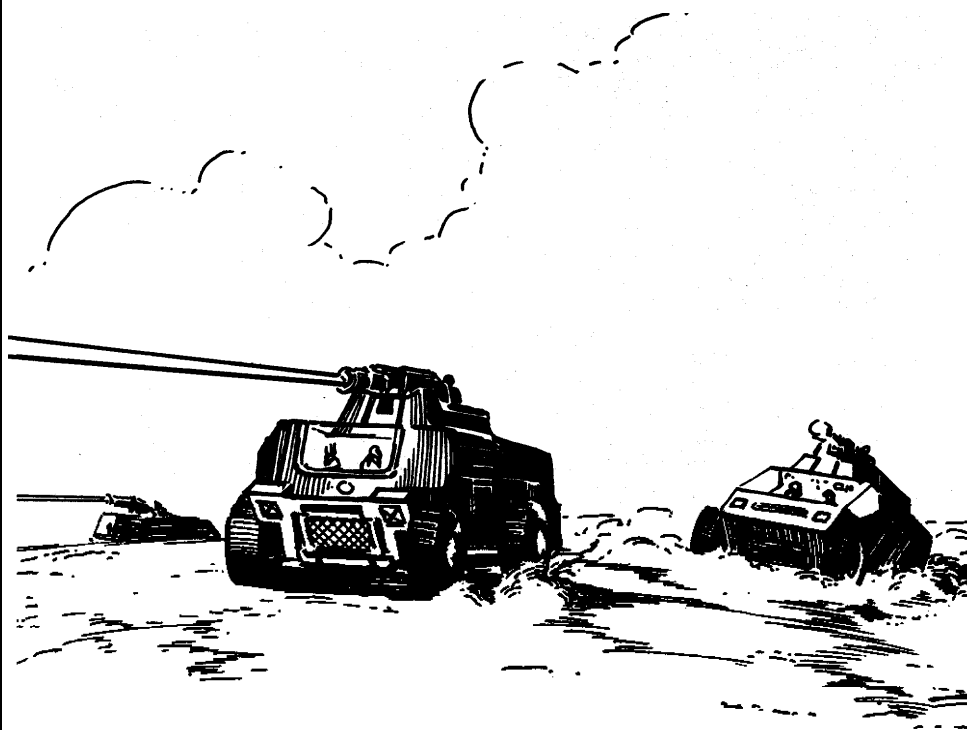


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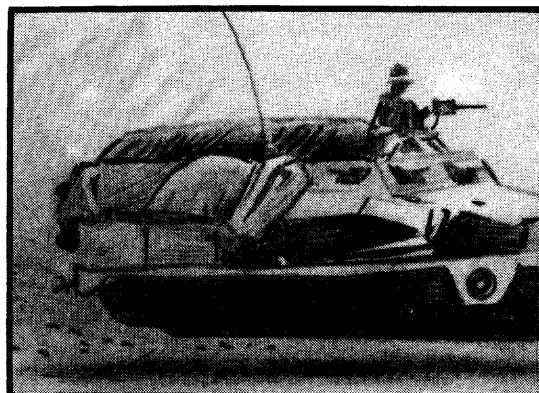
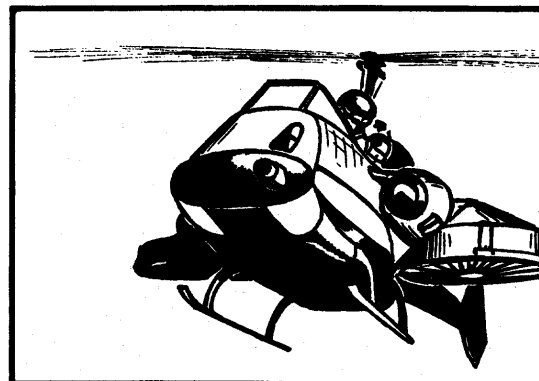
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Here Comes the Cavalry!



*Conventional warfare in the
STAR FRONTIERS® game*



by **Matt Bandy**

Some gamers (myself included) are attracted to the idea of combining role-playing with wargaming. For the most part, however, we are given only tantalizing bits of such a combination that leave us hungry for more. "The Battle of Voltarnus" in STAR FRONTIERS® module SF2 is a good example. The module is great fun, but it ends too quickly. There's Alex Curylo's article, "Tanks a lot!" which appeared in DRAGON® issue #199 which deals with modifying civilian vehicles for combat. But would there not exist vehicles designed solely for combat purposes? This article presents just such vehicles, based on Alex's article noted above.

Cavalry

Four basic divisions exist in any well-balanced military organization: infantry,

cavalry, artillery, and command. This article deals with cavalry — that branch of an army organized and equipped for missions requiring great mobility. Statistics for particularly important cavalry vehicles are listed in Table 1. Airborne vehicles are also considered cavalry. Particularly important airborne vehicles are shown on Table 2.

The effects that different types of terrain have on cavalry vehicles is important in the calculation of realistic rates of movement. These effects are shown in Table 3. Detailed explanations of terrain types are given in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules.

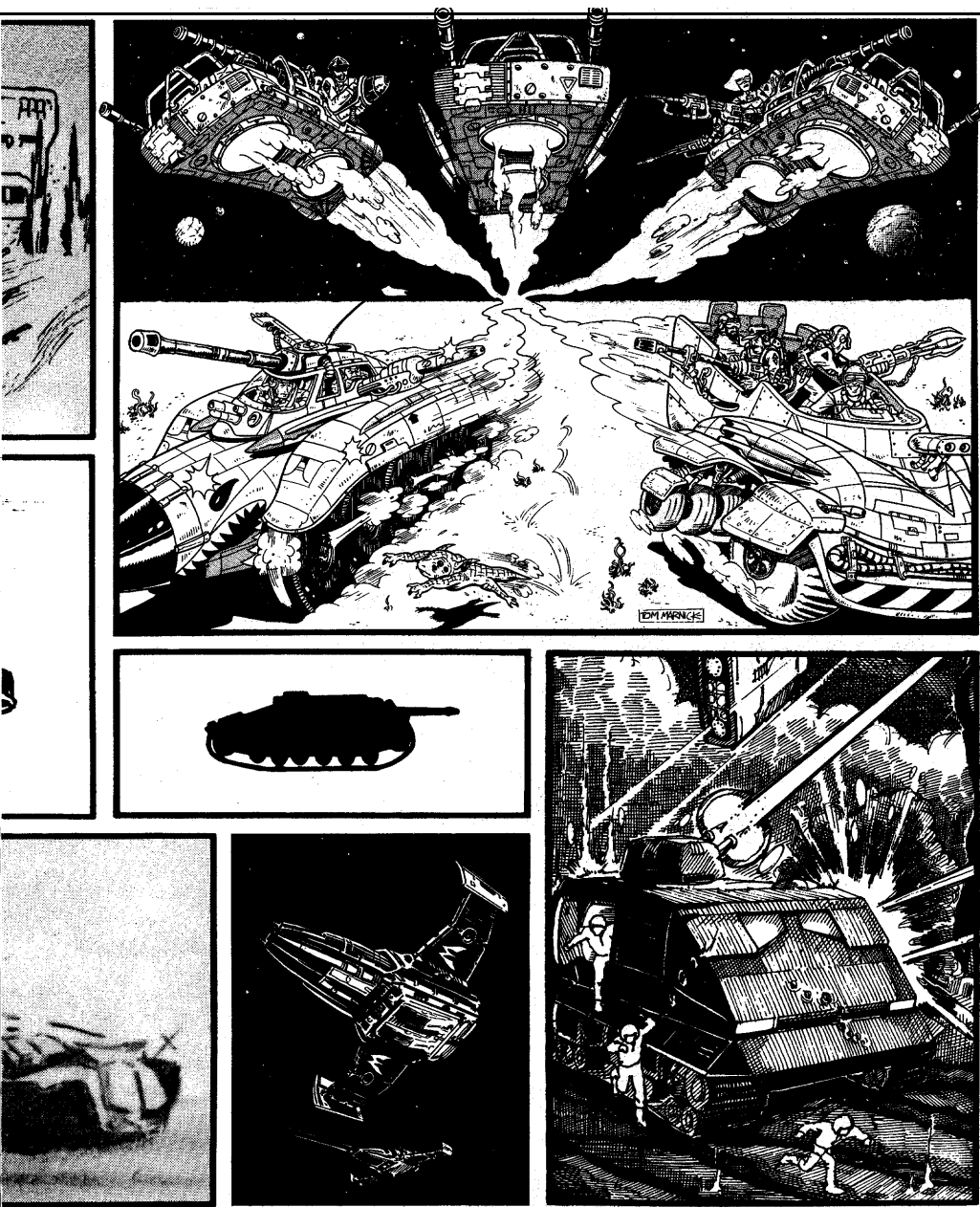
Bumping maneuvers

The vehicles dealt with in this article may take any action, such as bumping and slipping, that normal vehicles can. The battlewagon is an exception to this rule, as its actions may be limited by its size. Some

examples of bumping seem pretty unlikely, such as a hovercycle running an explorer off the road. To correct this situation and to integrate cavalry vehicles into the game, each vehicle has been assigned a "bump number." These numbers are listed in Table 4.

When a bumping situation occurs, the referee finds the difference between the two vehicles' Bump Numbers and multiplies that number by five. The result is added to the modified reaction speed score of the driver of the higher-valued vehicle, then subtracted from that of the driver of the lower-valued vehicle. A percentile-die roll is made for each driver to resolve the success or failure of the bump. Rolls of 01-05 always indicate success, just as rolls of 96-00 always indicate failure.

For example, a hovercycle is trying to run a ground car off the road. A quick look at Table 4 shows the difference be-



tween the two vehicles' Bump Numbers to be four. The hovercycle driver's score of 63 minus 20 ($4 \times 5 = 20$) is 43, and the ground car driver's score of 81 plus 20 (for being the driver of the higher-valued vehicle) and minus 30 (for being the vehicle bumped) is 71. The hovercycle driver makes a 1d100 roll of 26, meaning he maintained control of his vehicle. The ground car driver, however, is not so fortunate: a roll of 95 indicates loss of control. The referee now consults the Control Table in the Alpha Dawn expanded rules (page 31) and continues play.

When a driver loses control of his vehicle, standard procedures governing this situation apply. The exceptions to this rule are the tank (ground) and the battlegon. Due to their low centers of gravity and width, these two vehicles do not roll over. Treat a result of either "roll" or "roll and burn" as a spin.

Armaments, defenses, and sensors

Defenses and sensors, instrumental in locating and dealing with the enemy, are shown according to vehicular type on Table 5. Power screens may be of any type covered in the Alpha Dawn rules, the most common being albedo, inertia, and holographic screens. Albedo and inertia screens are detailed in "Tanks a lot!" Holographic screens are described in the following paragraph.

For use in sneak attacks, vehicles are commonly fitted with holo screens equipped with camouflage feedback loops. In certain terrains, however, this tactic is not effective. In passage over sand dunes, vehicles tend to raise a cloud of dust that the holo screen cannot hide, creating suspicion among observers. In these instances, it is best to disguise the vehicle as something more regionally appropriate, such as a thundering herd of camels. Holo screens cannot disguise or hide a vehicle

from radar or infrared sensors. Holo screens use three SEU per. Minute.

Armaments are shown according to which turret they occupy in each type of ground vehicle on Table 6. The same is done for airborne vehicles on Table 7.

The following section regarding bombs is the only part of this article that deviates from the rules set forth in "Tanks a lot!" That section of Mr. Curylo's article oversimplified the topic.

Bombs do damage of varying severity according to the distance an object is from them when they explode. This is illustrated on Table 8. The chance of a bomb hitting its target is equal to one-half of the bomber's dexterity score, modified. In the event of a miss, use the Grenade Bounce Diagrams on page 24 of the Alpha Dawn expanded rules book. The asterisk represents the target and the arrow represents the direction the bomber is travelling. The distance by which the bomb misses its target is dependent upon the altitude of the bomber, as shown on Table 9.

The bomb explodes one turn after being dropped, giving the bomber that amount of time to vacate the blast radius. Failure to vacate the blast area results in damage to the bomber.

Due to the increased sophistication involved in the engineering, Manufacture, and application of futuristic vehicles, a great degree of skill will be required to operate these machines. Skill requirements for operating the vehicles dealt with in this article are shown on Table 10.

Targeting systems

Numerous targeting systems are in use throughout the Frontier Sector. The most common are the eye-weapon coordination (EWC), manual, and cyberlink systems. The cyberlink system is explained in "Yanks a lot!" The remaining two are described in the paragraphs that follow.

"Eye-weapon coordination" means that the gunner's eyes and weapons are linked in such a way that they move in tandem. This is accomplished through the use of a special helmet fitted with a low-power laser. The laser follows the movements of the wearer's eyes and, through a complex circuitry link, brings the weapons to bear along the wearer's line of sight. When the weapons are aimed at the target, the gunner has only to push a button, flip a switch, or pull a trigger to fire any combination of weapons. The helmet can be switched from infrared to normal vision and can be turned on or off. The gunner need not expose himself to enemy fire, for each helmet is also linked to a set of infrared and video cameras. The images these cameras receive are projected onto the inside of the helmet visor.

On all the vehicles detailed in this article, the weapons are controlled by EWC. The vehicles have one gunner operating each turret who may fire any combination of the weapons mounted on the turret in any one direction on a given turn. Of course,

Table 1
Land Vehicles

| Vehicle | Top speed | Turn speed | AC/DC | Crew | Parabattery | Mileage |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|-------|--------|-------------|----------|
| Hover vehicles | | | | | | |
| Hovertank | 200 | 70 | 60/40 | 3 | 4 | 4 SEU/km |
| APC | 230 | 80 | 70/60 | 2 (20) | 3 | 2 SEU/km |
| Battlewagon | 150 | 50 | 40/30 | 5 | 5* | 8 SEU/km |
| Ground vehicles | | | | | | |
| Tank | 130 | 100 | 70/60 | 3 | 4 | 4 SEU/km |
| APC | 130 | 100 | 60/50 | 2 (20) | 3 | 2 SEU/km |

* A parabattery type 5 costs 8,700 credits, weighs 400 kg, and produces 8,000 SEU.

Key to Table 1

AC/DC: Acceleration/Deceleration
 Crew: Minimum number of crew members required for the vehicle to operate at maximum efficiency. Value in parentheses shows passenger capacity.
 Speeds: Given in meters per turn.
 Turn speeds: Because of their low centers of gravity, most vehicles shown here have high turn speeds.
 Mileage: The mileage properties of the vehicles are given because all the systems of said vehicles (i.e. weapons, defenses, sensors, and targeting systems) as well as the engine draw power from the vehicle's parabattery. A tally of SEU used should be kept by the players or referee.
 Hovertank: A large, armored vehicle that floats 50 cm above the ground on a cushion of air. It resembles the tanks of today sans treads.
 APC: Armored Personnel Carrier. Both ground and hover APCs look like large, armored transports and can carry 18 passengers. These passengers can all vacate the APC in two turns via the 10 hatches in the ceiling of the passenger compartment. These hatches may be opened to serve as firing ports.
 Battlewagon: A huge, armored vehicle wide enough to take up two lanes of a highway, and designed to carry out extremely hazardous missions individually.
 Tank: A large, armored vehicle much like modern-day tanks in appearance and locomotion.

Table 2
Airborne Vehicles

| Vehicle | Top speed | Cruise speed | AC/DC | Turns | Crew | Parabattery | Mileage |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|---------|-------|------|-------------|----------|
| Attack helicopter | 600 | 100 | 120/120 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 8 SEU/km |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | 1500 | 650 | 120/120 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 8 SEU/km |

Key to Table 2

Turns: The number of 45° turns the vehicle can make in one game turn.
 Attack helicopter: An armed and armored jetcopter designed to combat enemy ground forces.
 VTOL fighter-bomber: An armored aircar with exterior weapon mounts that is designed for high-speed bombing runs. However, it is versatile enough to hold its own in a dogfight.

Table 3
Effects of Terrain

| Vehicle | Clear | Broken | Rugged | Bog | Water | Highway | Hazard |
|----------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|-------|---------|--------|
| Hover vehicles | | | | | | | |
| Hovertank | 1.0 | 0.8 | - | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| APC | 1.0 | 0.7 | - | 0.9 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 0.8 |
| Battlewagon | 1.0 | 0.8 | - | 1.0 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 0.8 |
| Ground vehicles | | | | | | | |
| Tank | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 0.7 | - | 1.1 | - |
| APC | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.3 | 0.6 | - | 1.2 | - |
| Airborne | | | | | | | |
| Attack helicopter* | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.6 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.6 |
| VTOL fighter-bomber* | 1.0 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.4 |

* Modifiers apply only if the vehicle is within 100 meters of the surface. Above that altitude, movement is at 1.0.

**Table 4
Vehicle Bump Numbers**

| Vehicle | Bump number |
|------------------|-------------|
| Hovercycle | 1 |
| Ground cycle | 2 |
| Hovercar | 4 |
| Ground car | 5 |
| Hover transport | 6 |
| Ground transport | 7 |
| APC (hover) | 9 |
| APC (ground) | 10 |
| Hovertank | 12 |
| Explorer | 13 |
| Tank | 14 |
| Battlewagon | 16 |

weapons firing once every two or four turns must respect their limitations. EWC gives the user a +30 modifier to hit. The gunner receives no additional bonuses due to weapons skills.

“Manual” operation means the gunner operates the weapon by hand. This is by far the most common targeting system in civilian use. The gunner using this system must expose himself to enemy fire but will have hard cover if the weapon is mounted on a vehicle. Skill bonuses apply when using this system.

UPF and Sathar use

The UPF and Sathar war machines have little use for cavalry vehicles, as they are expensive and easily destroyed by planetary defenses in any attempted landing. Nevertheless, each faction does maintain a small complement of cavalry vehicles aboard assault transports, in case the attackers happen to cripple the enemy’s planetary defenses.

Planetary governments, however, are a different matter entirely. Being fast and durable, cavalry is an important factor in any planetary engagement and constitutes a large part of all planetary governmental armies in the Frontier. For what it’s worth, large Sathar biogenetic constructs are also considered cavalry.

On a final note, EWC systems, all weapons, and all defenses presented in this article are banned from civilian use (except by UPF Grant #739) by the Arms Proliferation Act.

**Table 8
Bombs**

| Distance from bomb | Damage | |
|--------------------|--------|-------|
| | Light | Heavy |
| 0-20 m | 25d10 | 50d10 |
| 21-50 m | 20d10 | 40d10 |
| 51-100 m | 15d10 | 30d10 |
| 101-200 m | 10d10 | 20d10 |
| 201-300 m | 5d10 | 10d10 |
| 301-400 m | — | 5d10 |
| 401+ m | — | — |

**Table 6
Defenses, Sensors, and Turrets**

| Vehicle | Sensors | Defenses | Turrets |
|---------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------|
| Hover | | | |
| Hovertank | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A20 | 2 (L) |
| APC | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A15 | 1(M) |
| Battlewagon | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A25 | 3(L) |
| Ground | | | |
| APC | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A20 | 1(M) |
| Tank | IR,V,SL | IRJ,S,A25 | 2(L) |
| Airborne | | | |
| Attack helicopter | IR,V,SL,R | IRJ,S,ES,A20 | 1(M), 4 (Pods) |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | IR,V,SL,R | IRJ,S,ES,A20 | 1(M), 4 (Pods) |

Key to Table 5

IR: Infrared cameras V: Video cameras SL: Searchlight
 R: Radar IRJ: Infrared jammer A: Armor (# of coats)
 S: Power screen(s) ES: Ejection seat

**Table 6
Armaments for Ground Vehicles**

| Vehicle | Turret | | |
|-------------|------------|------|-------|
| | One | Two | Three |
| Hover | | | |
| Hovertank | VMG,VHL | GMx6 | - |
| APC | VMG | - | - |
| Battlewagon | VMG,VHL | C,FT | GMx6 |
| Ground | | | |
| Tank | VMG,VHL,FT | GMx8 | - |
| APC | VMG,FT | - | - |

Key to Table 6

VMG: Vehicle machine gun VHL: Vehicle heavy laser GM: Guided missile (Type 2)
 C: Cannon FT: Flamethrower B: Bomb (Heavy)

**Table 7
Armaments for Airborne Vehicles**

| Vehicle | Turret | Pod number | | | | Pylons |
|---------------------|--------|------------|-----|-------|------|--------|
| | | One | Two | Three | Four | |
| Attack helicopter | VHL | GMx4 | VMG | GMx4 | VMG | Bx2 |
| VTOL fighter-bomber | VHL | GMx2 | VMG | GMx2 | VMG | Bx6 |

Key to Table 7

VMG: Vehicle machine gun VHL: Vehicle heavy laser GM: Guided missile (Type 2)
 C: Cannon FT: Flamethrower B: Bomb (Heavy)

**Table 9
Distance of Miss**

| Altitude of bomber | Miss distance |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Point blank | 20m |
| Short | 50m |
| Medium | 150m |
| Long | 250m |
| Extreme | 350m |

**Table 10
Skill Requirements**

| Vehicle | Driver skill requirement |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| APC | Technician 1 |
| Hovertank | Technician 2 |
| Tank | Technician 2 |
| Battlewagon | Technician 4 |
| Attack helicopter | Technician 4 |
| VTOL ftr./bmbr. | Technician 5 |

Ω

The Leader of the Pack

*Leadership
abilities in the
STAR FRONTIERS®
game*

by Steven E. Williams

It's a Saturday afternoon, and you and a group of friends are enjoying a STAR FRONTIERS® game. Take a moment to step outside the game and observe your fellow players. Is one known for the ability to crack a joke at just the right time? Does another come alive in a situation involving a no-nonsense decision to accomplish a specific task?

Some players steer a group socially. Others steer a group toward a predetermined goal in the adventure. In real life, these types of behavior have been separated by psychologists into two kinds of leadership: social and task-oriented. This division is drawn in the STAR FRONTIERS game universe as well, and is indicated by the PER/LDR ability pair.

A PER score, or personality score, measures a character's ability to adapt in interpersonal situations. Wit, charm, comeliness, and a sense of humor contribute to a high PER; gravy stains on a shirt and bad breath don't. All of these characteristics — both good and bad — are reflected numerically in a character's PER score.

A great use for PER lies in replacing the Carousing skill that TRAVELLER® game players miss in STAR FRONTIERS games. To accommodate this need, the referee should roll a PER check in any situation in which a PC socializes with an NPC.

For example, consider Rico the Snake, a 20-year-old Human military specialist

(thug) whose PER/LDR score is 30/40. He enters a bar in an unsavory section of the city and tries to make a new friend, upon whom he hopes to unload a hot hovercycle. The referee modifies Rico's PER according to his familiarity with the setting: Since the bar is in his home city, the referee gives the roll a modifier of +20, adding an additional modification of +10 for the stranger's receptive mood (i.e., slightly drunk). That gives Rico a chance of 60 (30 + 20 + 10) on the percentile dice of befriending the stranger. A 43 is rolled; Rico makes a good first impression on the stranger. The stranger tells Rico that his name is Carlos.

When the referee rolls a PER check, he should observe the table of racial reaction modifiers (STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Rules, p. 60). Because both Rico and Carlos are Human, there is no racial modifier. But only highly intelligent societies have eradicated stereotypes. Therefore, racial modifiers usually belong in calculations involving personality. Otherwise, the referee should restrict the modifiers to the general mood of the NPC and to the PC's familiarity with the setting.

Having gained Carlos' confidence, Rico decides to tell his new friend that he has acquired a new hovercycle. The outcome here depends on PER as well. In addition to the ability to win friends, PER determines a character's persuasive abilities. When a PC tries to persuade a group of NPCs, regardless of whether or not he has learned Persuasion, the referee should roll a PER check.

As a rule, a PER check should accompany any negotiations for money or seduction attempts. Successful or unsuccessful rolls don't necessarily mean success or failure in negotiations, although they may influence just how much a PC can get. Charm, or the power of personality, can swing a deal to the advantage of either participant.

Rico, rolling against the same modified chance of 60 that allowed him to rub elbows with Carlos, now tries to persuade Carlos to buy the hovercycle. The roll is 32; Carlos is interested. Unfortunately, he lacks the cash to put forth even a trifling offer. In return for Cr 50, however, Carlos offers the name of someone who needs a hovercycle. Rico the Snake accepts the lead. He gets up to leave the bar to find his prospective client.

In meeting strangers or settling a business deal, a high PER score can be a great asset. Social grace and magnetism help characters in many situations. In a crisis, however, a different brand of leadership emerges. Measured in LDR, this type of leadership involves the no-nonsense communication taught to military officers.

Task-oriented leaders are less interested in cordial relations than are social leaders. Whether Human flesh or Vrusk hide is on the line, danger affords no time to crack a joke. While in command, task-oriented leaders are more direct and more control-



ling. In fact, a good task-oriented leader may have a lousy personality.

So how does recognizing task-oriented leadership spice up the game? By way of rolling against the value of LDR, characters can advise others under pressure.

Suppose Rico and Carlos, while carousing in the bar, find themselves caught up in a brawl. Three upset Yazirians have started a fight. Rico, who holds Skill Level 3 in Martial Arts, yells, "Slap them in the eyes — they're sensitive!" Rolling against his LDR score of 40, Rico rolls a 29; he has told Carlos, who knows nothing about the martial arts, what to do. In the melee phase, Carlos tries to whomp his aggressor's reflective goggles. He succeeds and escapes being hurt. In this example, Rico has lent his Martial Arts skills to Carlos.

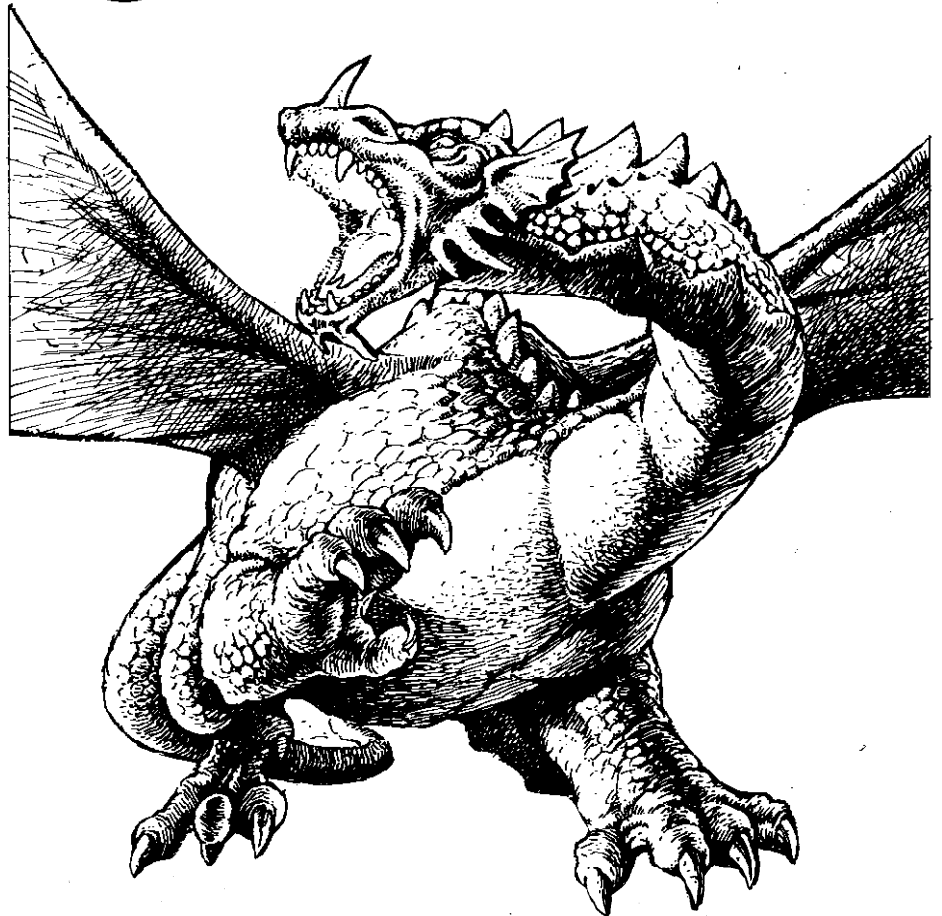
Translated into figures the referee can understand, the lending of a skill requires verification that the prospective listener can hear the speaker and a LDR check for the speaker. If both conditions are met and the LDR check succeeds, the listener borrows the skill. In all cases, the borrowed skill is received at Skill Level 1 on a temporary basis. In the case of Rico slapping the eyes of the Yazirian, the temporary basis was one round.

Keep in mind several limitations for lending and borrowing skills. A PC must reach Skill Level 2 in a skill before being able to lend it. Skills that may be shared include only military skills and the most basic in the remaining categories (such as Operating Computers, First Aid, Operating Vehicles, Stealth, and Concealment). Furthermore, a skill is received at Level 1 despite the expertise of the lender. It is impossible for a PC to make everyone nearby an expert in these skills.

Consider another application of skill-lending at the scene of the barroom brawl. Eventually, the fighting subsides and the Yazirians stumble out the door. Rico has suffered 20 points of damage from being clubbed with a Yazirian paw and a broken bottle. Even though Rico possesses First Aid at Skill Level 2, he cannot perform First Aid on himself; that skill can be performed on others only. But he is still conscious and decides to lend First Aid to Carlos. To succeed, Rico must roll less than his LDR score: 40. He rolls 84; as a result, he has failed to communicate the remedy effectively. Carlos, who finds himself unable to set the bandage, could try again, but getting his friend to the hospital might be more helpful.

Skill-lending, though limited in itself, can really improve an adventure on the whole by encouraging players to cooperate. An injured medic can advise another person on treating wounds. A vehicles specialist can coach non-drivers in the ways to use various kinds of transportation. By pointing out solid cover, a military character can help his friends evade enemy fire. Using LDR in this way justifies characters of different interests and professions coming together in the first place. Ω

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The Whole-Earth Ecology

Building a better alien in the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Danny Kretzer

Glakket and his Yazirian companion slashed their way through the dense jungle. Suddenly, a gigantic bird swooped down, claws flashing. In an instant, the Yazirian was gone, leaving the Vrusk explorer alone. . . .

"Whaaaaat?!" cried the player. "How could a giant-sized bird even budge something with a Yazirian's mass? And how could it find room to fly, much less swoop, in the middle of a dense jungle?"

"Well, I guess there was a break in the branches," replied the referee, nervously ignoring the first question.

"This jungle is miles in diameter! Why would a creature spend time flying above it in hopes that another creature would be in one of the few clearings at the same time it flew over?"

The referee simply shrugged.

"Well, where is its natural habitat?"

"Um . . . in the mountains to the south. But sometimes it goes hunting over the woods," said the referee.

"So, it does fly over this extremely dense jungle in hopes that a meal will conveniently pass through the clearings. But it's a fact that birds need to eat their weight or more in food each day, so there's no way that a giant flying bird could survive in these circumstances and have strength to pick a hireling out of a jungle. In real life, that bird would not have the strength to lift its own head off the ground due to lack of nourishment!"

The referee sighed. Perhaps it was time to try a fantasy game. No one ever questioned giant flying birds there.

All too often in STAR FRONTIERS® games, I see creatures that are so poorly

adapted to their environment that players begin to wonder how these creatures manage to survive. Referees create exotic plants and animals which could never really live together in one environment. The presence of unrealistic alien ecologies often cause players to wonder if there is any special reason for the flaws they perceive. The first thing players will suspect is that Sathar may have tampered with the ecology of the planet, sending the PCs off the track of the actual adventure in search of a Sathar base. Keeping the game on track and keeping the game balanced and believable are good reasons for a well-planned ecology.

When designing other-worldly creatures, the referee should add the following guidelines to those given in the STAR FRONTIERS® Expanded Game Rules. Note that these are very general guidelines, and numerous exceptions could exist for each such suggestion.

Appearance: Creatures often have the same colors on their dorsal sides as their surroundings ("dorsal" means the back of a creature), with white or pale colors on their ventral sides (i.e., the underbelly of a creature). Many small creatures, such as insects, are brightly colored when concealment is of minor concern or color is important for social identification. How well any natural camouflage works is completely up to the referee, though it should usually be helpful.

Consider, too, the location of a creature's eyes. As a general biological rule, predators have eyes on the fronts of their heads (to coordinate their attacks with binocular vision), and their prey have eyes on the sides of their heads (to detect predators over wide visual areas). The location of the eyes helps the referee determine how easily a creature can be surprised.

Nearly every mammal has fur or hair, serving as insulation for the creature and, if thick enough, as armor (to a limited extent). Fish, birds, and amphibians have no fur, but the referee may wish to have lizards, for example, grow fur in arctic regions. Some dinosaurs are believed to have had fur or feathers.

Physical form: Certain creatures might not be completely solid in form. Invertebrates such as the slug, worm, jellyfish, and medusa have no rigid internal structure; some creatures could almost be liquids. Such creatures would usually dwell in oceans or other mediums which would support their weight.

Attack forms: Almost all creatures have one or more methods of attack. Carnivores would usually attack with jaws or claws, and sometimes with a tail slap or sting. Herbivores generally attack only with limbs (like a horse's hooves) or by ramming and goring (like a rhino's horn). Sometimes, if large enough, herbivores can trample. Herbivores may bite but rarely do so by preference.

Plants that attack might have mouthlike leaves like those on a Venus flytrap. Alien plants would likely "attack" with thorns (perhaps poisoned) or with poisonous spores.

The referee should feel encouraged to create brand new attack forms, such as an acid spray, special venom, or maybe a sonic boom. However, attack forms should be suited to the creature using them, and should reasonably be expected to work against the creature's worst biological enemy. Avoid completely ridiculous attack forms unless you can find an analog for them in Earthly biology.

Defense forms: All creatures have one form of defense or another. Herbivores and omnivores usually have more effective defenses since they need them the most. Defense forms include protective shells, thick hides, heavy fur, increased speed, and sharpened senses. The referee should decide what bonus the creature should get from a defense; for example, a creature with a fur coat 5 cm thick might get a bonus of -15 to the attacker's hit roll with melee weapons, and it could take 5 points off the damage roll from nonenergy weapons. Large carnivores living on a planet that has no intelligent weapon-wielding predators will likely not be well defended

unless they need protecting from their preys' attacks or from other carnivores.

Speed: Small creatures would usually be fast or very fast. The referee should keep in mind that defenses like armor plating or heavy fur impede the speed of a creature and should only be given to large creatures that usually move slowly anyway.

Herbivores that are medium- to small-sized should never be any slower than medium speed, unless the predators are equally sluggish or unless the herbivores have a powerful defense form. Likewise, this rule should apply to carnivores. Giant- and large-sized creatures are usually slow-

er (unless they can fly), as are herbivores of this size, since they have more weight to move around.

Flying: Carnivorous flying creatures usually hunt prey on the open ground or on the surface of water. The terrain over which they are found usually helps determine their size. In the opening instance with the Yazirian-eating bird, the creature's size would impede its flight capability through the trees, and it couldn't see very well through the branches to catch its prey. In the woods, flying carnivores should never be larger than medium at best, and only that large in extreme cases. Larger flyers generally stick to the mountains or open areas. Smaller flyers will stay away from exceptionally windy areas, since they would be blown around like leaves. And please note that even the largest flying creatures in existence today would be unable to lift a medium-sized dog, much less a grouchy Yazirian with full combat/exploration gear!

Numbers: Tiny and small creatures are often found in large groups if they are social, especially if they have attack forms which can be combined to be dangerous to larger creatures. Medium-sized creatures might also be found in packs and herds. Medium carnivore numbers vary, since some travel in packs (like wolves) while others will hunt alone (like mountain lions). Hunting techniques may thus dictate group sizes.

Large- to giant-sized creatures might be found in smaller groups if they are herbivores, but carnivores will rarely be found in groups larger than packs or prides of eight individuals or less. This is because large carnivores that must hunt and bring down prey cannot stand great competition for food. Imagine the food requirements of a herd of tyrannosaurs!

On a planetary scale, there should be a great many small creatures serving as prey, a good number of medium prey and small predators, few large prey and medium predators, and very few large predators. The referee should remember this when he is making a random encounter table and make large predators a less likely encounter. This guideline, the food-chain ratio, is rarely applied but is critical if a realistic ecology is desired.

Special abilities: When a referee decides to give any creature a special ability, he should take into account the following: size, special attacks or defenses, intelligence, and dietary type (carnivore, herbivore, or omnivore). A large, intelligent carnivore with a poison sting should have few and limited (if any!) special abilities. A small herbivore of low intelligence without any attack or defense to speak of can have more and better special abilities. Herbivores or omnivores that are preyed upon will usually have special abilities keyed toward defense or camouflage.

Restrictions: Most, if not all, creatures have some type of restriction. If a carnivore has a restriction (which it should),

then its prey is bound to take advantage of it. To give a modern example, killer whales cannot survive on land. When one attacks a group of penguins, they quickly swim to land or a floating ice floe. This prevents the whale from completely wiping out the penguins, though a few penguins are usually caught anyway, thus allowing the orca to survive; both prey and predator benefit from the restriction, since a loss of prey means a loss of predators. The restrictions don't always have to be as obvious as this example. Restrictions should never allow every member of the prey's group to survive, or else the predator dies out. Of course, clever characters will observe the restrictions of different creatures and use them in their favor.

Intelligence: Almost every highly intelligent creature I've seen in any game adventure has been roughly man-sized and humanoid in design. Just because it happened that way on Earth doesn't mean it has to be that way on other planets. I've never seen a tiny creature or an aquatic or fishlike creature be the most intelligent race on a planet. And look at Vrusk and Dralantes! Challenge your players with a civilization of tiny lizard creatures that can talk and fight.

I've also rarely seen a newly created race of intelligent aliens that have developed firearms or motor-powered transports. It's likely that sooner or later the UPF will uncover a planet with beings that have developed technology to a point where they have sophisticated inventions and weapons or even early space exploration. Hours of exciting roleplaying are possible when a group of PCs uncovers a technologically advanced planet and tries to get them to join the UPF. For example, a group of PCs and NPCs exploring a remote star system in a game I ran discovered a crude exploration satellite with primitive photography equipment attached to it. This led them to a medium-sized planet, second from its sun. When they passed over it, they discovered the world was covered with settlements — some as large as cities. When they landed, the PCs met the planet's military forces. Once their poly-voxes were adjusted to the aliens' language and they had established their peaceful intentions, they were brought before the world's ruling council. This was an interesting point in the game, as the PCs discovered that they had allies and enemies on the council. They worked to convert those who were opposed to them. In the end, after much intrigue, the PCs got the planet to join the UPF. This got the PCs promoted in the UPF fleet. More important, it gave the players hours of fun. Now they knew how the aliens who come to Earth in the movies might feel!

The above example is one of several adventures in which I had the native aliens possess firearms. On another occasion, the Sathar got to the planet first and armed the natives, giving orders to kill anyone in UPF uniforms. To further com-

plete matters, the Sathar also told the natives that Sathars were gods who had to be obeyed. It was a challenge for the PCs to take on a bunch of armed alien religious fanatics who weren't talking and could easily beat the PCs in combat.

Parasites: Parasites are found on all planets. These are creatures that feed on larger creatures called hosts. Parasites have many ways of entering or attaching to a host; one way is through the digestive system (swallowing). Once inside, the parasite feeds off one or more of the host's natural features (blood, flesh, etc.). The parasite's feeding should affect the host in at least one way; for example, a parasite might lower a character's reaction speed by 10. The parasite should rarely be capable of killing its host, since this is against its best interests. If the host dies, then the parasite dies with it. Parasites should be a minor annoyance to the PCs and not a fatal threat.

Microorganisms: Earth is crawling with bacteria and other organisms that are microscopic. It seems very likely that other planets would be host to similar organisms. Only a relative few microorganisms on Earth cause harm to humans; this resistance evolved over millions of years of exposure to these organisms. However, microorganisms on planets that humans or other PC races have never visited before have a greater likelihood of being harmful to PCs (remember *War of the Worlds*, by H.G. Wells?). I've only seen one occasion on which a microorganism was a threat to the PCs in a STAR FRONTIERS® game adventure.

Microorganisms can become a very interesting problem for the PCs and can affect them in several ways. The first and most obvious is to have an effect similar to poisons, diseases, or infections, as shown in the Expanded Rulebook. The second is to give exposure to the microorganisms a bizarre effect, such as causing insanity or psychological deterioration. The third and most terrifying effect is (obviously) swift onset of illness and death. This should only be used when the bacteria are in an area in which PCs wouldn't normally encounter them: a depressurized drifting hulk, for example. If this type of effect is used, the referee may wish to introduce new anticontamination equipment to the campaign. The effect should usually become obvious upon exposure to NPCs or lab animals (don't kill off PCs too rapidly). In a recent adventure I ran, the PCs discovered a hulk full of dead bodies. When they brought a corpse back to their own ship, a careless NPC exposed himself to the body and its bacteria, and subsequently died. The PCs spent the rest of the adventure fighting faulty equipment and each other in an attempt to find a cure for the disease.

The last type of effect that microorganisms can have is to damage equipment, weapons, or even starships. This can leave the PCs stranded on a planet if the referee

chooses. *The Andromeda Strain*, by Michael Crichton, makes useful reading.

Microorganisms don't have to affect all races. In fact, there may be a type of microorganism that only affects the Sathar. The UPF would want to get their hands on it so they could use it to make new weapons (like grenades) for the Star Law Rangers to use against their foes. Corporations may also want to market a new pesticide and send PCs to collect samples.

The native animals on certain planets should have a very small chance of being affected by the microorganisms of their own planet since they probably would have developed immunity. But, if exposed to PCs or brought to another planet, aliens may die from contact with seemingly harmless microorganisms (again, as in *War of the Worlds*).

Microorganisms are almost always found in great numbers, and they usually move by wind or water currents. Some microorganisms cause harm only under certain circumstances. For instance, an alien bacteria may only take effect when inhaled, but can attach itself to skin and be carried by the victim even if he is wearing a gas mask. Other microorganisms are only effective when they are swallowed or enter the bloodstream through a cut.

Not all microorganisms have to be dangerous. Some may act as a cure for the

damage done by others. They can even be a mixed blessing, like one that raises a PC's Stamina but impedes his vision ("Hey, who turned out the lights?").

Lairs: In nature, a lair usually serves as a place to raise young, sleep, and eat food. Some creatures may store items that they consider valuable in their lairs. If the creature lives on a planet where there are large deposits of a valuable mineral, it may collect that mineral and even compete with prospecting PCs for control of a mineral deposit. Unintelligent aliens might keep valuable items for odd reasons, like the Australia bowerbird that builds a nest of shiny objects to attract female bowerbirds.

Uses: When the referee creates a creature, he should decide if there are any possible ways in which PCs could use that creature. Wild animals could be ridden by the PCs or used as pack animals on overland trails. The referee should decide how fast a creature moves while burdened with a rider or gear (or both), and what penalties are assessed against encumbered beasts.

A creature can also be used for food. Some creatures that are preyed upon (most notably insects) have toxic chemicals in their bloodstreams that are most effective against their natural predators. These poisons may or may not affect the PCs.

Intelligent creatures may act as guides

or mercenaries, but the PCs must have something of value with which to pay the creatures. Credits aren't likely to be accepted by aliens who have no contact with the UPF!

Summary

By using the guidelines above, referees should be able to create more realistic alien lifeforms. The referee should use the following rules in particular:

1. There should be more weaker creatures than powerful ones in a world's ecology.

2. The ecology should allow both predator and prey to survive.

3. Intelligence should not be restricted to man-sized creatures, nor should technology be so restricted.

4. Most important, just because something hasn't happened on Earth doesn't mean that it can't happen on other planets. In other words, the referee should not allow his imagination to be limited by the way things are here on Earth. If a creature is believable and consistent in its own environment, the game will be improved.

(Note: One excellent reference book for ecology- and alien-builders is *Dougal Dixon's After Man* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), which depicts a future ecology on Earth, 50 million years after the extinction of mankind. It's hard to beat for imagination and detail. — RM.)

Ω

Once upon a time...

...there were three adventurers.
The first was a powerful fighter.
He thought he could slash and hack
his way out of anything...



He's dead now.

The second, a great magician, thought
his spells would deal with any
threat...



He's dead, too.

The third wasn't the best fighter, or
the best magician. In fact, he wasn't
the best at anything. But he read
Tricks of the Trade...



And he lived happily
ever after.



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A special damage system for STAR FRONTIERS® games

A SHOT IN THE ARM

by Jason Pamental
and David Packard

The combat system used in the STAR FRONTIERS® game is generally realistic and simple, but the damage system lacks that realism. You never see anyone with a broken limb, a wound, a concussion, etc. The only damage taken is to one's Stamina. The following rules make the damage system more realistic and provide information about broken limbs, wounds, and cuts, and how this damage can be healed. It also provides realistic damage to robots, computers, weapons, and equipment. Vehicle damage is already covered in the game rules.



Table 1
Special Damage Modifiers

| Modifier | Reason |
|----------|--|
| +1 | Short range |
| +2 | Point blank range |
| +2 | Explosive weapon |
| +1 | Careful aiming * |
| +2 | Firing a burst |
| +1 | Per 5 SEU used by weapon |
| +1 | Target hit twice in same turn |
| +1 | Small target |
| +2 | Tiny target |
| +1 | Per skill level with weapon |
| +2 | Per Robotics or Com- puter skill ** |
| -1 | Large target |
| -2 | Giant target |
| -1 | Long range |
| -2 | Extreme range |
| -1 | Moving target* ** |
| -2 | Suit-type defense |
| -2 | Target is underwater |
| -2 | Target makes RS check |

* +1 is added for each round spent entirely on aiming, up to the maximum of +5.

** This applies only to attacks against robots or computers, respectively.

*** This modifier is counted only once, even if both attacker and defender are moving in any manner.

**Table 2
Weapon Modifiers**

| Weapon type | Modifier |
|----------------------|----------|
| Projectile pistol | +2 |
| Projectile rifle | +3 |
| Heavy projectile | +5 |
| Beam rifle or pistol | +3 |
| Heavy beam | +4 |
| Gyrojet pistol | +2 |
| Gyrojet rifle | +3 |
| Heavy gyrojet | +6 |
| Short melee * | +1 |
| Long melee * | +2 |
| Fist | +1 |
| Grenade** | |
| Other thrown weapon | +2 |
| Bow or crossbow | +2 |
| Tooth, claw, etc. | +2 |

* Whips, swords, polearms, spears, chairs, and big clubs are *long*; axes, bottles, small clubs, knives, nightsticks, pistol butts, shock gloves, etc., are *short*.

** Only a fragmentation or incendiary grenade can cause special damage. Each counts as an explosive weapon on Table 1.

The system

Each character has a percentage chance to cause special damage to an opponent when that character performs a "to hit" roll. This chance is figured out by the formula: $3\% + (\text{skill level} \times 2)$, where the skill level refers to the appropriate weapons skill. For example: Fl'remp, a female Vrusk, fires a laser pistol at a Human. She has a level 4 Beam Weapons skill, so her chance to cause special damage is 11%. She rolls a 06 on her "to hit" roll (less than her chance), so she has scored special damage. A character can add 1% to his special-damage chance for each round spent aiming at a target. A maximum of 10% may be added this way. If a character's chance to hit an opponent is less than the chance to cause special damage, then special damage cannot be scored.

After a character has caused special damage, the player must find out the type of damage done (this special damage is in addition to normal Stamina-reducing damage). To determine damage, the player rolls 1d10. Add or subtract any applicable

**Table 3
Damage Results Table: Living Beings**

| Modified 1d10 roll | Stamina damage | Special damage | Units of lost equipment |
|--------------------|----------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 or less | 0 | None | 0 |
| 2 | 5 | Chest wound | 0 |
| 3 | 5 | Leg wound | 0 |
| 4 | 5 | Arm wound* | 1 |
| 5-6 | 8 | Shoulder wound * | 1 |
| 7 | 9 | Arm wound** | 1 |
| 8 | 10 | Head wound | 1 |
| 9-10 | 10 | Leg broken | 1 |
| 11 | 15 | Chest deeply cut | 1 |
| 12-13 | 8 | Arm broken * | 1 |
| 14 | 8 | Arm broken ** | 1 |
| 15-16 | 15 | Abdomen deeply cut | 1 |
| 17 | 15 | Back wound, leg paralyzed | 2 |
| 18 | 12 | Shoulder deeply cut ** | 2 |
| 19 | 15 | Side deeply cut | 2 |
| 20-22 | 30 | Head concussion | 2 |
| 23+ | 1,000 | Head removed, body falls apart, target vaporized, etc. (pick one) | 5 |

* Secondary side (i.e., the left side if on a right-handed person).

** Primary side (i.e., the right side if on a right-handed person).

Special damage effects

Chest wound: -5 to hit.

Leg wound: -3 meters/turn on movement.

Secondary-side arm wound: -5 for firing rifles, can only fire one weapon, -10% for doing tech, robotics, medical, demolitions, and computer skills.

Primary-side shoulder wound: -10 for firing rifles, same other modifiers as a secondary-side arm wound.

Primary-side arm wound: -30 to hit, can't use rifles, -15% on above-mentioned skills.

Head wound: -5 INT/LOG, 50% chance to be unconscious for 1d100 minutes.

Leg broken: Only 2 meters/turn movement.

Chest deeply cut: -10 to hit, -5 DEX/RS.

Secondary-side arm broken: No rifles can be fired, -10% to all skills mentioned for a secondary-side arm wound, may only fire one weapon.

Primary-side arm broken: Same as with secondary-side arm broken, but with -25% to all above mentioned skills, -10% to hit with all other weapons.

Abdomen wound: -3 meters/turn on movement, -5% to hit with all weapons, -8 kg on limit for carrying items.

Back wound, leg paralyzed: Only 2 meters/turn on movement, -15 kg for carrying items.

Side deeply cut: -8 DEX/RS, -10 kg for carrying items.

Head concussion: -10 INT/LOG, -5 DEX/RS, 75% chance to be unconscious for 1d10 hours.

Dead: Dead beyond a doubt, no chance of revival.

modifications to this roll, as shown on Table 1. The referee may modify this number with modifications not found on Table 1 as seen fit. Note that a target in an activated defensive screen cannot take special damage. There are two damage-type tables: one for living beings and one for robots. Computer damage is explained elsewhere.

To read the damage tables, go from left to right. The first column on the left is the number a player has rolled. The next column shows how much extra damage is taken to the target's Stamina score. The third shows what kind of special damage is taken, and the final column shows how many pieces of equipment have been

destroyed. There is a 10% chance that a weapon will be destroyed instead of equipment. The victim's player can pick which piece of his equipment has been destroyed. If the character has more than one unit of a certain type of equipment, then two units of the equipment are destroyed (two clips, two rations, etc.).

Special damage need not only occur due to an attack using weapons. Vehicle accidents, falling, and fires are just a few of the other possibilities, although this article is only concerned with weapon-related damage.

The referee should keep track of damage for NPCs, creatures, robots, and computers, while players should keep track of

their own damage themselves (unless the referee doesn't trust them). If the referee feels that damage to a character might greatly lessen the other players' chances for completing their mission, then he may alter the damage taken by that character.

Computer damage

Computer damage is easy to determine because a computer has no major moving parts. Take the modified 1d10 roll generated above and divide it by 5, rounding down; this represents the number of programs which have been destroyed. The lowest-level programs are destroyed first, highest level last. If the computer has a Computer Security program which has not been destroyed, then any alarms it controls are set off.

A computer may be repaired, but the programs may not be brought back unless a computer specialist knows them (as per the Computer skill). A computer which has more programs destroyed than it possesses will explode, causing 6d10 damage points to anyone within 5 meters of it (Reaction Speed check defense). A computer destroyed in this way cannot be repaired.

Healing special damage

Adventurers may find it necessary to heal damage caused to themselves. To heal a *wound*, all Stamina points of damage caused by the attacking weapon must be healed, and 1d10 +1 hours of game time must pass until penalties caused by the wound are nullified.

A cut may be healed as a wound, but it takes 4d10 hours until the penalties caused by the cut are nullified.

A *deep cut* may be healed this way, but it takes 1d10 +1 days until those penalties are nullified.

A *broken limb* may be mended if all the Stamina points are healed and the limb is set in a cast or splint. If it is not set within two hours, the limb does not heal until the character enters a hospital (costing 50 Credits per day for 3d10 days). A limb set in a cast or splint takes 3d10 +1 days until the penalties are nullified.

A *concussion* may be mended if all Stamina is healed and the PC rests at least 10 hours per day for 1d10 days. Hospital fees for this time amount to 200 Credits.

The *back wound* is special. It may be mended if ail Stamina is healed, major surgery is used to repair paralyzation damage, and the PC rests for 2d10 hours. Otherwise, it heals in 3d10 days. A hospital charges 200 Credits for these services.

A Dralasite cannot have a broken limb, but it loses the ability to grow one until the spot heals where it was hit. This healing takes 3d10 days. The Dralasite still suffers the same penalties as if it had broken limbs.

If a character has multiple damage, such as a chest wound and a broken leg, it still takes 1d10 +1 days for the leg to heal. Healing times are not cumulative.

A Vrusk with a damaged arm requires a 1d10 roll to find out which arm was hit: 1-5 is the left arm, 6-10 is the right.

A Dralasite is not able to absorb a paralyzed leg until it is healed. Because of this, the Dralasite suffers the special penalties caused by the paralyzed leg.

An electrostunner does not break a limb. If a *broken limb* is indicated because of an electrostunner or other electrical damage, then the limb has excessive nerve damage instead. The same penalties occur, and the nerve damage may be healed the same as would a broken limb.

Repairing a robot

Repairing a robot is easier than healing a living creature. A character with Robotics skill is required.

Damage to a robot takes 2d10 minutes to repair. A *broken* part takes 5d10 +5 minutes to fix, while a *cracked* item takes 4d10 +5 minutes. Add 10 minutes to the repair time for each joint which is *damaged* or *broken*, and 20 minutes if the brain casing has been hit. If the brain casing and the body have been *cracked*, add 1 hour to the repair time.

Ω

Table 4
Damage Results Table: Robots

| Modified 1d10 roll | Stamina damage | Special damage | Units of lost equipment |
|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 or lower | 0 | None | 0 |
| 2 | 5 | Body damage | 0 |
| 3 | 5 | Leg damage | 0 |
| 4 | 5 | Arm damage | 1 |
| 5-6 | 8 | Arm joint damage | 1 |
| 7 | 9 | Arm joints damage | 1 |
| 8 | 10 | Brain casing damage | 1 |
| 9-10 | 10 | Leg broken | 1 |
| 11 | 15 | Body cracked | 1 |
| 12-13 | 8 | Arm broken | 1 |
| 14 | 8 | Arm joint broken | 1 |
| 15-16 | 15 | Brain casing cracked | 1 |
| 17 | 15 | Movement center damaged | 2 |
| 18 | 12 | Arm joints broken | 2 |
| 19 | 15 | Body and brain casing cracked | 2 |
| 20-22 | 30 | Brain casing broken | 2 |
| 23+ | 1,000 | Explosion (cannot be repaired) | 15 |

Special damage effects

Body damage: -5 to hit with weapons because of internal damage.

Leg damage: -5 meters/turn on movement (unless robot has alternate movement system, such as rocket movement).

Arm damage: Attacker can choose attacked arm or tentacle, -9 to hit with any weapon held in that arm.

Arm joint damage: -14 to hit with a weapon in that arm, -2 damage for melee attacks.

Arm joints damage: No weapons may be fired from that arm, no melee attacks.

Brain casing damage: 50% chance of robot being stunned for d100 minutes (even if A-S implant is installed), -5 to hit with all weapons, 20% chance of a malfunction.

All robots have brains, but a noncybernetic robot's brain is a computer.

Leg broken: -10 meters/turn on movement, -5 meters/turn to movement using alternate movement system because it also has been hit.

Body cracked: -10 to hit with all weapons, -5 meters/turn on movement, 20% chance of a malfunction.

Arm broken: No weapon can be fired from the arm, -5% to chances to repair it.

Arm joint broken: Same as arm broken, but a -25% to chances to repair it.

Brain casing cracked: Stunned for d100 +20 minutes, 50% chance of being deactivated, -10 to hit with all weapons, 35% chance of a malfunction, -30% to chances to repair it.

Movement center damaged: Robot cannot move, -30% to chances to repair it.

Arm joints broken: No weapons can be fired from the arm, -20% to chances to repair it.

Body and brain casing cracked: The same effects as body cracked and brain casing cracked combined. All damage and penalties are cumulative.

Brain casing broken: Automatically deactivated, -20 to hit with all weapons, -20 meters/turn on movement, 55% chance of malfunction, -50% to chances to repair.

Explosion: Everyone within 10 meters takes 7d10 damage (RS check defense).

A Second Look at Zebulon's Guide

Corrections, clarifications, additions, and answers

by **Kim Eastland**

Some time ago, I had the pleasure of designing *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space*, Volume 1, the first addition to the STAR FRONTIERS® game rules in many years. For those STAR FRONTIERS game fans who have picked it up, here are a few comments and corrections for that tome.

Preface: The preface mentions "Bizarre" in its first full paragraph. This is the second largest continent on the planet Faire in the Capella system out in the Rim. Its largest city is Minzii.

Contents Page: Under the Tables listing, the Skill Costs Table is actually on page 9, not 10. The Equipment Tables are actually on pages 88, 89, and 90.

Page 1: The first sentence of the Humma's special ability to spring charge should read, "A Humma can spring up to 25 meters horizontally from a standing start and, if it lands within two meters of an opponent, come to a dead stop and make a free melee attack against the opponent. This attack is in addition to normal actions or attacks that turn."

Page 3: The Mechanon pictured is a propaganda illustration issued by the planet Mechano itself to better the Frontier's image of Mechanons. In reality, Mechanons come in a variety of different shapes and sizes, and they are much deadlier looking than this cartoon version.

Page 5: Delete the Dexterity Modifier column on the Ability Score Table. It has been replaced by the Dexterity Modifiers Table on page 38. On the Racial Ability Modifier Table, the PER/LDR modifiers for Osakar and Humma are "- 10."

Page 6: The last sentence in the last paragraph on this page should begin "A positive shift makes. . ." Delete the previous "It does make."

Page 7: The Techex profession skill listed as "Machinery: Operate" is actually "Machinery Operation."

Page 9: The second paragraph of the last column states that skipping levels is not allowed, even if the character has enough experience to do so. This means that though a character has enough experience points (XP) to directly jump from second to fourth level in a skill, he must spend at least one adventure (of a substantial nature) with the skill at third level before he can spend the rest of his XP to achieve fourth level.

Page 11: With regards to the Medical section, note that when a character has a disease, infection, infestation, poison, or radiation introduced into his system, damage does not begin to occur until the turn following the introduction. All other forms of damage (weapons damage, fire, falling, etc.) occur instantly, in the same turn they are introduced to the character. In the Robotics section, note that roboprograms are not interchangeable with maxiprograms or bodycomp programs.

Page 12: The second to the last sentence in the Weapons paragraph should end ". . . and his result area can never be greater than the Blue area unless he rolls a 01-02 (see Automatic Rolls on page 29)."

Page 13: The skill check for Camouflage is secretly rolled by the referee. This is because the character will not know if he is successful until someone else spots or misses the camouflaged structure or item.

Page 18: The fourth sentence of the Hypnosis skill should read "(If the hypnotist is a Sathar, his skill level is eighth, but an unwilling victim is allowed a Logic check in addition to the normal Intuition check.)" This change applies as it is now widely known that Sathar can hypnotize. Also, the prerequisite skill for the Machinery Repair skills is Machinery Operation.

Page 19: The first sentence of the first paragraph should read: "Techexes who operate these devices for a living must have Matter Transferal Devices skill level 9." The skills Medical Treatment: Disease, Medical Treatment: Infection, and Medical Treatment: Infestation all have identical second and third paragraphs. The words "98-00 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the second paragraph in each, and the words "01-02 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the third paragraph in each.

Page 20: The skills Medical Treatment: Poison and Medical Treatment: Radiation both have identical second and third paragraphs. The words "98-00 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the second paragraph in each, and the words "01-02 or" should be deleted from the beginning of the third paragraph.

Page 21: The fourth sentence of the Medical Treatment: Wounds II skill should read: "For every 10 points of damage (or fraction of 10 points) that are healed, a full turn of treatment time and an additional dose of biocort are required."

Page 22: The Pumping Federanium's fifth sentence should end: ". . . may have trouble fitting into suits and equipment normally designed for his race."

Page 23: In the Robotics: Robopsychologist section, note that any robopsychologist who attempts to alter the functions or mission of a Mechanon suffers a - 8 CS modifier.

Page 24: With regards to the Stealth skill, note that the skill check for a character using Stealth to sneak up on someone must be made every 30 meters if the user is moving slowly or 15 meters if the user is moving quickly. The skill check for using Stealth to "tail" a suspect must be made every 30 minutes of stalking.

Page 29: The beginning of Step 2 of the Ranged Weapon Combat Procedure should

read: "Apply all appropriate combat modifiers, Dexterity modifiers, and shift columns to the left and/or right? The first sentence of Step 3 should read: "Roll percentile dice and locate the final result on the Resolution Table."

Page 31: The second sentence at the top of column one should read: "Opportunity shots are like Careful Aim shots; the character can do nothing else that turn, but an Opportunity shot cancels the negative CS modifier for target movement." The beginning of Step 2 of the Area Effect Weapon Combat Procedure should read: "Apply all appropriate combat modifiers, Dexterity modifiers, and shift columns to the left and/or right." The first sentence of Step 3 should read: "Roll percentile dice and locate the final result on the Resolution Table." The fourth sentence of Step 3 can be deleted altogether, as this information was spread throughout the Grenades and Missiles sections. In the Skills section, note that the distance a character can throw a grenade is equal to his Strength score plus his Dexterity score, divided by four; i.e., (STR + DEX)/4.

Page 34: The abbreviation "pS" indicates damage per each SEU used. The "Rate" note should be changed to "ROF," the "Defense Type" note should be changed to "Effective Defenses," and the "M#" note should be changed to "Msl#."

Page 35: The effective defense against the acid foam grenade should read "Salgel," not "Basegel."

Page 36: The "Range" column heading for missile warheads should be "Blast Radius." The blast radius of a sonic missile warhead is "6 X Msl#." Additionally, the Primitive Melee and Thrown Weapons Table should list Spear damage as 14, not 4.

Page 41: The last sentence for the Channeling I and Channeling II disciplines should be deleted and replaced with the sentence: "Each successful discipline use lasts 3 turns." Also, the Confusion discipline can only be used to affect a single target.

Pages 48-50: The names of the UPF Space Fortresses can be added to the tables of planets:

| Planet | Fortress |
|------------------|-----------------|
| Moonworld | Defiant |
| Kdikit | Kdikit |
| Morgaine's World | Gollwin |
| Pale | Pale |
| Gollywog | Redoubt |

Page 50: The second planet in the Cryxian system of the Rim Coalition Planetary listing is "T'zaan" (delete the "(B)T" note).

Page 65: The warheads come in different sizes for each missile type and are not interchangeable.

Page 69: Sonic screens or sonic headphones provide full protection from the effects of marble grenades unless three or more are detonated at the same time. The third marble grenade, and all others following it which detonate in the same turn, are then treated as polyhedron sonic grenades for defense purposes.

Page 73: The paragraph at the end of the Combining Hardware and Maxiprogs section lists various combinations of maxiprogs that a Level 2 Mainframe Computer could have. Delete the words "or one Level 4 maxipro" from the example. As is stated later, a mainframe computer cannot run a maxipro of greater level than the computer level.

Page 80: There are a few mistakes under the Energy Use or Max. Damage Absorbed column of the Defenses list. The Simp Screen should read "1 SEU/ 6 pts." Full Maser Mesh should read "Negates Maser damage." Partial Maser Mesh should read "Halves Maser damage." Both Basic Helmet and Sonic Prot. should read "V."

Page 91: On the first side of the STAR FRONTIERS Character Record Sheet, under the Weapons section, a player should enter his PC's DEX or STR modifier, whichever he chooses, along with the Column Modifier in the "Col Mod" box. See the Ability section under Melee Procedure on page 32. Ω

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Armored and Dangerous



Illustration by Keith Parkinson

The power of powered armor in the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by David Dennis

Powered armor is a device commonly used in science-fiction role-playing games and occasionally used in fantasy RPGs. TSR's own GAMMA WORLD® game has powered armor. A suit of powered armor also appears in AD&D® module S3 *Expedition to the Barrier Peaks*. Unfortunately, the game that would most likely have powered armor lacks it. Spacesuit armor is found in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks rulebook, but it is not powered. Here, then is real powered armor.

Properties of powered armor

Certain characteristics apply to any powered-armor suit, no matter what the design. The main property of such armor is the protection it provides. The degree of protection for each weapon type is listed on Table 3. The percentages listed there work on the same principal as spacesuit armor. If a character is hit by a weapon, look on the chart for the proper percentage and roll percentile dice. If the number is less than or equal to the listed percentage, the weapon fails to penetrate the armor. If the weapon penetrates the armor, the character still takes only half damage. Powerscreens may be combined with powered armor (using the SEU in the miscellaneous powerpack, if there is one), but defensive suits may not. Thus, a powerscreen that allows only half damage through (such as an inertia screen) means only one-fourth the total damage affects the character.

Besides providing protection, powered armor boosts the wearer's Strength and Stamina. A person wearing a fully functional suit of armor has triple his normal Stamina. This benefit comes from lack of

fatigue, lack of effort expended when wounded, decreased penetration by weapons, and many other factors. Even more benefits are received from the increased strength the armor gives. An armored character is able to lift one metric ton (1,000 kg) over his head, carry 200 kg at encumbered movement, and carry 120 kg encumbered. The suit's strength adds an additional 35 points to damage done in melee combat. For purposes of hitting in melee combat, such that half of the attacker's Strength is the chance to hit, give the wearer a base 100% chance to hit. Jumping is also boosted by the armor's strength, allowing jumps of 200 meters in height. Jet-assisted jumps may be made to 400 meters, but only 10 jet-assisted jumps may be made before the suit runs out of fuel. Horizontal jumps of 180 meters, with a 40-meter peak at the height of the arc, may also be made. Rate of movement in powered armor depends upon the type of armor purchased. All of the options listed for vehicles also apply to powered armor (with the exception of skid turns).

The key word in the phrase "powered armor" is "powered". These machines of destruction consume massive amounts of power. Powered armor suits are fuelled by type I parabatteries (600 Cr each) that last 48 hours each. If the suit runs out of power, the wearer is stuck with an incredibly cumbersome suit that leaves him almost helpless. Fortunately, every suit carries two spare parabatteries that may be exchanged for the used battery in 10 turns. In addition to the normal power supply, most suits have two separate powerpacks for weapons and miscellaneous devices such as screens, cameras, and infrared jammers. The amount of SEU in each of these varies from suit to suit. The weapons pack has connections for two weapons, and the miscellaneous pack has connections for one screen and two auxiliary items.

A soldier on a battlefield as dangerous as those of the STAR FRONTIERS game needs to be completely aware of his surroundings. Therefore, every suit of powered armor contains a compass, infrared goggles, magnigoggles, radiophone, toxy-rad gauge, and an external microphone that dampens loud noises and amplifies quiet ones. This microphone also allows the wearer of the suit to communicate with creatures outside. Every suit also contains a vital-statistics monitor on the outside that measures the wearer's rate of respiration, pulse, brainwaves, and the locations of his wounds. (In game terms, characters will be able to tell the current Stamina of wounded soldiers.)

In case of a gas or radiation attack, every suit of powered armor contains a gas mask and a four-hour air supply (which means that powered armor is completely usable underwater or in space). The air supply may be renewed where there is clean air. Powered armor also contains a four-day supply of food for

one person (stored in a freeze-dried form). The solid supply of food is only to be used when the suit's main supply runs out. The main food supply consists of a constant intravenous flow of nutrients that allows the soldier to fight and be fully nourished without stopping to eat. This supply of food also lasts four days. Two doses of stimdose, two doses of biocort, and one dose of staydose make up the suit's medicinal supply. The suit automatically administers these drugs to the suit user when necessary. Note that the effect of the biocort is tripled because it is added to the wearer's original Stamina. Furthermore, if a character's armor breaks down in the wilderness, the suit contains a survival pack identical to that found in the *Crash on Voltarnus* module included in the Alpha Dawn game set. As a final note, getting into a suit of armor takes four rounds (five for Vrusk).

Uses for powered armor

Powered armor is used by the UPF and certain rich and powerful megacorporations and planetary governments for planetary raids, antiarmor strikes, search-and-destroy missions, and various other activities across the Frontier. Soldiers in powered armor are usually landed by shuttles or dropped to a planet from orbit by assault transports: large, bulky ships equipped with ion engines, each capable of carrying 1,000 normal troops, or 700 powered troops and 10 shuttles. (Each shuttle carries 100 soldiers of either type.) Along with the shuttles, each transport carries numerous one-man reentry capsules for orbital drops by powered-armor troops. The Knight Hawks statistics for these ships are in Table 1.

Prior to an orbital drop, powered-armor soldiers are encased in individual capsules. A capsule consists of several layers, two of which contain parachutes and one which contains retrorockets. As the capsule enters the atmosphere, the layers burn away, protecting the soldier inside. With the combined use of the parachutes, retrorockets, and the powered armor's boot jets, the capsule is able to make a safe and gradual descent.

As the ablative layers of the capsule break off, they show up as numerous blips on radar, thus making it difficult to track descending capsules. To further this end, dummy capsules, exploding capsules, magnetic decoys, ion-window devices, white-noise broadcasters, and radar jammers are also launched from orbiting ships. Together, these elements produce thousands of images on radar when there are in actuality only a few hundred manned capsules being dropped. Consequently, the drop is probably the safest part of the mission. A 2% chance exists for any dropped soldier to become a casualty in the actual drop; casualties during the drop are almost invariably fatalities.

Powered-armor drop capsules are *not* for sale to the general public. They are

considered high-security military hardware, and possession of such a capsule or a drop-capable ship (or a suit of powered armor, for that matter) is a major felony.

Powered armor design

The system provided in this section allows you to custom-design a suit of powered armor. This system gives the designer 545 points with which to build a suit. The basic cost of a suit of powered armor is 3,500 Cr for a stripped-down version without weapons, sensors, or special movement capabilities. Prices for additional equipment may be added to this base price. The system for designing a suit is explained below:

Weapons: Weapons cost one point for every kilogram of weight they possess. For purposes of game balance, pistols weigh 3 kg and rifles 7 kg. A character may never have more than five pistols or three rifles per arm. In addition, a suit may never have more than 30 kg of weapons built into one arm. However, a character may still hold a handheld weapon in an arm with 30 kg. Handheld weapons must still be paid for in points. Total point cost for all weapons desired may never exceed 85 points. All costs for weapons purchased are added to the base cost.

Movement: When designing a powered suit, the turn speed, top speed, acceleration, and deceleration must be bought in points. Each of these is paid for using a number of points equal to that ability in meters/turn (thus, a turn speed of 90 meters/turn costs 90 points). Flight capability may also be bought, but a 190 meters/turn top speed on the ground and a minimum ground acceleration of 80 meters/turn are needed to qualify for the running take-off needed to fly. Flight costs an additional number of points equal to the top air speed in meters/turn divided by 10, rounded up. The monetary price for movement is 5 Cr per meters/turn in every ground ability and 10 Cr per meter/turn of top speed in flight. Flying suits accelerate, decelerate, change altitude, and make turns just like a jetcopter. However, flying suits may perform nap-of-the-earth flying with no movement penalties.

Power: The amount of SEU stored in the weapons and the miscellaneous powerpacks must be decided upon. Add up the total SEU carried in each powerpack and divide this number by 10, rounding up. This is the number of points that must be paid. The monetary cost is 5 Cr for every SEU carried. Powerpacks may be recharged at the same places as power back-packs (at no more than a 50-point expenditure).

Ammunition: Again, the listed weight in kilograms is taken in points. A dash on the Ammunition chart (in the Alpha Dawn Expanded Game Rules booklet, page 40) means that the item weighs 0.5 kg or less. For point costs, assume that these items weigh 0.5 kg each and therefore cost ½ point each.

Table 1
Assault Transport and Shuttle Statistics

| Ship type | HS | HP | ADF | MR | DCR | Weapons | Defenses |
|-------------------|----|----|-----|----|-----|-----------|-------------------|
| Shuttle | 3 | 15 | — | 4 | 29 | None | RH |
| Assault transport | 10 | 50 | 1 | 4 | 50 | LB,RB(x3) | RH, MS, ICM (x 4) |

Table 2
Standard UPF Assault Model Powered Armor

| Weapon system | Points | Cost (Cr) |
|---------------------------------------|------------|---------------|
| Basic suit | — | 35,000 |
| Two rocket launchers (right forearm) | 15(x2) | 5,000 (x 2) |
| One grenade mortar (back) | 15 | 2,000 |
| One flamethrower (left forearm) | 10 | 3,000 |
| Two missile packs (one each shoulder) | 20 | 1,200 (x 2) |
| Turn speed: 90 meters/turn | 90 | 450 |
| Top speed: 150 meters/turn | 150 | 750 |
| Acceleration: 70 meters/turn | 70 | 350 |
| Deceleration: 50 meters/turn | 50 | 250 |
| Weapons power: 300 SEU | 30 | 1,500 |
| Misc. power: 200 SEU | 20 | 1,000 |
| Flamethrower ammunition | 10 | 50 |
| Eight grenade mortar shells | 4 | 8 (x 8) |
| Nine rockets | 4 (x 9) | 15 (x 9) |
| One heavy laser (handheld) | 10 | 6,000 |
| Total | 545 | 62,949 |

Extras: If you wish to include special equipment such as more communications, radar, infrared jammers, cameras, holoscreens, and so forth, the point cost is up to the referee. A good ballpark estimate of cost may be made by dividing the cost in credits by 100, thus giving the point cost. Under this system, an infrared jammer would cost 5 points, a holoscreen would cost 10 points, and a subspace radio would cost 200 points.

An example of an armored suit is shown in Table 2 — the standard UPF Assault Model powered unit. The UPF armor is, naturally, highly efficient in its use of points, with no leftover or wasted points. The total listed cost in credits includes the base price.

Weapons for armor

Some weapons listed in Tables 2 through 6 are probably not familiar to you. These devices are weapons that are especially well-suited for use with powered armor. When designing armor, you may want to look at the weapons described in Alex Curylo's excellent article "Tanks a Lot!" from DRAGON® issue #99. The weapons described therein may be designed into powered armor. Here are the weapons that may be used:

ECM (electronic countermeasures) rifle: This weapon shoots a beam of magnetic energy. Its main function is to disrupt robots and computers, though it may

affect living beings by causing disorders in the iron content of the creature's blood and by jamming the creature's neural synapses. To find the chance of jamming a computer or robot, multiply the number of SEU used by five for a base percentage chance of success. From this base, subtract the level of the computer or robot multiplied by four; this will yield the chance of a malfunction. When a malfunction occurs, roll on the malfunctions table (page 15 in the Expanded Game Rules booklet) for the results. To cause damage to living targets, an expenditure of two SEU is necessary. When firing at vehicles or armor, treat the number of SEU used as the number of dice of damage done when using the damage table. Even if 15 SEU are fired at an armored soldier, the attack still does 5d10 to the wearer, but it is a 15-dice attack for the damage table.

Flamethrower: Originally mentioned in Alex Curylo's article, this weapon may also be used in a suit of powered armor. This device is hooked to a tank of napalm. The flamethrower's purpose is incendiary work, but it works well when used as an anti-personnel weapon.

Missile pack: Although guided missiles were mentioned in "Tanks a Lot," missile packs were not. Each missile pack contains six missiles. Missile packs come with a full supply of ammo when purchased. When fired, the wearer of the suit may command the missiles to divide themselves between as many targets as the number of

missiles launched. In addition, the suit wearer may dispatch different numbers of missiles to different targets. For example, a soldier in a suit with missile packs sees one civilian, one skimmer, and one enemy powered-armor soldier. The soldier launches eight missiles, aiming one at the civilian, three at the skimmer, and four at the enemy suit. All missiles must roll separately to hit, but receive a 30% bonus to hit because each missile is guided. As many missiles may be fired as are remaining in the suit, although all need not be fired. Missile packs may never be mounted in the arms or legs of a suit.

Armored combat

Combat in powered armor is conducted like normal ranged combat except for a few modifiers. Computerized targeting systems are built into every powered armor suit. As a result, characters wearing powered armor receive a 20% bonus to hit when using ranged weapons. If the character uses a missile pack, this bonus is also added to that given under the description.

If a weapon penetrates the armor during combat, there is a chance that damage to the suit occurs. The following sequence provides a step-by-step system for resolving this type of damage. Note that results derived from this are cumulative. Based on this premise, if speed is reduced by half twice in a row, the overall speed falls to one-quarter normal. As a final note, damage to powered armor may be repaired by technicians using the repair machinery subskill.

1. Check if the weapon penetrated the armor. If so, additional suit damage may have occurred. (The nature of this damage will be checked later on Table 7.) Character damage also results. If not, no character damage results.

2. Check if damage to the armor occurs. Subtract the number rolled from the number needed to hit for the difference. If the difference is equal to or greater than 35, then additional damage to the suit's functions has occurred.

3. Add the number of dice of damage caused by the weapon to a 2d10 die roll.

4. Divide the percentage of protection by 5, then multiply the quotient by 2. Subtract the product from the sum in step 3.

5. Consult Table 7. Apply the results next turn.

6. Roll for normal damage to the character, reducing the damage by half; reduce it by one-quarter if using a powerscreen effective against that weapon type.

For example: Jn'kri, a Vrusk, is hit by a

Table 3
Powered Armor Protection

| Weapon type | Degree of protection |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Lasers | 50% |
| Sonics | 60% |
| Electrostunner | 100% |
| Bullets | 70% |
| Needlers | 100% |
| Recoilless rifle | 40% |
| Gyrojet | 55% |
| Frag. grenade | 45% |
| Rocket launcher | 35% |
| Axe, knife, etc. | 100% |
| Electric sword | 65% |
| Spear or sword | 85% |
| Shock gloves | 70% |
| Stunstick | 85% |
| Guided missile | 30% |
| Flamethrower | 90% |
| Cannon | 30% |
| Howitzer | 15% |
| Bomb | 20% |
| Mine | 50% |
| ECM rifle | 45% |

Table 4
Special Weapons' Effects

| Weapon type | Damage | Ammo | SEU | Rate ** | Defense |
|----------------------|-------------|--------|------|---------|---------|
| ECM rifle | 5d10 or jam | Varies | 2-20 | 2 | Gauss |
| Flamethrower | 3d10* | 10 | — | 1 | None |
| Missile pack missile | 6d10 each | 6 | — | 1-6 | Inertia |

* Flamethrowers cause 1d10 of damage per turn to a target for three turns after firing, or until the flames are extinguished.

** A character in powered armor may fire all weapons he possesses in the same turn except those on the gun arm. Here, the wearer must choose between the hand-held weapon and the weapons built into that arm.

Table 5
Special Weapons' Ranges

| Weapon type | Range | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|---------|
| | PB | Short | Medium | Long | Extreme |
| ECM rifle | 0-10 | 11-30 | 31-100 | 101-150 | 151-300 |
| Flamethrower | 0-10 | 11-20 | 21-30 | 31-45 | 46-70 |
| Missile pack missile | 0-10 | 11-50 | 51-150 | 151-300 | 301-500 |

rocket launcher fired from an attacking ground transport. First, Jn'kri checks to see if the rocket has penetrated the armor. Jn'kri rolls a 49 and sees that the rocket has indeed penetrated the armor. Now, he checks to see if his suit sustains any further damage. The ground transport needed to roll a 60 to hit; it does so. The difference between 60 and 20 is greater

than 35 (60 - 20 = 40), so his suit might take additional damage. He now rolls 2d10 and comes up with a 17. To this, he adds 15 (because a rocket launcher does 15d10); the result is 32. He then divides the suit's resistance to rocket launchers (35%) by 5 and gets 7, then multiplies this by 2 to get 14. The result of this calculation is subtracted from 32 to get 18. Jn'kri checks a

result of 18 on Table 7 and sees that it means no further damage is taken by the suit, although damage to himself is taken.

Vrusk who are buying powered armor must add an additional 10% to the base price, resulting in a base price of 38,500 Cr. This increase is needed for the additional cost of more limbs, additional artificial muscles, strangely shaped gloves and

Table 6
Special Weapons' Statistics

| Weapon type | Cost (Cr) | Mass (kg) | Ammunition | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| | | | Type | Cost (Cr) | Mass (kg) | Rounds |
| ECM rifle | 8,000 | 15 | Pack | Varies | Varies | Varies |
| Flamethrower | 3,000 | 10 | Napalm | 50 | 10 | 10 |
| Missile pack | 1,200 | 10 | Missiles | 1,000 | 10 | 6 |

Table 7
Damage to Powered Armor

| Die roll plus damage | Effect |
|----------------------|--|
| 2-19 | No effect |
| 20 | Turn speed -20 meters/turn |
| 21 | Acceleration -25 meters/turn |
| 22 | Top speed -35 meters/turn |
| 23 | Jumping length (horizontally) -20 meters |
| 24 | Jumping length (vertically) -35 meters |
| 25 | Boot jets out, no vertical jumps over 200 meters |
| 26 | All Strength functions by half |
| 27 | Gyros out, no jumps |
| 28 | Top speed reduced by half |
| 29 | Lose half energy in suit power supply |
| 30+ | Suit's muscles locked, paralyzed for 1d10 turns |

helmets, air vents on the suit's bottom, and so on.

Now that you know what powered armor is and isn't, what do you use it for? No, not for a barroom brawl against that Yazirian who tells you to go jump on an Arcturian slime amoeba. Neither is it used for capturing the last remaining tree-dwelling rhinosquid on Antares IV. Powered armor should be used wisely, because time is literally money where powered armor is employed. Such devastating firepower would be useful against armored vehicle or fortified positions held by deadly enemies — e.g., Sathar, pirates, etc. But just because you took on a dozen space pirates without a scratch doesn't mean that it's safe to go tackle those three hovertanks hiding around the corner. Ω

by Mike Lane

The Frontiers of Design

Many STAR FRONTIERS® game players have problems when it comes to designing nonstandard military ships for use with the Knight Hawks board game and, as I can testify, it becomes rather nerve-racking to be constantly asked "How many laser batteries can I put on this minelayer? Well, then, how many rocket battery salvos can it carry? Well, then. . ." and so on. Over many hours and some calculator thumping, a system that pleased everyone in my gaming group was generated. This system creates starships compatible with (if a little tougher than) those given in the board-game rules. The new ships also have a great variability in weaponry, which can make even a simple assault-scout duel quite interesting.

The following sections deal with the shipbuilding formulas and overall system in depth. Tables 1-6 give details on the items discussed below.

Hull points and DCR

A civilian ship's hull points and DCR (Damage Control Rating) are determined as per the Knight Hawks rule book — i.e., hull size x 5 = hull points; (hull size x 3) + 20 = DCR. Military and Star Law ships multiply hull size by 10 to determine hull points and by 9 to determine DCR. The greater values generated show the toughness and technical superiority of the secret military hardware over the civilian/militia equipment, and result in fewer attacking ships being vaporized in the "Defensive Fire" phase of combat.

Weaponry and defenses

All weapons and defenses on a ship are placed according to the amount of space they occupy in cubic meters, as per the statistics on page 61 of the Knight Hawks game rules, rather than using the MHS (Minimum Hull Size) method. The MHS is still used as a measure of how many weapons of one type may be mounted on a certain hull.

The maximum number of each type of weapon on a ship may not exceed the hull-size rating divided by the MHS of that weapon system. However, any ship with the necessary space may mount any one weapon despite its MHS. (Yes, you can have an assault scout with a laser canon!)

Defenses are also bought by the cubic meter, though no ship of less than hull size 5 can mount a powered defense screen because of the screen's heavy energy demands, which require the larger "B" engines.

The cubic meters of space for each hull size is determined by a decreasing percentage scale, with figures rounded to the nearest useful amount. This effectively reduces the free space on a battleship to about 1.6%, as compared to a fighter's 97%, which reflects the squeeze on space as life-support systems, crew quarters, storage areas, and so forth expand with ship size and potential patrol duration.

*A new shipbuilding system for the
STAR FRONTIERS® game*

Table 1
Space Available by Hull Size*

| Hull size | Military ships | Civilian ships |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| 1 | 30 | 20 |
| 2 | 50 | 30 |
| 3 | 75 | 40 |
| 4 | 100 | 50 |
| 5 | 175 | 90 |
| 6 | 250 | 125 |
| 7 | 300 | 150 |
| 8 | 350 | 175 |
| 9 | 400 | 200 |
| 10 | 450 | 225 |
| 11 | 500 | 250 |
| 12 | 550 | 275 |
| 13 | 600 | 300 |
| 14 | 700 | 350 |
| 15 | 800 | 400 |
| 16 | 900 | 450 |
| 17 | 1000 | 500 |
| 18 | 1100 | 550 |
| 19 | 1200 | 600 |
| 20 | 1300 | 650 |

* All space is in cubic meters.

It should be noted that noncombat ships such as freighters, research vessels, liners, and the like have only 40% of the space listed, since their primary functions demand nearly all available space. This is not to say that there could not be small-capacity, heavily armed liners used to move VIPs; this simply means that such ships would not be self-sufficient and would thus be very rare.

Weapon magazines

Rather than saying that a certain number of rounds can be kept in a launcher, the cubic-meters system is used to determine the number of rounds carried. Thus, ammunition for assault rockets, rocket-battery arrays, torpedo launchers, mine spreaders, seeker-missile racks, masking-screen launchers, and ICM launchers are figured on a cubic-meters-per-shot basis, though one round (or one array, or 20 meters of mines) may be kept at no space cost in any launcher except a masking-screen launcher. This is because a masking-screen charge is larger than the launcher itself.

Space stations

Space stations come in four main categories: fortresses, fortified stations, armed stations, and unarmed stations. The last title is something of a misnomer, as even the smallest freight station is likely to have a laser battery to discourage piracy.

Military stations fall in the fortress and fortified-station categories, while megacorporations have only a few fortified stations and many armed ones. "Free" stations not belonging to any one group or cartel are

Table 2
Weaponry and Space Needed

| Weapon | Cubic meters | MHS |
|-------------------------|--------------|-----|
| Laser cannon | 40 | 5 |
| Laser battery | 25 | 3 |
| Proton-beam battery | 30 | 10 |
| Electron-beam battery | 30 | 6 |
| Disruptor cannon | 60 | 12 |
| Assault-rocket launcher | 10 | 1 |
| Assault rocket* | 10 | — |
| Rocket-battery array | 40 | 5 |
| Rocket-battery salvo | 10 | — |
| Torpedo launcher | 75 | 5 |
| Torpedo | 20 | — |
| Mine spreader | 60 | 7 |
| Mines (5 fields) | 20 | — |
| Seeker-missile rack | 40 | 7 |
| Seeker missile | 40 | — |
| Grapples | 60 | 5 |

* Assault rockets for rearming fighters kept aboard an assault carrier are kept in cargo space. Up to 15 per cargo unit can be carried.

Table 3
Defenses and Space Needed

| Defense | Cubic meters |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| Reflective hull | — |
| Masking-screen launcher | 10 |
| Masking-screen charge | 25 |
| Electron screen | 10 x hull size |
| Proton screen | 12 x hull size |
| Stasis screen | 10 x hull size |
| ICM launcher | 10 |
| ICM | 5 |

Table 4
Optional Items Carried

| Item | Cubic meters |
|----------------------------|--------------|
| Fighter | 60 |
| Assault-transport dropship | 35* |
| Hull size 2 ship | 120 |
| Assault scout | 850 |

* Dropships are mounted about 75% externally, thus taking up less space than the totally interior docking areas and repair facilities used by fighters.

usually armed, though a few fortified and unarmed stations can be found. Small freight stations, scientific stations, and automated stations are usually unarmed.

Space-station weaponry and defenses are mounted in exactly the same way as they are on starships, with two differences: No forward firing weaponry may be mounted, and MHS restrictions are ignored with respect to the maximum number of one weapon type mountable.

The statistics given on Table 6 refer to a single space-station hull of a given size. It should be remembered that more than one hull may be joined to create megasta-

tions, as per page 8 of the Knight Hawks rule book, though such huge stations are prohibitively expensive for all but the military and megacorporations of the largest size.

Miscellaneous items

Players and GMs will undoubtedly find new things to put on ships. By carefully determining an item's size, it can easily be integrated into this system. Remember, though, that addition of any item beyond the listed maximums reduces the ADF or MR of the ship by one.

(Tables continue on page 76.)



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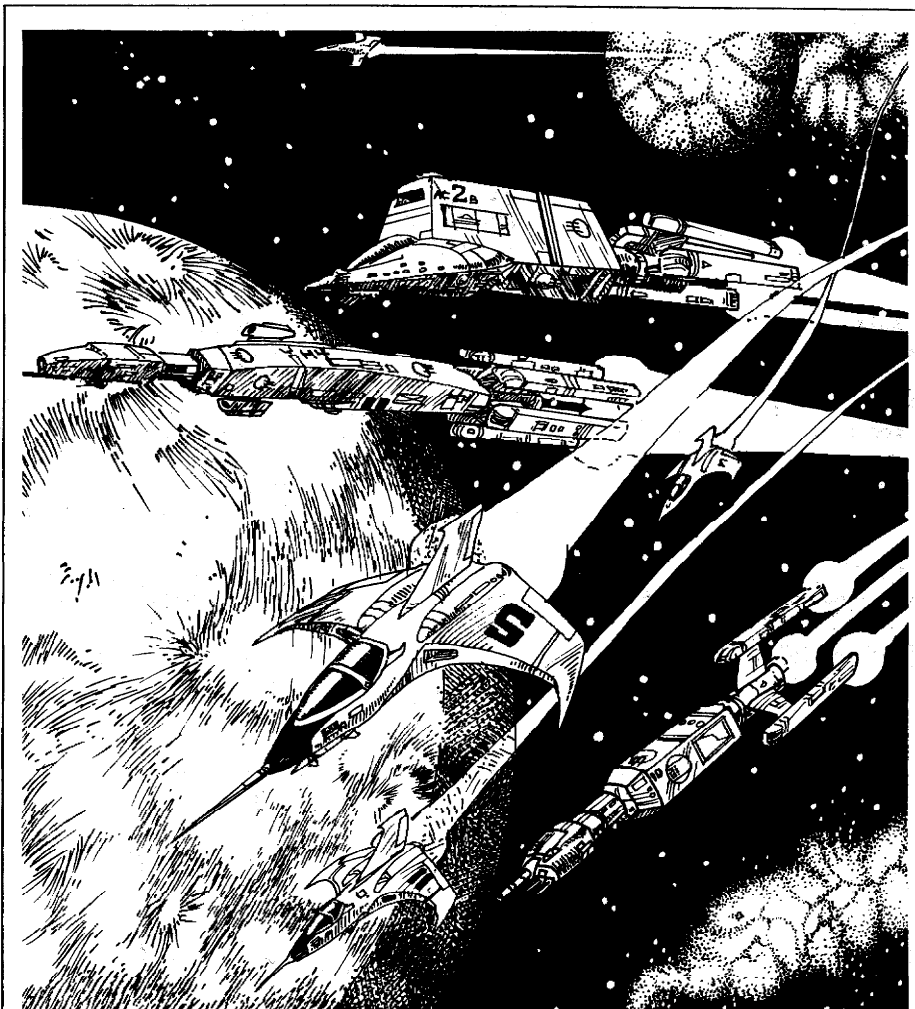


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**Table 5
DCR and Hull Points**

| Ship type | DCR determination | Hull points |
|-----------|-------------------|-------------|
| Civilian | (HS x 3) + 20 | HS x 5 |
| Military | (HS x 9) + 20 | HS x 10 |

**Table 6
Space Stations**

| Station type | Hull size | Hull points | DCR | Space in cubic meters | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|
| Fortress | 5 | 250 | 175 | 550 | |
| | 6 | 300 | 200 | 800 | |
| | Fortified | 3 | 80 | 60 | 180 |
| | | 4 | 120 | 80 | 210 |
| | | 5 | 140 | 100 | 250 |
| Armed | 1 | 30 | 30 | 80 | |
| | 2 | 55 | 40 | 120 | |
| | 3 | 70 | 65 | 160 | |
| | 4 | 80 | 75 | 200 | |
| Unarmed | 1 | 20 | 25 | 25 | |
| | 2 | 40 | 35 | 50 | |
| | 3 | 55 | 50 | 75 | |
| | 4 | 75 | 70 | 100 | |

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR UK Limited, The Mill, Rathmore Road, Cambridge CB1 4AD, United Kingdom.

The sage's horizons have now expanded beyond the D&D® and AD&D® games. This month's column focuses on the STAR FRONTIERS® game system. Page numbers in the "Alpha Dawn" section refer to the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules book, and page numbers in the "Zebulon's Guide" section refer to the *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* accessory, unless otherwise stated. See DRAGON issue #125, pages 73-74, for previous errata.

Alpha Dawn

The tables on pages 32-33 of the expanded game rules cover damage to moving vehicles. But what happens when a character fires at a stationary vehicle?

Treat any inapplicable result as a "No Effect" result or assign a different effect. For example, when rolling on the Vehicle Damage Table on page 32, the referee might choose to treat a "Spin" as a "No Effect," and a "Roll" as wheel or hoverfan damage equal to the "Turn Speed -15" result.

Is damage to vehicles cumulative?

Yes, both special damage and structural damage are cumulative.

What happens when a pedestrian is hit by a moving vehicle?

The pedestrian suffers 2d10 points of damage for each 20 meters per turn the vehicle was traveling. The referee might allow the driver or the pedestrian (or both) to attempt to avoid the collision if not surprised.

Will a grenade bounce when thrown from point-blank range? Is it even possible to miss when a grenade is thrown at point-blank range?

Generally, it is foolish to throw a grenade at point-blank range, since the

thrower will almost certainly be caught in the blast. In the basic game, grenades cannot be thrown at point-blank range. In the expanded game, grenades can be thrown at point-blank range with standard chances to hit (a character can miss with a grenade at this range just as easily as he can miss with any other weapon). The grenade will bounce 1 meter if it misses. *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* has no point-blank category; use the grenade rules on pages 31-32 to adjudicate grenade misses at any range.

Are there any climatic conditions that Sathar avoid? For example, is it possible to find Sathar operating in polar or Ice Age conditions?

This is up to the referee, but it is reasonable to assume that, given proper survival equipment, Sathar could operate in almost any terrain or climate since they do so in deep space.

Where is the planet Starmist (depicted in module SF3 *Sundown on Starmist*) located? I can't find it on the frontier sector map.

Starmist is not on the sector map; it's just off the map's left edge and is about the same distance from both Scree Fron and Araks. The exact star route to Sundown (Starmist's star) is a UPF secret. Sundown does appear on the sector map in *Zebulon's Guide*.

In the article "Going for a Swim?" in DRAGON issue #110, a laser is deemed too inefficient for underwater use. Why? Lasers are just intense lights, after all, and light goes through water doesn't it?

A complete answer to this question involves physics too complex to discuss in this column. To put it simply, water scatters light. Even in relatively clear water, this scattering is great enough to render even the most powerful laser useless as a weapon (it makes a good light, though).

If two vehicles are traveling side by side, what is the chance for a character to successfully jump from one to the other?

Assuming that the two vehicles are traveling at the same speed, and assuming that both are open-topped and thus easy to exit and enter, such a jump will succeed if the character passes an Agility check. The referee should assign penalties if the conditions are less than ideal.

If two vehicles are traveling in the same direction at the same speed, what modifiers apply when ranged combat takes place between the occupants of the two?

Only modifiers for cover (assuming that the fire is directed at the occupants) and for attacker movement apply. Target movement modifiers do not apply as long as the vehicles are not moving relative to one another.

What are the limits on Dralasite elasticity? Can one form into a limbless ball and roll downhill? Form into a boatlike shape and float? Form Yazirian-like wings and glide?

A Dralasite could retract all its limbs and roll down an incline, but any character foolish enough to do this on any but the gentlest and smoothest of slopes will suffer a considerable amount of damage from bouncing and colliding with obstacles (see the falling rules on page 20 of the expanded rules). Dralasites can swim by taking any number of useful shapes. Dralasites can't make themselves thin enough to form useful wings, even for gliding.

Do vehicle-mounted weapons get bonuses to hit? How much do vehicle-mounted weapons cost?

The referee might allow a weapon mounted on a vehicle a 5% bonus to hit (or one column shift in the combat system in *Zebulon's Guide*) due to its improved stability. Page 83 of *Zebulon's Guide* gives costs for mounting weapons on vehicles.

Can hover vehicles fly higher than 30 cm off the ground?

No. The air cushion cannot be made larger.

The terrain effects table on page 19 of the expanded rules has an entry labeled "Track-mobile?" What does this mean?

The entry applies to vehicles or robots with tank treads.

What kind of protection does armor give a vehicle? How much does vehicle armor cost?

The referee should assign a structure point value to the armor. Until these extra structure points are eliminated, an attacker cannot roll on the vehicle damage tables. Information on vehicle armor is given on page 83 of *Zebulon's Guide*.

How does a telescopic sight improve a weapon's chance to hit? What is a telescopic sight's cost and weight?

In the expanded game, a telescopic sight (scope) reduces the effective range to the target (see page 22). In the new combat system given in *Zebulon's Guide*, a scope extends a weapon's effective range (see *Zebulon's Guide*, page 30). Weights and

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costs for scopes are given in the equipment lists in *Zebulon's Guide*.

When a character tries to break out of a hold, does he use his Strength or melee "to hit" score?

The character uses his melee score, which might be based on his Strength (see page 25 of the expanded rules).

If a technician has flown a jetcopter once, does he have to roll against his operate machinery subskill in order to fly a different jetcopter?

Generally, no. Page 15 of the expanded rules clearly states technicians can automatically operate familiar vehicles. The referee, however, might require a roll if the second jetcopter has a locked ignition or is of an alien design. The referee might also require a roll whenever the character attempts an intricate maneuver or tries to operate the vehicle in poor conditions.

Can a character try again after failing a skill check?

This is up to the referee. Assuming that the initial failure did not produce a catastrophic result that would prevent further attempts, there is no reason why a character couldn't make several attempts. The referee should require a reasonable interval between attempts, from one hour to one day depending on the skill and the task. Attempts at lock-picking, for example, could be made every hour. An attempt to diagnose a disease or perform surgery could be made once a day at most.

Do Galactic Standard years have weeks or months?

No, the day is the largest sub-unit of a Standard year. If you want to use months and weeks, I suggest 20 months, each with four weeks, with five days in each week (20 days per month). Keep in mind that a month is usually based upon a world's lunar cycle, which may or may not be the same as the Earth-Moon lunar cycle, and which will certainly not be the same as any other world's lunar cycle(s).

The expanded game rules seem to indicate that a character can successfully climb a rope by passing just two Strength checks (at the halfway point and at the top), and these get a +30 modifier. Is the modifier applied to the die roll or the Strength score? Just how long a rope can a character climb?

The modifier is applied to the character's Strength score, but any roll of 96-00 is a failure. The actual length of the rope can vary; 30 meters is average. The referee might require additional checks for every additional 15 meters climbed, and might waive one of the checks if the climb is less than 15 meters.

The rules list grenades, standard energy clips, and pistol bullet clips

as having no weight or mass. This is causing real problems in my campaign. My players insist that their characters can carry several hundred of these items at no encumbrance penalties.

These items are so lightweight that carrying a few of them will not significantly affect a character's encumbrance. Normally, a character should carry no more than four grenades and six clips of ammunition. If a character insists on carrying more than this, each grenade weighs .25 kg and each clip weighs .10 kg. Carrying too many grenades *could* result in an accidental triggering of one or more grenades; the referee should assign a chance of this occurring for every grenade over the limit of four.

How much does anesthetic cost? One dose is required for surgery, so the supply included with a medikit tends to run out fairly quickly.

A hypo containing 10 doses of anesthetic costs 50 Cr.

How far can a character move during combat and still attack?

Any character can move his full allowance and still attack, though at a penalty; see pages 22 of the expanded rules. If you are using the new combat system in *Zebulon's Guide*, see page 37 of that book.

The skills section in the expanded rules says that a character cannot skip a level; that is, he must "buy" 4th level before he can advance to 5th. Fine, -but can a character "buy" 4th and 5th level (or any other consecutive levels) at the same time?

No. The character must spend at least one adventure at the lower level before advancing to the next level. This also applies to the new skill system presented in *Zebulon's Guide*.

Please explain how the three subskills of the Martial Arts skill (from the Military PSA) are used, and what die rolls are required. Also, where is the description for the Unarmed Combat skill? How much does this skill cost?

The subskills are used automatically when certain conditions arise. *Tumbling* comes into play whenever the character falls. The character's Martial Arts skill level is subtracted from any damage the fall causes, no die roll is required; see page 20 of the expanded rules for falling damage. *Defensive throwing* comes into play when a character breaks a wrestling hold. No die roll is required except the roll to break the hold. When the character breaks the hold, his opponent is knocked down and suffers damage equal to the character's punching score. The character receives no bonus when rolling to break the hold; he simply gets a better result when he succeeds. Wrestling and punch-

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ing are explained on page 25 of the expanded game. *Nerve combat* comes into play whenever the character is attacking a Dralosite, Human, Yazarian, or Vrusk with his bare hands (the referee might allow the character to learn nerve combat against the new races in *Zebulon's Guide* for an additional experience cost). When the character scores a successful hit, he has an increased chance to score a knockout. The bonus (+1% per Martial Arts skill level) applies only to the base chance (01-02) for scoring the knockout; see page 25 of the expanded rules for information on knockouts. The effects of the Unarmed Combat skill are explained on page 25 of the expanded rules. Consider Unarmed Combat a military skill when determining its experience cost (see page 11 of the expanded game).

Can a character use a heavy laser or other heavy weapon if he is strong enough to carry it?

Heavy weapons *must* be mounted on vehicles or tripods if they are to be aimed properly. If a character wishes to lug a heavy weapon, tripod, and power source along with him, and if he is willing to take time to set up the weapon every time a fight breaks out, more power to him.

How much does a tripod for a heavy weapon cost and weigh?

Tripods weigh 15 kg and cost 50 Cr,

Can I photocopy the character sheet that appears on the back cover of the basic game rules?

Yes, but only for personal use while playing the STAR FRONTIERS game; this also holds true for the character sheet included in *Zebulon's Guide*.

Are the -10 modifiers for using two weapons and for using a weapon in the "wrong hand" cumulative? What about a Vrusk using two weapons?

The two penalties are cumulative. When a character uses two weapons, his "right" hand fires at -10, and his "wrong" hand fires at -20. Vrusk never suffer the "wrong hand" penalty, but each weapon fires at -10 if one uses two weapons.

Why do groundcars move over water faster than explorers do?

Groundcars are not capable of water movement unless specially modified. When so modified, their lighter weight gives them a faster water movement.

How do you determine a robot's Strength score?

The referee must decide this on a case-by-case basis. In general, a robot will be weaker than an average individual of the race that built it, unless the robot is specifically designed for warfare or security. (No society wants to risk the consequences that might arise if a superstrong robot malfunctions and goes berserk.) Construction and industrial robots will have cranes, forks, or lifting arms that are very powerful, but these are designed to perform specific functions such as lifting bulk materials, compacting trash, excavating, etc. Decide how much strength a robot should have to get its job done (with some extra strength as a safety measure).

Do you need a robcomkit in order to deactivate a robot?

Yes, usually. The deactivation procedure for most robots involves removing an

access plate and fiddling with the robot's circuitry. Some domestic and industrial robots, however, have easily accessible kill switches. Any robot that is capable of inflicting large amounts of damage, like a snow-removal robot with a large rotary snow blower, will have such a switch. Any character can operate a kill switch. Of course, criminals or Sathar agents might reprogram the robot for destruction and thus disable such a switch.

Can a character exceed 6th level in a skill?

The 6th level is the limit in the expanded game. In *Zebulon's Guide*, however, the limit is 8th level.

Zebulon's Guide

When will volume two of Zebulon's Guide come out?

There are currently no plans for publishing further volumes of *Zebulon's Guide* or any other STAR FRONTIERS game products. Articles on this game (like this one) will occasionally appear in DRAGON Magazine, however.

Is it possible to use equipment from the first- or second-edition GAMMA WORLD® game for a STAR FRONTIERS game campaign?

Yes. Since the two games use the metric system, conversions between them are quite simple. You will have to assign a credit value to each GAMMA WORLD game item, and you will have to multiply the base damage of GAMMA WORLD game weapons by four in order to use them with the *Zebulon's Guide* resolution system. You might try to work out SEU consumption rates for GAMMA WORLD game weapons and equipment, but it is simpler if you just introduce GAMMA WORLD game energy cells into your campaign. This gives an alternate technology whose energy supplies are not interchangeable with those of standard items.

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Does an attacker who is unskilled with his weapon roll on the 0 column or the /0 column?

All unskilled weapon attacks use the 0 column before adjustments.

I don't understand the Humma's entry on the movement chart. What's the difference between walking or running and a Humma's leap/walking or leap/running?

Humma can move in two ways; they can walk or run just as the other races do, or they can use their springing ability. Since Humma attain a reasonable height when springing (5-10 meters, depending on the length of the spring), they must walk when indoors or whenever there isn't enough clear space overhead. Use the first line ("walk") when a Humma moves this way. A Humma's normal mode of locomotion is a series of kangaroo-like hops; use the walking rate from the second line ("leap") when a Humma moves this way. A Humma can also make a series of long springs when it wants to move very quickly; this is represented by the running rate on the "leap" line. When a Humma uses the run rate from the "walk" line, it is subject to the endurance rule on page 19 of the expanded rules, but it can only use the run rate from the "leap" line for 10 turns (see page 1 of *Zebulon's Guide*).

Does a character have any chance to succeed when he attempts a task requiring a skill he doesn't have?

This is up to the referee. Generally, an untrained character cannot perform any of the scientific skills or any skill that has a prerequisite. Otherwise, the character rolls on the -X column and will usually get a result that is less than the minimum result listed for the skill. For example, if an untrained character tries to use the Body Speak skill, he would only be able to convey simple concepts such as "help," "hello," or "danger." The referee might allow the untrained character to roll on a better column if the task is very simple or the character has some special knowledge. In the previous example, the character might roll on the 0 column if he was repeating a message he had seen a trained Body Speaker successfully convey earlier.

Are the Dexterity modifiers listed on page 38 applied before or after a combat roll?

All combat column shifts are applied before the die roll.

What qualifications must a robot have in order to operate a vehicle?

First, the robot must be able to fit in the driver's seat; this requires an android robot, a special control station that can accommodate a nonandroid robot, or a robot that is integrated directly into the vehicle. The robot or robot/vehicle must have a vehicle computer, a special version of the mind drive progit (at five times normal cost), and the following scanners: visual, radar, motion, and shape.

Page 31 (second column, "Skills") mentions a "throwing" skill. Where is the description of this skill?

This is a skill from the Alpha Dawn rules; see page 11 of the expanded rules.

How do you determine how far thrown explosives bounce when they miss? Page 31 mentions a non-existent miss section. How do you determine how far a grenade bounc-

es when it is on a timer? Page 32 says the bounce can be up to half the distance it was thrown; how does the referee decide the actual distance?

Thrown explosives behave exactly like grenades when they miss (see page 32). The referee will have to decide how far timed grenades (or explosives) will bounce on a case-by-case basis. The main consideration should be the setting on the timer. If the setting is one round or less, the grenade won't have very much time to bounce around before going off. I suggest treating such grenades as though they were set to go off on contact (they then bounce 1d10 meters). If the setting is longer, the grenade will probably stop bouncing before it explodes; determine the maximum distance for the bounce (half the distance it was thrown) and divide by ten, then roll 1d10 times the quotient to determine how far the grenade bounces, rounding any fractions up to the nearest meter. For example, a character throws a grenade 50 meters and misses. The grenade could bounce up to 25 meters ($\frac{1}{2} \times 50$). The player rolls 1d10 and gets a three, so the grenade bounces 8 meters ($25/10 = 2.5$; $2.5 \times 3 = 7.5$, round up to 8).

Do the mentalist's Beam and Detection disciplines require an unobstructed line of sight to the target in order to function?

No, although Beam requires that the mentalist know the general location of the target.

Will solar optics negate the -2 column shift inflicted when a character is "hit" by the beam of a floodlight?

This is up to the referee. If the surroundings are dimly lit, a sudden zap with a floodlight will blind a character wearing solar optics for one round. Afterwards, the optics will darken and negate the penalty. Of course, if the floodlamp is switched off, the darkened optics will obscure vision until they readjust to the

(continued on page 68)

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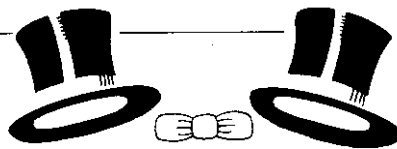
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(continued from page 50)

dim light (the effect is exactly the same as wearing sunglasses in a dark room). If the surroundings are already brightly lit, the optics will already be darkened and will protect against zaps from a floodlight.

Does a maxiprogram have all the functions given in its description, or does it perform only one of these functions?

A maxiprogram will perform only one function from the list suggested in its description, according to *Zebulon's Guide* designer Kim Eastland. However, Mr. Eastland points out that *Zebulon Guide's* computer section, like the rest of its contents, is intended to give referees a few basic guidelines for handling campaigns. If he wishes, the referee can introduce multi-function maxiprograms that combine functions. Such progs will be more expensive and will perform each function less well than a specialized prog.

What is the random location indicator on the file computer?

This is a catalog showing what information is stored in which file. This aids in retrieving information stored in the computer — information does not have to be retrieved in the same order it was put in.

Can a mainframe maxiprogram or bodycomp program be used simultaneously with other programs, or must they be used one at a time?

Assuming that the computer is not overloaded with programs, it can run all of them simultaneously. A level two mainframe, for example, can run up to four levels of maxiprograms, and can run these simultaneously. The computer could be loaded with more maxiprograms, but only four could run at any one time.

Is there an error on the mass and weight of scanners? A Type D scanner weighs in at 80 kg, but the slightly larger Type E weighs 1,000.

The mass figures for scanners listed on page 89 are accurate; the large increase in mass that you have noted reflects the Type E's much larger volume.

Can the spy eye be controlled through a joystick, or does it have to be preprogrammed?

A spy eye can be controlled manually.

Is the damage caused by the mentalist's Cryokinesis and Pyrokinesis disciplines one time only, or is the damage inflicted every turn? Is damage first inflicted on the third round or the fourth?

Once the mentalist has successfully completed three uninterrupted rounds of concentration of a target, he may continue to concentrate on the target and do additional damage every turn. Since these disciplines involve the complex task of controlling molecular activity, the mentalist must make a new roll for damage each round. If the mentalist switches targets or breaks concentration for any other reason, he must again concentrate for three rounds before inflicting damage. Either discipline inflicts damage on the fourth round of uninterrupted concentration.

What are the maximum and minimum (if any) changes in density allowed by the mentalist's Density discipline?

The time required to use the discipline (one turn for a 10% change in density) puts a practical limit on the change. In absolute terms, a character cannot give himself negative density. When the character reaches "zero" density, his body behaves like an underinflated helium balloon, not quite light enough to float but easily pushed about even by the slightest breeze. Any decrease in density will effectively make the character weaker; the character loses 10% decrease in Strength for each 10% decrease in density. Theoretically, there is no limit on how much density a character can gain, but in normal Earth gravity, a character will become totally immobile once his density increases 500% (five times normal).

What is the range of a grenade launcher?

A grenade launcher has "D" range (see page 37, Weapon Ranges table).

What is an asbestos suit? How much does it weigh and cost?

An asbestos suit is a fireproof garment that covers the entire body, including the head and extremities. It weighs 3 kg and costs 500 Cr.

Ke-5000 lasers and raffur M-10s can use parabatteries. What are parabatteries, how many SEUs do they carry, and what is their weight and cost?

Parabatteries are essentially larger versions of standard power clips. The capacities, costs, and weights of parabatteries are listed on page 41 of the expanded Alpha Dawn rules. Both weapons can use parabatteries of any size.

What skill is needed to fire a micromissile?

Technically, no skill is required, but the base column for success would be column 0. Characters with PGS weapons skill get a bonus when firing micromissiles.

How much does a minigrenade launcher cost and weigh?

A minigrenade launcher weighs .75 kg and costs 200 Cr.

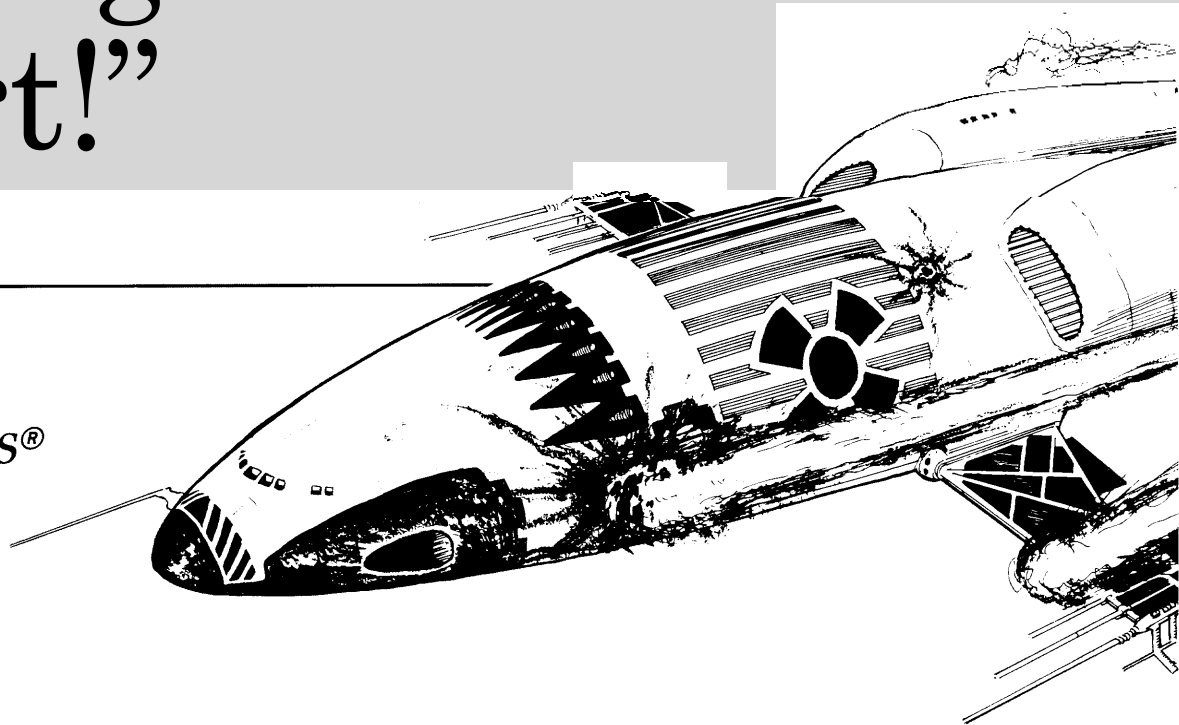
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“Damage control — report!”

Revised starship combat for the STAR FRONTIERS® game



The Nemesis rounded the final arc of the planetary orbit set up by its crew for mapping procedures. On the bridge, Commander Marc-sur-Lars patiently awaited the incoming information. The system didn't show much promise. It was more like a rest stop — but one far behind enemy lines.

“Sir, I'm picking up a faint energy source.” Hortlefloo, the Osakar pilot, examined his control screen. “It's at the sensor limit, over the approaching horizon. It might be a starship engine.”

“Full alert,” Commander Lars said evenly, pressing a small button on the side of his own command control panel. They were deep in Sathar territory; he couldn't take any chances with his 13-million-credit ship or its crew. The bridge lighting dimmed and slowly turned red. Lars could hear the alert warning in the corridor outside. So

much for the rest stop, he thought.

“I've got a fix on the ship on the main screen,” said the astrogator. Lars looked up and examined the image on the screen. It wasn't any known type of Sathar ship, but that meant nothing. The Sathar had all sorts of ships.

“It's powering up its weapons,” warned Hortlefloo. “Now it's closing in. It's got us.”

“Battle stations. Conflict imminent.” Lars punched a second button and a warning klaxon sounded in the hall outside the bridge door as crewmen ran for their combat posts.

Lars allowed himself a brief smile. “Mr. Harrachi,” he said, turning slightly toward the Yazirian weapons officer. “Please give our neighbor our warmest greetings.” And pray, he thought, that we give them ours before they give us theirs.

In the STAR FRONTIERS® game, starship combat is played out using the Knight Hawks board-game system. Players in campaigns centered around a starship, like those concerning exploration missions, often find that starship combat is a time when they hang up their characters and concentrate solely on the dice. Here are some suggestions to liven up combat and bring characters out of the background.

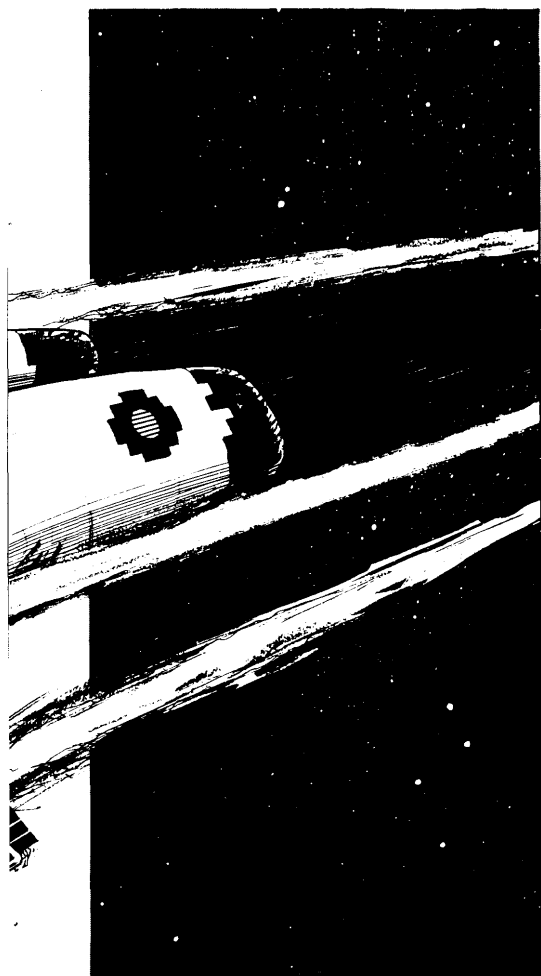
In the Knight Hawks game, starship

combat has two phases, movement and combat, with each side taking turns in a fixed order to perform its actions. Instead, a more flexible initiative system is in order. Initiative should be dependent on several factors: the maneuver ratings (MR) of the ships, the pilots' initiative modifiers, and the gunners' initiative modifiers. To determine the starship initiative modifier, find the ship on each side with the highest MR. Add the initiative modifier of either the

pilot or the gunner (whichever score is higher) to the ship's MR. The total is the starship's initiative modifier. Repeat this for as many combatants as needed. Then each side rolls 1d10 and adds the initiative modifier. The highest resulting number becomes side A, the first side to move, and the sequence of play in the Knight Hawk's Tactical Operations Manual, page 3, is followed thereafter.

After three turns in the advanced Knight Hawks game, there is a repair turn. This does not mean that the starships have disengaged and decided to start repairs, but it instead shows the culmination of efforts over the past three turns. For a more realistic approach, let repair rolls be made at the end of each combat turn. Of course, if the engineer starts work on one project, then another problem requires more attention a few turns later, the character will be faced with some interesting dilemmas. To have the engineer use his DCR rating, he must maintain work on a damaged system for three turns. If he stops to work on something else without completing the previous repair, all his work will go to waste.

In the advanced game, percentile dice are rolled when a ship is hit by enemy fire, and the Advanced Game Damage Table from the Tactical Operation Manual, page 12, is consulted. This table has little to offer player characters but major sys-



tem difficulties, ending in a quick death for the PCs and the loss of their expensive starship. The modified damage table with this article was developed to take into account other systems that could be damaged in combat. Some of this damage may not be immediately threatening, but it could cause trouble later on. The new results in the modified table are explained below.

Ship's boats: This hit disables one of the following, selected by 1d10 roll: 1-2, life boat; 3-4, launch; 5-6, workpod; 7, shuttle (if an assault carrier is hit, score the hit against a fighter); 8, fighter; 9-10, escape pod.

Crew casualties: Casualties depend on hull size and, to some extent, ship type. In any case, a single hit cannot reduce the crew to less than half of the last turn's total (to save PCs). Below is a table of hull sizes and the number of crewmen and passengers that can be lost.

| HS | Crew lost |
|--------|---|
| 1-2: | 1 |
| 3-4: | 1-5 |
| 5-7: | 1-10 |
| 8-10: | 2-20 (if an assault transport or passenger liner is hit, 20-200 are lost) |
| 11-14: | 3-30 |
| 15-18: | 5-50 (if an assault carrier is hit, 10-100 are lost) |
| 19-20: | 10-100 |

Modified Advanced Game Damage Table

| Modified die roll | Type of damage |
|-------------------|--|
| -20-05 | Hull hit: Double normal damage by weapon type |
| 06-10 | Ship's boats * |
| 11-20 | Crew casualties * |
| 21-25 | Cargo hit* |
| 26-45 | Hull hit: Normal damage by weapon type |
| 46-48 | Drive hit: Lose 1 ADF |
| 49-51 | Drive hit: Lose half of the total ADF (round up) |
| 52 | Drive hit: Lose entire ADF |
| 53 | Drive hit: Fuel loss* |
| 54-57 | Steering hit: Lose 1 MR point |
| 58-59 | Steering hit: Lose entire MR |
| 60 | Steering hit: Continue current course indefinitely |
| 61-62 | Weapon hit: LC; LB; PB; EB; AR; RB; LP* * |
| 63-64 | Weapon hit: PB; EB; LB; RB; T; AR; MM* * |
| 65-66 | Weapon hit: DC; LC; AR; T; LB; FB* *; SM* * |
| 67-68 | Weapon hit: T; AR; EB; PB; LB; RB; TB* * |
| 69-70 | Weapon hit: LB; RB; T; AR; PB; EB; LC |
| 71-72 | Internal systems hit * |
| 73 | Soda machine* * * |
| 74 | Power short circuit: Lose all screens and ICMs |
| 75-77 | Defense hit: PS; ES; SS; MS; ICM; ENS* * |
| 78-81 | Defense hit: MS; ICM; SS; PS; ES; MF* * |
| 82-84 | Defense hit: ICM; SS; PS; ES; MS; ENS* * |
| 85-87 | Combat control system hit: - 10% on all attacks |
| 88-90 | Life support hit* |
| 91 | Computer hit * |
| 92-96 | Navigation hit: Lose all maneuvering control, moving at random |
| 97 | Holo games * * * |
| 98-105 | Electrical fire: Roll additional damage at +20 each turn |
| 106-115 | Damage control hit: DCR cut in half |
| 116 | Steam baths * * * |
| 117-120 | Disastrous fire: DCR cut in half; lose entire ADF and MR; - 10% on all attacks; roll damage at +20 each turn |

Any hit that cannot be applied is treated as a normal hull hit.

* This effect is described in the text.

* * All of these abbreviations are based on the weapons and defenses given in Gus Monter's article, "An Interstellar Armory," in DRAGON issue #115. The abbreviations are as follow: LP = laser piston; MM = maxi-missile; FB = fusion bomb; SM = screen mine; TB = tractor beam; ENS = energy shield; MF = masking field. If this article is not available, ignore these results.

* * * These areas can be hit only once. Subsequent hits here are treated as normal hull hits.

Cargo hit: One hull unit of random cargo is lost.

Drive hit, fuel loss: The fuel storage has been damaged. On atomic-drive ships, one engine has lost 1-5 fuel pellets. Ion-drive ships lose one-quarter of their stored hydrogen. Chemical-drive ships lose half their fuel.

Internal systems hit: This hit could affect combat performance but will more likely be a nuisance after the battle. The internal systems that can be hit are (roll 1d10):

1-2. Elevator: The emergency ladders will have to be used, so travel time between decks is doubled.

3-4. Food service: No food can be served from the galley as the food dispensers have been disabled.

5-6. Cameras: Internal cameras have failed.

7-8. Robots: Computer robot links are

down, so robots will not respond to computer commands. This hit may not show itself for quite a while, until someone breaks into the ship and the security robots fail to investigate.

9-10. Intercoms: Internal ship communication is down.

Life support hit: This hit gradually incapacitates the life support system. On the first hit, the main life support's capacity is reduced by half. The second hit knocks it out completely. The same progression is followed for the backup units.

Computer hit: This hit can be a real menace. First, determine at random which mainframe was hit. Good starship designers have a network of mainframes to prevent the destruction of all the computer programs at once. After determining the mainframe hit, randomly destroy one of the programs in that mainframe. Ω

by Charles A. Vanelli

*An updated
movement
system for the
STAR FRONTIERS®
game*

"Jetboots, don't fail me now!"

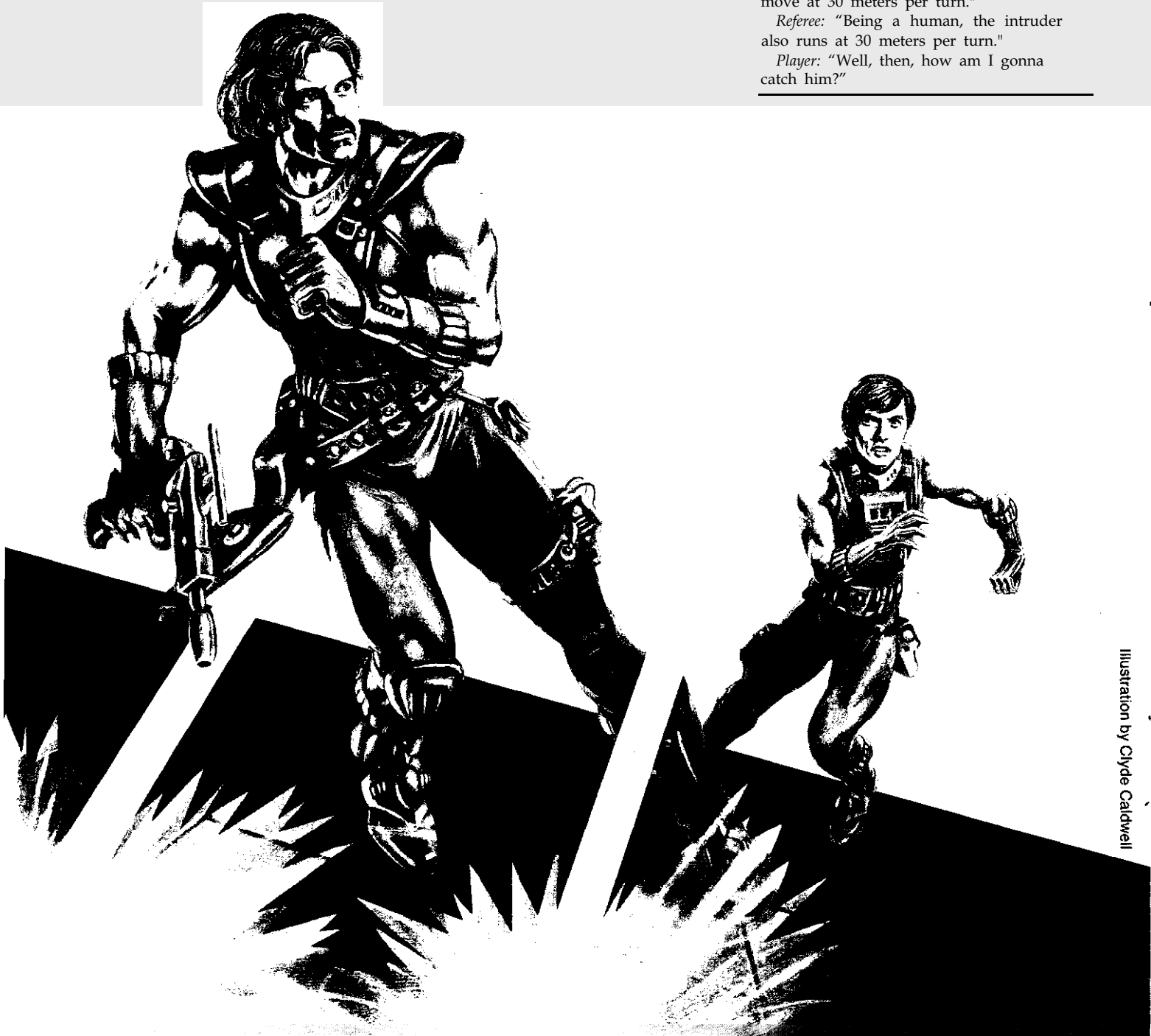
Player (whose character, a space-station security guard, has unexpectedly discovered an intruder in a storage area): "I back away, drawing my nightstick."

Referee: "Great, because the guy takes off the moment he sees you. He's carrying a box from the storeroom."

Player: "I chase after him! When I catch up, I'll smack him with my nightstick! I move at 30 meters per turn."

Referee: "Being a human, the intruder also runs at 30 meters per turn."

Player: "Well, then, how am I gonna catch him?"



Good question. Unless the intruder happens to slip on a convenient banana peel or other unforeseen obstacle, the poor security guard may never get his man. Here we see evidence of a flaw in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, in that all beings of the same race run at the same rate of speed. The problem, however, is not just limited to running or walking; it also applies to swimming, climbing, and just about every other movement task that a character might attempt.

In the STAR FRONTIERS game, all creatures are given a set of movement rates which are dependent only upon the races of the creatures involved. Thus, every Human in the Frontier runs just as fast as every other Human. The same can be said for Yazirians, Dralasites, and every other known race. Obviously, this just isn't the case. Any decent member of an Olympic track team could beat the socks off the average person on Earth in a foot race, yet the current movement system would not allow this.

Since all characters are *not* created equal in the STAR FRONTIERS game system, all speeds should not be equal. Speed should be based upon the basic attribute scores of a character and the character's race. (Obviously, a Dralasite cannot run as fast as a Vrusk.) This article describes a diversified movement rate system in which only the characters who are physically alike have the same movement rates. In addition, the "standardized" movement rates, such as climbing, jumping, and the rest, are also covered. The main advantage of this system is that it allows each character to be different from his peers. As an added bonus, the system is flexible, permitting a character to improve his speed as he improves his physical fitness.

Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM)

This system requires that each character have a new statistic defined: the Movement Rate Multiplier (MRM). The MRM is simply a number from 1 to 10, indicating how fast a character is — but only as compared to other members of the same race. High MRMs represent fast characters, while low scores represent slow characters. This score is used extensively in generating the movement rates, so it is recommended that this score be recorded on each character sheet near the Initiative Modifier score or the movement rates. To create the MRM, simply take the average of the character's Strength and Reaction Speed scores, then divide by 10, rounding all fractions down. This value is the MRM.

The Strength score is used in the MRM because a character's speed and quickness are based upon the strength of the muscles within that character's limbs. The Reaction Speed score is used because, by definition, it is a measure of a person's quickness. Excessive body weight and equipment encumbrance do not play a part in the creation of the MRM because of their difficulty to implement; game

masters wishing to use these attributes must create their own modifiers for them.

To use the MRM, the player must find his character's Base Movement Value for the type of movement desired. The Base Movement Values are listed in Table 1 herein and are found by cross indexing the character's race with the type of movement needed, such as running or walking. The player then multiplies the number found by his character's MRM to find his character's movement rate using that particular type of movement. Even though encumbrance has no effect on the MRM, it still plays a role in reducing the movement rates of an encumbered character by half

if the character is carrying over half his Strength score in kilograms.

For example: Rufinkel, a Yazirian, has a Strength score of 55 and a Reaction Speed score of 60. His MRM would then be 5 (the average of 55 and 60 is 57.5; dividing by 10 gives 5.75, rounded down to 5). Consulting Table 1, Rufinkel walks at the rate of 12.5 meters per turn, runs at 37.5 meters per turn, and hikes at the rate of 5 kilometers per hour. In addition, the table also gives Rufinkel's "standardized" movement rates. Rufi now climbs at the rate of 2 meters per turn, and he makes running jumps up to 6 meters long and standing jumps up to 3 meters.

Table 1a
Base Movement Values by Race

| Race | Walking | Running | Hiking | Climbing | Crawling |
|------------|---------|---------|--------|----------|----------|
| Dralasite | 1.250 | 5.000 | 0.750 | 0.375 | 0.500 |
| Human | 2.500 | 7.500 | 1.250 | 0.500 | 0.500 |
| Humma* | 2.000 | 7.000 | 1.200 | 0.300 | 0.200 |
| Ifshnit* | 1.000 | 3.750 | 0.500 | 0.250 | 0.250 |
| Osakar* | 5.000 | 12.000 | 2.000 | 0.400 | 0.600 |
| Vrusk | 3.750 | 8.750 | 1.500 | 0.375 | 0.250 |
| Yazirian | 2.500 | 7.500 | 1.000 | 0.500 | 0.500 |
| Sathar * * | 2.500 | 5.000 | 0.750 | 0.500 | 0.500 |

Table 1b
Base Movement Values by Race

| Race | Running leap | Standing leap | Running vertical leap | Standing vertical leap |
|------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Dralasite | 1.000 | 0.375 | 0.375 | 0.250 |
| Human | 1.250 | 0.500 | 0.500 | 0.375 |
| Humma* | 10.000 | 5.000 | 1.500 | 1.000 |
| Ifshnit * | 0.750 | 0.250 | 0.375 | 0.250 |
| Osakar * | 1.200 | 0.500 | 0.400 | 0.300 |
| Vrusk | 1.250 | 0.625 | 0.375 | 0.250 |
| Yazirian | 1.250 | 0.500 | 0.500 | 0.375 |
| Sathar * * | 1.000 | 0.500 | 0.375 | 0.250 |

Table 1c
Base Movement Values by Race

| Race | Flying | Swimming per turn | Swimming per hour |
|------------|--------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Dralasite | — | 2.000 | 0.250 |
| Human | — | 2.500 | 0.250 |
| Humma* | — | 1.600 | 0.200 |
| Osakar * | — | 1.000 | 0.125 |
| Ifshnit * | — | 2.400 | 0.200 |
| Vrusk | — | 2.500 | 0.250 |
| Yazirian | — | 2.500 | 0.250 |
| Sathar * * | — | 2.500 | 0.375 |

* See SFAC3 Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space for details on this race.

** Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON® issue #96.

Movement types

Table 1 also gives new movement types that are available to the characters. These are more fully explained below, along with the old movement types from the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules to reduce cross referencing between the book and this article.

Walking: This is the rate at which a character can walk, expressed in meters per turn. This is also the rate at which a character can climb a ladder or staircase.

Running: This is the rate at which a character can run, expressed in meters per turn.

Hiking: This is the rate at which a character can walk (with appropriate rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour. (This is known as "Per Hour" in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules.)

Climbing: This is the rate at which a character can climb a rope, expressed in meters per turn. A character can climb a vertical surface at half this speed, provided there are handholds and footholds.

Crawling: This is the rate at which a character can crawl along the floor or ground in a semiprone position, expressed in meters per turn.

Running Leap: This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally, allowing a straight-line run for 15 meters before leaping.

Standing Leap: This is the distance in meters that a character can leap horizontally from a standing start.

Running Vertical Leap: This is the height in meters that a character can leap, allowing a straight-line run of at least 5 meters before leaping. This height is measured from the ground to the lowest point on the character's body at the highest point of the jump. The sum of this distance and the character's height (with arm extended) used when the character is attempting to reach a high object.

Standing Vertical Leap: This is the height in meters that a character can leap from a standing start.

Flying: This is the rate at which a

Table 2
Average STR, RS, and MRM Scores

| Race | Average strength | Average reaction speed | Average MRM |
|-----------|------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Dralasite | 50 | 40 | 4 |
| Human | 45 | 45 | 4 |
| Humma* | 55 | 45 | 5 |
| Ifshnit * | 40 | 45 | 4 |
| Osakar * | 50 | 50 | 5 |
| Vrusk | 40 | 50 | 4 |
| Yazirian | 35 | 50 | 4 |
| Sathar ** | 45 | 40 | 4 |

* See SFAC3 *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* for details on this race.

** Sathar are used as NPCs only. However, this information also applies to the Sathar-related S'sessu race (which may be used as PCs), as described in DRAGON issue #96.

winged character may fly, expressed in meters per turn. Note the difference between flying and gliding: Gliding is merely coasting through the air on steady wings, but flying is the act of physically propelling oneself through the air by flapping wings.

Swimming per turn: This is the rate at which a character may swim, expressed in meters per turn.

Long-Distance Swimming: This is the rate at which a character may swim (with brief floating rests) over long periods of time, expressed in kilometers per hour.

Expanding Table 1

Expanding the table of Base Movement Values for new races can be accomplished in four easy steps. First, each new race must have a table of average movement rates defined for it; the creation of this table is left to the designer of the race. Second, the new race's average Strength and Reaction Speed scores must be found, using the method in the following section. Third, using the average Strength and Reaction Speed scores, the average MRM is computed, as per the rules in this arti-

cle. Finally, new figures for Table 1 are found simply by dividing the average movement rates for the race by the average MRM, rounding results to the third decimal place. The results should be recorded in the appropriate columns on Table 1.

There may be some confusion as to what a race's average ability scores are. Note that when rolling on the Ability Score Table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules (page 4), the most commonly generated base score will be a 45, simply because the table assigns a 20% chance for it to occur. No other base score has as great a chance, though 45 is not the average score. The average score is actually the sum of 45 and the appropriate value from the Ability Modifier Table (Alpha Dawn expanded game rules, page 4). Thus, for a Dralosite, the average Strength score would be 50 (45 and a +5 modifier equals 50), while its average Reaction Speed score would be 40 (45 and a - 5 modifier). This gives Dralosites an average MRM of 4 (the average of 50 and 40, divided by 10 and rounded down). The average MRMs for typical races are given in Table 2.

When the numbers in Table 1 are multiplied by the average MRM score for a race, the results are the regular movement rates for the race in question. This system works on the assumption that the rates given in the Movement Table on page 19 of the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules were created with the average character in mind. The average character's statistics are the same as those of an average NPC, as shown on the table in the Alpha Dawn expanded game rules on page 59. Ω

We Moved!

Well, actually, our mailing address has changed slightly. The new address is now: DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. See the difference? Our street address for UPS shipments is still: DRAGON Magazine, TSR, Inc., 201 Sheridan Springs Road, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A.

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Continued from page 61

finding a master entirely apart from their acquaintances or present superiors.

Once the master has been established, the DM can then use the formula in *Oriental Adventures* for detailing what martial-arts abilities the particular master is familiar with. In the case of the monastic classes (monks, shukenja, and sohei) and the ninja and yakuza, even if the character's present master is limited in martial-arts ability, it should not be difficult for the character to locate a more experienced master later — through the process listed. Ω

SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom

This month, "Sage Advice" covers a potpourri of questions on various topics related to TSR® games.

D&D® game

The D&D Expert Set says that only maidens can ride unicorns. How can my female PC become a maiden?

Females don't become maidens. Maidens are born, not made. In fantasy literature, a maiden is a young, unmarried woman. In the D&D game, a true maiden also has a Lawful alignment. You might also look up the word "virgin" in a dictionary.

At what level can PC mystics start on a path to Immortality? Does any path favor Mystics?

Mystics can seek immortality any time after reaching 16th level. A mystic's intense devotion to his discipline makes the Epic Hero the only suitable path for a mystic; the DM must decide if this is also the favored path (see the *Master DM's Book*, page 15).

Will a *weapon of wounding* negate a troll's regeneration ability in the D&D game?

Only insofar as the troll suffers the extra damage caused by the "wound" (1 hp per round). The troll can regenerate this damage, however.

STAR FRONTIERS® game

I enjoyed the article "Armored and Dangerous" in issue # 129 (page 70), but I have a few questions. Does the basic suit of powered armor come with a bodycomp and any special scanners? I assume there is a body comp because *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* says that an enviro-

comp is required, and implies that a master-comp is also required.

The basic suit has no scanners, but it does have a bodycomp with a type D processor and a kingpack power supply. The standard progitis are: master-comp, med-inject (three of them), body-scan, and enviro-comp. Additional progitis can be added to the computer, up to the kingpack's 12-progit limit.

I like the helmet rafflurs and grenade launchers in *Zebulon's Guide*, but I can't find costs and weights for them.

As explained on page 70 of that book, helmet attachments cost 20% more than their regular counterparts. The weights of the helmet and regular versions are identical. Helmet rafflurs, for example are merely two rafflur M-1s attached to a helmet. The cost and weight of the rafflur M-1 are given on page 34 as 300 Cr and .50 kg. Therefore, helmet rafflurs cost 720 Cr ((300 X 2) X 1.2) and weigh 1 kg.

AD&D® game

Why does a paladin become a cavalier instead of a fighter when he loses his paladinhood?

With the appearance of *Unearthed Arcana*, paladins became a subclass of the cavalier, not the fighter.

Both the *Monster Manual I* and the *Best of DRAGON Magazine Anthology*, vol. III, say that halflings have a +3 "to hit" with missile weapons. Do PC halflings get this bonus in addition to any adjustments for dexterity?

No; the +3 bonus is given only to NPC halflings, who are assumed to spend a lot of time practicing with short bows or slings (as well as to have high dexterities). The +3 bonus applies only to these two weapons.

Are elves immune to *charm* effects that aren't from spells, such as a vampire's gaze or a harpy's song?

Elves and half-elves are resistant (not immune) to all forms of sleep and *charm*, including those above.

If a dwarven character and a human character got married and had kids, wouldn't their offspring be half-dwarves? What would the

racial characteristics of half-dwarves be?

We suppose that a human and a dwarf would produce a half-dwarf, if they could produce a child at all. Such a child, however, might be either a tall, hairless dwarf or a short, hairy human, as there are no half-dwarves in the AD&D game. While it is possible to create more crossbreeds than are already present in the AD&D game, we recommend that you stick with the ones in the rules.

Can humanoids such as gnolls or orcs use weapon specialization?

No; weapon specialization is for the fighter class only. We suppose that some very extraordinary humanoids might actually have fighter training and so could specialize. This would be very rare.

Here is my 8th-level troll thief. What do you think of him?

See the *DMG*, page 21, "The Monster as a Player Character:" for the official view on this and all other cases like it involving monsters as PCs.

Can a character worship a deity from the pantheon of another race? Why or why not?

Yes, he can, but he might find himself outcast, accepted neither by his own race nor the race associated with the deity. This depends on how appropriate the deity is for the character. The Greek deity Hephaestus, for example, is very appropriate for dwarves or gnomes. Likewise, deities who are associated with a particular class are generally appropriate for any character of that class regardless of race. A dwarven worshiper of a giants' deity, however, is likely to be unwelcome wherever he goes. Clerics are a different matter; refer to the individual descriptions of each deity to determine which races the deity will accept as clerics.

When can a character build a stronghold and attract followers?

Characters who are allowed to construct strongholds in order to attract followers may do so when they reach "name" level. "Name" level is the level at which a class no longer gains additional hit dice or constitution bonuses (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 12). *DRAGON* issue #117, pages 16-17 ("Feuds and Feudalism"), has some suggestions for midlevel strongholds as well. Any PC with the money may build a stronghold - but attracting followers other than the usual henchmen and hirelings could be difficult if the PC is of low level.

Which classes get a constitution bonus higher than +2 per hit die?

To be absolutely clear: fighters (including rangers and barbarians) and cavaliers (including paladins).

Do nonthief characters have any

From Freighters to Flying Boats

Traveling the high seas in the STAR FRONTIERS® game

by Matthew M. Seabaugh

In the STAR FRONTIERS® Alpha Dawn game rules, land travel is covered extensively. Air travel is also given its fair share of coverage in both the Alpha Dawn and *Zebulon's Guide to Frontier Space* rules. But when you reach the beach, you're stranded. Hovercraft can travel over calm water for a good distance—but after that, what's left?

This article fills the gap by describing several types of surface vessels, a few underwater craft, and some amphibious aircraft. The vessels detailed herein are essentially generic creations; referees may create variations on these for their own campaign worlds. Sea movement and combat are also covered.

Surface vessels

Ski cycle

Cost: 2,000 Cr (rental: 25 Cr down + 25 Cr/day)

Top/cruise speed: 150/90 KPH

Passengers: 2

Cargo: .5 cubic meter

Parabattery: Type 1

Hull size: A

Bump number: 1

Notes: Similar in size to a land cycle, a ski cycle has an engine resembling a jet engine that uses water as the propellant. This vessel is very maneuverable and can travel in extremely shallow water.

Motorboat

Cost: 6,000 Cr (rental: 50 Cr down + 25 Cr/day)

Top/cruise speed: 120/80 KPH (15/10 KPH w/sail)

Passengers: 6

Cargo: 200 kg, 1 cubic meter

Parabattery: Type 2

Hull size: B

Bump number: 3

Notes: This is an outboard-motor craft capable of high speeds and quick maneuvering. The price includes a collapsible sail. Motorboats can maneuver in waters one meter or more in depth. A special enclosed-canopy version may be purchased, or the canopy can be added later; the canopy makes a motorboat more streamlined and, hence, faster. Any motorboat with an enclosed canopy has a top speed of 140 KPH. As the canopy is made of canvaslike material, it does not serve as armor.

Yacht (cabin cruiser)

Cost: 75,000 Cr

Top/cruise speed: 100/60 KPH

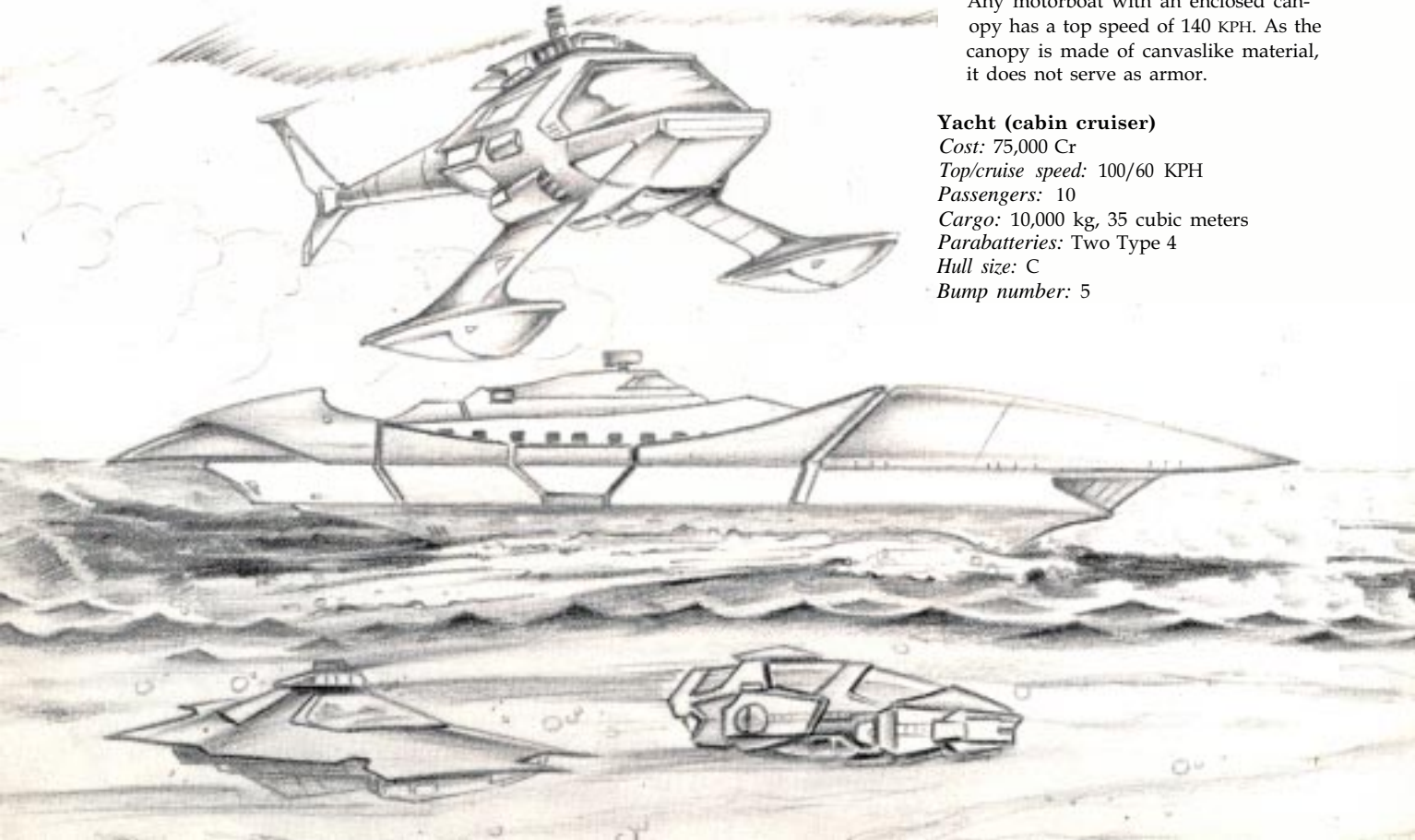
Passengers: 10

Cargo: 10,000 kg, 35 cubic meters

Parabatteries: Two Type 4

Hull size: C

Bump number: 5



Notes: This large ship has enclosed cabins with bunks, cooking facilities, and bathrooms. Many yachts have extravagant cabins for the owner or captain. These ships are favorites among the rich and powerful for their plushness and speed. Yachts are used in deep water, using small rowboats for boarding and disembarking. Yachts and larger ships may be modified to use tow lines. Any vessel of hull size C or D may have a towline on board that can be used to pull disabled ships. A ship may pull any ship the same size or smaller than itself at one-half cruise speed.

Transport ship

Cost: 200,000 Cr
Top/cruise speed: 95/55 KPH
Passengers: 10/30
Cargo: 72,500 kg, 24 cubic meters/7,500 kg, 8 cubic meters
Parabatteries: Four Type 4
Hull size: D
Bump number: 7

Notes: There are two types of this vessel, the workhorse of surface fleets. The first type is the cargo transport, detailed by the first set of figures; the second is the passenger transport, detailed by the second set of figures. Transports are deep-water craft and use rowboats to shuttle crewmen to and from shore in the absence of a dock. Transports may have towlines.

Submersible vessels

Minisub

Cost: 50,000 Cr (rental: 200 Cr down + 100 Cr/day)
Top/cruise speed: Surfaced—100/60 KPH, submerged—85/45 KPH
Passengers: 4
Cargo: 300 kg, 3 cubic meters
Parabatteries: Two Type 2
Hull size: C

Bump number: 5

Notes: This is a personal vessel, used often in underwater communities as a car would be used on land. Some are fitted with harvesting equipment for use on Kelp farms. Others are used as exploration vessels. Most underwater communities have several of these vessels for the maintenance of habitat walls, as well as for rescue or police vessels. Minisubs carry enough life support for 72 hours before they need to resurface. Additional units of life support may be purchased to increase this time to 120 hours.

Transport submarine

Cost: 20,000 Cr
Top/cruise speed: Surfaced—90/50 KPH, submerged—70/40 KPH
Passengers: 6/20
Cargo: 50,000 kg, 18 cubic meters/5,000 kg, 5 cubic meters
Parabatteries: Four Type 4
Hull size: D
Bump number: 7

Notes: Like the transport ship, there are two versions of this vessel: the cargo transport (first set of statistics) and the passenger transport (second set of statistics). Transport subs carry enough life support for 96 hours. Additional units of life support can be purchased to increase the time to 144 hours.

Amphibious aircraft

Amphibian aircar

Cost: 55,000 Cr (rental: 100 Cr down + 100 Cr/day)
Top/Cruise speed: 875/400 KPH
Passengers: 4
Cargo: 750 kg, 2 cubic meters
Parabattery: Type 4
Notes: This is an adapted version of a typical aircar. Its underside and wings

have pontoons to keep the craft afloat. These craft are often used in swamps and near underdeveloped islands.

Amphibian air transport

Cost: 125,000 Cr
Top/cruise speed: 700/250 KPH
Passengers: 3-12
Cargo: 9,500 kg, 40 cubic meters
Parabatteries: Two Type 4

Notes: This is an adapted version of an aircraft, the air transport. It can be used either as a passenger transport or a freight transport.

Amphibian jet copter

Cost: 45,000 Cr
Top/cruise speed: 325/50 KPH
Passengers: 4
Cargo: 350 kg, 5 cubic meters
Parabattery: Type 4

Notes: This, too, is an adapted aircraft. It rests on two pontoons where skids are usually positioned. It is often used in sea rescues and for tracking criminals in swamps and bogs.

Sea-vessel movement

In general, surface-vessel movement is similar to land-vehicle movement, while submarine movement is much like aerial movement. The rules for acceleration, deceleration, maximum speed, backing up, and turn speed are the same as in the Alpha Dawn expanded rules, page 30. See Table 1 for surface-vessel data.

Special maneuvers: Unusual actions may be performed as follows:

1. All ships can perform bumps and slips (as per the Alpha Dawn expanded rules, pages 30-31), as well as short corners (see the following text).

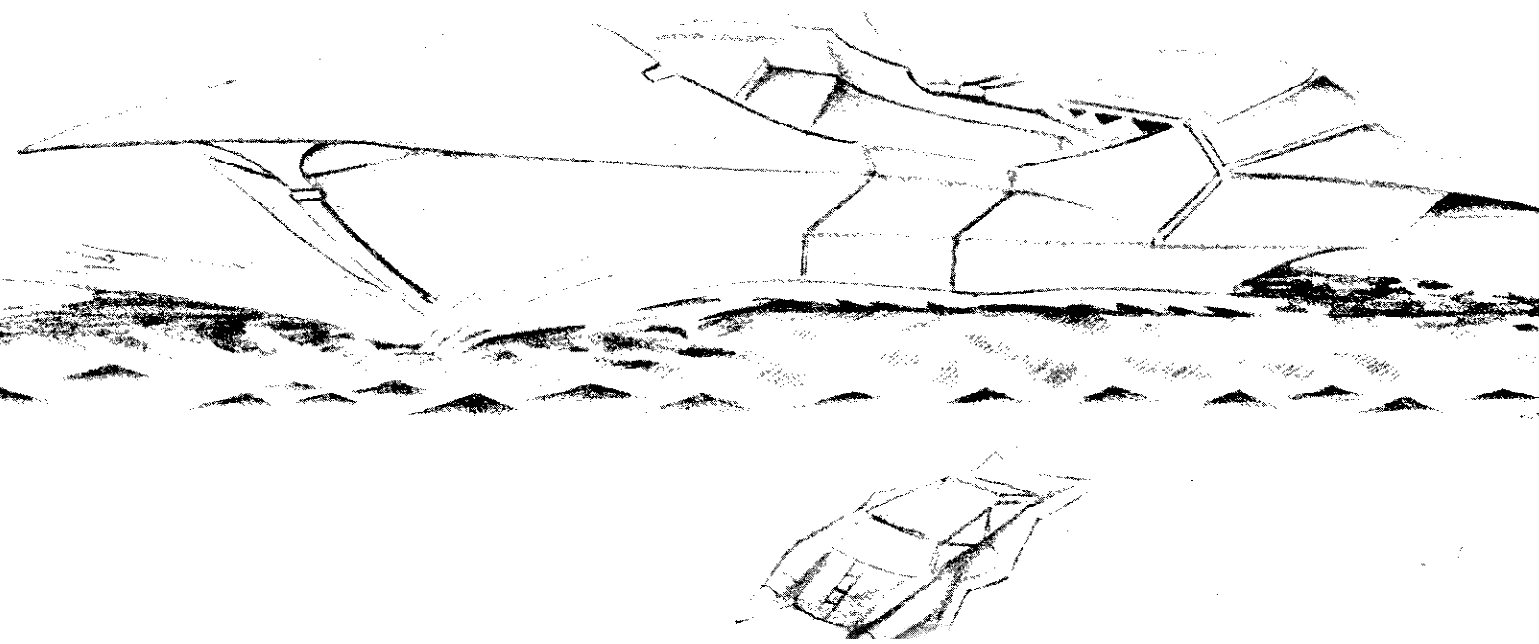


Table 1
Surface Vessel Data
(statistics are in meters/turn)

| Hull Vessel | size | Acceleration | Top Deceleration | Turning speed | speed |
|----------------|------|--------------|------------------|---------------|-------|
| Ski cycle | A | 100 | 40 | 250 | 100 |
| Motorboat | B | 70 | 40 | 200 | 80 |
| Yacht | C | 60 | 40 | 170 | 60 |
| Transport ship | D | 40 | 30 | 160 | 40 |
| Minibus* | C | 70 | 40 | 170 | 60 |
| Transport sub* | D | 40 | 30 | 160 | 40 |

Only surface movement shown.

Table 2
Surface Vessel Control

| Speed (meters/turn) | Result |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 2-79 | Speed reduced by 20 meters/turn |
| 80-139 | Speed reduced by 50 meters/turn |
| 140-199 | Decks awash |
| 200-259 | Engine flooded |
| 260+ | Capsized |

Table 3
Hull Damage Results

| Points of damage | Result |
|------------------|---|
| 2-15 | No effect |
| 16 | Current speed reduced by 20 KPH |
| 17 | Current speed reduced by 30 KPH |
| 18 | Acceleration reduced by 20 meters/turn |
| 19 | Deceleration reduced by 20 meters/turn |
| 20 | Top speed reduced by 20 KPH |
| 21-25 | 5% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn) |
| 26-30 | 10% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn); add 3 to next damage roll on this table |
| 31-33 | 30% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn); add 6 to next damage roll on this table |
| 34-36 | 50% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn); add 9 to next damage roll on this table |
| 37+ | 70% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn); add 12 to next damage roll on this table |

2. Only ships of hull size C or smaller can perform skid turns as well as the other maneuvers. However, yachts must attain a speed of at least 90 meters/turn to accomplish a skid turn.

3. Other special maneuvers, such as stunts, are up to the referee's discretion to use and define.

Short corners: Any ship may attempt a short corner, but this is especially dangerous on the open sea. If the character performing the short corner doesn't make his Reaction Speed check (Alpha Dawn expanded rules, page 31), there is a 15% chance the ship will capsize. If the ship doesn't capsize, roll 1d100 and add the ship's current speed in meters/turn, then apply the total to Table 2.

Collisions: If a vessel strikes an object above the waterline, treat the collision as per the Alpha Dawn expanded rules, page 31. However, if the object is struck below the waterline, there is a 1% chance per meter/turn of the vessel's speed that the vessel will take on water. Unless repaired by technicians with a total of four levels of Technician skill, the ship sinks. A ski cycle

sinks in five minutes, a motorboat or minibus in 10 minutes, a yacht in 15 minutes, and transport ships and subs in 20 minutes.

When submerged, submarines may make up to six 45° turns in one minute (one such movement per game turn). These turns may be made in succession or at different times during the minute. If a sub is at a dead stop, it may turn to face any direction before moving. A sub may also increase or decrease its depth by 30 meters/minute to a maximum depth of 600 meters.

Sea-vessel combat

The rest of this article is written in terms of the Alpha Dawn expanded rules. Conversion to the *Zebulon's Guide* system should be fairly simple and is left to the referee.

Surface combat

A ship is divided into two parts for the purposes of this article: the hull and the superstructure. The hull is the part of the ship below the water line; the superstruc-

ture is the part above the water line.

If a ship's hull is hit, the damage will affect the speed of the ship or cause the ship to sink. If the ship's superstructure is hit, the direction, speed, or communications will be affected: fires may break out, and the ship might capsize.

There are three types of combat between ships: *contact combat*, which includes ramming, bumping, and boarding; *ranged combat*, which involves both personal and mounted weapons; and *explosives*. The same three types of combat also apply to submerged combat, with some modifiers.

Contact combat: Bumping between two ships is similar to bumping between two land vehicles, but the sizes of the vessels involved are much more influential in sea combat than in land combat. To apply this factor, a system is used similar to the "bump number" system from Matt Brady's article, "Here Comes the Cavalry!" in DRAGON® issue #120. When a bumping situation occurs, the referee finds the difference between the two vessels' bump numbers and multiplies it by five. This number is added to the Reaction Speed of the pilot of the ship with the higher bump number and subtracted from the Reaction Speed of the pilot of the other vessel. The referee now rolls a 1d100 check for each pilot's revised Reaction Speed score. A successful roll indicates the pilot has maintained control of his ship, while a failed roll indicates the pilot of the ship has lost control of his vessel. When a pilot loses control, roll 1d100 and add his vessel's current speed in meters/turn, then apply this result to Table 2.

Ramming is a bit different. Both ships are damaged in a successful ramming attempt, not just the defender. When a ramming attempt is made, each pilot must roll 1d100, add his Reaction Speed, add his ship's bump number multiplied by three, then subtract his opponent's speed in meters/turn. If the attacker's total is higher than the defender's, the ramming attempt is successful.

If the ramming attempt succeeds, both ships are damaged. Damage is calculated by taking the attacker's speed in meters/turn, dividing that figure by 10, then adding the result to the attacker's bump

number multiplied by three. The total is applied to Table 3 for the results. Damage to the attacker is figured in the same way, substituting only the defender's bump number for the attacker's bump number.

Boarding is the movement of the crew of one ship to another ship for hand-to-hand and ranged-weapon combat. This usually causes little or no damage to either the attacker's or the defender's ship. Even so, boarding can be the trickiest of any of the contact combat maneuvers.

Two requirements must be met for boarding to take place. First, the ships must have the same speed and heading for three turns prior to boarding, and must be at most 10 meters apart. Second, at least three grappling hooks must connect the two ships. Grappling hooks are treated as thrown weapons for purposes of determining the success or failure of the grappling attempt.

After all these criteria are met, characters may climb across the ropes to the opponent's ship. The climb takes three turns at most. A climber hit by weapons fire must make a dexterity check or else fall into the sea. After a character boards his opponent's ship, combat proceeds as usual.

For obvious reasons, boarding between high-powered ships is rarely used except against stationary ships or under extreme circumstances.

Weapons combat: There are two sorts of weapons used between seafaring vessels: personal weapons and mounted weapons. Usual ranged-weapon procedures are used for personal weapons, with these additional modifiers to hit:

- 1 Attacker on hull size A or B ship: - 10
- 1 Target ship is hull size C: +5
- 1 Target ship hull size D: + 10
- 1 Aiming below the water line: -20

Shots fired by personal weapons hit the superstructure of the target ship only, unless intentionally aimed below the waterline. Then the attacker suffers the aforementioned penalty.

When a hit is scored, the attacker rolls 2d10 and adds the number of dice of damage inflicted. This number is applied to Table 4 unless the hit was intentionally aimed at the hull, in which case the number is applied to Table 3. Note that these effects only apply to relatively small ships with little or no armor, as would be found on most colony worlds. Shooting at a really large ship, like an aircraft carrier, is an exercise in futility (and probably in suicide as well).

The number and type of mounted weapons a ship may have depends on the ship's size and ship type. Ski cycles may only have forward-firing laser pistols. Motorboats may have any type of rifle mounted on a swivel mount. Transports may have up to four heavy weapons mounted on swivel mounts.

Mounted weapons are subject to the same modifiers as personal weapons, including the previously given modifiers

for target hull size and aiming below the waterline.

Explosives: These come in three different types: thrown explosives, placed explosives, and mines.

Thrown explosives, as well as grenades, are treated as ranged weapons and use the same modifiers.

Placed explosives, used often in espionage or ambushes, can be put inside or outside the ship. Determine whether or not the blast will count as either superstructure damage or hull damage, given its location. Getting the explosives to the ship without detection is the tricky part.

Mines are often used to guard harbors and military installations. Mines are often stationary, although some may break loose, floating freely. If a ship strikes a mine, treat it as 10 dice of damage applied to Table 3.

Undersea combat

A submarine is a versatile vessel able to fight either on the surface or underwater. When a submarine is surfaced, it follows the same surface rules as other ships. When submerged, the submarine follows a new set of guidelines.

There are three different types of underwater vessel combat: *contact combat*, *torpedo combat*, and *explosives combat*.

Contact combat underwater is similar to surface contact combat. The same three basic maneuvers are used: bumping, ramming, and boarding. A bump maneuver exerted underwater uses the following modifications: The submarine maneuvers in a three-dimensional environment, meaning bumps can be inflicted from the top or bottom. A bump from above grants a +5 to rolls on Table 6 made to see if the bumped vessel keeps control. In addition, maneuvering undersea is no mean feat. Most of the maneuvering of the sub is done by relying upon the onboard computers; you cannot maneuver a sub underwater by sight.

Ramming underwater uses the same mechanics as surface ramming, with the following modifiers. First, speed is divided by five rather than ten. Second, if a ship is descending in depth as it is ramming, five additional points of damage are done to the defender, and five fewer points of damage are done to the attacker. All such damage is applied to Table 7.

Underwater boarding is usually done on rescue missions rather than in combat, as it is tricky. Any men attempting to board during combat must come through the air locks, so they are easy targets for the men inside. Hence, most boarding actions against submarines take place on the surface against engine-damaged subs; holes must be cut in the enemy's hull to enter at different places. Many ships simply sink obstinate submarines rather than board them.

Underwater weapons combat uses torpedoes—self-propelled undersea missiles approximately four meters long. Most

Table 4
Superstructure Damage Results

| Modified die roll | Result |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 2-15 | No effect |
| 16 | Radio knocked out |
| 17 | Steering jammed right |
| 18 | Steering jammed left |
| 19 | Steering jammed straight |
| 20-24 | Decks awash |
| 25-29 | Engine flooded |
| 30-33 | Fire |
| 34+ | Capsized |

Table 5
Submarine Control: Surfaced

| Speed (meters/turn) | Result |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0-79 | Speed reduced by 20 meters/turn |
| 80-139 | Speed reduced by 50 meters/turn |
| 140-199 | Decks awash |
| 200-259 | Hold flooded |
| 260 + | Capsized |

Table 6
Submarine Control: Submerged

| Speed (meters/turn) | Result |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 0-50 | Speed reduced by 20 meters/turn |
| 51-100 | Depth reduced by 30 meters |
| 101-150 | Forced surfacing |
| 151+ | Ballast tanks crushed |

Table 7
Submarine Damage Results

| | |
|-------|---|
| 2-15 | No effect |
| 16-20 | Loss of control |
| 21-25 | Acceleration reduced by 30 meters/turn |
| 26-30 | Turns -2 |
| 31-35 | Forced surfacing |
| 36+ | 40% chance of sinking (cumulative per turn) |

torpedoes carry 150 grams (15d10 points of damage) of TD-19 that explode on impact. There are three different types of guidance systems on torpedoes. Straight-running torpedoes are the simplest, and are aimed and follow their courses for 2

km, when their fuel runs out. Acoustic torpedoes guide themselves after being fired from the sub, homing in on engine sounds from the target until they hit or run out of fuel after 2 km. The most deadly type is the wire-guided torpedo, which can be guided from the launching sub using a computer with a radio antenna. Its range is also 2 km.

Combat involving torpedoes is intense and deadly. One lucky shot may disable a ship. Deception and speed are invaluable. A minisub can carry up to four torpedoes, while a transport sub can carry up to eight. These tubes are usually divided, facing fore and aft. Straight-running torpedoes use the guidelines for mounted weapons. There is no to-hit modifier for careful aim or for the water being soft cover. Acoustic torpedoes follow the same guidelines with a +10 modifier to hit if the opponent is moving or if his engines are running. Wire-guided torpedoes are not subject to any modifiers. The only way to escape these terrors is to outrun them; they travel at 125 meters/turn for 16 turns, then detonate if they haven't hit their intended targets. Damage from a wire-guided torpedo is 2d10 + 15 points, applied to Table 7.

Explosives in submarine warfare are occasionally encountered. Some harbors contain mines at the depth that a sub would have to travel to enter the harbor

undetected. At other times, spies may board ships and sabotage them. Underwater mines each carry 100-200 grams (doing 10-20 dice of damage) of TD-19.

Results: Tables 2-7

Ballast tanks crushed: The submarine sinks toward the ocean bottom.

Capsized: The boat rolls over, and all aboard take 2d10 points of damage if outside the ship or 3d10 points if inside (C and D hull sizes only). In addition, anyone inside a C- or D- size ship when it capsizes has a 25% chance of being trapped in an air pocket with 1d10 x 10 minutes worth of air. This amount is divided equally among characters if more than one person is trapped.

Decks awash: The bow of the ship suddenly dives into the waves, and its decks are flooded. There is a 50% chance that any character exposed outside will be washed overboard.

Engine flooded: The engine immediately ceases to function, and the vessel slows to a stop. It takes 1d10 turns for the ship to completely stop, after which the engine will not start for 3d10 minutes.

Fire: Flames burst from a referee-determined part of the ship. Those within 10' of the blaze take one point of damage per minute. If less than 75% of the crew

helps, the fire burns an additional 1d10 minutes. For every minute the fire burns, there is a 1% cumulative chance of an explosion. If the ship explodes, the blast radii per hull size are as follows: A—50 meters; B—100 meters; C—150 meters; D—250 meters. All people within the blast radius take 7d10 points of damage; no type of screen or suit affects this damage.

Forced surfacing: The sub must immediately surface. All aboard take 5d10 points of damage, and the sub cannot submerge again until repaired, or else it sinks.

Hold flooded: water pours into the submarine through the hatches. Speed is reduced by 20 KPH for 3-30 minutes, until the pumps can empty the ship again.

Loss of control: The submarine's speed is checked on Table 6 for the effects.

Radio knocked out: The antenna for radio communication has been downed. The antenna takes 1d10 hours to repair.

Depth reduced by 30 meters: The sub's depth is decreased by 30 meters (i.e., the sub rises, possibly reaching the surface). All aboard take 3d10 points of damage.

Sinking: If a ship has a chance of sinking, the ship has taken water into its hold. The referee rolls 1d100, and if the roll is less than or equal to the designated percentage, the ship begins to sink. A ski cycle sinks in 5 minutes; a motorboat in 10; a yacht in 15; a transport in 20. During this time, deck guns can continue to fire until one minute before sinking. If the ship doesn't sink, the appropriate modifier is applied to the next damage roll.

Speed reduced: The vessel immediately loses the indicated amount of speed unless it is over one-half of the vessel's current speed. In the latter case, the ship loses half speed at most. Any result below zero meters/turn is a full stop.

Steering jammed: If jammed straight, the vessel cannot turn. If jammed right or left, the vessel must turn 45° in the indicated direction after each 20 meters of travel. The ship can accelerate or decelerate, but it cannot change direction.

Turns - 2: The maximum number of 45° turns the submarine can make in one minute is reduced by two.

Additional notes

Ship-vs-submarine combat: Submarines almost always have the advantage of surprise against surface ships. However, they have fairly low firepower when compared to other ships of the same size. Also, surface ships are faster than subs, so escape may be difficult for a detected submarine.

A submarine must be fairly close to the surface to fire the torpedoes it carries. This means that if a sub is sighted before it fires, it can be fired upon with deck guns from the surface ships. When a torpedo strikes a surface ship, the damage is considered hull damage, and the attack gains an additional 2d10 points of damage on Table 3 to represent the surprise factor.

In addition to torpedoes, some subs have

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a recoilless rifle or heavy laser mounted on deck. This mount takes three turns to arm and may then be used as the surface-combat rules dictate.

Often, the only weapons the surface ships have available to fight submarines are depth charges. These are special charges of TD-19 set to go off at a certain depth or on contact. The base chance to hit a sub with a depth charge is 20%. If the surface ship is using sonar (1,000 Cr/km range), the chance improves to 45% as long as the sub has its engines on; if the sub shuts off its engines, the chance decreases to 35%. A sub hit by a depth charge takes $2d10 + 20$ points of damage, applied to Table 7.

Another mode of attack available to submarines is to ram ships from underneath. This is especially damaging, and the defender takes one and one half times normal damage while the sub takes normal damage. In this case, the sub rams under surface-combat rules. The damage to the surface ship is applied to Table 3, while the damage to the sub is applied to Table 7.

Escape from sinking ships: The methods of escape from vessels vary. Every seafaring vessel under UPF jurisdiction must carry a safe means of escape. Size A ships generally carry life jackets, and size B ships carry either life jackets or life bubbles. Life bubbles are zip-open plastic

spheres that can encase one passenger each, having enough air for two hours and a small snorkel for additional air if needed. They will take 5 points of damage before collapsing. Life bubbles cost 50 Cr.

Size C and D ships generally carry a life jacket for every passenger in addition to a number of lifeboats. Lifeboats are small boats that carry six people. These boats always have oars and a collapsible sail. More expensive versions may be motorized. Submarines carry an equivalent of a lifeboat, called an escape capsule, that is essentially a lifeboat that is pressurized for the depth. The capsule rises to the surface where its canopy opens and is treated thereafter as a lifeboat. Capsules may also be motorized. Capsules cost 100 Cr more than comparable lifeboats.

Lifeboat

Cost: 1,500 Cr (700 Cr w/sail)

Top/cruise speed: 100/50 KPH (15/10 KPH w/sail)

Passengers: 6

Cargo: None

Parabattery: 2

Hull size: A

Bump number: 2

Accel/Decel: 50/40 (varies w/sail)

In addition to a means of escape, all ships must have one standard sea survival pack per passenger. The contents of such

a pack are: one all-weather blanket, one first-aid pack, four survival rations (eight days of food), one compass, 10 salt pills, 10 liters of water, one flashlight, one pair of sea goggles, and an emergency beeper that emits a signal for 20 km for 48 hours. Some packs may include a small firearm.

The sea is a huge and dangerous place, full of adventure and danger. I hope this article has opened this frontier to you. Good luck, and good sailing!

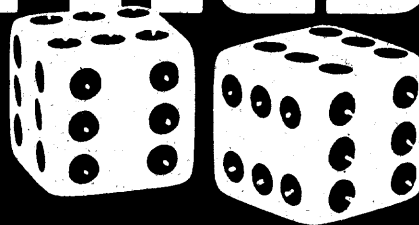
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