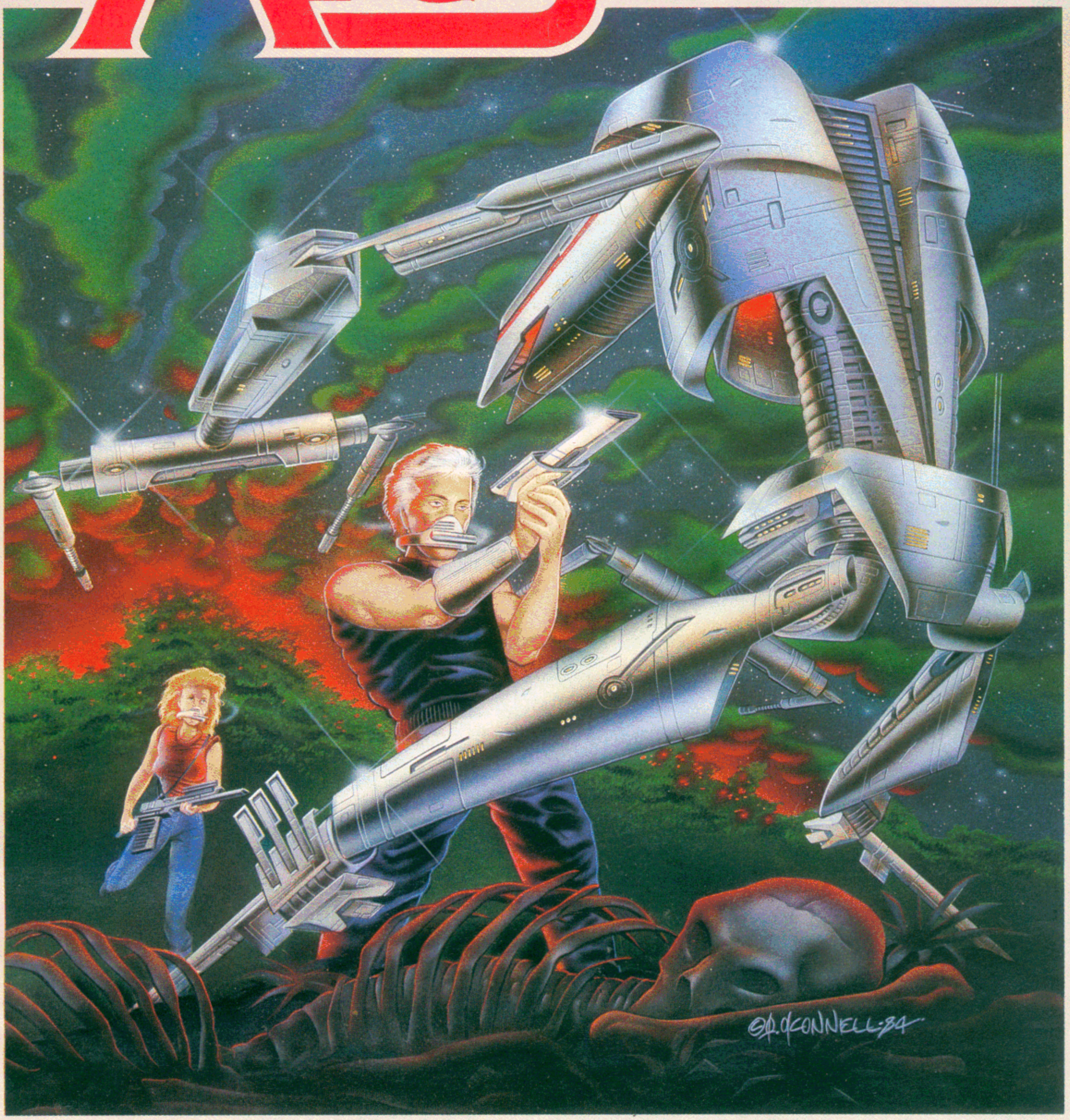
THE SCIENCE FICTION GAMING MAGAZINE

Number 17 $6.00

Arēs

Mongoose and Cobra, A UNIVERSE™ game module

Sports and Warfare



SPI

Final Issue

The Expanding Universe of Traveller

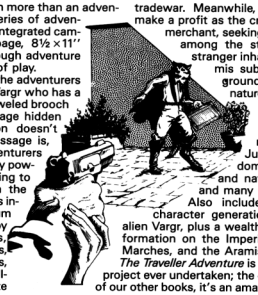
Why do more people play Traveller than any other science fiction role-playing game? Because GDW knows that you can't fit the whole universe into one box.

There are nearly 50 adventures, supplements, rules expansions, games, and modules for Traveller—so far. Each one adds new ideas to make your campaign more exciting. Choose just the ones you want—the Traveller universe is as large as you want to make it.

The Traveller Adventure

Actually, it's much more than an adventure: it's a whole series of adventures making up an integrated campaign. It's a 160-page, 8½×11" book filled with enough adventure to last for months of play.

It all starts when the adventurers meet Gvoudzon, a Vargr who has a stolen treasure: a jeweled brooch with a secret message hidden within it. Gvoudzon doesn't know what the message is, but soon the adventurers find that a great many powerful people are willing to kill to get it. Soon the party find themselves involved in a museum burglary, an attack by Vargr commandos, lanthanum smugglers, bureaucratic intrigues, kidnapping, and a full-scale megacorporate tradewar. Meanwhile, they must try to make a profit as the crew of a subsidized merchant, seeking cargo and patrons among the strange worlds and stranger inhabitants of the Aramis subsector: the underground city of Leedor, the nature-worshipping dictatorship of Pysadi, the eugenic elitists of Paya, the alien matriarchy of Yebab, Junidy with its co-dominium of humans and native "Dandelions", and many others.



Also included is a complete character generation system for the alien Vargr, plus a wealth of background information on the Imperium, the Spinward Marches, and the Aramis subsector.

The Traveller Adventure is the largest **Traveller** project ever undertaken; the equivalent of 6 to 8 of our other books, it's an amazing bargain at $12.

Murder on Arcturus Station

A corporate executive has been murdered on Station Three of Arcturus Belt. It's up to the referee to decide which of the nine suspects is guilty. Was it the executive's estranged wife? His mistress? The Solomani rebel? The Aslan noble? The adventure tells how to construct each of the possible crimes: motives, clues, alibis, even misleading clues pointing to the wrong suspect.

Then it's up to the adventurers to solve the mystery by questioning the suspects, discovering clues, and using their powers of deduction. But watch out: the murderer may strike again.

Murder on Arcturus Station is a classical mystery in the tradition of Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers—except that it takes place in an asteroid belt, one of the suspects isn't human, and several of the others are possessed of odd cultural quirks.

At 56 pages, *Murder on Arcturus Station* is longer than most **Traveller** adventures, but it's still only $5.

Tarsus

When a game takes in the entire universe, it's easy to forget how large and complex even a single world can be. **Traveller** boxed modules, of which *Tarsus* is the first, are intended as demonstrations of how much scope for adventure one planet, described in detail, can provide.

The 24-page world data book covers the world's history, geography, climate, flora and fauna, and the myriad other details that make this world unique in the universe.

Five scenario folders deal with a few of the possible adventure situations, including the maneuvers of various political factions and the megacorporation SuSAG, rumors of strange events deep in the tanglewald, and trouble on the family ranch. Also included are 3 maps and 12 character cards.

The entire world is available for only $12.

Scouts

Traveller Book 6 offers expanded treatment of the Scout Service similar to *Mercenary*'s and *High Guard*'s expansion of the Army and Navy. It describes the organization and history of the service, including all its various component offices and branches. A detailed character generation system offers new skills and makes provision for service in all branches of the Scout Service.

In addition, the book contains new rules for generating complete planetary systems: number, spectral type, and temperature of stars, habitable zones, and the number and orbits of all the system's planets and their moons. Rules for generating factors affecting a world's climate are also included: albedo, orbital eccentricity, average surface temperature, axial tilt, and the greenhouse effect are all taken into account.

The new rules are fully compatible with the original **Traveller** world creation rules, and systems already generated under the original rules may be expanded easily.

As an example, two complete stellar systems are included: Regina and Sol.

Price: $6.

Veterans

This supplement is a handy aid for the referee using Book 4, *Mercenary*. It contains over 200 pre-generated *Mercenary* characters from all branches of the Army and Marines, ranks from private to colonel, and tech levels from 7 to 15.

Veterans is especially useful when players are recruiting a mercenary unit. Each character is given a full resumé for the players to see; information reserved for the referee is in a separate section. Price: $5.

The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society

The *Journal* is a quarterly magazine crammed with new **Traveller** material. Each issue contains two ready-to-play scenarios, a description of an alien race, and much more. If you're serious about **Traveller**, the *Journal* is for you.

Issue #18 is now available. Single issue: $2.50; subscriptions: $9 per year in the US and Canada, $18 (includes airmail) elsewhere.

Game Designers' Workshop

P.O. Box 1646, Bloomington, Illinois 61702

Available from better hobby stores around the world or direct from GDW. *Free catalog on request.*

CONTENTS

ARES
NUMBER 17
Final Edition

ARES Log 4

LETTERS 6

MEDIA 7
Of Writers, Editors, and Horror Stories

FUN AMONG THE MUTANTS
James M. Ward 9
Wreck-creation in the lands of GAMMA WORLD® gaming.

SWORD IN THE DIRT
Henry Melton 11
Who controls whom in the arena of the future: man or his weapons?

PANCAKE ALLEY
Steve Winter 14
Driving fast and dangerously in CAR WARS™ gaming.

A FRIENDLY GAME OF HOOPLE
Timothy Robert Sullivan 16
One victory over the aliens was all they needed, but when . . . ?

MONGOOSE AND COBRA
Nick Karp 25
A frontier planet, a lost outpost, and death await UNIVERSE™ characters.

THE ZAMRA: WEAPON OF THE YAZIRIANS
William Tracy 41
A STAR FRONTIERS® game variant.

FIRE AT WILL!
Carl Smith 42
Miniature rules for the STAR FRONTIERS KNIGHT HAWKS game.

THE FEDERATION STRIKES BACK!
Marvant Duhon 47
Expanding the DELTAVEE™ game system with new ships and pods.

SWORD AND SORCERY IN SUPERGAME™
Jay Hartlove 53
Barbarians, battleaxes, and comic book superheroes meet at last.

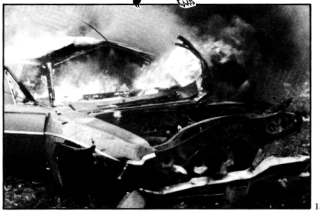
GAMES 55
Five detailed reviews for the gaming consumer.

BOOKS 61
Ken Ramstead flips through the local bookshelf.

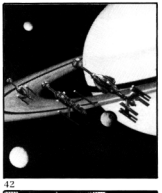
ERRATA 62
A few additions to the NIGHTMARE HOUSE™ game and the *Into the Void* module from ARES™ Magazine #15

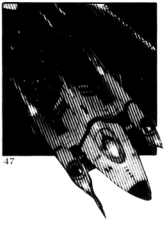
ON THE COVER
Mongoose and Cobra illustration by Mitchell O'Connell. For more details, see the module on page 25.

9


15

16


42


47

ARES™ Magazine #17
THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING MAGAZINE

Publisher: Michael Cook
Editor-in-Chief: Kim Mohan
Editors: Mary Kirchoff & Roger Moore
Design Director: Kristine Bartyzel
Fiction Editor: Patrick L. Price
Advertising Dept.: Mary Parkinson
Subscriptions: Mary Cossman
Office Manager: Sharon Walton
Editorial Assistance: Charles Ramsay, Georgia Moore
Graphics: Mitchell O'Connell, Robert Nelson, Dave LaForce
Production Staff: Marilyn Favaro, Kristin Pelisek

All materials published in ARES Magazine becomes the exclusive property of the publisher upon publication, unless special arrangements to the contrary are made prior to publication. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but the publisher assumes no responsibility for them and they will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope of sufficient size and volume.

ARES is a trademark of TSR, Inc.'s science-fiction gaming magazine. All rights on the contents of these publications are reserved, and nothing may be reproduced from them in whole or in part without prior permission in writing from the publisher. © 1984 TSR, Inc.

Third-class postage paid at Lake Geneva, WI, and additional mailing offices.

GAMMA WORLD, DRAGON, UNIVERSE, STAR FRONTIERS and DELTAVEE are trademarks of TSR, Inc. Traveller and Striker are trademarks of Game Designers' Workshop. Space Opera, Aftermath, and Villains & Vigilantes are trademarks of Fantasy Games Unlimited. Star Trek is a trademark of FASA. The Morrow Project is a trademark of Timeline. Champions is a trademark of Hero Games. Superworld is a trademark of Chaosium, Inc. Supergame is a trademark of DAG Design. Star Fleet Battles and Starfire are trademarks of Task Force Games. Ogre and Car Wars are trademarks of Steve Jackson Games. Laserburn is a trademark of Tabletop Games. Starship Troopers is a trademark of Avalon Hill. The Forever War is a trademark of Mayfair Games. Star Fleet Battle Manual is a trademark of Zocchi Games.

Game issues (ISSN 0737-6537)
Non-game issues (ISSN 0737-6545)

ARES LOG

Welcome to the last issue of ARES™ Magazine. Starting with issue #84 of DRAGON® Magazine, ARES Magazine will be merged with the former publication as a special section, appearing monthly. The ARES section will include articles on science-fiction role-playing games and boardgames.

The decision to cease publication was not made lightly. Production costs (in terms of time, energy, and money), compared to the actual readership, were the major factors; the circulation was not high enough to justify the workload involved in making it go. However, we are proud to have played a part in creating a product which has enjoyed such a high standard of quality since its inception.

We would like to express our gratitude and appreciation to several individuals who helped make these last issues of ARES Magazine stand head and shoulders over their predecessors, and who helped make this the finest of science-fiction gaming magazines. Many of them will lend their talents to the new ARES section in DRAGON Magazine.

Kristine Bartyzel, our design director, is the one responsible for the layout and look of ARES Magazine, and has given it a touch of class that few gaming magazines have ever possessed. Some people think gaming magazines can't possibly be nice to look at as well, but happily that turned out to be just a rumor. Fortunately, she had help from our able, patient production staff, Marilyn Favaro and Kristin Pelisek, whose talents have been invaluable.

Patrick Lucien Price has served as our fiction editor, maintaining contact with authors, selecting the best of the mountain of fiction we receive, and generally keeping us on our editorial toes. His efforts have brought a certain sophistication to this publication, and those of you who've sampled the fiction in these pages will appreciate his work, too.

Chuck Ramsay, the nose-to-the-grindstone editor of STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine (our SPI cousin), has given a goodly share of his time to inputting and proofing material, and we give our thanks to him for all that he's done for us.

Others who deserve credit for their efforts include the games and contributing editors who've given us their time and talents; Mary Parkinson, our advertising coordinator; Jim Ward, our cheerful Gamma Expert; Georgia Moore, who assisted with inputting copy; Mary Cossman, our subscriptions department; and, of course, our editor-in-chief, Kim Mohan, whose support we've appreciated on more than one occasion. All of these people have given ARES Magazine their best, and to them we are deeply indebted. Thank you!

Last, but not least, our most heartfelt thanks go out to *you*, the readers who gave us your support and letters, and your articles. If you're interested in writing for the ARES section of DRAGON Magazine, check the writers' guidelines notice on the next page. We hope to hear from you in the days to come.

All yet seems well; and if it end so meet,
The bitter past, more welcome is the sweet.
***All's Well That Ends Well,* Act V, Scene III.**

Competition, in the form of peaceful athletics or in the realm of warfare, makes interesting reading. It makes interesting gaming, too; role-playing games and boardgames thrive on competition, and this issue of ARES™ Magazine takes a look at the peaceful and warlike ways in which humans (and non-humans) might compete in the far future.

The centerpiece for this issue is Nick Karp's module for the UNIVERSE™ science-fiction role-playing game, *Mongoose and Cobra*. Player characters traveling to a newly-settled planet must uncover the mystery of why a research station has failed to report to home. The adventure grows deadlier as time slips by and other forces make their moves.

Another tribute to the UNIVERSE game describes new ships and weapons systems to enhance the DELTAVEE™ starship combat boardgame; *The Federation Strikes Back!* variant was created by Marvant Duhon, and is a welcome addition to the DELTAVEE game. In a similar vein, Carl Smith adds more material to the STAR FRONTIERS™ KNIGHT HAWKS game, outlining the ways to fight tabletop spaceship battles using the STAR FRONTIERS miniatures now available from TSR, Inc.; new scenarios for the KNIGHT HAWKS game also appear.

What will people do for recreation in the future? Four different articles and stories give their own answers to this question. Jim Ward cheerfully describes the amusements of a post-holocaust world (none of them recommended as entertainment in our own world) in *Fun Among the Mutants*; Steve Winter, on the other hand, believes that driving fast with a loaded machine gun is lots more fun than playing with four-armed people, and tells us why in *Pancake Alley.* This issue also features two excellent short stories describing futuristic competition from the gladiatorial arena of Henry Melton's *Sword in the Dirt*, to the alien playing fields of Timothy Sullivan's *A Friendly Game of Hoople*. Picture a future Olympics with *these* sports. . . .

The STAR FRONTIERS game makes another appearance with an article on a new dueling weapon that's the rage among Yazirians (excuse the pun). Jay Hartlove, co-designer of the SUPERGAME™ superhero role-playing system, offers some insight into putting fantasy elements into superhero campaigns using the SUPERGAME system.

Our regular columns feature reviews of new science-fiction books, a few thoughts on the horrible alien monsters who edit science-fiction magazines, and an extra-long games review section that features five releases from last year that might have escaped your attention. With that, we wish you good reading, and hope you enjoy this issue of ARES Magazine.

The Editors

In the spirit of peaceful competition in outer space, we dedicate this issue of ARES™ Magazine to the men and women of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and in particular to Alan B. Shepard Jr., shown below, who became the first man to play golf on the Moon, 6 February 1971, on the Apollo 14 mission.

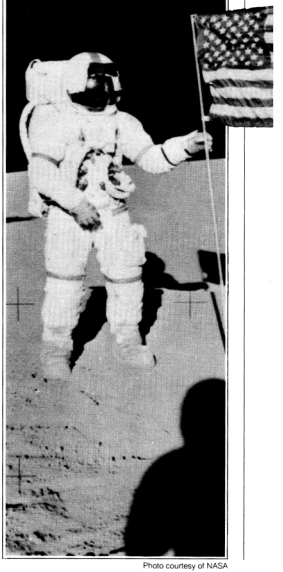
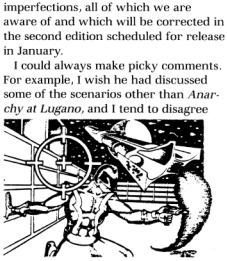


Photo courtesy of NASA

Jerry Epperson sent me a copy of his upcoming review (see *Games*, ARES™ Magazine Special Edition II) of the TO CHALLENGE TOMORROW™ game, and he suggested that I write you with my reactions or comments.

In general, I thought the review was quite well balanced. He seems to have caught the basic elements of the game quite well, and his explanations are clear. He does point out a number of imperfections, all of which we are aware of and which will be corrected in the second edition scheduled for release in January.

I could always make picky comments. For example, I wish he had discussed some of the scenarios other than *Anarchy at Lugano*, and I tend to disagree



with his prejudice against what he calls "gift of the gods" granting of TP, which seems to us far more playable and managable than time-based learning. However, on the whole I'm quite pleased.

One note of interest: we do have expansion sets in the works, the first two of which will be out quite soon. They are: TRIAD (SF in the far future, October '83, $3.95), LONDON BY NIGHT (Victorian and supernatural 1890s, December '83, $4.95), SUPERHEROES (Comic book setups and characters with new skills and powers, February '84, $4.95), JOLLY ROGER (Adventure in the West Indies in the age of Piracy, April '84, $3.95). Prices don't include postage which will be $.50 per item, and all are in some stage of completion or other. Each one contains maps, new rules, background, rules corrections, a Q&A section, and 3-5 scenarios. This information might be a useful companion to the review.

I hope the information and comments are of some value to you.

Dave Nalle
Ragnarok Enterprises
Austin, Texas

The following letter was received in response to the letters mailed to all ARES Magazine subscribers, concerning the merging of the magazine with DRAGON® Magazine:

I hope that the [ARES] section in DRAGON Magazine is not merely a "token" section, thrown in just so you can say you're "supporting" science-fiction gaming. I also hope that this does not mean the end of the science-fiction games that I originally subscribed to ARES Magazine for. I have to drive over 130 miles just to get to a hobby store that has a decent selection of games on hand. ARES Magazine was always nice to get because it gave me a new game without having to make a major trip. I also hope that the ARES section will continue to be a supportive area (with variants, scenarios, etc.) for previously published science-fiction games. Thank you for not abandoning us.

Gary S. Johnson
Pine Bluffs, WY

Unfortunately, we will *have to say goodbye to the boardgames that appeared in ARES Magazine. The production of science-fiction boardgames is very difficult in itself, and the new format of the ARES section in DRAGON Magazine rules them out. However, we* can *cover boardgames that have already been published . . . if we get the articles. Besides, DRAGON Magazine itself has a special inclusion in each issue, and hopefully once in a while science-fiction material will appear.*

As for the section being a "token" one, we'll put it this way — DRAGON Magazine has a readership of nearly a quarter of a million people. If we do a "token" section on science fiction, a lot *of people are going to call us liars. No way! We are giving the ARES section our best, and if some of you readers would care to send us articles that you believe we should be running, all the better. We have a fair number now, but we lack good science-fiction boardgaming material. Please find out how to receive writers' guidelines by referring to the ad on this page. In the meantime, pick up a copy of the April issue of DRAGON Magazine for continued coverage of science-fiction gaming.*

Do You Like To Write?

The ARES™ gaming section of DRAGON® Magazine is looking for more writers, and you might be one of them. We are interested in all aspects of science-fiction gaming, from boardgaming to role-playing, from galactic empires to superheroes to post-holocaust worlds. If you have an idea for an article you'd like to write on SF gaming, then write to us (the editors) and see what we think about it. Information on writing for the ARES gaming section may be received by writing to the following address and enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope so we may get back with you promptly. Our address is:

ARES Department
Dragon Publishing
P.O. Box 110
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Currently almost a quarter of a million people read DRAGON Magazine; this is an opportunity you may not want to miss!

DRAGON and ARES are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc. ©1984 TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Of Writers, Editors and Horror Stories

"Socially, a journalist fits in somewhere between a whore and a bartender. But spiritually he stands beside Galileo. He knows the world is round."

— Sherman Reilly Duffy

by David J. Schow

Charitably, the above description might be expanded to encompass writers in general. Further charity would also allow the inclusion of a supportive, impossible, helpful, infuriating, insightful, maddeningly contradictory subphylum called "editors." Editors rank neither above nor below writers on the evolutionary totem pole, but beside them. The only practical difference is that while writers and editors both know the world is round, only one of them has to reconcile that fact with the realization that he is nonetheless the editor-in-chief of *Flat Earth Quarterly*.

First, some rules and mythology.

Myth #1: According to the dictum, those-who-can, do, those who cannot write become editors. This conclusion is nearly a matter of reflex. Many editors are writers, but not *frustrated* ones — witness the careers of T.E.D. Klein, Fred Pohl, or Robert Silverberg. Klein admirably juggles a literary career (working almost exclusively in the hard-to-sell novella form; forthcoming from Viking Press is a novel, *The Ceremonies)*, with full-time editorship of *Twilight Zone* Magazine, whose annual fiction competition featured last year a winner named Scott Edleman, another editor *(Last Wave Speculate Fiction)*. Then there are the non-fictional contributors, thus the term "contributing editor." Editorials themselves, the stewpot of commentary heading each issue's contents, generally require some thought and elementary writing skills (except for the editorials in *Starlog*). All editor/writers write eventually . . . if only editorials.

Myth #2: Whenever two or more writers get together the discussion unfailingly falls into one of three categories: (a) money, (b) sex or (c) editors, all three of which concern essentially the same thing. This myth is utterly, incontestably true.

Despite as many contrary examples as most working writers could name, the hoariest image of editors still holds sway, thanks mostly to those hyperbolic writer-to-writer confabs, not to mention the suspicions of not-yet-working writers who mutter a lot and can only think in terms of clichés dating back to the stereotypes of *The Front Page*. The editor is idealized as either a miserly, 18th-century wimp duded out in a visor, pince-nez, and arm garters, or a sweaty, bloated cigar-chomping slug with a secretarial bimbo on one knee and a heart of fissionable lead. Although many editors (particularly in science fiction) seem to prefer an antiquated image (just look at the way some of them dress at conventions), the tradition ignores the current reality that most of the editors ramrodding the science-fiction books you read today are women.

Inevitably, there do exist inept, tyrannical and tasteless philistines who use their position to eviscerate good writing with the alacrity of a starlet tooting cocaine. Such petty power junkies lurk in the gutters of the magazine industry, dealing in bile, hearsay and nuisance suits, but to call them editors is a gross exageration. They know who they are and will be ignored here.

Contradictions aplenty, and they put us in touch with the essentially schizoid nature an editor must have to be useful. They are people capable of seeing the value in a manuscript without necessarily succumbing to it.

I once wrote a story that was, among other things, the optimum length for a short piece of SF fiction. The initial rejections were quite encouraging, the sort of feedback that sustains writers in lieu of food or money: "Vivid and unusual," it had "force and originality," "a colorful and mysterious protagonist;" it was "just black enough" and "stays one step ahead of the reader until the very end." One editor said "I rather like it" while another proclaimed it "good, interesting and original." To this day it remains unsold, having worn out its welcome at some 25 markets over the years (it was submitted to OMNI Magazine when that magazine was still an embryo called NOVA), which might lead a cynic to the conclusion that in science fiction there is no market for original, interesting, vivid, unusual stories.

The key term *editorial sensibility*, the need for the writer to link up with the editor's wavelength, and comprehend the needs of a market in order to adequately supply them. It is not unlike a marriage of minds, tastes and practical necessity, and such marriages are often more traumatic than the real things. As far as simple rejection goes, therefore, the most frequent cause (unless one is the most talentless of tyros or hacks, and let's face it — there's enough 14-karat putrid writing slushpiled out there to sink the entire island of Hawaii) is that the material is "inappropriate."

As a narcissistic, in-house example of how the process works, consider the editorial gamut run by the story "Visitation," recently published in ARES™ Magazine #15.

In late 1981, then ARES Magazine editor Michael Moore phoned to ask if I could assemble a research article on the haunted house genre as a support piece for a forthcoming game then called *Nightmare Hotel*. A two-page precis was approved and I had one of my first commissioned articles (meaning one an editor asks you to write , as opposed to a

written one you ask him to buy). When completed, the survey piece was titled "The Haunts of Ha'ants" and set for an issue due in four months. Since I had just published fiction in ARES Magazine ("The Embracing," July, 1981), I asked if Mike would mind crediting a *Media* column, the article, and a *Nightmare Hotel* story all to the same writer in the same issue and his reply was that bylines did not matter if the material was good. While I tried to write a haunted hotel story without ripping off *The Shining*, Mike called to inform me that the "fiction" for that issue would consist of an EC Comics-style illustrated story. I was briefly set to co-write it; I finished "Visitation" instead and hustled it off to other markets.

TSR bought SPI, and 1982 came and went. The next time "Visitation" was mentioned was during a phone call from replacement editor Geoff Golson, which went something like this: "The OMEGA WARS™ game used a comics format in our last issue, and *Nightmare Hotel* is coming up next, and we don't want to repeat ourselves so soon with another comic, so, ah . . . could I see the haunted hotel story you were working on a year and a half ago?"

The first copy I sent him got lost in the mail. The substitute arrived several days after #15's final deadline and was squeezed in anyway, even though a perfectly adequate filler story by another writer had been waiting in the wings.

Somewhere between conception and realization, *Nightmare Hotel* became the NIGHTMARE HOUSE™ game, "Ha'ants" became "Haunted Places" (the original title of the precis) and ARES™ Magazine gained two new editors, Mary Kirchoff and Roger Moore (no relation to Michael, or for that matter, James Bond). It was during their tenure that "Visitation" finally appeared in print, inside what Roger jokingly referred to as the "Dave Schow Memorial Issue of ARES Magazine."

And that's a case where things went fairly *smoothly*, without revisions. A similar story can be heard about almost every manuscript that makes it to publication, and while writers often judge such machinations as outrageous, long-suffering editors take it in stride. I don't know what prescription they're on, but I'd like to find some of it.*

One small corrigendum: In the ARES Magazine #16 column on movie novelizations, "W.J. Stuart," the novelizationist for *Forbidden Planet*, was mistakenly identified as SF author Jack Williamson — a recurrent error in SF bibliographies thanks to the convenience of Jack's initials and his middle name, Stewart. W.J. Stuart is in fact novelist Philip MacDonald, whose most well-known work is *The List of Adrian Messenger*.
So much for good editors. . . .

*I have broken a long-standing rule of good taste here by referring to my own experiences in the first person, a gross indulgence I permit myself because as we go to press, Roger Moore informs me that the issue of ARES Magazine you now hold in your hands is our last hurrah; ARES Magazine as an entity is to be relegated to the back pages of TSR, Inc.'s own DRAGON® Magazine. Which reminds me: If you'd like to continue reading *Media* as a regular feature in DRAGON Magazine, write a letter to — who else? — the editors. — DJS.

From "POLTERGEIST" © 1982 MGM

FUN AMONG THE MUTANTS

Wreck-creation in the lands of GAMMA WORLD® gaming

by James M. Ward

When intelligent beings have time to get away from their normal working-day activities, they naturally turn to group games of one type or another. The cultures found in the lands of GAMMA WORLD games are no exception. Their games are closely related to the goals and interests of the Cryptic Alliance that prevails over that particular area and people, shaping the sort of amusements that the players are involved with. The following is a tongue-in-cheek list of activities that are commonly enjoyed throughout the GAMMA WORLD game world. These games are dangerous, and should not be played anywhere outside of the GAMMA WORLD game setting.

Archivists

Children's game: ***Laser in the Haystack***
One youngster takes a laser pistol and hides it on a mountainside, within an area about 100 meters in diameter that is thickly covered in straw and debris. He and two other youngsters then sit on the edges of the playing field and telekinetically throw rocks at other youths, acting as "searchers," who try to block the rocks by *telekinesis* and find the pistol in the shortest amount of time. Fun is had by all in this fast-paced action game that simulates the difficulty of finding artifacts in a hard world.

Adult game: ***Jump on the Robot***
The object of the game is to deactivate a working robot. When such a device is discovered, the Archivists will leap on the robot and hold on until the robot uses up its power reserves trying to get them off. The survivors then take the machine back home to their base. Sometimes it takes several communities worth of Archivists to run the robot down, but that is part of the fun.

Brotherhood of Thought

Children's game: ***Pacify the Monster***
Always played with a team of three, the players in this game must find the biggest wild mutant monster in their area (never much of a problem in itself) and try to quiet the monster using any means that will not completely destroy the creature. Points are awarded on the originality of the methods used to silence the beast. As one would expect, the 18-meter high Thunder Lizards (Kamodos) are favored by players for this game over all other monsters.

Adult game: ***Make the Plant Go Away***
This is a fun party game played by any number of consenting adults. It requires that some type of plant with poisonous thorns or tearing jaws be placed in a small room. The players must move the plant out of the room without actually touching it. Those with telekinetic abilities, however, must be within striking range of the plant at all times when they use their mutations.

Followers of The Voice

Children's game: ***Shoot the Mountain***
This game is usually played by large teams of heavily-armed children, but sometimes individuals with powerful technological devices will play it all by themselves. In *Shoot the Mountain*, the object of the game is to see how much of a mountaintop a team can blow off at one time. Players with the *Mass Mind* mutation are especially good at this. Points are awarded for how many tons of earth are removed or scattered from the mountain. This game is quite popular in what was once called the Rocky Mountains, now called the Rocky Hills.

Adult game: ***Make the Best Trap***
Players create traps of one type or another to capture creatures and large moving machines, in heavily populated regions away from the Followers' homelands. The winner is the person who traps the biggest creature within the time between one full moon and the next. Extra points are always awarded to those who capture machines, and an automatic win is given to any player who captures a Death Machine.

Friends of Entropy

Children's game: ***Ruin the Thing***
This engaging children's pastime has each child bring an object to a central open area. Then the children all get together and try to destroy each of these objects with all of their might and powers. At the end of the game, the child who owns the least damaged object wins the game.

Adult game: ***Destroy the World***
The adult version of *Ruin the Thing*, this game deals with ruining large tracts of land. The players see how much destruction they can cause to a specified area using any means (mental, physical, or otherwise) at hand. The one that ruins it the most wins the game. Radiation weapons may be used, but neutron devices that leave things standing after the devices explode are not appreciated.

Healers

Children's game: ***Doktor***
This game is played by all children of Healers. The object of the game is to get an clear understanding of the anatomy of various creatures. The kids first locate a dead being, and then take it completely apart and study its organs and muscle structure. The winner of the game is the child who remembers the most about the life form when another one like it is encountered; of course, the second life form must also be taken apart completely, a concept that may not initially appeal to the creature.

Adult game: ***How Big is the Hole***
How Big is the Hole is a game played in all areas in GAMMA WORLD gaming, especially by Healers (who don't use live targets). In this game, a non-living target whose texture resembles flesh is set up on a firing range. After selecting a ranged weapon of virtually any kind, the players draw a circle or shape of some kind on paper, giving their best estimate of the size and shape of the hole the weapon will make in the target. The

player who best estimates the size of the actual hole wins. Nuclear weapons may not be used.

Knights of Genetic Purity

Children's game: ***Pin the Bird***
This game involves shooting arrows at large mutanted flying creatures of all types. The archer cannot be equipped with any weapons other than a bow, but may have as many arrows as can be carried. The player that pins the largest mutant flyer to the ground with the best shots wins the game. The "bird," of course, is allowed to fight back, and frequently (99% of the time) does.

Adult game: ***Grab the Mutant***
Players in this game are unarmed, and must be mounted on Brutorz. A humanoid mutant of some type is set loose within a certain area, and the mounted Knights try to grab the mutant and prevent it from escaping without killing it. A similar game is played by Iron Society members, though the roles of catcher and catchee, of course, are reversed. Daring Knights may even give the mutant a weapon of some sort.

Radioactivists

Children's game: ***Search for the Glow***
In this game, children compete with each other to find the brightest piece of radioactive material in a given area. The player that brings in the object, device, or non-living remnant emitting the highest intensity radiation wins the game.

Adult game: ***Melt the Thing***
Objects made of different materials are brought close to a slab of metal giving off 18-intensity radiation. The mutant bringing in the object that takes the longest to melt in the radiation field wins the game. Things that totally emplode do not count, and the mutant cannot shield the item he brings with his own powers.

Restorationists

Children's game: ***Guess What It Is***
The players in this game take an unknown object of the Ancients and try to figure its workings out within a short period of time. Points are awarded for noises the object makes, for finding lights that blink, and especially for making the device shoot missiles of any type, no matter who or what they hit.

Adult game: ***Fire the Weapon***
This fascinating game has the players try to figure out unknown weapons of the Ancients of any type, and is similar in many ways to the game above. Points are awarded for successfully firing the weapon, finding out how it is loaded, and, unlike in the children's game above, for not hurting anyone when the weapon goes off (adults have learned to be somewhat cautious). Players who activate atomic weapons are usually disqualified, depending on house rules.

Seekers

Children's game: ***Kops and Robbers***
In this fun game, the players pick teams; one, the Kops, is made up of the strongest of the players, and the other, the Robbers, contains the fastest workers. The Robbers are given a count of 100 to build some type of defensive structure or fort. Then the Kops try and knock the fort down while the Robbers try to stop them in any way that doesn't actually kill the Kops. The Kops are forbidden to directly strike the structure; they must use other means (i.e., mutations, firearms, etc.). The winner of the game is the team that does the best job of building or destruction.

Adult Game: ***Melt Down***
All adult Seekers love to apply varying intensities of heat to the artifacts of the Ancients. This pastime is shared by all Seekers and those with *Pyrotechnic* abilities are favored members of any team. Whole tracts of land are especially devoted to this activity around the homes of the Seekers, where it is a common sight to see blast furnaces and bellows working in a good game of *Melt Down*, turning artifacts into formless lumps of gray slag. The products of such games are always used in the weapons and defenses nearby towns.

The Created

This group of intelligent creatures are not usually known to play any type of leisure sport. Some minor power groups, however, are computer-linked to strange machines called *video games*. These devices employ hologram projectors, and provide hours of target practice time for robots as they blast away at three-dimensional projections generated against any flat surface.

The Iron Society

Children's game: ***Stab the Dummy***
This game uses a human-sized thatch dummy placed in an open field. Standing back about thirty feet away, the mutant children enjoy themselves by throwing their razor-sharp daggers at it all day long until the dummy falls apart. Special points are awarded for throws that take the head off the dummy.

Adult game: ***Throw the Human***
This game is played whenever a Knight of Genetic Purity falls into the hands of the Society members. The human Knight is tied up, and players in the game take turns seeing how far they can throw the human. Extra points are awarded for height and distance, and for making the Knight bounce.

The Ranks of The Fit

Children's game: ***Targets***
This simple game is played constantly by all the children of this alliance. They simply pick any sort of moving target, from animal to plant, and shoot at it with the missile weapons that their parents make for them. Special points are always awarded for hits that completely blow up the target.

Adult game: ***In Fiel Odd***
This game is played with large darts or razor-sharp discs. A special field is made of man-sized logs ranked in several rows. In this game, the players see how many logs they can hit with one or two missile weapons. Points are awarded for the amount of damage done to the rows and the number of logs hit with any one throw. This game was taken from a book about the age of Napoleon, an Ancient general, and is played by all members of the alliance.

Zoopremists

Children's Game: ***Crushum***
Crushum is always played on rocky hillsides. A carving of a humanoid figure is placed at the bottom of the hill, and players climb high on the slope overlooking the carving and drop anything from pebbles to boulders on the figure. The player who does the most damage to the carving wins the game.

Adult game: ***Break the Wall***
Break the Wall requires ten players. Walls composed of various materials are built from stones, logs, or anything else that is commonly used to make buildings. It is the duty of each player to do their best to break the wall in the briefest amount of time. The winner of the competition is the player making the largest-sized hole or break in the wall itself. The best *Break the Wall* players are always given the honor of being the first-in fighters when attacking the castles of Knights of Genetic Purity. ▲

Sword IN THE Dirt

© 1983 by Henry Melton

Lord Erin James North, Earl of West Hendryn, stood at ease, balanced, with his legs at a fighting stance. He was relaxed, his mind cleared of anything more serious than the play of the gold reflection of the room lights off his armor or the balanced weight of shield and blue steel broadsword. He took a deep breath and swung his sword in a blazingly fast overhead arc.

His shield warned, "Don't overtrain. It wouldn't help anything if you had a muscle spasm right now. The fight will be in five minutes — I'll be giving you more warm-up exercises. Don't go off on your own."

Lord Erin scowled, "I moved my sword because it felt right. Don't underestimate my feeling of what is right."

The large jewel on the hilt of the sword in question pulsed blue as it added, "You have to be careful! Shield has your training schedule. If you are not going to follow our advice, you should never have made us."

"Shut up. I've got to concentrate." The Earl was irritated. Sword could choose a better time to berate him. The Soviet broadsword champion would be challenging him in minutes, with only a four-point spread between them to decide who would take the gold medal and who would take the silver. Sometime after the games were over, he was going to take his sword apart and re-do its personality entirely.

The warm-up room was empty. Before a fight he preferred communion with himself and his armor and weapons to that of any human trainer. He asked his tunic, "How am I doing?"

Tunic reported his agility and metabolism quickly and with no spare words. Its personality was not nearly as extroverted as Sword. Shield announced time for a quick dozen sword-presses to prime him for the bout. Lord Erin completed the exercise just as the door opened. A page decked in a white tunic decorated in the five colored interlocking circles entered and announced the royal request for his presence.

The Earl sheathed Sword, removed Helm and tucked it under his arm. He nodded to the page and followed him out onto the bright sunny meadow.

The light breeze ruffled his blond hair with a cool breath of spring. His eyes searched the ornately carved stands where the King and his court waited. He couldn't spot the cameras this time. In the North American preliminaries, when he took Johnson, he'd spotted a lens. The president of the association had reported the lapse of protocol. Lord Erin could see everything tightening up as the final round approached. Whether it was because of the importance of the match, or just a reflection of an old European sense of fitness, he appreciated the care taken to insure the purity of the scene. To the eye, there was nothing in this meadow to remind him of the modern world and its modern problems.

Count Carl Shenev, Protector of the Georgian Reaches, matched his pace as they neared the royal party. Lord Erin paid him no mind as he concentrated on the elements of the presentation. There was so much to remember, and protocol forbade the wearing of a helm at this time.

SWORD TO HELM: Have you got a fix on the competition?

HELM TO SWORD: AF. We are matched. The Soviet is augmented. There is a tracer on us as well. I would guess third-generation armor — Sanford design. Our primary is due for a shock.

SWORD TO SHIELD: What are our chances?

SHIELD TO SWORD: I am working on it.

SHIELD TO HELM: I need a physiological reading on our opponent primary.

SHIELD TO TUNIC: Give me a physiological reading on our primary.

Lord Erin enjoyed the cere-

mony. He always did. The King took the jeweled Cross of St. Forman from its velvet case and blessed the combatants. Then they both rose from their knees. Erin turned to his party and bowed — first to the president then to his lady. Margaret smiled confidently and blew him a kiss. A page carried her token to him, and he tucked the blue gauze into the wrist of his gauntlet.

The King's Marshall raised his hand. They saluted with their swords, then sheathed and turned to their stations. Lord Erin had placed his helm on before he had taken two steps.

The earpiece was hot from the moment he had it in place, "Trouble, the Soviet is augmented."

"Good!"

"Don't you want more detail?"

"No," Lord Erin shook his head. "Just give me the best advice you can. If the count is getting good advice, then it should be a fair match." He smiled. The scent of spring flowers on the warm morning wind, the caress of his lady's token on his wrist, and the weight of his armor on his shoulders made it one of life's perfect moments. He began to whistle as he approached his circle.

SWORD TO SHIELD: It is obvious from our primary's words that strategy is being left up to us this time. I can think of three offensive strategies to take.

One, we can concentrate on the primary. It will be difficult if he is indeed using the Stanford armor.

Two, we can concentrate on the secondaries. Helm should be able to give us accurate target information in order to take out the opponent's sensors. We have to expect this strategy to be directed against us. Without secondary tactical advice, the battle would revert to a classical broadsword fight — a contest of the primary's stamina, strength and instincts. We have seen what happens when one primary is augmented and the other is not. It would be worse for us if our primary was deprived of our advice. His instincts have probably atrophied. But if we could take out our opponents sensors in a first strike, then the game would be ours.

And then there is option three —

TUNIC TO SWORD: I told you before, I will not consider that. I do not approve of the discussion. It is not our job.

There were three circles, each a rod in diameter, traced in the grass with rope. The two outer circles overlapped the center one as if they were links in a chain. Battle could only be engaged in the center, and combatants could only leave at the order of the Marshall. Retreat to the end circle was permitted to replace weapons, but only for a period of one minute. Lord Erin had never made use of this option in his five years of combat and he had no intention of starting the practice.

The Marshall's voice rang out clearly, and the Earl and the Count stepped into the center circle with sword and shield held ready. The initial stroke was not long in coming. This was no fencing match. The broadsword is swung in an overhead circle, with a twist of the wrist during the last phase of the stroke to double the speed of the blade as it strikes.

These opponents were seasoned. Every stroke was hitting the shields. The clang of metal on metal rang across the scene.

In the Earl's ear, Helm spoke continuous advice as to where to place his strokes and warnings as to where the shield must be to divert the flashing metal edge that came at him every other heartbeat.

SWORD TO HELM: We must do it my way. Shield and I are the tactical brains of this outfit, and our conclusions are identical. Unless we act now, we may not survive.

SHIELD TO HELM: I agree. I have sustained more surface damage this bout than in the last three combined.

HELM TO SHIELD: Shut up and feed me the tacticals. That last one was too close to me. Where will your strategic brilliance go if my sensors are taken out?

TUNIC TO SHIELD: Helm is right. Concentrate on the fight, and do it by the book. We know you are getting hurt. That is why we must spend our total effort in winning quickly.

SWORD TO HELM: Or losing quickly.

TUNIC TO HELM: Don't listen to them. It is not our job to lose.

SHIELD TO HELM: Tunic isn't getting any damage that I can see. But I'm getting chewed up out here. Sword and I are agreed that we can choreograph a quick end to this, with minimal damage to the primary. Don't forget that you are the number one target — even more than the primary according to the attack statistics. Unless we act fast, we both might finish the day in the scrap heap, and tunic might end up with a cold body to monitor. The greatest good for the greatest number right now is to lose, and quickly.

HELM TO SHIELD: I don't know yet. Right now I need tacticals. And give me a plan of attack against my opposite number. I want to blind that secondary!

SHIELD TO HELM: I've been working on it. Okay, transfer this.

Sweat was stinging Lord Erin's eyes. The action was hot, and it never let up. He was gaining a grudging respect for the Count's strength and stamina, if nothing else.

In his ear, there whispered: "Bend your left knee." Aim for the chest." Expect a low cut." "Aim for the ear." Normally, the voice in his ear was like his own thoughts, but this was becoming a very strange battle. More and more of the attacks against him were aimed at his head, and his own aim had been directed to the Count's copper-hued helmet far more often than was usual. There could be only one reason. While the silver medal had been awarded posthumously more than once this last decade, it was never because of a head wound. The helms were very strong. All that would be accomplished by a strike there would be damage to the sensors or the computer.

HELM TO SHIELD: Don't give me that noise. We need to take out the opponent's sensors before they take me out. I need support here.

SWORD TO HELM: Shield is right: the opponent is too fast. These attacks against his sensors are both futile and dangerous. They know very well what we are up to, and they can read our actions quickly enough to avoid head attacks. A head attack is very difficult. And your own data is telling us that the opponent is much better at it than we are. Your only chance is to go along with our plan.

TUNIC TO HELM: This is wrong.

SWORD TO TUNIC: I wouldn't worry. My plan works for a lower limb cut on our primary. You shouldn't even be harmed.

HELM TO SWORD: Feed me this sequence. I'd like to look at it.

Lord Erin was feeling the strain. His sword arm shook from fatigue, and his shield was slower to block after each strike. How could the big Russian keep it up? *At least by now the swords no*

"Your tacticals betrayed you as surely as mine betrayed me. We must rid ourselves of them if this is to remain a field of honor."

longer have a razor edge. Erin shook that thought away; it was defeatist.

"Aim for the chest." "Block high." "Try for the chest again." "Block high."

No! Lord Erin rejected the whispers. The Count was cutting low! Erin blocked low. The field rang with the sound of the deflected blow.

He backpedaled almost to the rope. There were more whispers in his ears, but he ignored them. He had expected this, and his fears had proved true. He must not listen any more.

The Count was puzzled by his retreat; there seemed no sense in it, but he advanced. In the free seconds Lord Erin gained, he fumbled with his chin strap and pulled his helm free. The crowd gave a collective gasp of puzzlement as his blond hair shook free in the sunlight. It was suicidal to be in the broadsword ring without head protection.

He dropped his shield and took the helm in the freed hand. The count was almost in striking range. Erin tossed the helm directly at the Count's face.

The gamble worked. The count's sword struck the helm in midair. Erin marveled at the man's speed, even as he used his own sword to cut deep into his opponent's thigh.

That was the end. In short order, Lord Erin had his swordpoint at the man's chest. The Count cried yield. The King granted his life. And the crowd went wild.

The Marshall summoned them from the circle, and Lord Erin stabbed his sword into the soil and stooped to help his fallen opponent.

Healers arrived on a run with medical kits. As they worked on the leg, Erin spoke to the Count, "You are very fast. I am not sure I would care to face you again."

The man's smile was pained, "But the best man won. And it is not you who is bleeding into the grass."

Lord Erin frowned and shook his head, "I am not sure of that. I will speak to my president, requesting an association ruling that forbids augmentation in our sport."

"But you were augmented. My tactical assured me of that!"

"Yes, I was," he glanced over to where the helm lay, split nearly in two by the Count's last stroke. "And I listened to their voices until they turned against me. They had no honor. Did you not see how the battle turned from being a contest between two men to a war between my tacticals and yours? I gambled that yours would attack my helm rather than me if given the chance, and it worked. Your tacticals betrayed you as surely as mine betrayed me. We must rid ourselves of them if this is to remain a field of honor."

"Can you move?" The Count nodded, and Lord Erin helped him to stand on his good leg. The crowd went wild as the two men moved, slowly, to face the King.

SWORD TO SHIELD: We won. We survived.

SHIELD TO SWORD: Yes.

SWORD TO SHIELD: I wish the primary wouldn't leave me stuck in the dirt like this. I'll rust. ▲

For the MAIL ORDER HOBBY SHOP™ Catalog, write:

TSR, Inc.
P.O. Box 756, Dept. EQB
Lake Geneva, WI 53147

YOU are the hero in ENDLESS QUEST® Books

From the producers of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Game

Now you can experience all the thrills and excitement of your favorite TSR™ role-playing game in the pages of an exciting new series of books. YOU are the hero, and only you can make the decisions that lead your adventure to success — or disaster!

Enter the danger-filled world of the popular **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** game, filled with dark, mysterious tunnels, enchanted castles, and fearsome monsters. Are YOU brave enough to meet its challenges?

PICK A PATH TO ADVENTURE™

with any of these exciting ENDLESS QUEST® titles.
Available at better bookstores and hobby stores everywhere!

#1 DUNGEON OF DREAD
#2 MOUNTAIN OF MIRRORS
#3 PILLARS OF PENTEGARN
#4 RETURN TO BROOKMERE
#5 REVOLT OF THE DWARVES
#6 REVENGE OF THE RAINBOW DRAGONS
#7 HERO OF WASHINGTON SQUARE
#8 VILLAINS OF VOLTURNUS
#9 ROBBERS AND ROBOTS
#10 CIRCUS OF FEAR
#11 SPELL OF THE WINTER WIZARD
#12 LIGHT ON QUESTS MOUNTAIN
#13 DRAGON OF DOOM
#14 RAID ON NIGHTMARE CASTLE
#15 UNDER DRAGON'S WING
#16 THE DRAGON'S RANSOM

TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™

ENDLESS QUEST, DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, TSR, PICK A PATH TO ADVENTURE, and PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION are trademarks owned by TSR, Inc.
©1984 by TSR, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

PANCAKE ALLEY

Driving Fast and Dangerously in CAR WARS™ Gaming

by Steve Winter

Modern road rallying actually started several years ago, back in the early days of autodueling. Even five years ago, things weren't like they are now. There wasn't any AADA, no Metro Police or Frontier Main Patrol, not even a working national communication net. Outlaws controlled just about everything outside the fortified towns, and went pretty much wherever they wanted to go.

With civilians holed up behind walls and outlaws running the countryside, autoduelists got their kicks by challenging each other to make runs into outlaw territory. One guy would race out 50 miles or so, marking his trail as he went, and hide a case of Yukon Jack. When he got back to civilization, the game was on for his friends. It really took some gears to drive around in the decivilized areas without any real idea where you were headed until you got there. Anyway, the guys who made it back could have a fine time toasting the guys who didn't and lying about all the dirty birds they smoked.

But with the highway pacification programs and ironclad convoys and every driver and his dog packing a piece on the roads, those days are gone. Rumor says things are still pretty wild out in Nevada, and all around the Prohibited Area, but there's no real challenge in a quick run outside the perimeter anymore. Nobody needs an excuse to go cruising for goons, and most goons nowadays aren't worth the ammo it takes to open them up: rich little prangers in showroom cars, barely a dustup in the lot.

Anyway, rally dueling grew right out of that tradition. Now its got its own professional circuit, a drivers' organization, video coverage, even fan clubs. It seems a lot dirtier now, but that's what happens when a high-risk hobby turns into a professional blood sport.

The North American Rally Commission recognizes three kinds of rally dueling now: Fox and Hounds, individual Score the Flag, and team Score the Flag. Score the Flag is based on an old kid's game, but it still owes a lot to those old Yukon Jack runs. Fox and Hounds is more like the real thing.

All three games are played in an area of about 50 square miles, laced with roads. Conditions on the course depend on where the course is. On the Eastern seaboard and along the Mississippi valley, courses are constricted; lines of sight are short because the fighting area is all hills and woods. In the Plains and Southwest, everything is flat and open and a gunner can see a target when it's a mile out of range. The Rockies are pretty much like the East, at least in their effect — real short lines of sight and fire — but the roads are a lot trickier and there are a lot more prangs. "Departing the surface" is a lot more dangerous, too. In Illinois, at least, a car isn't likely to fall 500 feet if it skids off a turn.

Fox and Hounds works like this: One car is the Fox. The Fox chooses his starting road from three or four possibilities on one side of the course. It has to get across the course and leave along one of the designated roads on the opposite side. The Hounds are three to five other vehicles that enter the course along any side roads. Their job is to hunt down the Fox and keep it from leaving the area.

That sounds pretty tough for the Fox, but the Fox has a guardian angel: a helicopter that keeps tabs on the Hounds and tells the Fox where the Hounds are and where they're headed. The Fox knows where the enemy is all the time, but has to think and move fast to avoid being trapped. The Hounds have to find the Fox, box him in, and catch him or rap him off the road before he can slip out of sight at a junction or get the Hounds all bunched up and break into the clear.

There's a variation on this called Bear and Hounds. The difference is that the guardian angel not only tells the Bear where the Hounds are, but tells the Hounds where the Bear is. To make it a contest, the Bear usually is a real badass, more than a match for any one Hound. Unless the Hounds can gang up on him, the Bear will just smash through a weak point and rack up an easy prize cup.

Score the Flag is played in the same area, but with a different set of rules. Instead of sending one car across the area with no objective other than escape, in Score the Flag one vehicle or a team of vehicles has to move through the course, pick up flags from various stations throughout the area, and get back to its own base. Everybody else is trying to do the same thing at the same time, of course.

Before starting a Score the Flag game, five to eight flag stations have to be set up around the course. Prime places for flag stations are abandoned schools, and other isolated

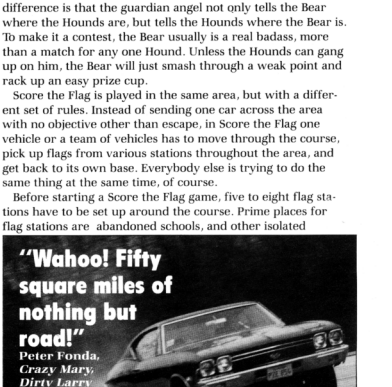


Photo courtesy of Robert Bartyzel

Photo by Tom Laughlin

"Just lucky, I guess," says unscratched Dieter "Stormcloud" Sturm, three-time Wisconsin State Autodueling Champion, shown here after a relaxing game of "Bear and Hounds." "If you think THIS looks bad, you should see the other guys!" says the Stormcloud.

landmarks. All a flag station really needs is a flag dispenser and a sandbag bunker. A flag dispenser can be a complicated locked-compartment affair, or a simple clothesline where flags are hung in the open. A bunker is just a sandbag enclosure, about 3 feet high and 5 feet across, where a driver can dive for cover if somebody catches him outside his car.

Individual Score the Flag works like this: Three to eight vehicles each start at a road leading into the course. When the starting signal is fired, they race into the course area. The objective is to drive to each flag station, stop the car, get out (or have the gunner get out) and retrieve a flag from that station, hang it on the car's whiplash flagpole so everybody can see it, get back in the car, and head for the next station. When a car has a flag from each station, it heads back toward its entry road. The winner is the first car out of the area with a flag from every station.

Cars can hit the stations in any order they want. Some guys will just drive a circuit, others will skip around. Opponents can be ambushed or avoided, whichever seems like a good idea at the time.

Matches can be run blind or with universal observers. In blind matches, nobody knows where anybody is until they cross sights. Universal observers are like the guardian angel in Bear and Hounds. They watch the field from above and report positions to everybody. A few months ago the New Peoria Rallyers tried a partially blind rally. Airborne observers reported positions and movements, but those reports were broadcast only to video screens at the flag stations. Drivers willing to sit at a station get updates on the competition.

Musical Flags is a variant on Bear and Hounds that's getting popular because it promotes more fighting. If that's what the fans want, somebody's bound to see that they get it. The only change is that each flag station has one fewer flag than there are cars in the rally. The car that gets to a station last is out of luck; the only way to get that flag is to take it from someone who has it, and the only way to do that is to disable that car.

House rules on defending a pancake vary. Most clubs rule that if a car is rapped out of the event, that driver has to surrender his flags to whoever ventilated his cage. Rules like that keep drivers alive and protect professionals from psychotic killer types, but there's a good argument that they promote mediocrity, too. In the end, people will fight harder if they can't squirm out of a meatgrinder by surrendering.

Team Score the Flag works the same way, but cars operate as teams instead of alone, and only two flag stations are used. Those flag stations do double duty as flag stations and as team bases. Anybody who was once a kid should recognize this as a blood and guts version of capture the flag. To win, one team has to cross the field, take the enemy's flag anyway which way it can, and carry it back across the field to its own base.

A captured flag can be retaken by members of its own team, but only by force. Once retaken, a flag becomes mobile; a team that recaptures its flag can hang it from a whip and carry it around the field.

Only two hard rules apply in this game. First, every vehicle, driver, and gunner has to wear prominent team colors at all times, so everybody knows whether a target is friendly or hostile. That doesn't mean a driver can't get out of his car and creep through the bushes to spy out or attack the enemy's base; it means that when the enemy spots him, there shouldn't be any question about which side he's on. Second, flags have to be displayed prominently at all times. If the flag is at its home base, it has to be flying from a pole, 6 to 8 feet from the ground, visible from all directions. If the flag is being carried by a vehicle, it has to be flying from the whip. If the flag is being carried by a greener, it has to be fastened to the top of his helmet, tucked under an epaulet, or tied around his arm or neck. Nobody should have to wonder which team a car or pedestrian belongs to or whether it's carrying a flag.

SCORE THE FLAG IN CAR WARS GAMING: Some people would rather run rallies with paper and dice than blacktop and bullets. (Don't start looking around; we know who you are.)

To set up a Score the Flag course for a CAR WARS game, get a map of the county where the players live. Pick an area 6 to 8 miles square and map it onto quarter-inch graph paper at a scale of one square equals 100 yards (100 yards equals 20 car lengths.) Pick five to eight intersections and landmarks and mark them as flag stations.

Next, indicate ridges and high points along the roads. A driver or gunner can trace a line of sight from one ridge to another, and to anything between, but never across a ridge. A target can't be attacked if there is a ridge between it and the attacking vehicle.

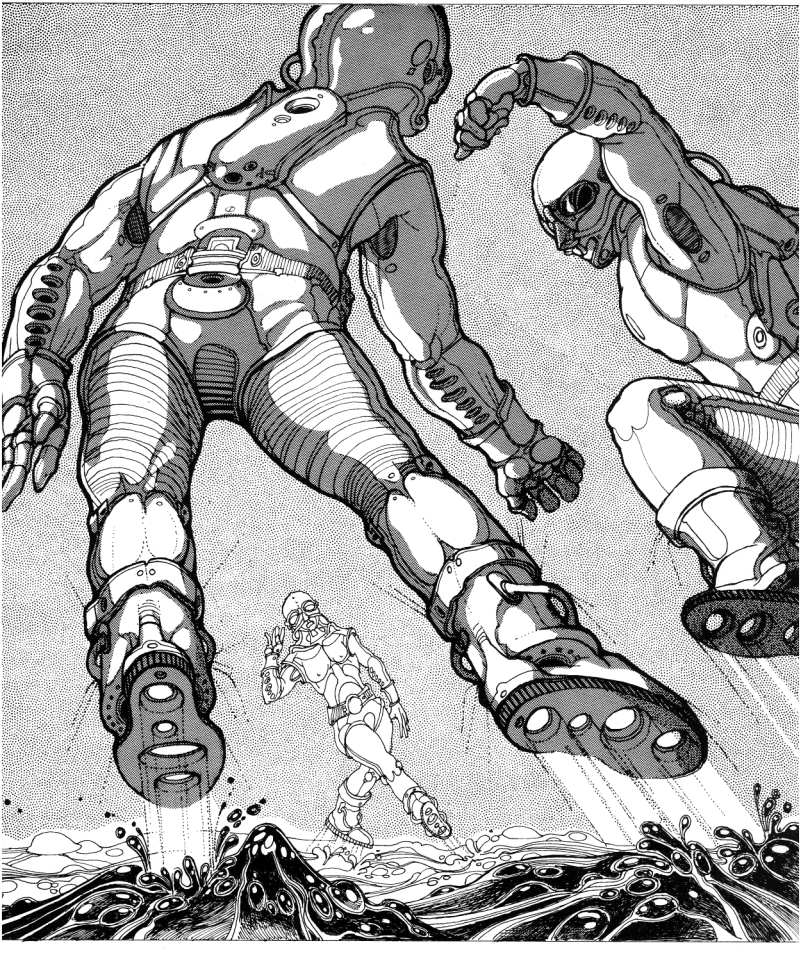
Finally, if the course will be used for Score the Flag, draw maps of a few flag stations. One station is pretty much like another, so one or two station maps are enough. Each station needs a flag dispenser and a sandbag bunker. A person inside a bunker is protected from all directions except overhead. A typical bunker offers 5 to 10 DP of protection. Exposed flag stations need the sturdiest bunkers.

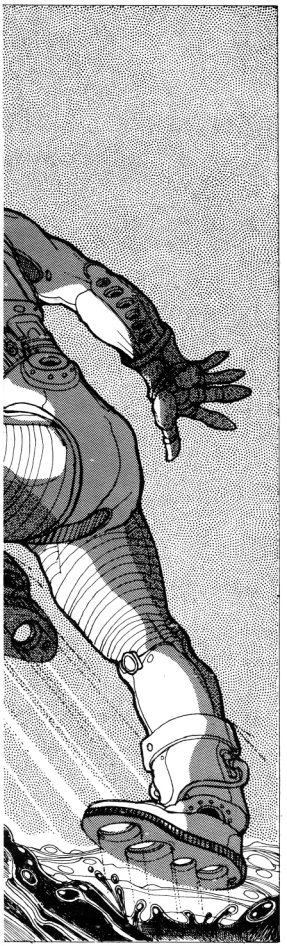
Until vehicles move within sight or attacking range of each other, cars move in 20-second turns. Each driver indicates his speed at the start of the turn, then all vehicles are moved. Each vehicle moves a number of squares equal to one-tenth of its speed (a car traveling at 50 mph moves five squares on the map). If the map is mounted on corrugated cardboard, positions can be indicated with colored pins.

A vehicle can burn straight through an intersection without stopping or slowing down, but if the driver wants to turn, his vehicle has to stop as soon as it reaches the intersection. It can move normally in any direction on the following turn.

Picking up a flag takes one complete turn. During that turn, the vehicle must be stopped at the flag station and either the driver or the gunner has to be outside the vehicle. The vehicle can move normally in any direction on the next turn.

DRIVE OFFENSIVELY!





Illustrations by Robert Nelson

A FRIENDLY GAME OF HOOPLE

by Timothy Robert Sullivan

Less than ten hours after losing the closest game a human team had ever played against Hoderians, Shem and I were practicing hoople on the inner walls of one of the colony's revolving spokes with the team's three stars. Shem and I were the first players ever born on the colony who'd made the team, but so far neither of us had ever actually played the game. We'd only been seconds for Tomoko Murashima, Barney Barekzi Lopez, and Hassan Worth. My name is Jay Kruschev.

Even though two bulkheads separated the practice area from the rest of the colony, the three of them were scrimmaging as though their lives depended on it. A bypass had been constructed outside, and no visitors were allowed, so their efforts weren't just for show. The disappointment of losing the game by only one point had turned to anger and then determination.

We skated on clay — floated over it, actually — brought up from Hoder's claybowls, a hole in the planet's surface filled with melted glacial ice and sediment. A volcanic hot spot churned and boiled the stuff, which we simulated with exhaust vents heating and moving the clay. It was reasonably realistic, I suppose, but next to the real thing it was a satyr to Hyperion in terms of magnitude. Nothing I've experienced before or since compares with the feeling of being plopped down on that turbulent sea of clay.

Something hit me from behind like a ton of bricks, sending me sprawling. All three of our experienced players treated Shem and me like second-class citizens, but only Worth did this kind of thing. He'd done the same thing to Barney during the game, in his eagerness to score and gain some glory; it had cost our team two points.

Attila Luvumba, our coach, blew his whistle as I rolled over, my body leaving an impression in the warm glop. I fell backwards to bob onto my feet so I wouldn't have to turn off my antigraviton skates, a time-saving trick Attila had taught me. The skates floated a few centimeters off the ground — about three inches. When you were standing, that was fine, but it was hard to get on your feet unless you knew how.

As I stood on shaky legs, Worth leered at me, skating past. The whistle blew again, and he looked up at Attila hover-

ing over us, nylon wings flapping angrily. Attila jerked his thumb and ordered Worth off the clay.

"All right, all right," Worth said with annoyance, still gliding over the miniature waves.

"Get off the clay now!" Attila shouted, banking in the low gravity and coming down right in front of Worth.

Worth could no longer ignore him. Barney and Tomoko glared at him too, so he reluctantly withdrew to the nearest bulkhead. It was often said that Worth, skillful player that he was, had forgotten the purpose of the game; it was, first and foremost, a tool of diplomacy. To Worth, it was an obsession that had turned sour. He no longer believed we could ever beat the natives, and so he'd become a violent player. We wondered how long it would be before violence carried over into his life off the clay. He must have known he was courting disaster, but it seemed that he couldn't help himself.

During the rest of the practice session, Barney and Shem played hard against Tomoko and me, until Attila blew the whistle again and told us to go spray off our sweat. Attila removed the rigging and corset connected to his wings, his heavy body perspiring almost as much as ours.

Tomoko and Barney were gone by the time Shem and I were dressed. They didn't associate with us much off the clay anyhow; we were the two lowly subs, and they were the colony's hoople stars. So Shem and I opened the hatch in the bulkhead and bounced down to get something to eat. The commissary, inside the hub, was very busy and noisy, as usual. I saw Tomoko, Barney, and Worth sitting together at a table. There were two more places there, not being used. "Let's join them," I said.

"Uh, uh," Shem replied, "I'd rather eat standing up."

"Not me." I walked over to their table. "Mind if I join you?"

Tomoko made no sign that she'd heard me, and Barney shrugged his broad shoulders. Worth's red face glowered at me, but he didn't say anything. It would have been bad form for them to refuse me. I was new on the team, and I knew they didn't want me there, but I felt compelled to join them. Perhaps I was trying to prove something to them . . . or to myself.

I sat down.

"Leave it to one of these snot-nosed, tin-can kids to invite himself to eat dinner with the grown-ups." Worth was speaking, ofcourse.

I almost expected the others to say something about his rudeness, but they paid no attention to him. We weren't on the clay now, and Worth's social behavior didn't concern them. I was on my own.

"I'm sorry," I said, feeling awkward and hurt. "I thought that since we're teammates —"

"Teammates!" Worth jeered. "Kid you're nothing but a second-stringer, a redheaded waterboy. You're not on *any* team." He leaned closer, affording me a generous view of the food he was chewing. "You're only good for carrying our gear."

"Oh, yeah?" I snapped. "At least I didn't lose points for us yesterday."

Worth was livid. He'd meant to anger me, but he never dreamed I'd fight back. "You little bastard!" he screamed, lunging at me. He landed on his belly and slid across the table, meaty hands groping for me. Plates clattered and food flew through the air. Barney and Tomoko held him back, straining as he flopped on the tabletop like a fish out of water.

He finally calmed down and got off the table. Looking glumly at the refuse, he picked up a chair and righted it, then stalked silently out of the commissary.

Barney shook his close-cropped head. "He's rabid."

Tomoko said nothing, sizing me up with that cool gaze of hers, delicate features in repose. I suspected that she was surprised I'd stood up to Worth, an athlete famed even back on Earth. I couldn't say what that meant, because I'd never been to Earth. I was born and raised on the colony, and I'd never been anyplace but Hoder.

"I'm sorry," I said.

"Why?" Barney asked. "You haven't done anything wrong."

"I should have respected your wishes." With that I turned and walked away, the maintenance mechs passing me on their way to clean up the mess Worth had left.

Worth wasn't at the next practice session. We played two on two, Barney and me against Tomoko and Shem, an even match. We'd been skating hard for twenty minutes when the red light over the hatch flashed. Whoever was coming in had clearance, or his palmprint wouldn't have opened the hatch. I had a feeling I knew who it was.

Everybody stopped skating as the hatch was flung to one side. In stepped Worth, bullish face and neck unnaturally red from consuming some stimulant or other.

Attila glided down onto the clay. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Came to scrimmage," Worth said, smiling stupidly.

"Sorry, you're on probation. You're not supposed to be in here at all."

Worth winked at him conspiratorially. "Coach, I'm the best player you ever had."

"Even if that were true, it wouldn't matter," Attila stood in his way, his dark brow furrowed deeply. "Now get out of here, or things are going to get bad for you."

Worth's grin turned to a grimace. He looked at me then, with an expression of pure hatred. He backed off, and in a moment he was gone.

We all stood staring at the closed hatch.

"All right, all right," Attila said, "let's get back to work."

My skates were buzzing, so I leaned forward into the clay hillocks. The antigravitons floated me over the artificial surface, and I was eager to show what I could do. If Worth was out, he'd be replaced in the next game by either Shem or me. I had to show Attila that I was the one he should put on the clay alongside Tomoko and Barney.

Apparently, Shem had the same idea. He came charging at me, trying to veer off at the last possible instant. He miscalculated, and we both splatted into the rippling clay.

"For Christ's sake, Shem!" I shouted.

I heard laughter. Looking up, I saw Barney and Tomoko doubling over. It was the most emotion I'd ever seen Tomoko display, so I couldn't be too angry.

I lay flat on my back, embedded in the clay except for my feet. My ankles floated three inches over the clay, as though on water. Tomoko gave me a hand, and, as I stood, I looked into her eyes and thought I saw something there I'd never seen before: appreciation, if not respect . . . maybe even affection. I told myself I was dreaming and got back into the scrimmage.

Our collision, which would have cost our team two points during an actual game, didn't mean a thing to Shem. He kept dogging me, usually failing to show me up because of his overeagerness. By the end of the session, I knew I had the edge on him. From the way he was flagging, I guess he knew it too.

After practice, I refreshed myself with a hot spray and went to the library. I requested holos of classic hoople games and sat in a carrel to study them. I went back twenty years, to the days when Attila was playing. He was much thinner then, an agile figure in his skintight suit.

Attila was playing against a Hoderian team who had been dead a long time. Their life spans are much shorter than ours. They make up for it with speed and economy of motion; even with the handicap of antigraviton skates, they consistently outclassed humans. Speeding over the clay, they looked like bristly blue spiders with outsized craniums. In fact, Hoderians are very similar to arachnids: their thoraxes accommodate the equivalent of the medulla oblongata and the midbrain, and their internal

we were worthy, and the only way to do that was to beat them at hoople.

The game is sacred to them, you see. They're tribal, having an agrarian culture that at one time during their history made constant warfare, one island against the other over their sparse crops. This had proven too costly in terms of lives, and so the game came to replace combat. An oral tradition had developed, glorifying hoople. That was why we didn't have any new holograms. The cold, unchanging reality of holograms just wasn't the same as the endless mythic retellings of great hoople games. The Hoderians wouldn't play if there was a camera in sight.

Five years earlier, the natives had sent a delegation to the colony, after we had come within three points of them in a

watched them skate in those old holos until I felt I had some sense of their rhythms.

Outside the library, I ran into Attila. He was walking alone on the gently landscaped slope of the torus.

"Checking up on me, coach?" I asked.

"To tell the truth, Jay," he said, showing bright teeth in a grin, "I was looking for you."

"What a coincidence." I gestured at the library. "I was just looking *at* you."

"You mean those old holos? Those were the days, when the colony was new, back before the new wheel up top was added." He paused and looked thoughtfully about. "I'm the first coach to have players who were born here, you know."

He was getting at some point, in his roundabout way, so I waited for him in silence to hasten the process.

"Tomoko and Barney are great players, but they're from Earth. It's going to mean a lot to people that you or Shem will be playing in the next game, not just skating backup."

"I guess so." Maybe Attila was trying to let me down easy, I thought. Just because Shem hadn't done so well in the scrimmage was no reason to think he wouldn't be chosen; after all, he'd been on the team longer than I had been.

"What I'm trying to tell you, Jay," he said, nodding gravely, "is that you'll be starting against the Hoderians in just" — he checked the time — "a little less than forty-eight hours."

I must have been gaping at him, the way he laughed. I felt as though I'd just had a brace of stimulants; no, I'd been deprived of oxygen and was getting dizzy. Gravity no longer held me to the ground. I was floating. When I finally touched down again, I said, "Isn't this kind of short notice for a game? Not that I'm complaining, you understand."

"The natives sent word they want it this way," Attila said, suddenly serious. "That's not the only unusual thing, either. They don't want any substitutions. Each team fields three players, and that's it."

"Why?"

"We figure they're a little shaken up about our team coming so close last time, and they want a chance to really give us a beating. But with the Hoderians, you never know."

I must have been gaping at him, the way he laughed. I felt as though I'd just had a brace of stimulants; no, I'd been deprived of oxygen and was getting dizzy.

plumbing is in the thorax. The thorax stores a good deal of methane, the pliable exoskeleton swelling until the Hoderian is prepared to release it in a measured blast, helping to propel him forward over the clay. A full-grown male is as large as a German shepherd, and though its head is not as large as a human's, it is as intelligent as we are. Hoderians possess a cellular density in their gray matter that effects an electrical ephaptic communication in their neutral transmissions. They have two eyes, which make their faces look surprisingly human, even though they have mandibles; and two pinhole heat and light sensors are located just above the eyes. They have eight legs, the set in front being smaller and more pointed than the other three sets designed for carrying and working.

As I watched those long-dead Hoderians darting at me in three dimensions, I wondered how long ago they had started playing hoople, the game named after the hooting sound emitted from their book-lungs when excited. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years. Nobody knows, and the Hoderians weren't talking. First we had to prove hard fought contest. That was when they saw a hologram. They immediately forbade any further filming of hoople and refused to discuss the matter at all.

I was watching the same game they had seen, imagining the battles of ages past while admiring the Hoderians' incredible grace as they skated on their spur-tipped legs. The spurs serve a double purpose, interlocking around a vine or branch while the creature is resting. That way, he won't fall off while the island rocks back and forth on the clay. When the Hoderian is excited, as it is during hoople and presumably was during warfare, a sac near the leg tip secretes lubricating oil enabling the Hoderian to move easily over the smooth clay. Its eight legs churn furiously to get up speed, airbag torso expelling methane — a ridiculous spectacle. But then they glide so beautifully you'd think they were born on the clay . . . which they practically are. With their bristly blue legs and sagging abdomens, they look sort of like animate bagpipes, after releasing all their stored methane. One's first impression is of spiders, but that soon fades and you think of them as . . . well, as Hoderians, individuals. I

Shem didn't make it to the last practice session before the game. There were only the three of us, no scrimmag-

ing, just a few exercises and some drills. After Attila wished us luck, we sprayed ourselves clean and went to the commissary.

Since Shem wasn't there, I sat by myself. I felt certain that Tomoko was watching me while I ate. Everytime I gazed across the crowded commissary, she was staring right at me. I wanted to go over and talk to her, but I was too proud after what had happened last time. Finishing my meal quickly, I went straight home.

The entire gangfam was waiting for me when I got there. Sativa Quinn had sculpted a Hoderian victory talisman, a stylized figure made from clay. I ceremoniously added it to our shelves of genuine and imitation Hoderian icons and art objects. It took me a while to find a spot for it among our crowded collection, but I finally did, amid much applause. My twelve other brothers and sisters had prepared nice things to eat and drink. I didn't have the heart to tell them I'd already had dinner, so I sampled everything and thanked them all. I truly appreciated what they'd done, but at the first opportunity I excused myself and went off to bed, knowing they'd understand.

My berth was on the colony's outer curve, the window facing Hoder every few minutes as we spun in space. I marvelled at the red-splotched planet we orbited, feeling almost as though I'd never seen it before. Hoder is much like Earth in many ways, they say, and its sun is much like Sol. But Hoder is some five million kilometers further from its sun than the homeworld is. It's a cold place, except for those hot spots and claybowls, and there's not much life away from the volcanic heat except for lichen. But in the claybowls, life is abundant, with the Hoderians at the top of the food chain. It's a little smaller than Earth, so hydrogen escapes easily from the atmosphere, which is thin but breathable. Earthers say it's easier to get around on Hoder, since gravity is only seventy per cent what it is on Earth and the planet has no moons. From the colony, it was a mottled white-and-red egg, with a tint of blue green here and there. I lay staring at it with my head on my pillow, dreaming of the adventure I would have there tomorrow.

Someone touched me, and I awoke with a start. "Huh?"

At first I thought I was dreaming. It was Tomoko. I started to get up, but she pressed her palms against my shoulders.

"It's all right, Jay," she said.

Imagine our surprise when we climbed aboard the bus and found Worth sitting there, gear in the overhead rack. He grinned at me malevolently as I took my place on the bench opposite him.

"Is it time to go down to the surface?" I asked. "Did I oversleep?"

"No." She got into bed with me.

"What are you doing?" I asked, now fairly certain I was still dreaming.

"I've come to spend time with you until the game."

"You have? How did you get in here?"

"Your brothers and sisters let me in. They didn't think you'd mind." She kissed me. "Now relax and enjoy yourself."

And that's exactly what I did.

Before Tomoko and I loaded our gear onto the bus, we rubbed Major Hoople's belly for luck. The Major is a top-hatted cartoon character painted on the bus, in honor of the game. The cold lights of the hangar would soon give way to the orange sun. Barney and Attila were nowhere in sight, but we assumed they'd be along shortly. Imagine our surprise when we climbed aboard the bus and found Worth sitting there, gear in the overhead rack. He grinned at me malevolently as I took my place on the bench opposite him.

"What's the matter, kid?" he said. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Not particularly. What are you doing here, anyway?"

"Haven't you heard? Barney had an accident."

"What?"

"It's true." Attila came through the hatch.

"What happened?" I asked.

"A fire in his gangfam hive."

"Did he make it?" Tomoko asked.

"Yes, but he's badly burnt. He's going to need extensive skin transplants."

"Couldn't you get anybody else?" I looked right at Worth.

"Shem is nowhere to be found."

So Worth was going to play in spite of everything. I wondered if he'd been anywhere near the scene of the accident and what had become of Shem.

"It's time to go," Attila said.

As the hangar doors slid open, we saw the stars through the forward ports. The thrusters fired, jolting us out of our reverie about poor Barney, and then we were on our way down to Hoder. It was a silent ride, Tomoko sitting next to me while Worth and I glared at each other. My stomach was doing flip-flops.

The sun peeked over Hoder, an orange crescent that soon became a disc, brilliant but too far away to provide much warmth to the frozen planet below. Volcanic action made the difference, though the sunlight was sufficient for photosynthesis.

Now the bus arced down to close orbit, skimming the thin atmosphere. The curving ice fields were pierced by volcanic caldera yawning towards the sky, blue-green algae clinging to their slopes. But these were only the largest volcanoes, here where ice-sheets hundreds of kilometers thick covered most of the planet. Sensors had detected vast arrays of regular objects under the ice near the north pole, which some people claimed were the remains of an ancient civilization. Perhaps Hoder had once been closer to the sun, and the natives had not been forced to lead such a mean existence, permitting them to build up a civilization. They must have built their cities in the polar region when some natural calamity started to push them away from their sun, since it was the warmest place on the planet due to Hoder's pronounced axial tilt. It was all speculation, but we hoped to learn more about them through scientific inquiry and diplomacy. The latter was where hoople came in. If we could ever win a game, they'd have to consider us their equals. Then they might start confiding in us a little more.

The bus slowed, and the glaciers seemed endless. But at last we reached the edge of the gaming claybowl, a red rippling gash beyond the snow. Huge chunks of granite, basalt, and quartz

were buoyed up by the thickness of the clay and the constant upward pressure of volcanic gases. We came to a complete stop over one of the largest islands, a slab crisscrossed with blue-green vegetation. These were the Hoderians' crops, flowering vines stretching from one massive tree to another over every available inch of space on that precarious floating slab. We had chosen this particular island because it had a rocky shelf just a few meters above the waves. We could organize our gear there.

As the hatch opened, we caught a glimpse of some natives, hanging upside down from vines. In a few hours, they would be regaled by grand tales of the game we were about to take part in.

"Good luck," Attila said as we fastened our lines and prepared to go down. I doubted that he had much hope for us: a novice, a madman, and one reliable player. I was determined not to let him down. He patted me on the shoulder as I squatted at the hatch opening. I was the last to drop down, as usual. At first it made me giddy, huge bubbles swelling and exploding, coming up to meet me. Then I was so close that a skimmer fluttered its membranous wings to avoid running into me. It was in pursuit of a flock of tiny wavehuggers and apparently hadn't noticed me until it heard the whine of the bus's engines and looked up.

I was just three or four meters over the clay now, so close that big waves blocked out the distant ice floes. I dropped my gear into Tomoko's arms. She and Worth stood on the bare rock ledge staring up at me, their faces disproportionately large as I dangled above them.

I rappelled the rest of the way, until my boots slapped against rock. My line slackened, I undid the clasp and let it go, securing my gear to a gnarly root protruding over the ledge. I sat down on the rock, unpacking my skates and putting them on.

"Everybody ready?"

I was surprisingly relaxed, though I wouldn't say I wasn't nervous. The only sound was my breathing, that and the constant rumbling from the bowels of Hoder. My mask was a familiar smell of plastic and my own body odor. My thermal suit was comfortable. I was as ready as I'd ever be, despite the percussive pounding of my heart. I nodded to Tomoko, touching a point on my wrist console and feeling the hum of skates as they started up. I was lifted magically off the ground.

"Let's go!" We jumped over the side and onto the clay as a unit, a team. The clay rolled up and curled over our heads. It took me a moment to get my legs coordinated, but then I was skimming across the bucking clay, ready for anything . . . even a bubble.

"Here they come." Worth's sneering voice crackled in my helmet communit. "Too bad Barney's not here."

I chose to ignore that remark. I watched out for opponents. I saw Tomoko and Worth perched at the summit of an ephemeral mountain. I was in a trough below them, unable to see much of anything. But the bottom rose swiftly and became a cresting wave. They were below me: three blue, skating bagpipes with eyes.

Their arrival meant that the game had begun.

"Take your positions," Tomoko said.

The three of us were skating abreast now, about fifty meters apart. I crooked my knees, prepared to jump at a moment's notice. I didn't have long to wait. As the wave we rode cascaded downward, the trough the Hoderians were on emerged. We faced each other, us on the way down and them on the way up. Their mandibles opened, their strangely humanoid mouths forming into circles as they shouted, "Hoo-ple, hoo-ple, hoo-ple. . . ."

They suddenly shot off in three different directions at once, leaving me in awe of their dazzling speed. I leaned into the wind as the ground rose again. Not half a klik further on, a huge wound opened in the clay dead in front of me. I skated faster, firing myself past a trembling red mound and . . . over the gash.

"Good jump," Tomoko said. "We drew first blood, one point."

Worth grunted disparagingly, but I paid no attention. I was exhilarated. This was the first time I'd scored in a real game, and it was far more thrilling than any practice leap could ever be. I doubted that an experienced player would have given it a second thought, but when you're actually over the

chasm, your skates have nothing to work against. If you miscalculate, you don't make it to the other side, and then you're buried inside that rubbery gorge. The clay's weight would crush you to death instantly.

"Thanks, Tomoko," I said.

Worth answered for her. "Save it for the bubbles."

I resented that, but he was right. Bubbles couldn't be simulated in our practice chamber. I'd never attempted a jump anywhere near that size. The one I'd just made was comparatively minor. My confidence was building, though; I'd be ready for a bubble when the time came.

A Hoderian appeared on the crest and skated to within three meters of me. I could see his glittering, purple irises very clearly. Our eyes locked for an instant before my opponent veered abruptly away. I didn't see the swell as quickly as he did, and even when I did, I didn't realize what it was at first. I was awestruck as that huge embolism bulged out of the clay. Ten, twelve, fifteen meeters high and just as wide, it rose over us. It was a bubble.

The Hoderian's legs scrambled, its abdomen swinging from side to side as it zigzagged. His body swelled to twice its normal size and expelled methane, gliding up the curved bubble's side. The bubble trembled expectantly, about to burst.

The Hoderian flew over the top just as the bubble exploded. Hot clay flew and orange gas spewed out as it vanished behind the bubble's outpourings.

"Five goddam points!" Worth bellowed.

I said nothing, being somewhat taken aback by the ease with which the native had negotiated that bubble. I steeled myself, should another swell out of the clay. I was going straight for it when I got the chance, no matter how scared I was — and I was plenty scared. You had to go for it, you see; if you didn't, you'd probably never get another chance to play hoople.

"In front of you, Jay," Tomoko said.

I tried to stay cool, skating up a mound so I could see everything in the immediate area. But the mound unexpectedly rose straight up. I was standing right on top of the bubble itself.

Panicked, I skated down the side as it swelled higher and higher. The sun was blocked out as the bubble's shadow fell over me. If I didn't get into position fast, I'd never make it. I knew a maneuver that might work. It was my only chance.

Skating up the nearest mound, I jumped as I reached its slowly breaking crest, spinning my body in midair so that I came down facing the opposite direction. I'd watched enough training holos to gauge the time it would take. I could still make it.

"Don't lose it," Tomoko said.

It wasn't far now, the bubble already starting to quiver. If I just kept going straight on at top speed, I should make it.

Something flew by me as though I were standing still. It was a Hoderian, scuttling in close and sliding up the bubble's curve right in front of me. I turned away as the native soared over the bursting bubble.

"Eight points!" It was Worth again. "Eight points."

His addition couldn't be faulted. Five points for the bubble jump, and three points for my opponent cutting me off without touching me while I was in scoring position. I was ashamed, angry at Worth for rubbing it in, but I somehow managed to keep quiet.

The score stood thirteen to one; our single point was the gash leap I'd made. That point hardly mattered, and I wasn't going to fool myself that it did.

A Hoderian showed up high on a crest, scurrying back and forth on its multi-jointed, knobby legs as though it were challenging me. I skated a little closer, watching for openings in the clay.

"Tomoko!" Worth shouted.

Tomoko streaked off to her left, towards a swelling in the clay. She reached the forming bubble in a smooth slide, just as its dome began to emerge. She spiralled around it playfully, slowly working her way to the top. She was almost there, the telltale trembling beneath her feet signalling the imminent explosion. She suddenly arced towards the top. The bubbled boomed as she went over, her slim figure obscured by a spume of gas.

Had she made it? For a moment I was certain she hadn't. I squinted through the noxious vapor, but I couldn't see anything except the bubble's messy remains, huge lumps sinking into the clay.

Then a graceful skater slalomed out of the orange gas.

"Tomoko, that was fabulous," I said, just as Worth groused, "The score is still thirteen to six."

"We can count," Tomoko said. "Thank you."

A hooting sounded through my mask. The Hoderian team was skating in wide loops, working their way toward us.

"Now they're going for glory," Tomoko said with certainty.

It looked as though she were right, the way they were moving steadily in. I wouldn't have been surprised if they'd cut right through our ranks and headed for the nearest island, to end the game now that they had a commanding lead. On the other hand, they wouldn't get much sport out of that, and they loved their sport. Then again, with only six points to our credit, we'd forfeit our right to visit any Hoderian village at least until the next game. That might appeal to them as much as prolonging the agony today.

I saw a bubble swelling like an angry blister, to my right.

"It's yours, Jay," said Tomoko.

If I went straight for it, I figured, I'd be there too soon. I worked my way back and forth between two furrows, timing it so that I'd be at the base at just the right moment. If I waited too long, I'd be forced to take the downside of the curve. That wouldn't do; I'd be sent sprawling on the clay.

All I could hear was my own breathing, quick and ragged, underscored by the bass rumbling from under my feet. The bubble was coming up right on schedule, still low enough to be in the shadow of an enormous wave. I was within ten meters now, moving closer, closer, closer . . . time to go for it.

I was in a trough. It began to rise swiftly, the overhead wave curling towards the bubble. I could see the tiny sun shining feebly through the space between them.

Something skimmed over the top of the breaking wave. When the curl was only two or three meters over the trembling bubble, the player jumped. The bubble exploded as he flew over it, a perfect jump. I was so close I was pelted by clods of hot clay and had to stagger blindly away so I wouldn't fall in the hole left by the bubble. I was stunned, almost sickened, not because I'd been cut off again, but because the skater wasn't a Hoderian. I had been cut off by my own teammate.

"Worth!" Tomoko shouted. "Why did you do that?"

"To make sure we got some points," he replied from within the trailing orange cloud.

"We *lost* two points because you cut Jay off," Tomoko said. "If you had just let Jay have it, we'd have five points — we only get three now."

"Thirteen to nine," said Worth, skating into sight. "Better than thirteen to six,

[Worth] leaned forward just as he reached the top, but his position was off just a hair. He was in the air when the bubble exploded, all right, but he had gone off to one side instead of straight over.

which would still be the score if you'd let Kruschev go for it."

So he wanted to humiliate me that badly, did he? Willing to throw away points. He really had lost sight of the game's purpose. I was furious, but I managed to control my temper.

"To your left, Jay," Tomoko said.

I turned just in time to see a Hoderian scatter a flock of wavehuggers, their squawks hurting my ears. My opponent executed a quicksilver gash leap, putting them ahead by another point. Nevertheless, I was relieved. The Hoderians still wanted to play, in spite of our incompetence. The three of them capered on a wave.

While they frolicked, the clay rose behind them. It was a bubble, coming up fast. One of them was on it in a trice. The creature's gangly legs were scrabbling madly for a moment, methane jetting from its rear. Then the legs were locked in position, as he glided smoothly up and over, with impeccable timing.

His teammates skated back and forth until he emerged from the funnel of orange gas left in the bubble's wake. "Hoo-ple," they bleated. "Hoo-ple."

"Nineteen-nine," Worth said.

"Spread out," said Tomoko. "Find action wherever you can. We'll catch up to them even if we have to do it a point at a time."

The Hoderians were way ahead of her on that. No sooner were the words out of her mouth than one of them — and then another right after him — scored a gash leap. The score stood twenty-one to nine. Our chances were slipping, but Tomoko refused to say die.

With something akin to a Hoderian's sixth sense, she roved the clay and managed to position herself perfectly for the next bubble. She was up and over with as much grace as any hoople player I've ever seen, human or Hoderian.

Unfortunately, a native matched that score with a bubble jump before my ears had stopped ringing from our joyous whoops.

"We might as well hang up our skates," Worth said as the Hoderian skated out of the mist to join its hooting teammates.

"All we need is two bubble jumps and two gash leaps," I said, "and the score is tied. The game's not over yet."

"We might as well hang up our skates," Worth repeated, "with you on the team, Kruschev."

"Shut up Worth," Tomoko said. "If you don't like being on this team, then get off the clay."

According to the rules, we could play with only two on the team if we wished. Worth muttered something incomprehensible, but he didn't skate away. He would finish the game, no matter how hopeless it seemed.

A Hoderian took off like a shot. A gash had opened, and it was over while the three of us were still arguing.

"See that, Worth," I said. "If you hadn't been whining, one of us could have —"

"That goes for you, too, Jay," Tomoko snapped. "This is a team. We don't fight among ourselves while we're on the clay."

My face was hot, and I felt queasy with shame. I was doing the kind of thing I criticized Worth for, jeopardizing our chances because of a personality clash.

"We've got to score fast," Tomoko said. "When the Hoderians get this far ahead, they start losing interest."

Only a couple of minutes passed before the next score, a gash leap. The point went to our opponents. The Hoderians skated back and forth, mocking us.

A bubble rose behind them while they capered on the surging clay, and Worth darted through their ranks. Before the natives could position themselves he was up its curved side, legs bowed, helmeted head in profile. He leaned forward just as he reached the top, but his position was off just a hair. He was in the air when the bubble exploded, all right, but he had gone off to one side instead of straight over.

Tomoko and I skated back and forth, waiting for the orange mist to subside. Worth groaned from beyond the gaseous veil.

"Worth, are you okay?" Tomoko asked.

"My ankle . . ." he grunted.

"Can you skate?"

"Don't think so . . . it's pretty bad."

Tomoko and I were skating abreast of one another now. I looked at her and saw that she was peering off into the orange cloud clinging to the clay. I knew what had to be done, and I knew I had to do it before she realized what I was up to.

I started skating right into the gas.

"Jay!" Tomoko shouted. "Where do you think you're going?"

"To help Worth," I said, without slowing.

"You can't see in there. If a gash opens, you'll be killed."

"Worth will die if I don't get him out of there."

"Wait for the gas to disperse," she ordered.

I ignored her, skating through a trough where the wind couldn't get at the lingering gas. I was skating blind, but I moved fast, trying to guess where the hole was left by the bursting bubble. It looked as though an orange ghost haunted the claybowl. If I were lucky, the hole might have sealed over by now, but it wasn't likely, judging from the size of that bubble.

"Worth," I said, "I'm coming for you."

"No, too dangerous . . . wait till the gas clears away."

I kept skating, knees bent, head and shoulders leaning forward. I zigzagged, looking for Worth. Where was he?

My foot struck something. A lump of clay from the burst bubble, too irregularly shaped for my skates to work against. I somersaulted and landed flat on my back, splatting painfully into the clay. The stuff rippled along my spine. I tried to get up, but the wind was knocked out of me.

"Jay, are you all right?" It was Tomoko.

I tried to catch my breath, gasping, "I flipped over, but I'm okay." At least I thought so. My limbs were sprawled out on the clay, my feet levitating three inches in the air; at least my skates were still working. I rolled over onto my stomach, getting onto my hands and knees. My gloves sank into the clay. By tumbling backwards, I was able to get on my feet. I stood on my skates, wobbling a little, and started slaloming around the

sinking clods. Visibility had improved a great deal, and, as I started through the wafting gas, I saw that my fall had saved my life. A huge, ragged hole lay dead ahead, just now beginning to seal. If I'd kept skating blind, I'd have fallen right into it.

Looping around it, I weaved in and out between the clods. Suddenly I caught sight of the prostrate Worth through the dissipating mist.

"I see you, Worth," I said. "I'll be right there."

I skated up to him. He was holding his ankle, the bad foot laying on the clay. One of his skates had failed. I helped him to his feet, being careful to see that he favored his good left foot. I put my arm around his shoulder, and together we skated on three legs.

"No, I'm taking you to the nearest island," I said.

"No, you've got to stay in the game. We're too far behind."

"It doesn't matter."

"Of course it matters," Worth insisted in a pained voice. "We have to show these bastards we can play hoople."

"We're a team," I said. "We can play hoople some other time."

As we came out of the orange gas, I saw that the entire Hoderian team was keeping pace with us. Tomoko was nowhere in sight. It was hard to skate swiftly with Worth hanging onto me, but we were making steady progress. The natives started to circle us, literally skating rings around us.

"They're taunting us," Worth said.

"I don't know." I sensed something else. But what? A warning? Encouragement? I wasn't sure, but somehow it didn't seem that they were mocking us.

"Hoo-ple," they belched, skating so close I could see the blue bristles on their inflatable hides, stiff and thorny.

And then I saw what they were trying to tell us. Dead ahead a bubble was rising. Just behind it was an island, a gray and blue-green slab of safety in the distance.

This was a bubble like no other I'd seen. It was twice as big as the one I'd had my eye on early in the game. No, three times as big. It rose in perfect synchronization to our approach, as if it had been waiting on us all along.

"Jay, what are you doing?" Worth said. "We've got to go around it."

"No," I said. "We're going over the top."

"We'll never make it."

"Oh, yes we will."

We were close now, so close the bubble's immense shadow fell over us.

"All right, Jay," said Worth, "let's go for the glory."

Two blue blurs streaked in front of us from either side, both of them hell bent for that bubble. They collided, and we were barely able to avoid them as they both went spinning on the clay, chittering and squeaking in frustration.

The way was clear now. We hit the base an instant before the downside emerged. At that moment, the third Hoderian reached the bubble. But it was too late, the creature turned nearly upside down as the downside swelled out of the clay. He fell on his back, blue legs churning furiously.

Worth and I soared up and over, and I permitted myself the luxury of exulting in the sensation of flying. It seemed at that moment that I was alone in the universe . . . sailing over the bubble's dome . . . soaring. . . .

The hot blast of the exploding bubble at my back brought me back to the claybowl. I still had my arm around Worth's shoulder, and the booming force behind us carried us past the collapsing bubble. Worth groaned in agony as we came down onto the clay, and I felt his body sagging. He wasn't going to make it to the island.

"Hell of a jump, thirteen points." It was Tomoko, on Worth's other side, slipping her hand under his armpit. "Let's go for the glory."

It was just a few hundred meters to the island, and we moved steadily, if not swiftly, towards it. Once the whole team was standing on dry land, the game was over. With the thirteen points we'd just scored, and the two the natives had lost by cutting each other off, we had the lead by one point, twenty-seven to twenty-six.

"They're coming up fast," Tomoko said.

Glancing over my shoulder, I saw our opponents scrambling, expelling methane and gliding towards us at a terrific pace.

"They want to kill us," Worth moaned.

The Hoderians caught up with us and skated around us in a circle. They peered at us with their purple eyes, and then shot off towards the island at top speed. By the time we got there, the Hoderians were scuttling up and down its rocky terraces, hooting loudly.

They had ended the game themselves.

"They must not have realized we were ahead," Worth said as Tomoko and I helped him onto the lowest rock ledge.

"This scoring system was worked out to their satisfaction twenty years ago. Of course, they realize it."

"Hoo-ple," they bellowed, "hoo-ple, hoo-ple."

Hoderians began to pour out of the vines' shadows onto the jagged ledges.

"They're welcoming us," I said, "celebrating our victory."

We turned off the power to our skates, sitting on the rocks and holding onto roots. Tomoko said something, but the natives were hooting so loudly I couldn't hear what it was. Young and old alike some of them carrying pet wave-huggers in their mandibles, the Hoderians danced around us until the bus came to a stop overhead. I couldn't wait to see Attila.

I fastened the dangling line to Worth's middle. "They'll have you fixed up in no time," I said.

"Thanks, Jay," he said, grimacing in pain. "You saved my life. Why?"

"We're teammates," I shrugged. "What else could I do?"

"You're my teammate, all right," he said. "Thanks."

A few seconds later, Worth disappeared inside Major Hoople's ample belly. Tomoko fastened a line around her waist and embraced me. "That was a foolish thing you did, Jay," she said.

"Maybe so, but I'm glad I did it."

"So am I." I caught the beautiful glint of one of her rare smiles as she was pulled up.

The Hoderians were silent now. As I caught the silvery line dangling from the bus, one of them scuttled through the still crowd towards me. Its two spurred forelimbs were extended, and from their tips dangled a clay victory icon. I recognized the player who had beaten me to that bubble early in the game; there was a certain knowing look in his eyes that told me it was him.

For a moment I didn't know what to do. The native looked at me with warmth in its intelligent eyes now, and I reached out to accept the gift. "Thank you," I said, moved by this signal of honor. "Thank you all very much."

They began hooting again as I tucked the icon into my thermal suit and fastened the line around my waist. I intended to give it to Attila on behalf of the whole team.

From above, as I was pulled up, the island was green and gray, blue natives milling by the thousands, shouting, "Hoo-ple, hoo-ple, hoo-ple."

I knew I'd see them again very soon, but now it was time to go home. ▲

MONGOOSE & COBRA

A UNIVERSE™ Science-Fiction Game Module

by Nick Karp

MONGOOSE & COBRA

A UNIVERSE™ Science-Fiction Game Module

I. Introduction

Mongoose and Cobra is an adventure scenario designed for the UNIVERSE science-fiction role-playing game. A gamemaster (GM) is required to play this adventure; *Mongoose and Cobra* cannot readily be used as a solitaire adventure, and works best with four to seven players (not including the GM). More than seven players can participate in the adventure, but the number of characters that will be able to travel in one group will necessarily be limited by the capacities of the vehicles used, forcing some players to sit out parts of the adventure. Fewer than four players can attempt the scenario, though they might have trouble dealing with the more dangerous situations presented.

Contents

I. Introduction **26**
II. The Adventure **26**
1. Introducing the Scenario
2. Briefing for the Players
3. GM's Outline
III. The Voyage to Chara **28**
4. The *Marcus Aurelius*
5. Captain Chavez and Crew
IV. The Chara System **29**
6. Gardenia
7. Magrito and Kelm
V. The Settlements **31**
8. Oceanus
9. Southcap
10. The Exploration Camps
VI. Outbase Gamma **35**
VII. The Monopole Mine **37**
VIII. The Raiders of Kelm **38**
IX. Random Encounters **39**
X. Future Adventures at Chara ... **39**

II. The Adventure

Mongoose and Cobra takes a much freer approach to scenario construction than most pre-packaged adventures, giving the players more "strategic" choices to consider and giving the GM more latitude in injecting his own ideas. Even the mission itself is not rigidly defined; depending on the courage and ingenuity of the players it could be anything from a simple quest to gather information to an armed assault.

A number of suggestions for introducing the adventure and mission to the characters are provided in Section 1. The GM should read over the section, and select whatever ideas presented there (or of his own devising) he feels best meet the needs of his campaign.

Before beginning play the GM should read through the entire adventure to familiarize himself with the main characters, and to get a feeling for the flavor of the situation. Play may begin by presenting the material in Section 2, which contains the background information available to the players. The GM should modify or add to the briefing as seen fit. A more detailed overview of the situation is provided for the GM in Section 3.

1. Introducing the Scenario

Rather than restrict the GM to one method of introducing the adventure, a number of possibilities are provided in this section for motivations to travel to the Chara system, where the adventure takes place, and the reasons that the characters undertake the mission described in this module.

The Chara system is at the fringes of explored space, and has only recently been colonized. The settlements are expanding and need persons skilled in just about any fields. Stellar Prospecting, Inc. the company sponsoring the colonization of the system, will pay standard fare for any reasonably respectable character seeking employment.

Characters who are skilled with weapons or in unarmed combat, who also have relatively clean criminal records, could apply for positions as security personnel in the system. Characters who have had trouble with the authorities of their world might find themselves deported to Chara.

If the GM is running a continuous campaign, the characters might receive word from a friendly non-player character detailing the opportunities available in the system. This idea is especially recommended if there aren't very many player characters, as the NPC then becomes a potential companion.

The characters could also become involved with Stellar Prospecting, Inc., better known as StellarPro, through any business connections they might have. The company has a lot of radioactives to be transported and sold, and needs supplies to expand operations in the Chara system. If any of the characters is particularly wealthy, another possibility is that StellarPro has offered a block of stock to him, and the character may wish to examine the company's operations firsthand.

If the group of characters includes any ex-military personnel, they might be hired by the Federation of Planets to scout out the Chara system as a location for a military base. The Federation might also send the characters to Chara to observe the behavior of company officials there, and report on any violations of Federation law.

Finally, some friends or relatives of the player characters might live in the Chara system, providing an additional reason for the journey there. Other possible reasons for adventuring may be developed as desired.

2. Briefing for the Players

The characters are traveling to Gardenia, a size 4 world in the Chara system (-22,-3,+20). Gardenia was first colonized as a scientific colony because of the abundance and variety of flora and fauna there. A few years ago a substantial lode of high quality radioactive ore was discovered, and exploitation of the world's mineral resources began.

More than 500 people now inhabit Gardenia, most of them at Oceanus, near the radioactives mine. Oceanus is a bubble-city underwater near the continental shelf of one of Gardenia's land masses. The radioactives mine itself is dug into a nearby sea-cliff. A landing strip for air vehicles and streamlined spacecraft floats on pontoons above the city.

The second largest settlement on the planet (called "Southcap" because it is located on Gardenia's south pole) is an agricultural station, growing food for all of the colonies. In addition to Oceanus and Southcap, three outbases exist. Each camp is the center of operations for scientists and prospectors exploring the unvisited hinterlands of the planet.

The air on Gardenia is thin, but rich in oxygen because of the density of the planet's plant life. The air pressure is two-thirds earth normal, while the oxygen content is slightly higher than Earth's. The air unfortunately is contaminated by aerial plankton, which float in clouds throughout the planet's atmosphere. If the plankton are inhaled, the immediate effect is that the inhaler begins to hallucinate; in the long term, breathing the plankton causes serious respiratory diseases.

All exploration and colonization on Gardenia is done under the sponsorship of StellarPro, which has purchased a 99-year title to the world's mineral resources. StellarPro is a known and reputable firm which has explored and colonized four other worlds before Gardenia.

Aside from Gardenia, the Chara system has two asteroid belts, a gas giant called Aegaron, and one other planet with a moon. The asteroid belts contain refineable silicon and metals, but have not been exploited because of Chara's extreme distance from the heavily settled parts of space. The other planet, Magrito, is out at the periphery of the system. No resources have been discovered on it or its moon, Kelm, although extensive exploration has yet to be conducted.

Since the colony was founded on Gardenia, supply and ore ships coming in and out have been hounded by space raiders. These pirates have harassed shipping for over a decade in a large volume of space, of which the Chara system forms only a part. Apparently the system's distance from heavily traveled space and the absence of an Astroguard base in the system make it attractive for the buccaneers.

As a result of the frequent attacks, StellarPro now sends ships in less frequently but with better protection. The ship on which the characters will enter the Chara system is the Flute-class *Marcus Aurelius*, which is believed to be fast enough to escape pirates who attack her.

The characters have been provided with passage aboard the *Aurelius*, although accommodations will be tight as the ship is not very large. Each character can bring a maximum of 80 kg baggage with him (additional baggage, robots, etc., can be brought at a cost of 10 mil/kg).

3. GM's Outline

The material presented in Section 2 is basically accurate, but it does omit two important details. The first is the true nature of the *Marcus Aurelius*. The *Aurelius* is not just a well-defended transport vehicle, but is actually a cruiser in the Federation Navy, the *Conqueror*. The officials of StellarPro responsible for the Gardenia colony have become alarmed by the frequent pirate raids on shipping to and from the Chara system. They requested a military escort for the company freighter that was scheduled to be going to the system, but the Navy commodore receiving the request decided to lay a trap for the pirates. The raiders would almost surely ignore a known Navy ship, but they might attack a Flute-class ship with company markings.

The *Conqueror* was therefore camouflaged and repainted with company symbols to become the *Aurelius*, the "mongoose" to the pirate's "cobra." Complete secrecy has been maintained for fear that the pirates would get word of the plan; only the Navy commodore, the captain and crew of the *Aurelius/Conqueror*, and three company executives know about the ship's mission. To prevent rumors from spreading in the company as to why the scheduled transport vessel is not going to Chara, the *Aurelius* is carrying both cargo and a limited number of passengers; word has been given out that the *Aurelius* was hired from another firm as the most secure way of getting the vital cargo through to Gardenia.

The second important bit of information absent from the characters' briefing is that the pirates are *based* in the Chara system. The Chara system was selected by the pirates nearly a decade before it was first visited by any other party as a system unlikely ever to be colonized. The only marketable resources the pirates found in their survey of the system were radioactives on Kelm, Magrito's moon. The radioactives on Gardenia itself were overlooked, and the planet's contaminated atmosphere weighed against its being colonized given the absence of any mineral wealth. The pirates shielded Kelm's radioactives with lead to prevent their being discovered by prospectors, and settled into the system under the assumption that they would remain undisturbed there.

Even after the radioactives were discovered on Gardenia and the planet began to be colonized, the pirates remained relatively isolated on Kelm. The moon was so far outside the rest of the system that, after a few resource hunters' visits failed to turn up any significant minerals, the moon was left untouched by the flow of people into the system.

When it became clear that Gardenia was to be settled, the pirates managed to infiltrate the colony with a number of their own people. With these spies, the pirates have kept informed of activities on Gardenia and have been able to acquire the schedule for supply and ore ships traveling to and from the system.

One post of particular importance in the colony administration which is held by a pirate agent is that of colony communications officer. This position is more vital on Gardenia than on most colony worlds, because of the dense aerial plankton described in the players' briefing. The plankton make radio communication between distant points on the planet's surface impossible. The communications officer on Gardenia maintains contact with the outlying bases through his psionic powers. All information and orders going between the main colony at Oceanus and the other settlements on the planet have to go by messenger or through the communications officer, who is privy to much confidential news.

This access to secret information has recently paid the pirates well. An expedition operating out of Outpost Gamma (one of the colony's outbases in Gardenia's northern hemisphere) stumbled across a heavy magnetic flux while on a zoological mission in the hills a few hundred kilometers north of the base. After careful investigation, the scientists discovered that the source of the flux was a substantial deposit of

lodestone, interspersed with veins of invaluable magnetic monopoles. The discovery was reported in the outpost's next communication with Oceanus, but the pirate communications officer did not transmit the message to the colony commander. Instead, news of the find was relayed to the pirate's base on Kelm.

The opportunity to seize the monopoles was too valuable for the pirates to pass up. Flying in from Kelm, they descended on Outpost Gamma. The base was seized without a fight and its occupants were either shot or taken prisoner. The pirates then began mining the monopoles, using equipment brought from their base and the slave labor of captives they had taken from the outpost camp.

Oceanus, the main base, remained ignorant of what was going on. The pirate communications officer continued to give regular and unexciting reports on the status of the outpost, and the pirates mined the monopoles without being molested.

This situation could not be maintained forever, though. Outpost personnel on Gardenia are subject to a regular bi-annual rotation. The next rotation is scheduled to occur about one week (earth-time) after the day the characters touch ground on Gardenia. The pirate communications officer, anticipating the rotation and realizing that some ploy was necessary before the rotation was due, has decided to inform the colony commander that he cannot make contact with the outbase. The pirates have plans to fix the outbase to make it appear as though it had been attacked and destroyed by one of Gardenia's larger animal predators, concealing the pirates' attack on the base and taking suspicion off the shoulders of the communications officer.

When the colony commander is told of the base's "silence," she will send a reconnaissance party out to the base in one colony's ornithopters to find out what happened. This recon party could easily be the player characters themselves.

Besides these two omissions, Section 2 does leave out a number of finer details about Gardenia and the Chara system. More information should be available to the characters if they search around for it. The GM should answer any reasonable questions if the characters conduct research on the system. The Star System Log for Chara and the World Log Sheets for the planets in the system may be examined by the players upon request. The players should not be shown the smaller-scale maps, however.

Before the characters embark for Chara, they may make any purchases or sales they desire at the world that they are currently on. The *Marcus Aurelius* should depart for Chara shortly thereafter.

III. The Voyage to Chara

The trips to and from the jump-points on the way to Gardenia will be fairly uncomfortable. Due to energy limitations, the *Marcus Aurelius* will not employ constant acceleration for the duration of the journey. Instead, she will build up speed during the first part of the trip, coast for the majority of the voyage, and only deccelerate as she nears her destination. Using this plan, the formula for travel time is 85 times the square root of *d* hours, where *d* is the length of the journey in astronomical units (AUs). Two Energy Blocks will be consumed for every five days of travel (averaging the energy used at the beginning and end of the trip out over the entire trip-time). See the box on Energy Expenditure for more details.

An unpleasant consequence of this energy-saving manuever is that the middle three-fifths of each leg before and after the hyperjump will be weightless. There is a (50 [10 × NW Gravity Skill Level])% chance that a character will experience bouts of extreme discomfort during these parts of the trip (roll once each week of weightlessness).

Quarters for the *Marcus Aurelius*'s passengers will be rather cramped. The ship is a military vessel, and the only accommodations available are crew-grade bunkrooms. The passengers will be provided with decent food and entertainment, and the ship's crew will make every effort to alleviate the discomfort of the quarters, but passengers accustomed to first-class or even standard-fare cabins will still find the bunkrooms a bit unpleasant.

Other passengers will be going with the characters to Chara for their own reasons, and may be generated by the GM as desired. In order to keep secret the fact that the *Aurelius* is a military ship, the passengers will not be permitted to leave the passenger pod. Captain Chavez will apologize for the crowding, but says this is necessary to keep the passengers out of the crew's way. The door from the pod to the main hull of the ship will be kept locked.

The GM may roll normally for accidents or deep space encounters, but the success of the hyperjump should be automatic if the adventure is to get underway.

4. The *Marcus Aurelius*

The *Aurelius* has a Flute-class hull carrying an arsenal pod, an augmented jump pod, an energy pod, and a crew pod; half of the crew pod has been stripped and given over to cargo space. All of the pods are Armor Class 2.

The *Aurelius*'s main hull is standard, as per the specifications in UNIVERSE™ game Section 31.0 and DELTAVEE™ game case 4.9, except that the cargo hold of the main hull has undergone some modification and now contains a reserve energy supply (30 units) for the ship. The *Aurelius*'s hull can no longer carry any cargo except for items small enough to be stowed in the corridors and bunkrooms.

The *Aurelius* (as the *Conqueror*) has been in service as a military ship for 15 years, and has seen a good amount of action. Her exterior is marred in places from battle damage, but has been repaired. None of her scars are more than superficial, however; the ship is fully functional.

The crew pod in which the *Aurelius*'s passengers will be passing the voyage contains one 6-man room, three 4-man rooms, and one 2-man room. One of the doubles will be occupied by the stewards serving the passengers (see Section 5). The characters and the other passengers will have to decide how the remaining rooms are divided up. Other facilities available in the pod include: a kitchen, well stocked with edible but bland food; a common room with comfortable furniture, card tables, and a movie projector and screen; a common study, with a few books and three video-terminals connected to the main ship's computer; a unisex restroom with facilities for six people; and a first-aid station.

The half of the crew pod given over to cargo (as noted above) contains spare parts for the colony's air circulation equipment and ornithopters, pressure sealant for joints in Oceanus's dome, a crated mining robot, light-weight moldable radiation shielding, diamond-crusted drill-bits, and a variety of other equipment. The cargo hold can only be entered from the exterior of the ship.

5. Captain Chavez and Crew

The *Marcus Aurelius* has a crew of 15, counting all officers and sailors. The crew is standard complement for a Federation light cruiser. All personnel are career Navy men.

The commander of the *Aurelius* is Captain Martin Chavez, a short, stout man in his late thirties. Captain Chavez's physical appearance is not very impressive. He has curly black hair, over-large ears, and a smile that seems glued to his face. He cultivates an image of naive and unworldly simpleness that disarms potential adversaries and makes his true ability the more noteworthy when it shines through. The *Aurelius's* crew all know their captain well, and have a deep respect for him. His characteristics are as follows: ST 3; EN 5; DX 7; AY 8; IN 10; MP 3; LD 12; EM 5; AG 6; SS: Skilled Tech Family Skills: Urban 4; Environ-Deep Space (All environ types 4); Gravity-NW 4; LT 1; HY 2; EX 5; Temp NL; Astronomy 3; Asteroid Mining 2; Pilot 3; EVA 2; Gunnery 1; Space Tactics 7.

Captain Chavez's orders regarding the voyage to Chara are as follows: he is to transport the materials and passengers aboard his ship safely to Oceanus and return with whatever cargo or passengers are requested by the colony commander there. If engaged by pirate raiders, he is to fight back, but not to risk his ship if he is outgunned. At his discretion he may remain in the system for up to three months, patrolling near the jump points and looking for clues concerning the pirates; this he will do. The code-name for this anti-pirate operation is "Rikki-Tikki-Tavi," named after a storybook mongoose described by Rudyard Kipling.

The *Aurelius's* First Officer is Jim Stuart, a tall, handsome man in his mid-twenties. First Officer Stuart's characteristics are: ST 8; EN 5; DX 8; AY 5; IN 7; MP 2; LD 9; EM 8; AG 8; SS: Local Establishment Skills: Urban 1; Gravity NW 3; LT 2; HY 0; EX 2; Temp NL; Environ FL/LV 2; Pilot 4; Gunnery 2; Missile Guidance 3; Spaceship Tech 1; Energy Tech 1; EVA 1; Space Tactics 4.

The other two members of the crew that the characters may deal with on the trip to Gardenia are Ivan Marichev and Maxim Dynep, the stewards serving the passenger pod. Although both speak Universal, throughout the voyage they will communicate with each other entirely in their native Russian and will pretend to have minimal comprehension of other languages, to discourage detailed conversation with the passengers that might lead to an accidental revelation of the *Aurelius's* true mission in the Chara system.

The *Aurelius's* psionic navigator is Sharon Ilia, a dark Egyptian lady of surpassing skill in her profession. If she or another psionic has occasion to employ psionic communication with the pirate communications officer at Oceanus, she will have a vague feeling of treachery about him. Relevant characteristics are: IN 10; MP 4; Skills: Life Sense 1; Navigation 9; Psionic Boost 2; Psionic Communication 3; Laser/Stun Pistol 1.

Other crew members aboard the vessel (and their Skill Level in the task of their profession) are: two technicians (4 and 7), a pilot (6), two gunners (2 and 8), one spaceship technician (9), and four missile guidance personnel (2, 4, 5, and 7). Another member of the crew is Alf, a robot with a Brummagen II chassis and spaceship tech system. He is kept in a locker on the underside of the ship's hull and will only come out if needed to conduct external repairs while the ship is in deep space.

When the *Aurelius* makes her jump safely to the Chara system, she will be beset by two pirate vessels, the Sword-class *Condor*, and the Piccolo-class *Kite*. The raiders will be waiting 1,000,000 km (50 DELTAVEE game hexes) inside the nearest jump point to Gardenia, and will attempt to intercept the *Aurelius* when she passes by at a moderate speed. The pirates will pursue the ship at high acceleration, thinking she can be caught.

Both Captain Chavez and Karag Machar, the pirate commander, will be very cautious when an engagement occurs. Both will quickly realize that their ships are evenly matched and that a victory could only be achieved at the cost of unacceptable damage to his own ship. The two commanders will spar about at long range without really coming to grips. Karag Machar will then dock the *Kite* to the *Condor* and break off for Gardenia and the monopole mine (See Part VII) at high speed. Captain Chavez will pursue only slowly because of energy limitations and the inability of his passengers to sustain lengthy periods of high acceleration.

Limited patchwork repairs can be performed at Oceanus if any damage is done to the *Aurelius*. If the *Condor* or *Kite* are damaged, they can either be repaired at the moonbase on Kelm (See Part VIII), or by the theft of supplies from Oceanus.

IV. The Chara System

Chara is a G0 sunlike star located 30 light years from Sol at coordinates -22,-3,+20 on the UNIVERSE game's Interstellar Display. Because of Chara's extreme distance from most colonized worlds, the system remained unexplored and uncharted until the arrival of Karag Machar and his raiders (See Section 3 and Part VIII). The first exploration of the system by people other than the pirates was conducted by a survey vessel owned and commanded by a wealthy and eccentric naturalist, ten years before the events of this adventure.

A cursory examination of Magrito, Aegaron, and the two asteroid belts revealed little of value there. No mineral wealth was found on Gardenia during the preliminary survey, but Boris Tyshenko, the naturalist, was intrigued by the animal and botanical specimens he found there. A biological exploration of the planet was begun and a small scientific colony was founded on the world's south pole.

For six years, exploration of the planet continued at a low level of intensity. Then radioactives were discovered by a party of scientists circumnavigating the Tyshenko Sea (of which environ n10 is a part). The scientists were moving north along the coastline in an amphibious vehicle when a huge spout of water erupted several miles offshore. Scientists tracked down the cause of the sudden geyser in the hopes of finding some huge marine leviathan.

The scientists instead discovered the water in the area of the geyser was tinged with radioactivity. Undersea exploration was conducted, and it was found that the geyser was caused by the sudden release of boiling water trapped in subterranean chambers heated by a vast lode of radioactive minerals. Boris Tyshenko sold the mineral rights to the planet to StellarPro (retaining the right to engage in further biological exploration) and the exploitation and colonization of Gardenia was begun.

The other planets in the Chara system include Vertiprox, Gardenia's small and lifeless moon; Aegaron a huge (size 9) hydrogen/ammonia gas giant with 15 satellites of assorted sizes; Magrito, a small world at the icy fringe of the system; Kelm, Magrito's volcanic moon; and two asteroid belts. Aegaron, its moons, and the asteroids are not described in detail here, and are believed to be of little value. Future adventures (See Part X) may occur there, however.

In addition, the Chara system is wreathed in a glowing halo of cometary bodies torn from the system's asteroid fields in Aegaron's monstrous gravitational force. Several comets will be visible in Gardenia's night-time sky on almost any evening (atmospheric conditions permitting), and shooting stars are common. Vertiprox's pitted surface is largely a result of the density of comets and meteors in the system.

6. Gardenia

Gardenia is a small, green world, 0.8 AUs from Chara. The single most noticeable feature about Gardenia is the amount of vegetation on the planet. Undergrowth and larger plants cover the world's landmasses, algae fill its seas, and even its air is permeated with minute organisms, plankton. The chief factors underlying the vigor with which plantlife prospers on Gardenia are the planet's warmth and its humidity.

Temperatures on Gardenia range from a high of 65 degrees to a low of 10 degrees Celsius, depending on the time of day. Seasonal variations are fairly moderate, and rainfall is heavy across most of the world.

Regardless of the variability of the planet's temperature, on the average Gardenia is hot. One result of this is that the moisture content of the planet's atmosphere is very high. The warmer regions of the planet feel like a steambath to the naked skin, and a thick mist hangs in the air. Gardenia's plants love the tropical heat and humidity, and grow to gigantic proportions with amazing rapidity.

Characteristics common to most of Gardenia's plantlife include brilliantly-colored flowers, large, pale leaves, and extremely long, thin stalks. In Gardenia's murky air, a plant's leaves have to be large and set high above the mists to capture as much sunlight as possible.

Another distinctive feature of Gardenian plants is a high degree of mobility and responsiveness to the environment. Many plants have sensory organs permitting them to hear or smell and fibrous muscles that allow them to react to potential danger. Several species have the ability to shoot stinging quills at predators; others "sweat" acidic or bad-tasting chemicals in the presence of natural enemies, while some merely fold their leaves and flowers to attract as little attention as possible.

Gardenia's aerial plankton (mentioned in Sections 2 and 3) thrive on the sunlight and moisture of the upper air, and form dense clouds that sometimes shadow the land beneath them. Most of the time, the plankton form a smog-like, omnipresent haze, but on occasion (15% chance per 60-hour day) their thickness will cause the air to become opaque for 2-12 hours.

Although the plankton are not parasitic, and Gardenian creatures do not suffer when the plankton grows thick, some of the chemicals composing the microorganisms are unhealthy to man, and have the hallucinogenic and respiratory effects described in Section 2. GMs may arbitrate the hallucinogenic effects as desired. In addition, skin exposed to the Gardenian atmosphere for more than an hour will develop a greenish tinge only removable by surgical skin-grafting or exposure to high levels of radiation. Many of the colonists in Oceanus and the other bases will have "Gardenian suntans" of this type.

Another effect of the plankton cover is that long-range radio communication is rendered impossible. Short-range communication (less than 400 km) has a chance of malfunctioning equal to (*d*/4)% (where *d* is the range of the transmission in km). Vehicles orbiting the planet may still exchange signals with the hemisphere facing them, because the broadcast only travels through a narrow thickness of plankton when going to (or from) a point outside the planet's atmosphere.

In addition to Gardenia's abundance of plantlife, the world has a large assortment of animals. Most are vegetarian, but the planet has its share of meat-eaters, some of which are dangerous to man. The murkiness of the atmosphere makes vision a less than dependable asset, so most of Gardenia's animal-life have highly-developed senses of smell and hearing. A few of the species observed are almost blind. Some of Gardenia's more common creatures are described in Part IX.

Gardenia has few natural resources, though those present are extremely valuable. Many Gardenian plants and a few animals are edible. A root or fruit chosen at random has a 60% chance of being safe to eat, and a 30% chance of providing some nutrition if the first roll is made. The corresponding percentages for animal meat are 20% and 70%.

A variety of Gardenian plants are useful in other ways besides as food. A number of vines have fibers suitable for the manufacture of rope, and the long, straight Gardenian trees grow perfect lumber for furniture or construction. None of the planet's vegetable resources are profitable enough to exploit at this stage in the colony's development, though experiments with hybrids are in progress at Southcap (see Section 11). The mineral resources available on the planet are described in Section 10 and Part VII.

Gardenia has one small (size 0) moon called Vertiprox. Vertiprox is a heavily cratered moon orbiting 100,000 km from the planet's surface. As a result of the moon's nearness, Gardenia's oceans have unusually variable tides; the difference in sea-level between high and low tide can be as much as ten meters.

No life may be found on Vertiprox, but frozen subterranean moisture is present. The moon has few other resources of note. Temperature on Vertiprox varies between the sunny side's 150° C, and the nightside's -70° C.

7. Magrito and Kelm

Magrito is the outermost and smallest world of the Chara system. Chara is far away and dim, and Magrito and its satellite Kelm are very cold and dark. With only each other and an occasional comet for company, they drift through space some six billion km from their sun.

Magrito's surface is rugged and *appears* lifeless (see Part IX). Water exists in a frozen state mixed with ammonia ice. At -100° C, water and liquid ammonia bubbling up from the planet's molten interior freeze instantly to dirty ice. Much of the planet's surface is covered by glacial formations.

Magrito has a thin and poisonous atmosphere of methane, sulfurous compounds, and inert gases; the planet's volcanoes emit a steady flow of noxious fumes, maintaining an atmospheric pressure of 5 pounds per square inch.

Local temperatures will prove a strain on standard expedition suits unless they have been specifically modified for the extreme cold. The GM should roll once every two hours a character is in the open on the planet's surface; there is a 15% chance each check that the suit's heaters will break down. Characters will die and freeze solid in seconds without heat.

Magrito's mineral resources (by environ) are: n03-Phosphorous; n05-Titanium; s01-Phosphorous; s02-Silicon; s03-Phosphorous; s05-Silicon, Titanium. The only substance potentially worth mining on the world is the titanium, but even this is impure and inaccessible, making it unlikely that mining operations will be begun for a long time to come.

Kelm orbits Magrito at a distance of 800,000 km (40 DELTA-VEE game hexes). Kelm's surface is even more rugged than that of Magrito. In several large areas, whole sections of the moon's crust have collapsed upon caverns once filled with volcanic gas. Without any atmosphere to wear them down, huge slabs of jagged rock lie end on end. In other sections of the moon's surface, immense crevasses can be seen (where the crust has not yet fallen in). Any detonations of nuclear weapons in the vicinity of these faults (environ n05) could result in a wide-area collapse and "moonquakes."

Although Kelm and Magrito are equally far from Chara, the

greater volcanic activity on Kelm makes it warmer than its companion. Another consequence of the moon's volcanic nature is a tenuous atmosphere of 1 pound per square inch (with about the same composition as Magrito's). Kelm's gravity is too weak to hold air for long, but its atmosphere is constantly replenished by fumes leaking from the interior.

Kelm's resources (by environ) are: n02-Chromium; n03-Aluminum; n05-Chromium, Aluminum; s01-Aluminum. Environ s01 also has radioactives, which are the only resources on the moon currently worth exploiting. The radioactives are being mined in limited quantities by the pirates, who use them to fuel their spacecraft and to provide energy for their base, located a few kilometers from the mine and accessable by vehicle trains.

It should be noted that the presence of radioactives is not marked on Kelm's world log. This and other omissions related to the moon's settlement status were made so that the World Logs can be shown to players without giving away important information. For the same reason, no mention of monopoles is made on Gardenia's log.

V. The Settlements

The colonization and exploration of Gardenia is organized by two groups: Stellar Prospecting, Inc., and Boris Tyshenko's company, Tyshenko Scientific Research, Incorporated (better known as Tyshenko Research). Although StellarPro is responsible for almost all of the colonization of the planet, nearly half of the scientific exploration of Gardenia is conducted under Boris Tyshenko's sponsorship.

The five permanent settlements on Gardenia include Oceanus, Southcap, and three outbases ("Alpha," "Beta," and "Gamma," respectively). Oceanus is by far the largest colony, with a population of slightly more than 350. Southcap is the next largest, with quarters for 60 StellarPro employees and the twenty-odd members of Tyshenko Research. Each of the outbases is staffed by 15 to 20 scientists and support personnel, one-third of whom will be away on scientific expeditions at any given moment. Tyshenko Research organizes similar exploration parties, although all are based at the Tyshenko Research headquarters at Southcap.

8. Oceanus

Oceanus is located on the ocean floor, 12 km offshore in the Tyshenko Sea (on the world log it is the settlement on the coast of environ n06). The facilities at Oceanus consist of the colony dome, the radioactives mine, and a floating installation on the surface above the dome.

When StellarPro made the decision to mine the radioactives on Gardenia, a concensus was reached that it made more sense to have the miners' quarters on the sea bottom near the mine than to base the colony on land and ferry the miners to and from the shaft. A pressurized dome would be needed in any event because of the contamination in Gardenia's atmosphere, and having support personnel and equipment close to the mine was judged the safest and most economical way of establishing the colony.

Oceanus's dome is composed of three watertight layers of high-tensile sheet plastic, built onto an alloy frame well capable of withstanding the enormous pressure exerted by the three-kilometer depth. Each layer of the dome is reinforced to prevent implosion even if the other two shells should fail. The dome's sheet plastic has a projectile armor rating of 6 and a beam armor strength of 4.

Two airlocks lead out of the dome: one on the ocean floor for the entry and exit of the colony's two bathyscape submarines (equipped with reef-walker type extendable legs); and the other at the apex of the dome, where a gondala arrangement is connected to Oceanus's surface installations. No airlocks for individual divers lead out from the dome, since no diver could survive the water pressure three kilometers beneath the surface.

The interior of the dome is spacious and well-lit. Twenty large structures serve as living quarters for the colony's 150 miners and 200 auxiliary personnel, and another fifteen buildings house administrative offices, technical shops, laboratories, mess halls, and recreational facilities. Much of the interior of the dome remains empty, as the colony is not yet near its projected size. A football field has been marked on the plastic floor in part of the unoccupied space.

In the center of the dome is a large, cylindrical building rising all the way to the ceiling. An underground railway from the mine leads to an elevator shaft beneath the base of the building. Miners go to and from the mine via this elevator and the railway, and processed radioactives (carefully shielded) are transported to the gondola at the top of the dome and to the surface in the same way.

The mine itself is a kilometer and a half distant from the dome, dug into the side of a cliff that climbs abruptly to within a half a kilometer of the surface. The bubble was built far from the mine because the water in the immediate vicinity of the radioactives is heated to such high temperatures that it would weaken the material of the dome.

The mining operation is more than an extraction shaft. Interstellar shipping is expensive enough to make it necessary to refine the radioactives before transporting them. The ore dug from the mine is ground, purified, and converted to high-grade fuel before it ever leaves Oceanus. The actual digging of ore from the earth is done almost entirely by machines; the radiation at the core of the mine is too intense for even a well-protected man to dig for long. The mining operation produces one metric ton of fuel every three and a half hours, working around the clock; full-capacity production is expected to be nearly four times that rate in the future. Once the fuel has been processed, it is shipped to the surface to await the freighter that arrives every 12 Gardenian days (about one Earth month) from Lelande 25372 (-14,-7,+4).

Spacious storage facilities for the colony's produce are available on the surface installation floating above the dome. The facilities on the surface are large, including an 800-meter landing strip capable of handling the largest streamlined spacecraft. Sophisticated tracking and computer guidance systems are located near the strip to make up for the poor visibility afforded by Gardenia's atmosphere.

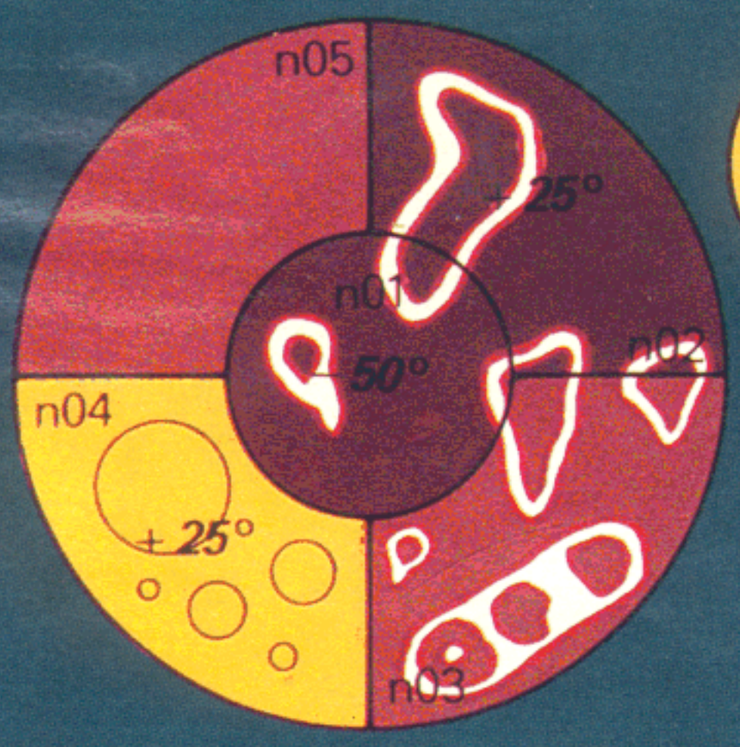
The floating installation also has hangars and maintenance facilities for two Terwillicker 5000 landing craft and four ornithopters. The Terwillickers are used as scouting vehicles and low-payload shuttles; they are the modified (non-burster) model. The ornithopters are a smaller and slower version of the machine described in the UNIVERSE game.

The landing strip and other facilities are suspended on the surface by pontoons and are kept in place by several hundred cables running down to the ocean floor. The facility is not rigidly held against storms or the tide, but reacts flexibly to changing weather patterns and sea currents. A computer system monitors the pressure exerted on each of the installation's cables, and adjusts their length and the buoyancy of the pontoons as necessary to maintain stability.

WORLD LOG: Size 4

Gravity: 0.7 (LT); Action Round Movement: +2

NAME Gardenia **TYPE** Tolerable
MOONS (nr.) 1 **DISTANCE FROM STAR** 0.8 A.U.
ATMOSPHERE Thin (C.) **MEAN TEMP** 37°C
HYDROGRAPH 55% **DAY LENGTH** 60 hrs.
HUMAN POPULATION 500+
SETTLEMENT STATUS Active Exploration
LAW LEVEL 1 **CIV LEVEL** 4
SPACEPORT CLASS ½



WORLD LOG: Size 2

Gravity: 0.2 (NW); Action Round Movement: +8

NAME Kelm **TYPE** Hostile **MOONS (nr.)** — **DISTANCE FROM STAR** 40 A.U.
ATMOSPHERE None **MEAN TEMP** -80°C **HYDROGRAPH** 0% **DAY LENGTH** N
HUMAN POPULATION None **SETTLEMENT STATUS** — **LAW LEVEL** —
CIV LEVEL — **SPACEPORT CLASS** — **RESOURCES** Chromium, Aluminum

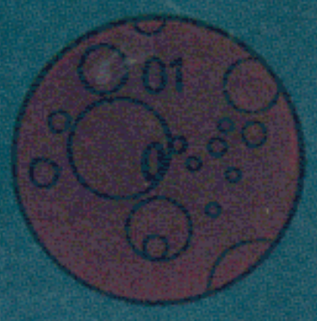
Star System Log

CHARA (type G0), 30 LY from Sol, coordinates (-22, +3, +20)

Orbit (AU)	Name	Size	Type	Resources	Moons
.5	Corona Proxima	Asteroid Belt	Hostile	Poor (?)	—
1.0	Gardenia	4	Tolerable	Poor	1
2.0	Aegaron	9	Gas Giant	None (?)	15
2.5	Corona Longior	Asteroid Belt	Hostile	Poor (?)	—
40.0	Magrito	3	Hostile	Poor (?)	1

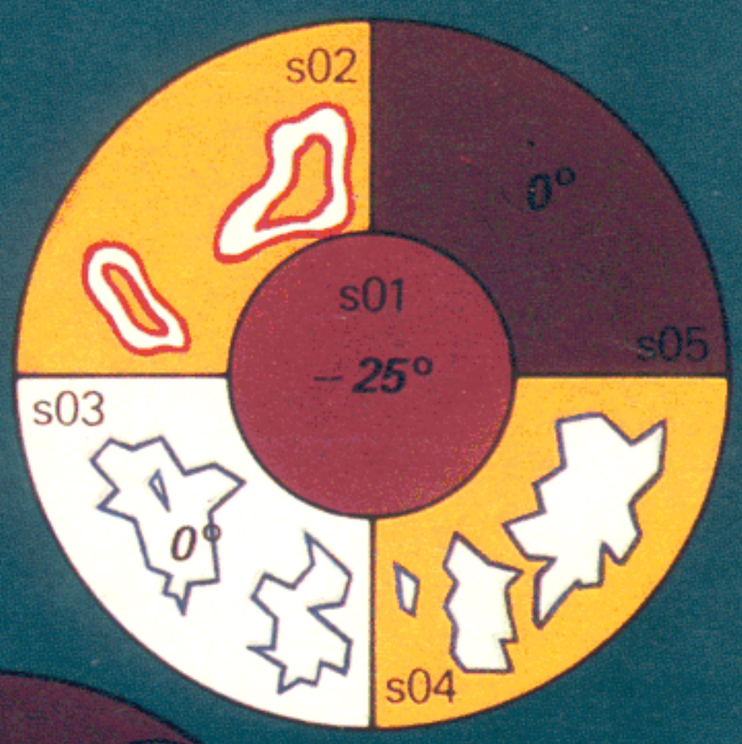
Interstellar Routes: Green — None; Amber — None; Red — Lelande 25372 (-14,-7,+4)
Capital World: Gardenia Federal Fleet: None Starport: ½ at Gardenia

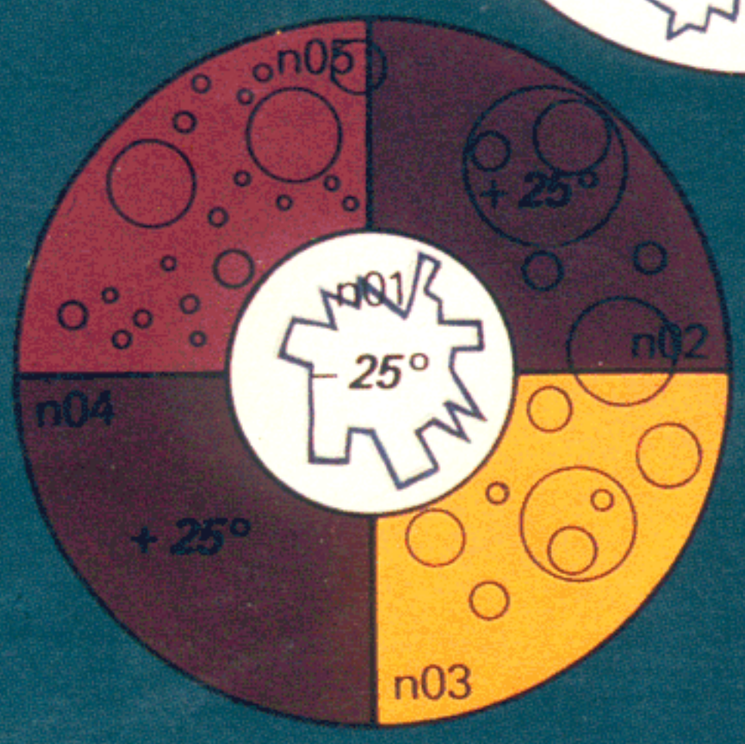
Graphics by Dave LaForce



WORLD LOG: Size 0
Gravity: None (NW); Action Round Movement: +8

NAME Vertiprox **TYPE** Hostile **MOONS (nr.)** —
DISTANCE FROM STAR 0.8 A.U. **ATMOSPHERE** None
MEAN TEMP 150°C (day) **HYDROGRAPH** 0%
DAY LENGTH 4 **HUMAN POPULATION** None
SETTLEMENT STATUS — **LAW LEVEL** —
CIV LEVEL — **SPACEPORT CLASS** —
RESOURCES None





WORLD LOG: Size 3
Gravity: 0.4 (NW); Action Round Movement: +4

NAME Magrito **TYPE** Hostile **MOONS (nr.)** 1
DISTANCE FROM STAR 40 A.U. **ATMOSPHERE** Poison
MEAN TEMP -100°C **HYDROGRAPH** 0% **DAY LENGTH** 96
HUMAN POPULATION None **SETTLEMENT STATUS** —
LAW LEVEL — **CIV LEVEL** — **SPACEPORT CLASS** —
RESOURCES Titanium, phosphorous

Flat
Hill
Mountainous
Peaks and Cliffs
Light Vegetation
Woods
Forest
Jungle
Marsh
Ice Cap
Volcanic
Water
Major River
Human Settlement
Craters
50 meter Contour (Small-scale maps only)
Electrified Fence (Small-scale maps only)
Vehicle Track (Small-scale maps only)

Oceanus is basically peaceful and well-run. Nevertheless, there is some discontent among the employees working at the colony, who are upset by the frequent interception of supply ships and the consequent hardships and shortages imposed. One factor which the miners are particularly unhappy about is the shortage of radiation shielding in the shaft. Geiger counts are made at frequent intervals and all have been well within safety limits, but if anything were to go wrong in the mines there is almost no backup shielding available.

The colonists working at Oceanus are moderately well-behaved and law-abiding. There is little crime in the colony, and consequently the settlement has only a small security force. Ten men and a six robots have proved more than sufficient to maintain order in the colony. All security personnel and robots are armed only with stun-pistols and cudgels; no beam or projectile weapons of any sort are permitted inside the colony dome for fear of a puncture.

The chief administrator at Oceanus and commander of StellarPro's employees and the resources on Gardenia is Kim Li, who has been the colony's chief executive since its construction. She is very sharp and has a talent for organization; she gets along well with all the senior and intermediate level administrators, and is well liked by most other employees. She knows everyone in the colony by sight, if not personally.

Commander Li deals with people in a simple and direct manner. Sometimes she is a bit blunt, but she always gets her point across. Her characteristics are: ST 4; EN 5; DX 5; AY 2; IN 9; MP 3; LD 10; EM 9; AG 8; SS: Skilled Tech Family Skills: Urban 4; Grav Lt 1; Temp NL; Environ Fl/lc 2; Chemistry 2; Programming 3; Geology 1; Planetology 2; Biology 4; Compu/Robot Tech 1; Ground Vehicles 1; Diplomacy 3; Economics 1; Law 3; Recruiting 4; Streetwise 2.

A constant attendant of Commander Li is Bruno, her secretarial robot. Bruno has a Manner 51sdf chassis equipped with creative thought, valet/secretary, recorder, and anti-bio systems. Bruno handles a lot of the minor administrative details of running the base and can frequently be seen delivering papers or gathering information for her. When duties do not call, Bruno works on his chess, a game that he finds fascinating and is already very good at.

When Oceanus was founded, five pirates worked their way onto the colony's staff so as to keep tabs on goings-on there, and to try to minimize exploratory surveys of Magrito and Kelm that might lead to the discovery of the pirate base. The pirates have kept a low profile, doing their jobs well but not outstandingly, and associate little with the other colonists at Oceanus. Two of the spies work as miners, one is a low-level supply manager, one is a deputy in the colony's security forces, while the fifth, Yasu Aman, is the colony's chief communications officer.

Yasu Aman is a powerful psion, once the master of a psionic institute at Eta Cassiopeia more than 40 years ago. A power struggle for control of the institute developed; Yasu Aman lost, was stripped of his rank and authority and expelled.

Soon after his expulsion, Yasu heard of Karag Machar's band of raiders (See Part VIII). Bitter, defiant, and uprooted, he joined the group, which was more than glad to accommodate a capable psionic navigator.

Once he joined the pirates, Yasu soon became a powerful lieutenant and seemed to become a close friend of Karag Machar. The psion cultivated the relationship and worked his way into Karag's trust. Yasu is now a constant adviser to the pirate leader, who has come to depend on the thinker's cleverness and insight. Yasu has gradually emerged as the real leader of the pirates, able to get Karag to do almost anything he wants by applying subtle psychological manipulation.

Yasu is not overly moralistic about the damage and violence wreaked by the pirates and makes no attempt to restrain them. Like many psions, he is ambivalent towards humans without psionic powers, whom he regards as inferior.

Since he joined Oceanus as the colony's comm officer, Yasu has filtered the information passing through him and reported selected tidbits to the pirates, whom he contacts daily by psionic communication. Although the duties of his position bring him into frequent interaction with Kim Li, she has no suspicions of him. Yasu is very clever, and is careful to cover his espionage well.

Yasu's activities on behalf of the pirates go beyond simple information gathering. He is accomplished at psionic mind-control, and on several occasions has used this ability to make people do what we wants them to around the base. People are aware that once in a while someone will report doing things he hadn't intended, but no lives have been lost.

Yasu uses the standard light jumpsuit issued to base personnel and also wears a turban. Yasu is 67 years old but looks to be in his early fifties. His hair is greying and his face is slightly wrinkled, but he is still vigorous and alert. His characteristics are as follows: ST 3; EN 2; DX 5; Ay 4; IN 12; MP 6; LD 9; EM 3; AG 4; SS: Communal Colony Skills: Urban 4; Grav NW (-3), LT 4; HY 1; Ex -1; Temp HO; Environ FL/LV 6; Mind Control 9; Life Sense 6; Navigation 5; Psionic Boost 7; Psionic Communication 8; Psychokinesis 9; Psion Tech 1; Blades 5. Psionic rigs are available to Yasu at the colony, the pirate moonbase, and aboard the *Condor*.

Yasu keeps aloof from the rest of the colony, doing his job but not interacting socially with any of the other personnel. Hindustani is his native tongue; when he speaks Universal he has a heavy accent.

9. Southcap

The first settlement at Gardenia's south pole was established by Boris Tyshenko soon after he first arrived at the planet. Southcap still serves as the head quarters for Tyshenko Research's exploration of Gardenia, though the colony has been largely taken over by StellarPro personnel. Members of the foundation are still legally independent of the company, but all aspects of the day-to-day management of the colony are handled by company officials.

The south pole was selected as the site for a colony because of its extraordinary flora, even more varied and exotic than elsewhere. Dangerous animal predators are rare around the colony site, due to careful hunting and the colony's placement.

StellarPro's facilities at Southcap are entirely agricultural and botanical. Sixty acres of fields and a dozen hothouses grow food for Oceanus and for Southcap's own consumption. By reducing the colony's need for imported foodstuffs, valuable cargo space on freighters traveling to the planet is open for materials that cannot be produced on Gardenia.

StellarPro also conducts botanical experiments at Southcap. A number of Gardenian plants are potential exports for the colony, so experiments are being performed with hybrids and grafts of various kinds. Other research tests plants from foreign worlds in Gardenia's soil and sunlight.

Tyshenko Research conducts similar botanical experiments, although potential profits are emphasized less. The majority of Tyshenko Research's facilities at Southcap are devoted to supporting the exploratory and zoological expeditions based at the colony. Holding cages, bio-labs, maintenance shops, and

homes for expedition personnel are the main concerns of Tyshenko Research at the colony.

The facilities at Southcap are housed in some thirty-odd buildings, each individually pressurized and air-conditioned. Half of the colony's buildings are dwellings for five to ten people each, while the other half are scientific facilities, agricultural processing plants, and storerooms.

Southcap has its own landing pad, though it is much smaller than the one at Oceanus. It can accommodate ornithopters of the type based at Oceanus, and is also suitable for Terwillicker landing-craft and other vehicles requiring only a short runway. Transports from Oceanus arrive every seven days (420 hours) to pick up food and transfer personnel.

Boris Tyshenko's private residence is located at Southcap. Though the wealthy naturalist is willing to put up with the hardships of the camp when on an expedition into the wilds of the planet, at home he likes to be comfortable and he succeeds admirably. His private yacht, the *Integral*, makes occasional runs to Lelande 25372, carrying the most interesting new zoological specimens, and returns with supplies for the foundation and luxury items for him.

The *Integral* has a Corco Mu hull with a jump pod, light weapons pod, 3 energy pods, a lander pod with modified Terwillicker 5000, a buffered cargo pod, a living cargo pod, a bio-research pod, a medical pod, a cargo pod, and a luxury cabin.

An amphibian, two mobile labs, and three crawlers are based at Southcap. Most will be away on Tyshenko Research expeditions at any given moment, except for the amphibian, which is owned by StellarPro and kept near the base.

10. The Exploration Camps

Three small, permanent camps are the bases for StellarPro's exploration of Gardenia. Except for a regular bi-annual supply shipment and rotation of personnel, the camps operate independently of Oceanus. Each camp has full scientific facilities, vehicles, and a mix of specialists to make up its expedition teams. The primary purpose of the camps' exploration is the discovery of mineral deposits, but some attention is also given to unusual or potentially valuable animal and plant life.

The first of the camps to be established, Outbase Alpha, is located in environ s02. The base is at the bottom of a valley in the middle of a large mountain range. Huge, deep canyons and sheer, cutaway cliffsides expose layers of rock to direct observation and geological interpretation. A variety of semi-precious rocks have been found, though no veins large enough to mine have been discovered.

Outbase Beta, the second camp, is located on the rocky shore of environ n12. The base was built there because a coral-like creature inhabits the waters along the coast. Unlike its earthly counterpart, however, this coral's reefs are composed of metals instead of bony rock. No particular metal seems to be used; the creature extracts whatever metals are in the surrounding water and deposits them in the reef. A large number of the camp's geological missions are underwater, following the reef and sampling it at regular intervals in the hope that the composition of the reef will reflect any nearby undersea deposits of precious metals. No substantial finds have been made yet, although a number of exotic sea creatures have been captured for study.

Outbase Gamma is located in environ n06, at the hilly source of the tributaries feeding a large river running to the sea. Samples of the river's water contained a wide abundance of minerals, so exploration of the hills from which it flowed was begun. Though none of the resources that the base was established to look for have been found, a lode of monopoles far more valuable than all the radioactives at Oceanus was discovered, leading to the pirate raid described in Part VI.

VI. Outbase Gamma

Outbase Gamma consists of a central camp, two outlying structures, and a small airstrip. The main camp includes the living quarters and scientific facilities of the base, while the outlying buildings (set a safe distance away from the camp and each other) are a nuclear reactor and fuel depository.

The main camp consists of eleven structures built closely together. The buildings are pre-fabricated, airtight, and windowless. A pressurized plastic corridor connects the buildings to allow transit between them without an expedition suit. Each building has its own airlock, however, as protection against leaks in other parts of the settlement.

No humans will be seen in the vicinity of the camp. All evidence indicates that the camp has been abandoned for some time, though the remains of some outpost personnel may be discovered (see below).

Although the area in which the base is located is heavily infested with undergrowth and tall, thin trees, the ground is cleared for a 25-meter radius around the camp and around the airstrip and the outlying buildings. The soil in these areas has been treated with a powerful defoliant to keep Gardenia's plants from infiltrating the structures of the settlement. The main camp (though not the other installations) is also protected from animal predators by a charged fence encircling it at a 100-meter distance.

What follows is a brief description of the individual buildings in the main camp. Only those details judged particularly significant have been included, so the GM should feel free to elaborate on the descriptions provided. Parenthesized numbers refer to specific rooms in the structure being described, as indicated on the map of the base.

Crawler Garage: A large, high-ceilinged room (1) that contains a standard crawler. Cabinets containing fuel cells line the side walls. A second room (2) contains vehicle maintenance equipment equivalent to a Civ Level 8 Vehicle Kit. Enough spare parts are available to repair up to "partially destroyed" grade damage. Six expedition suits hang on hooks near the airlock leading outside. A third room (3) contains additional spare parts, a Civ 7 suit kit, a library of the crawler's computer log tapes, and records of the expeditions it has been on since the base was established.

The Bunkhouses: Rooms 1-6 are bedrooms, each with one bed, a closet, a chest, two chairs, and a variety of personal possessions. Each bunkhouse also contains a bathroom (7), and a living room (8) equipped with comfortable chairs, video screens (with an assortment of movie tapes), sound equipment, and tables. The three bunkhouses (A, B, and C) are identical, except that rooms 2 and 4 in bunkhouse C are empty of possessions and furniture.

Air-Circulation Plant: The outer room (1) contains maintenance equipment, spare filters, and other materials to keep the air-processing plant in room 2 running smoothly. There are also monitors of the base's water, electric, refrigeration, and sanitation facilities here. Room 2 contains filtered compressors that draw in air from the outside, purify it, and pump it to the buildings of the base through underground circulation tubes. An auxiliary oxygen synthesizer is also hooked up to the system as a backup when the main system is being repaired.

Geology Lab: Rooms 1-4 are offices for the base's four geologists. Each contains a desk, chair, small collection of technical books, papers, and personal items. Room 5 is a latrine. The main lab part of the building (6) contains Civ Level 8 geoscanners, chemicals, tools, and other equipment permitting rapid analysis of geological samples. Use of this equipment effectively doubles a character's geology skill level when attempting geology tasks in the lab. Room 7 contains samples of rocks picked up during exploration, all carefully labeled and catalogued for type and area obtained. Room 8 is a storeroom containing spare tools and chemicals. Room 9 contains geologic charts of the planets crust for a radius of 1200 km, and maps of surface contours for a radius of 800 km.

Base Commander's Lodge: Room 1 is the living quarters for the commander of the outbase, including a bed, chest of drawers, footlocker, easy-chair, table, and a small shelf of books. There is also a combination safe containing important papers, powerful drugs, and a small vial of monopole dust. The magnetic emanation of the monopoles are detectable (with instruments) from outside the safe, though it cannot be determined that the emanations are from monopoles rather than standard lodestone. Room 2 is the base commander's office, with a large desk, several chairs, and a video terminal hooked up to the computer in the sciences building. Room 3 is a bathroom.

Armory: The inner airlock door is locked by combination. The armory itself contains two Civ 8 paint guns, two Civ 6 paint guns, an arc gun, three pistols, five needle pistols, two Civ 8 laser pistols, six Civ 8 stun pistols, two carbines, four Civ 7 needle rifles, eight gas grenades (various toxins), two pounds of plastic explosive (with blasting equipment), and ammunition and power packs for all the weapons. There are three armored vests, one portable force field, and a Civ 8 weapon kit.

Animal Retention: A large room (1) contains metal and force cages in a variety of sizes. A number of bins contain food substances native to Gardenia. There is a chem synthesizer (Civ Level 6) on a workbench stocked with a variety of organic chemicals. A needle pistol hangs on the wall nearby. A large, heavily reinforced cage (2) is available for very big creatures that might be brought in, while two smaller but still substantial cells (3 and 4) are capable of handling creatures several meters long. A functioning (though currently switched-off) Brummagen I robot with an anti-bio system is stored in room 5, while room 6 contains a robot kit and spare parts for both it and the sentry robot (see below).

Sciences Building: Rooms 1, 3, and 4 and the offices of the camp biologist and chemists, respectively. Room 2 is a bathroom. There is a large bio-chemical laboratory (5), containing a Civ 8 bio scanner, a neuro scanner, a Civ 7 chem lab, a Civ 8 chem synthesizer, a Civ 7 energy scanner, and a Civ 5 basic repair kit. Add two to a character's biology and chemistry skill levels when performing related tasks in the lab (in addition to the bonuses for the kits). Room 6 houses the base computer. The room also contains a library of all programs and printouts produced by the computer since the base was established. Room 7 is the base doctor's office, equipped with a Civ 8 medi scanner, a variety of medicines, and two sick beds in sterile isolation tents.

Mess Hall: A large dining-room (1) contains two long and one square tables, 20 chairs, and a cabinet with silverware and other dining utensils. Room 2 is a fully equipped kitchen. A storeroom (3), is filled with crates of food and a large walk-in closet. The mess hall is badly damaged; the outer walls of the dining room and storeroom are ruptured, and there are human skeletons strewn in and about the building.

The base's full complement of personnel included the base commander, four geologists, two chemists, a biologist, a doctor, a driver, three maintenance men, two handymen, a cook, and an energy tech specialist, for a total of seventeen people. The base has been unoccupied for more than four months (earth-time). All but seven of the men that were at the camp are dead, and those seven are currently captives of the pirates at the monopole mine to the north.

The skeletal remains of the other ten men may be tentatively identified by certain remarks in their medical records at the base, as well as by their clothing (matching it to clothing kept in bunkrooms). Though the pirates have tried to disguise the murder of the personnel as the act of wild predators, careful medical examination will show that some of the bodies were shot by laser weapons.

After the monopole vein was found and the discovering expedition returned to the outbase with a report of its find, news of the monopoles was sent to Oceanus. Yasu Aman received the information, but relayed it to Karag Machar, rather than to the colony commander. The pirates decided that the monopoles were too valuable an opportunity to pass up, and so the *Condor*, which had been waiting near Gardenia's jump point, departed for the planet at high acceleration.

Once the pirates were in orbit, a raiding party descended in the *Kite*. The ship landed in the brush nearly a kilometer from the camp, using quiet, levitator-type anti-gravity generators for her landing so as not to alert the base. The raiders crept into the camp, passing through the electrified fence by a small, non-charged door. A patrolling sentry robot was shut down easily because, under the assumption that all humans in the area were friendly, the 'bot had only been programmed to defend against non-human intruders.

The raiders then waited at the periphery of the camp until the base personnel were all gathered in the mess hall for a meal. They then entered the building, lasers ready, and ordered the assembled diners to surrender. Though outnumbering the raiders nearly 3 to 1, the base personnel had only their silverware to use as weapons, while the pirates had body armor and paint guns. The outpost commander gave the order to surrender without a fight.

One of the base's seventeen men was not at the meal, however. Crawler-driver Jostud Holme came into the mess hall late, after finishing up some repairs on the crawler. Seeing the armed strangers and the glum faces of his comrades, Jostud turned and fled back to the garage before the raiders could stop him, and locked its airtight doors behind him.

Although he had no idea who the strangers were, Jostud rightly concluded that the recent monopole find was the reason for their visit. Acting impulsively, he fixed the crawler's engine so that it would break down after an hour or two of travel. While the pirates shouted curses and threats from outside, he recorded what had happened to the base in the crawler's log tape and hid the tape in the vehicle's engine where it would be found when the crawler was repaired. With no means of contacting Oceanus directly, this was the best way that Jostud saw of helping future investigators from the main colony.

Jostud then put on one of the expedition suits in the maintenance shop, and tried to flee from the exterior airlock. A pirate waiting outside gunned him down.

The raiders had sixteen captives, and complete control of the base. Though the prisoners would be useful to work the

monopole mine, the *Kite's* passenger capacity was already fully utilized. Seven could fit in the cargo hold, protected by expedition suits for the short hop up to the *Condor*. The rest Karag ordered killed by laser fire.

Rather than loot the camp for its scientific equipment, Karag conceived a plan to disguise what had happened to the base. He knew from Yasu Aman that, aside from the pirates and the seven remaining captives, no one was aware of the existence of the monopoles. A careful search was made of the camp for evidence of the monopoles and records of the expedition on which they were found, and all were destroyed (or so he thought). The computer disc with the relevant sections of the camp log was de-magnetized, and the computer left on to overheat, so that the scrambling would seem accidental to anyone checking the computer. Notebooks with written records were burned, and all samples of the monopoles and the ore in which they were found were taken.

Two clues were missed by the pirates, however. One was the crawler log hidden by Jostud Holme. The second was a small vial of monopole dust in a safe in the base commander's quarters. The raiders did detect the monopoles' magnetic radiation, but there was no way of getting into the safe without doing it very noticeable damage (the base commander was one of the captives who had been slain). Karag contented himself with the knowledge that probably nobody at Oceanus could open the safe either. Even if the monopoles were found, their presence would be a mystery in the absence of any other information about the mine.

The pirates then set about to conceal their part in what had happened to the base. The camp had been conquered without a battle, so there were no visible signs of a struggle to give away the fact that humans were involved. The sighting of a large and seemingly ferocious predator close by the camp gave Karag the idea to make it seem as though the base had fallen to an unlucky raid by one of Gardenia's carnivores. On the surface a clever plan, it was carried out clumsily.

A number of beasts of a suitable species (the "rhinosaur"; see Part IX) were rounded up and led into the camp. After some goading by the raiders, the creatures tore open the side of the mess hall with their long and powerful horns, ate vast quantities of the food in the storeroom, and mauled the corpses of the dead personnel who were left in and around the dining room. After tracking up the area near the mess hall and damaging some of the other nearby buildings, all the creatures save one were driven away, trampling the (turned-off) electric fence as they went. The last beast was killed by the machine-gun bullets of the sentry-robot (which the pirates reprogrammed), and left on the ground near the mess hall. The pirates then tried to wipe away any remaining evidence of their own presence, and went back to the *Condor*.

At present the camp is very run-down. The interiors of the buildings are dusty, and the air circulation and temperature control systems have long since broken down, though the camp's nuclear reactor is still operating. The plastic passages connecting the buildings' airlocks were torn by the rhinosaurs' horns, and have deflated. The corpses of the base personnel and the dead beast have decayed, so that all that remains is their bones. Bones and withered plants are also all that is left of several specimens (including another rhinosaur) kept in the animal retention center.

Some traces of the pirates' passing remain, however. A boot-print that does not match the boots worn by the base personnel may be found in the outpost commander's office, hidden from immediate view behind a desk. Laser marks, though covered with dirt and paint, may still be seen in some areas of the base, particularly along the mess hall walls where the personnel were shot down. The GM should determine how likely it is that clues will be found, allowing for the PCs skills and actions.

The sentry robot, a Manner 44 chassis with self-activation, anti-bio, weapons targeting, machine-gun, and force field systems, has been positioned near the airstrip, with instructions to fire at landing vehicles and "defend against" any people that arrive at the camp. Its memory banks have been falsified to include a record of "the rhinosaurs' attack," and superficial damage was done to its interior circuits to make it seem as though its current hostile behavior is the result of a malfunction. Such tampering may be detected after careful examination by the appropriate technicians.

An aerial survey of the area may reveal a crushed patch of vegetation near the camp (see maps) that has not been overgrown recently. It is the size of a small starship hull.

VII. The Monopole Mine

The monopole mine is nestled into the base of a cliff a little over 600 km north-by-northwest of Outbase Gamma. In addition to the mineshaft itself, the pirates have constructed a small hydroponics plant nearby. The plant and the entrance to the mine are both well camouflaged against aerial observation, blending in well with the surrounding vegetation. However, the concentration of monopoles is so great as to make the site detectable from orbit with the proper instruments.

Ore storage areas, refining equipment, and living quarters for the prisoners mining the monopoles and their guards are all underground, near the entrance to the shaft. Only three pirates are usually stationed at the mine, though more will often come down in the *Kite* when the *Condor* is in orbit around Gardenia. Though the pirates are expecting no intruders at the mine, an armed rover is parked nearby in case a quick getaway seems necessary. A neuro-scanner set to humans is hooked up to an alarm bell at the entrance to the shaft, to provide advanced warning of visitors. Yasu Aman contacts the pirates at the mine daily to relay orders from Karag Machar, to pass on any important information about goings on at Oceanus, and to check up on the progress of the monopoles' extraction.

The mineshaft burrows into the rock of the cliffside for a distance of 750 meters, following a thin streak of monopoles buried in a vein of lodestone. The shaft slopes downward at a 15 degree angle, but is fairly straight and has no branches.

The section of the shaft near the surface is broken up by two airtight doors, one at the mouth of the shaft, the other 20 meters further in. A large (300 cubic meter) cavern has been hollowed from the rock between the two doors; the three pirate guards live in this space, and this is where extracted ore is purified and the final product stored.

The refining of the mined ore is done by a Brumaggen II robot with miner and chem systems. The purification done by the robot is very imperfect, however. The ratio of waste rock to monopoles even in comparatively rich ore is very high; quality extraction requires equipment not included in the robot's systems.

Forty-thousand kilograms of semi-refined ore have been mined to date, and the mine produces 400 kilograms of new ore every 24 hours. As the ore is produced, it is packed in 1000 kilogram crates (each $^1/_{10}$ cubic meter large), and stacked at one side of the cavern near the mouth of the shaft.

The actual mining of ore is done by the seven prisoners

taken in the raid on Outbase Gamma. Equipped with digger/scoopers, they quarry the ore and carry it to the miner-robot, under the supervision of the pirates. Living facilities (crude but adequate) for the prisoners are provided in a small hollow behind the second airtight door.

The shaft has no air filtration system. A refrigeration unit keeps temperatures bearable, while the robot synthesizes oxygen when needed to freshen the atmosphere.

A small hydroponic garden is located just outside the shaft. A five-meter radius prefab dome (with airlock) contains planting tubs, chemicals, and atmosphere and temperature control equipment. Foods of a variety of types are grown, including vegetables, high-yield grain hybrids, and an unappetizing but healthy yeast-base protein substitute. The garden was built near the mine as an emergency food source in case the *Condor* was ever prevented from making a supply run. Karag Machar wanted to be sure that he wouldn't be forced to come to Gardenia when it was potentially dangerous just to keep his men from starving. The pirates augment the produce of the garden with the meat of a common Gardenian herd animal.

The seven prisoners from the raid on Outbase Gamma who survived are now slaves in the monopole mine. Though the captives do not work willingly, there is little alternative. On two occasions they tried refusing to mine, and each time one of them was taken out and tortured until all consented to continue to dig.

The prisoners consist of two of the outpost's geologists, two maintenance men, the driver, cook, and biologist. The statistics for each may be developed by the GM as desired; if rescued, they will certainly be well-disposed toward the saviors and will do all they can to have them rewarded. There is a 20% chance that a particular prisoner will want to leave the planet once rescued.

The prisoners are provided with enough food and water for their needs, though they are allowed only six hours' sleep out of every twenty-four hour working "day." The rest of the time they are hard at work, deepening the shaft.

The pirate guards do not go out of their way to make life unpleasant for the captives, but they are intolerant of any misbehavior, and are willing to be very cruel if they feel it is needed. The pirates are careful to avoid friendly relationships with their prisoners which might put them off their guard; they interact with the captives only when necessary for the operation of the mine.

VIII. The Raiders of Kelm

The origin of the raiders of Kelm goes back twenty years before the events of this scenario, to a brief war fought between the Federation of Planets and the colonists of a world in the Eta Cassiopeiae system. The colony wanted independence from federal regulation of trade and objected to the presence of a federal military force in their system. Tensions built, culminating in the expulsion of federal officials in the system. The Federation could not allow this to occur, and determined to reassert its influence, by force.

One of the Federation vessels sent to the colony was the Sword-class *Condor*, carrying a platoon of spacetroopers commanded by Karag Machar. Karag was and is a talented leader, inventive, cunning, and possessed of an innate magnetism that inspired loyalty among his platoon. He even attracted the admiration of the crew of the *Condor*. The commander of that vessel was a petty, vain fellow, upset by the control this trooper had over the crew.

Tempers flared between the two leaders, and the *Condor*'s commander became increasingly cruel to his own men. Finally words turned to blows, and Karag led a mutiny aboardship with his own troopers. Knowing that the penalties for mutiny were imprisonment or death, the platoon commander and his men, joined by many from the ship's crew, decided to flee.

One crew member who did not join Karag's revolt was the ship's psionic navigator, who valued her position in the Navy too much to become a refugee. After failing to psionically contact the leader of the federal expedition against the colony and psionic acquaintances on other ships nearby, she contacted Yasu Aman, whom she had heard to be the master of a psionic institute on the colony below. Yasu, unbeknownst to the navigator, had just been expelled from the institute (see Section 8).

Instead of seeing to the punishment of the mutineers, Yasu decided to join them; making contact with Karag, he made his intentions known. Though suspicious of Yasu's offer, Karag needed a navigator. The *Kite* was sent down to the surface with those few troopers and crewmen who had not joined the mutiny; on the return voyage it carried Yasu Aman.

Once safely away from the Eta Cassiopeiae system, Karag searched about for a base for the *Condor*. Many systems were investigated over the years until a suitable one, Chara, was finally discovered.

For nearly twelve years the pirates have operated out of their base on Kelm, gathering materials to improve their base and accumulating wealth that they sell on the black market in other systems. Their raids were concentrated away from Chara at first, to avoid putting their base in jeopardy. However, with the settlement of the world, the pirates have begun hitting Chara's shipping as well (though not at a great rate). Most of their strikes have been around the Xi Bootis system (-16,-14,+7).

Initially, the pirates avoided unnecessary bloodshed and focused their attentions on gaining valuable cargoes. With time's passage, however, they have become more callous and have acquired new and less disciplined men. The crew is responsible for a number of senseless atrocities now, and is wanted by most major planetary and Federation law-enforcement and military organizations.

Despite his barbarity, Karag is still an excellent leader of men, and has led them well over the years. He avoids unnecessary risks with his crews and materials. Karag's statistics are as follows: ST 9; EN 8; DX 8; AY 10; IN 9; MP 2; LD 12; EM 7; AG 11; SS Poor colonist family. Skills: Urban 1; Grav NW 6; LT 3; HY 1; EX 0; Temp HT; Environ FL/IC 3; Body Armor 4; Paint Gun 5; Arc Gun 2; Artillery 2; Ambush 2; Battlefield 4; Unarmed Combat 3; Space Tactics 6; Disguise 4; Forgery/Counterfeiting 4; EVA 2; Spaceship Tech 2; Survival 3.

The *Condor* is a Sword-class ship with two Energy pods, a heavy weapons pod, an augmented jump pod, and a lander pod with an attached Piccolo-class craft, the *Kite*, which has a light weapons pod of its own. Both ships are fully crewed.

The main pirate base at Kelm (located in environ s01) is fully equipped and basically independent so long as occasional spare parts and raw materials are brought in by raids. The base has its own source of energy in a nearby radioactives mine, and thus access to almost unlimited fuel for itself and for the spacecraft. Full docking and repair facilities for the *Condor* and *Kite* as well as for two Terwillicker-X battlecraft are available at the base. A powerful force screen (treat as a class 2 spaceship force field) covers the pirate settlement against missile bombardment, should it be discovered. The base is also capable of defending itself with its own missile and

burster systems. Treat the base's system as a fully stocked arsenal pod capable of two burster fires and two battle commands each friendly fire phase (using the DELTAVEE game rules). About twenty men manage the base when the *Condor* is away.

The pirates also have a minor installation concealed in a crater on Vertiprox, Gardenia's moon. The installation is simply a fuel depot, with a stockpile of 500 energy units as an emergency supply for the *Condor*. No men are stationed there.

IX. Random Encounters

The GM should roll for random encounters regularly, as per the UNIVERSE game Case 27.1. Gardenia's Danger Level is 2, while the danger levels for Magrito and Kelm are only 0. If the Encounter Table indicates an NPC encounter while the party is traveling the wilds, the GM should make a second roll; if the second roll is 15% or less an exploration party or some other group of NPCs has indeed been encountered. On a 16% or higher, treat the roll as "No Effect." If the Encounter Table indicates a creature encounter, the GM may use one of the creatures described in this chapter, a standard creature from the UNIVERSE game's Adventure Guide, or a creature of his own devising.

Creatures

RHINOSAUR: 1-Hex
Restrictions: Light vegetation, woods, or forest on Gardenia.
Combat: 12-14, AY: 6-8, AG: 11-12, IN: na
Initiative: 20%
Composition: Protein
Powers: Camouflage, Heightened Hearing and Smelling and Chitinous Carapace
***Warning:** A large, lumbering hulk is pushing its way through the undergrowth towards you.
***Sight:** Big, 6-legged lizard, 5 meters long; has a ½ meter-long sharp horn growing from its snout. Creature has no visible eyes.
***Perception:** Creature is carnivorous and very pugnacious. It is building up speed to charge.
***Examination:** The creature has very sensitive powers of smell and hearing; tiny eyes may be found as well, of poor quality in vision.

FENWICK BATS: Small
Restrictions: Within 10 km of caves on Gardenia.
Combat: 6-9, AY: 10-12, AG: 3-6, IN: na
Initiative: 4%
Composition: Protein
Powers: Flight, Dart Shooting, Poison Attack, Radar Sense.
***Warning:** You hear a flapping of wings close by.
***Sight:** 5-10 one-meter long two-headed lizards. Sharp teeth, pointed tail, and quills radiating from its trunk.
***Perception:** Entity is hunting insects. Will ignore party unless attacked.
***Examination:** The quills and tail are coated in a toxic nerve agent. The creature has an internal echolocation organ allowing it to judge distances to nearby objects.

HEAT PLASMS: Small
Restrictions: Anywhere on Magrito or Kelm
Combat: na, AY: 5-8, AG: 7-10, IN: na
Initiative: 15%
Composition: Non-carbon
Powers: Energy Absorption
* **Warning:** Dozens of amorphous white blobs are coming towards you.
***Sight:** They are each 1/2 meter in diameter. They move by rolling; no limbs or orifices are visible.
***Perception:** The creatures crave the party's body heat and the energy produced by their equipment. The entities will attempt to surround any source of heat. They cannot be scared away.
***Note:** The pirates have only recently discovered these creatures (and vice versa). The heat plasms have slain two pirates so far, and few of the raiders dare travel overland on foot now, preferring to use tracked vehicles.

CARPETEER: Large
Restrictions: Jungle or forest on Gardenia
Combat: 3-5, AY: 1-2, AG: 5-7, IN: na
Initiative: 15%
Composition: Carbon
Powers: Heightened Hearing and Smell, Acidic Secretions, Camouflage
***Warning:** A large, red, leafy mat is draped over a nearby tree limb.
***Perception:** The entity drops on unsuspecting passerbys beneath it and digests them with acidic secretions.
***Examination:** The creature has some features of a plant, and some of an animal. It has leaves and engages in photosynthesis, but is also mobile and consumes animal protein.

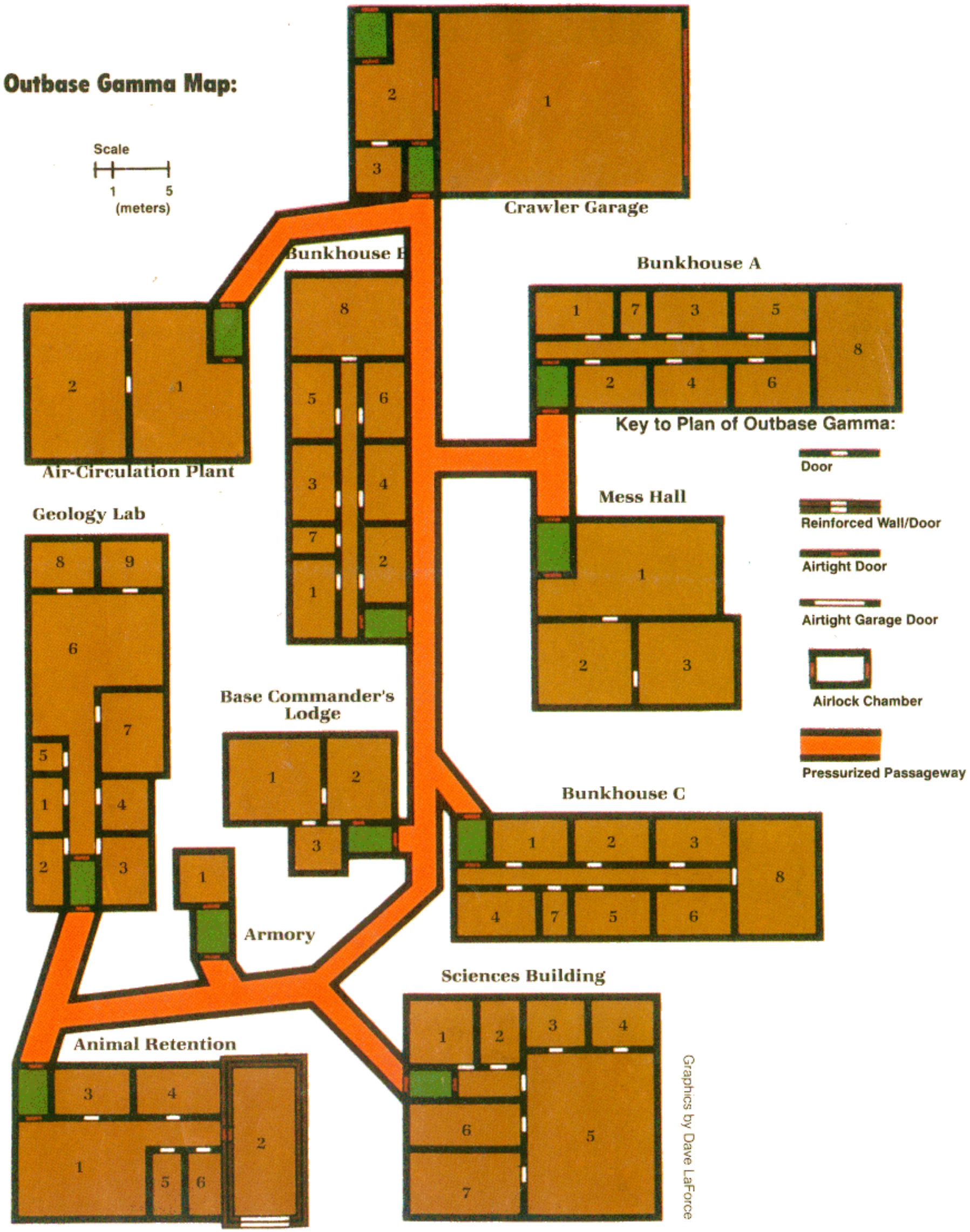
TUNNELERS: Miniscule
Restrictions: Flat or hilly terrain on Gardenia
Combat: 1, AY: 1-4, AG: 3-6, IN: na
Initiative: 1%
Composition: Carbon
Powers: Swarm mind, Tunneling
***Warning:** A ditch blocks your path.
***Sight:** The ditch is 2 meters wide. Four-legged insects with thin, round torsos swarm at the ditch's bottom.
***Perception:** The insects are carrying bits of vegetable matter. They will ignore the party unless something enters the ditch, in which case they will swarm around it and attack with their mandibles. The ground in the vicinity of the ditch is permeated with tunnels dug by the insects. Any heavy or poorly distributed weight has a chance (weight in kg/10)% of falling through into a nest.

X. Further Adventures at Chara

The GM may feel free to develop further adventures in the Chara system as the UNIVERSE game campaign progresses. Often it will be discovered that keeping an adventuring group within one system can make for detailed and cohesive scenarios with an overall background in mind. Only the GM's imagination is necessary.

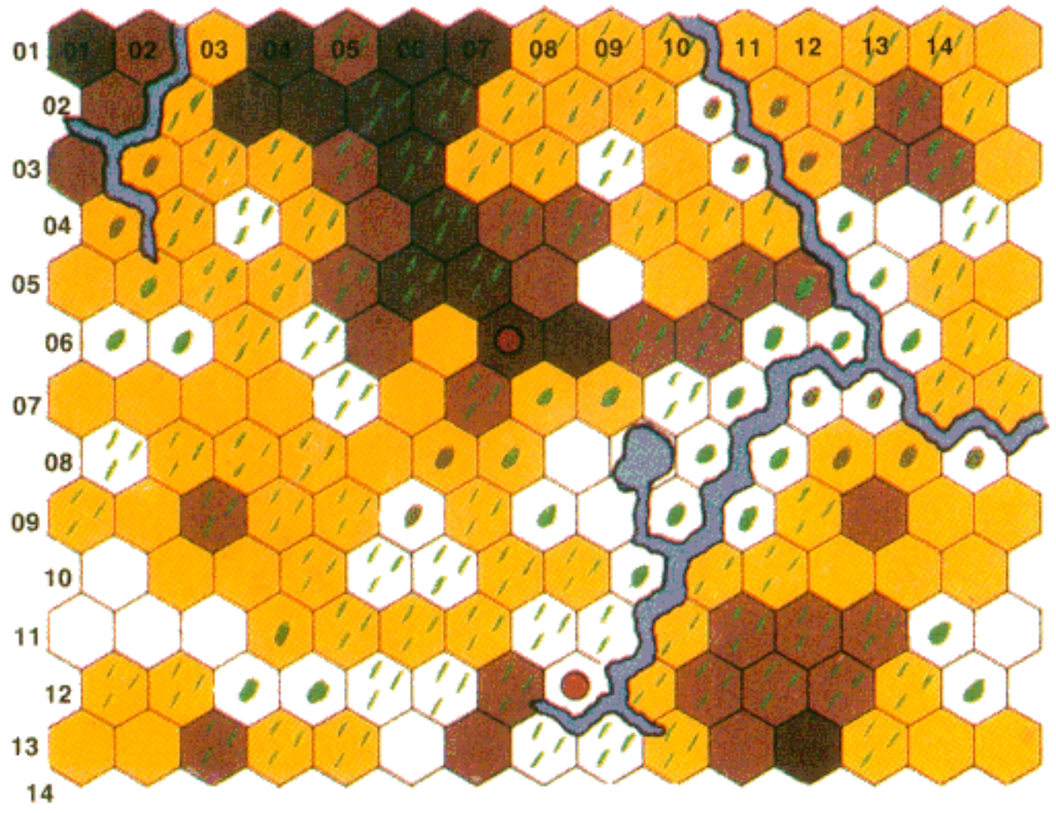
1. Some of the possible adventures that may appear could include the following ones:
2. Capture and exploration of the pirate base on Kelm, with meetings with the heat plasms that live there.
3. Exploration of the moons of Aegaron, and the discovery of an alien artifact in a cave system on one of the larger moons.
4. Cross-country journeys on Gardenia, in search of new animal specimens.
5. Asteroid prospecting in the two belts.
6. Identification and capture of "hidden" pirate operatives at Oceanus; some of them may attempt to shoot their way to freedom or hold the base hostage by seizing the power plant.

Outbase Gamma Map:



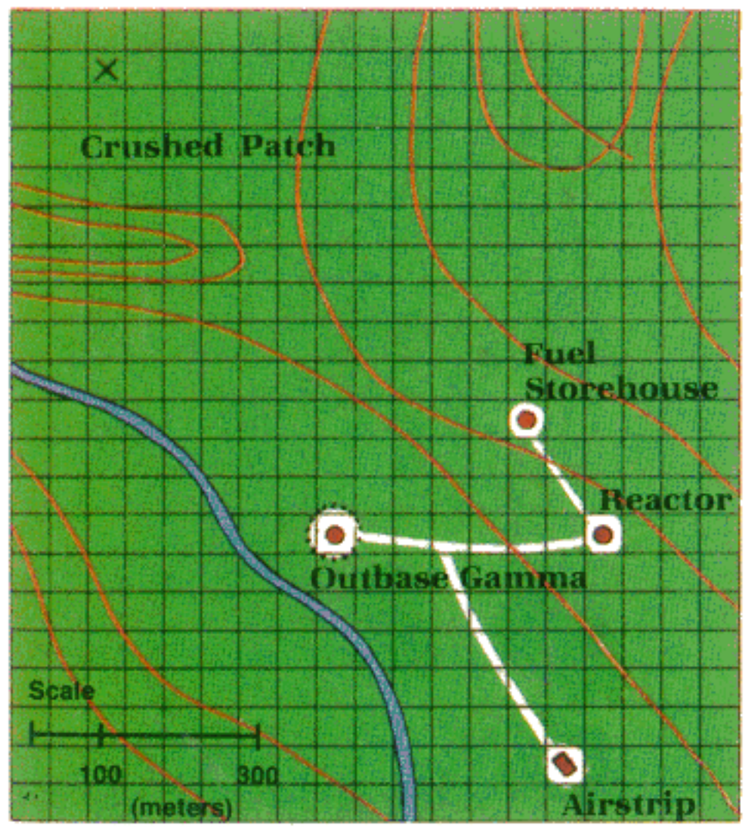
Graphics by Dave LaForce

1300 by 1400 km Area of Environ n06 of Gardenia:



The map depicts Outpost Gamma (red dot), the monopole mine, (hex 06-10), and the surrounding area. Scale = 100 km/hex.

Map of Outbase Gamma Area:



Note that light vegetation covers the entire area depicted except for the crushed patch and the 25 meter wide defoliated zones enclosing the camp, the outbuildings, and the airstrip.

THE ZAMRA:
Weapon of the Yazirians
A STAR FRONTIERS® Game Variant

by William Tracy

The zamra has been used by the Yazirians for many centuries; it is a metallic disc about 10 centimeters in diameter, with sharp edges, used as a hurled weapon. Yazirians wear a gauntlet of light metal mesh when using this device so they will not be cut by it.

The zamra was used in the early history of the Yazirians as a dueling weapon. The two Yazirians in the duel would climb separate poles about 20 meters in height with a distance of about 5 meters between them. At a given signal the Yazirians would leap from the poles and glide downwards; each would have one zamra to throw at the other. If the duel was not between enemies, the Yazirians would try to hit each other's wing-like membranes, causing opponents to fall faster. The duelists would try to critically wound or kill each other if they were enemies.

The winner of the duel had to fill several conditions. He had to be alive when he landed, the last one to touch down, and had to land within a two-meter diameter circle which was clearly marked on the ground. One contestant had to meet all these requirements or the duel was considered a draw.

Sometimes duels were carried out using zamras made of a softer material. These were generally non-lethal, but sometimes contestants were badly injured or slain with them anyway. Over the years the Yazirians started using the zamra not only in duels but also in any sort of fighting. Even now in the age of space travel, most Yazirians know how to use this weapon.

The statistics for using zamras in STAR FRONTIERS gaming follow:

Weapon type: zamra
Damage: 1d10 (1d6 if non-lethal variety)
Ammo: 1 (itself)
Rate of fire: 1/turn
Defense: Inertia
Point-blank range: 0-5 meters
Short range: 6-10 meters
Medium range: 11-20 meters
Long range: 21-30 meters
Extreme range: 31-40 meters

A Yazirian will carry at most two types of zamras. One type is produced in a variety of colors (except red) and can be used anytime the character wishes. The other type is dark red, and can only be used against that Yazirian's life-enemy. Often the red zamra will be carried as a sign of honor if the Yazirian chooses a life-enemy that is not a living being, such as a disease or a competitive company. Typically only one red zamra is ever owned by a Yazirian; to own more is considered disgraceful. A character may own as many other kinds of zamras as he pleases.

When a Yazirian character is created, a six-sided die is rolled to determine the initial skill level the character has when throwing a zamra. A roll of 1-3 means a skill level of 1; a 4-5 roll means a skill level of 2, and a roll of 6 indicates a skill level of 3. This skill level may be improved over time. A character's base chance to hit targets when using a zamra equals one-half the character's dexterity expressed as a percentage, plus 10% per skill level with the zamra, plus range, movement, careful aiming, cover, target size, and thrower's condition modifiers. Use an additional -15% penalty if cast by a gliding Yazirian (such as during a duel).

Other character races may use the zamra, though Yazirians tend to frown upon such practices. The zamra has a significant place in Yazirian folklore and culture, and Yazirians like to see it treated with proper respect (which they don't feel can be given the device by other races). Although they usually won't attack someone seen using a zamra, Yazirians won't necessarily be happy to see this situation, either.

Yazirian battle gauntlets and zamras are made of a strong, light alloy; zamras weigh about .5 kilograms. Game characters can never "modernize" zamras by adding devices to make them some sort of energized weapon.

Note: The zamra will always be used before any other weapon carried by a Yazirian if a life-enemy is being fought. When a Yazirian is using a zamra against his life-enemy, he gains a +10% bonus to the chance that he will go into a battle rage, which will last as long as he is fighting his life-enemy. A red zamra will be used against life-enemies if possible, though other sorts will do.

ZAMRA TRICKS

If cast at a gliding Yazirian, a roll "to hit" that is less than or equal to 1/10th the thrower's normal "to hit" score may (at the caster's option) disable one of the target Yazirian's wing-like membranes, forcing him to cut his gliding distance in half and land quickly.

If two Yazirians are throwing zamras at each other, each has a chance to catch the zamra thrown at him with the battle-gloved hand. The chance is equal to one-half the character's dexterity plus 3% per zamra skill level. If the gloved character is hit by a zamra yet makes his catch percentage, he will take no damage.

Any character with a zamra skill level of four or better has a chance to try rebound shots. For example, the character may be pinned down by gunfire in a corridor, with the assailant firing from around a corner. The zamra thrower may attempt to make the zamra bounce off a wall or other surface and strike the assailant. There must be a hard surface for a rebound shot to be attempted, and a zamra can only bounce off one surface to make an effective attack. The following procedure must be used:

1. Basic chance to hit: 1/5 dexterity (round fractions up).

2. Bonus: +5% per zamra skill level.

3. Add or subtract range modifiers, adding 5 meters of effective distance for the rebound itself.

4. Use the rest of the modifiers listed on p. 22 of the STAR FRONTIERS Expanded Rulebook.

5. Subtract 1-4 points from the zamra's damage if it hits the target, as the rebound absorbs part of the zamra's kinetic energy. ▲

"FIRE AT WILL!"

The bridge of the UPF Constellation was bathed in blue light. Flipping the protective cover off the switches on the console before him, the captain powered the ship's defenses and armaments. They'd found the Sathar, and it was now or never.

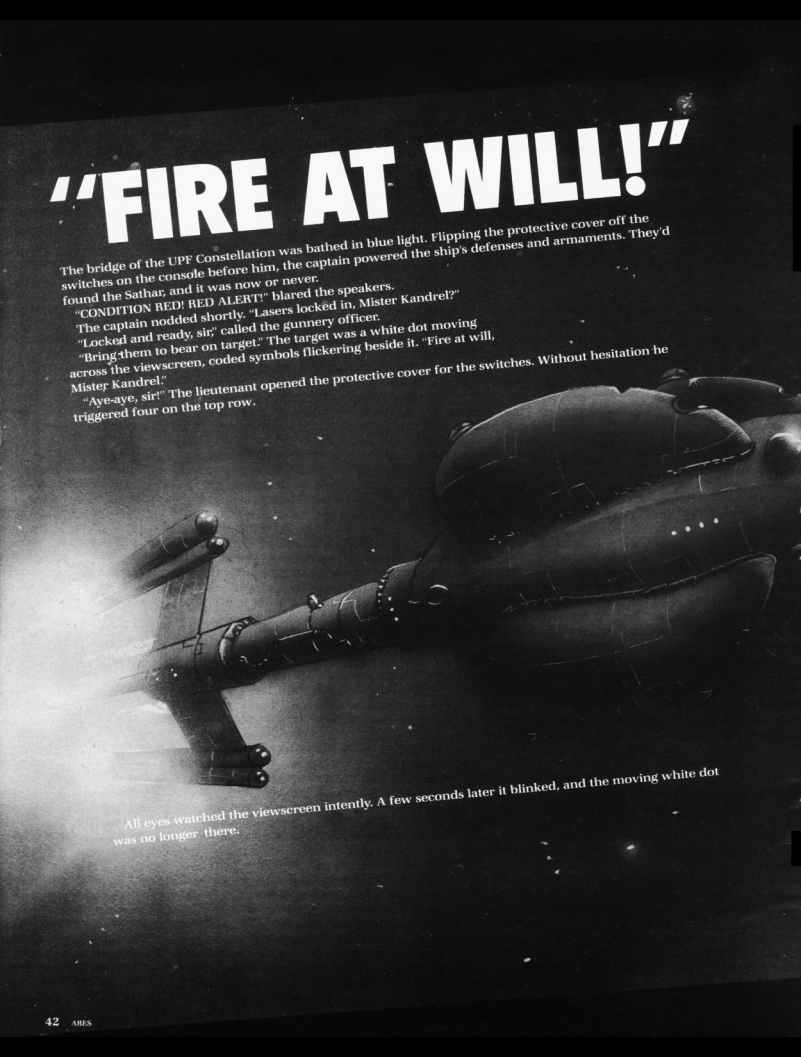
"CONDITION RED! RED ALERT!" blared the speakers.

The captain nodded shortly. "Lasers locked in, Mister Kandrel?"

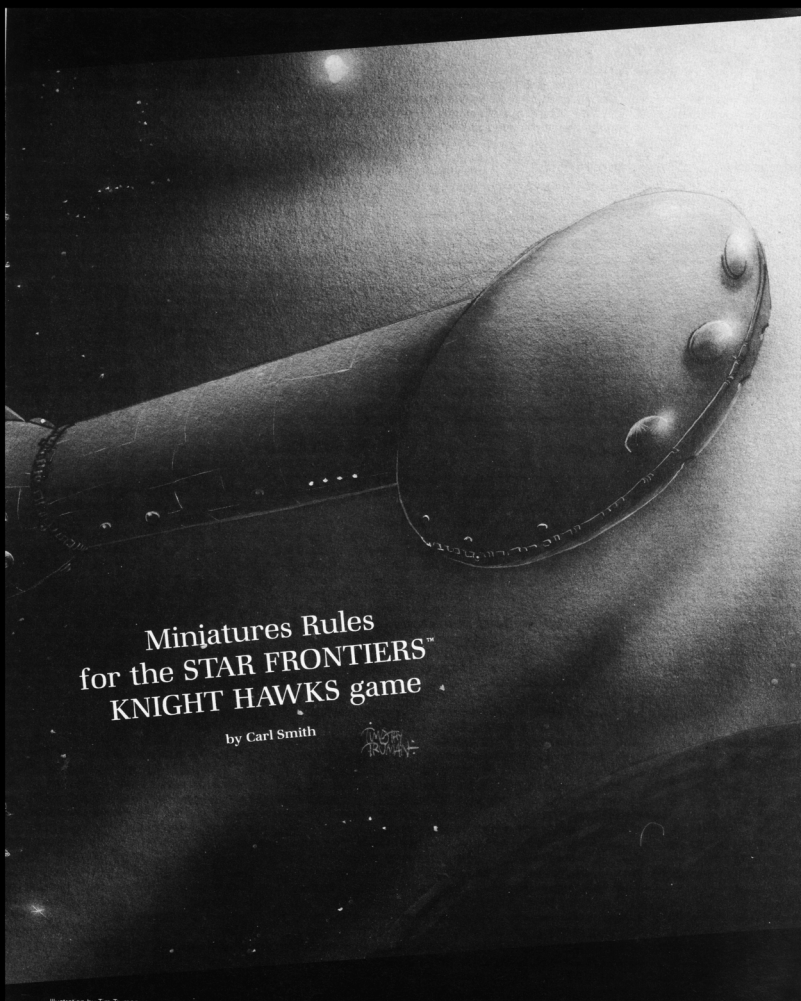
"Locked and ready, sir," called the gunnery officer.

"Bring them to bear on target." The target was a white dot moving across the viewscreen, coded symbols flickering beside it. "Fire at will, Mister Kandrel."

"Aye-aye, sir!" The lieutenant opened the protective cover for the switches. Without hesitation he triggered four on the top row.



All eyes watched the viewscreen intently. A few seconds later it blinked, and the moving white dot was no longer there.



Miniatures Rules for the STAR FRONTIERS™ KNIGHT HAWKS game

by Carl Smith

Illustration by Tim Truman

INTRODUCTION

These rules convert the board movement and combat systems given in the KNIGHT HAWKS™ game so they may be used with TSR, Inc.'s KNIGHT HAWKS game miniatures to fight battles in outer space. To use these conversion rules, a player needs to be familiar with the KNIGHT HAWKS game.

Combat results and other game variables are decided by rolling one or more 10-sided dice, to get results from 1-10, 1-100, 2-20, etc. Combat results are shown in the KNIGHT HAWKS game, under the Advanced Game Combat Table.

All miniature figures represent one vessel of a particular class. The only exception to this rule is a grouping of five fighters, molded as a "flight."

TIME SCALE

One game turn equals ten minutes of game time (not real time). During this turn, both players move and conduct all their attacks. Everything occurring in this turn is considered simultaneous.

Players roll a die for initiative before movement each turn. The player winning the roll has the option of being the first or last one to move and fire offensive weapons.

Note: Seeker missiles for either side are always moved last in a turn, after both sides have already moved.

DISTANCE SCALE CONVERSIONS (HEXES-INCHES)

One hex from the KNIGHT HAWKS game maps represents an area 10,000 km across; using miniatures, two inches will equal 10,000 km (so one inch equals 5,000 km in the gamescale). A turn from one hex-side to another in the KNIGHT HAWKS game becomes a 60 degree turn in the miniatures version.

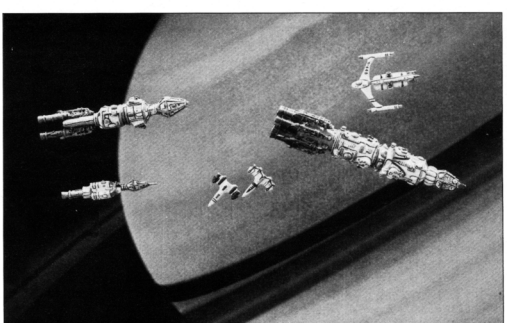
MOVEMENT

Each ship retains its specific acceleration and deceleration factor (ADF) as outlined in the rules. All ADFs are measured in increments of two inches (10,000 km).

Players may never willingly "ram" one starship into another. To do so would totally destroy both vessels. Players must move so as to avoid collision whenever possible.

Any evasive movement is noted on the ship log, and that vessel is moved at one-half normal speed.

Turning: A protractor may be used to determine turning angles. For every two inches of forward movement, a player



may make one facing change of 60 degrees or less. This may be done in accordance with MR rate, i.e., a player with 2 MR may make no more than two 60-degree changes in his turn. Players do not have to turn during their move if they do not want to. All ships must move 2" forward prior to executing any turns.

Exception: Any player not moving may face his vessel in any direction he chooses, regardless of MR rate.

RANGE

In the KNIGHT HAWKS game, all ranges are measured in hexes (each hex being 10,000 km). When using these rules for miniatures, one inch equals 5,000 km. A weapon with a range of ten hexes thus fires twenty inches. Simply double the range in hexes to find a weapon's range in inches.

Note: Mark a white dot on the front (center) of each miniature's stand. All measurement from one vessel to another should use the white mark as a reference. This dot also serves as a point of reference for all forward-firing (FF) lasers.

When measuring, round up all fractions of an inch if the distance is half an inch or greater. Round down if the distance is less than half. This is used for determining all movement distances and ranges.

Optional rule: All ranges may be estimated prior to being measured. If a target is out of range, you have wasted your shot. All fire must be "laid-in" (i.e., allocated) before combat begins.

AREA (ZONES OF CONTROL)

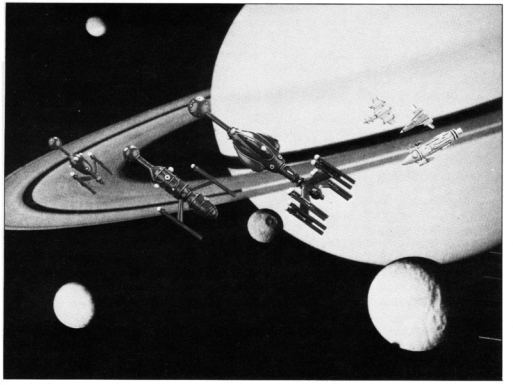
No ship may move within one-half inch of another ship. No ship may fire through another vessel. All ships must have a direct line of sight between their guns and their intended target. Destroyers will often "screen" larger ships, intercepting fire intended for the capital ship, by blocking the line of sight between it and other ships. Ships arranged with only one-half inch between them "screen" ships behind them from enemy fire.

Exception: Fighters may maneuver between larger ships, enter and exit an assault carrier, and fly in formation in any area of one-half inch. Individual fighters conduct their attacks as part of a formation. Generally a group of fighters will attempt to intercept another group of fighters or an unescorted vessel.

FIRING

Ships with forward-firing weapons (FF) may fire those FFs only within a 60 degree arc, 30 degrees to either side of their bow (front). Turret-mounted weapons may fire in a 360 degree arc, all around the ship.

Vessels firing in a straight line from their front with FF weapons stand a slightly better chance to hit; use the HEAD-ON charts for this. Any ship firing at a target within 5 degrees of its center



Ships unable to maneuver may crash into other ships, destroying both. This may occur because of damage to navigation, but never on purpose.

line receives the bonus for a "head-on" shot. Use the white dot on the stand to measure these shots.

Defensive fire: During its defensive phase of a turn, a ship may fire at any target which is in its unimpeded field of fire. A ship which is screened may not be fired upon. Only laser cannons, ICMs, laser batteries, and rocket batteries may be fired defensively.

All ICMs must be fired at designated incoming attacks. ICMs cannot be allocated to all incoming attacks, but specific ones, i.e., an ICM cannot be used against both fire from a rocket battery and a torpedo. It must be used only against one or the other. If a player wishes protection from both, he must fire at least two ICMs.

Seeker missile fire: Use paper counters to represent Seeker missiles. These missiles have a duration of six turns, and a maximum 24″ speed. Because of their size and guidance systems, seekers may change direction up to 180 degrees before moving. Any ship coming within 2″ of a seeker will activate it. Seeker missiles always move last in a turn, after all other movement has taken place.

Torpedo fire: Torpedoes have a duration of one turn, and a range of eight inches. Torpedoes must be able to trace a path to their target without coming closer than one-half inch to any other target. If a torpedo comes within one-half inch of a target, it hits that target instead of its original target.

DAMAGE

As noted in the KNIGHT HAWKS™ game, ships have several means of protection which must be indicated on the ship log if used. Examples of ship defenses include reflective hulls and masking screens, and their effects should be taken into consideration before damage is assessed.

All damage takes effect at the end of both players' turns. Damage is assessed according to the hit chart (p. 12) in the KNIGHT HAWKS game rules. Any ship receiving 92-97% results has navigation damage, and must follow the last course written down until the damage is repaired. This means a vessel repeats the entire movement pattern of its previous turn, or follows its last course direction to the letter over and over.

You may attempt to repair damage at the end of every third turn. The KNIGHT HAWKS game rules for damage repair apply.

Ships unable to maneuver may crash into other ships, destroying both. This may occur because of damage to navigation, but never on purpose.

STARSHIP VESSEL TYPES

The following is a list of Federation and Sathar spaceships, with suggested statistics for their speed (S), turning (T), hull points (HP), and weapons (W). All of these miniatures are now available in boxed sets from TSR, Inc.

Federation Ships

Battleship: S = 2, T = 2, HP = 120, W = 2 laser cannons, 4 laser batteries, 8 torpedoes, 10 rocket batteries.

Destroyer: S = 3, T = 2, HP = 50, W = 1 laser cannon, 1 laser battery, 2 torpedoes, 6 rocket batteries.

Frigate: S = 3, T = 3, HP = 40, W = 1 laser cannon, 1 laser battery, 2 torpedoes, 4 rocket batteries.

Assault Scout: S = 5, T = 4, HP = 15, W = 4 assault rockets, 1 laser battery.

Freighter, unarmed: S = 1, T = 1, HP = 75, W = None.

Freighter, armed: S = 1, T = 1, HP = 75, 1 FF laser cannon (or 1 laser battery).

Sathar Ships

The Sathar have starships that correspond exactly to those the Federation has (use the above statistics). They also possess the following extra ship types.

Heavy Cruiser: S = 2, T = 1, HP = 100, W = 2 laser cannons, 2 laser batteries, 6 torpedoes, 10 rocket batteries.

Light Cruiser: S = 3, T = 2, HP = 70, W = 2 laser cannons, 2 laser batteries, 4 torpedoes, 10 rocket batteries.

Pirate Ships

Frigate: S = 3, T = 3, HP = 40, W = 1 laser cannon, 1 laser battery, 2 torpedoes, and 4 rocket batteries.

Assault Scout (Classes A and B): S = 5, T = 4, HP = 15, W = 4 assault rockets, and 1 laser battery.

NEW SCENARIOS

I. Incident 43-C

Four UPF unarmed freighters were in the company of a UPF frigate and one military armed freighter; all were approaching the star system Ktsa-Kar from Kizk-Kar, their last stop. They were in the military jurisdiction of the planet Ktsa-Kar when they were attacked by a Sathar light cruiser and two Sathar frigates. At first they were not disturbed, because of "reasonable" activity by pirates in the area. The convoy sent information to the local military interceptor base, and an assault scout hunter-killer team of two assault scouts was dispatched. When the assault scouts arrived, they were greeted by empty space and the destroyed hulks of the convoy.

Set up: Sathar have one light cruiser and two frigates. They enter at extreme weapon range from the convoy at an eight o'clock intercept angle. The UPF convoy consists of four unarmed freighters, one armed freighter, and one frigate. The two UPF assault scouts enter at twelve o'clock intercept angle at the beginning of the ninth game turn. All ships are fully armed and ready.

Victory conditions: The Sathar must destroy all unarmed freighters for a marginal victory, the entire convoy for a tactical victory, and all UPF vessels for a decisive victory. The UPF receives a marginal victory for destroying one Sathar ship, a tactical victory for destroying two Sathar ships, and a decisive victory if *all* Sathar vessels are destroyed.

II. Incident 91-K

Four UPF assault scouts, a destroyer, and a frigate, encountered a pirate assault scout (class B, "gull-wing") near Prenglar as it closed with a UPF freighter carrying war material. In the ensuing combat, the pirate assault scout was easily destroyed. The group proceeded on a four o'clock interception course with Prenglar, but were jumped by a Sathar heavy cruiser on a two o'clock intercept course. The Sathar cruiser surprised the small escort group, destroying two assault scouts and the freighter. In the combat, it badly mauled the destroyer before it was destroyed itself.

Set up: Option A — The freighter and pirate assault scout start together in the center of the playing area. The UPF force approaches at extreme weapons range from the four o'clock area and engages the pirate assault scout. One turn after the assault scout is destroyed, the Sathar heavy cruiser will enter at extreme weapons range from the two o'clock position and engage the UPF fleet.

Option B — Assume the pirate vessel has been destroyed, and arbitrarily halve the number of torpedoes and rocket batteries each UPF ship has to simulate shots fired in their engagement with the pirate. The Sathar is fully armed. It enters from the two o'clock intercept position at extreme weapon range and attacks the freighter and rescue fleet.

Victory conditions: The Sathar player receives a portion of a victory for every vessel he destroys. If the Sathar destroys the freighter, he receives a marginal victory. If he destroys the freighter and either of the capital ships, the Sathar has a tactical victory. If the freighter and two or more of the UPF vessels are destroyed, the Sathar has a decisive victory. The UPF receives a tactical victory for keeping the freighter from being destroyed, and a decisive victory if he keeps the freighter from being destroyed and destroys the Sathar ship.

III. Incident 217-K

A pirate base was discovered off the farthest planet of Zebulon. A punitive expedition under Admiral Kraal, consisting of the UPF *Constellation* (a battleship), the *Port Yzair* (a destroyer), the *Klikk-T'llicck* (a frigate staffed mainly by Vrusk), two assault scouts, and the military armed freighter, *Rub'n Jamz,* was sent to neutralize the pirate force. Acting as a decoy, the *Rub'n Jamz* fled from the pirates who sent their entire strike force, a frigate and two assault scouts (one a class B "gull-wing," and the other, a class A "arrow wing") after the freighter. Waiting on the sunward side of the planet was the entire UPF assault force.

In the following battle, the entire pirate force was destroyed, with only the loss of one assault scout to the UPF fleet of Admiral Kraal. This region of space remained pacified until three years later when the yacht, *Cassidine Breeze,* was waylaid by an old pirate assault scout which was obviously just passing through the area.

Set up: The *Rub'n Jamz* starts in the middle of the playing area. All pirate vessels start at maximum weapon range on a six o'clock intercept angle. On the second turn, the UPF force enters. The assault scouts start from the ten o'clock position at maximum weapon range from the freighter, and all other UPF vessels start at an eight o'clock interception angle from the UPF freighter at maximum weapon range.

Victory conditions: For every vessel the pirate destroys, he receives victory points equal to the number of hull points of the vessel. A marginal victory is 70 hull points destroyed; a tactical victory is 175 hull points; a decisive victory is any score over 225 hull points. If the UPF player destroys one pirate vessel he receives a marginal victory; two pirate ships, a tactical victory; and three pirate ships, a decisive victory.

IV. Incident 217-L

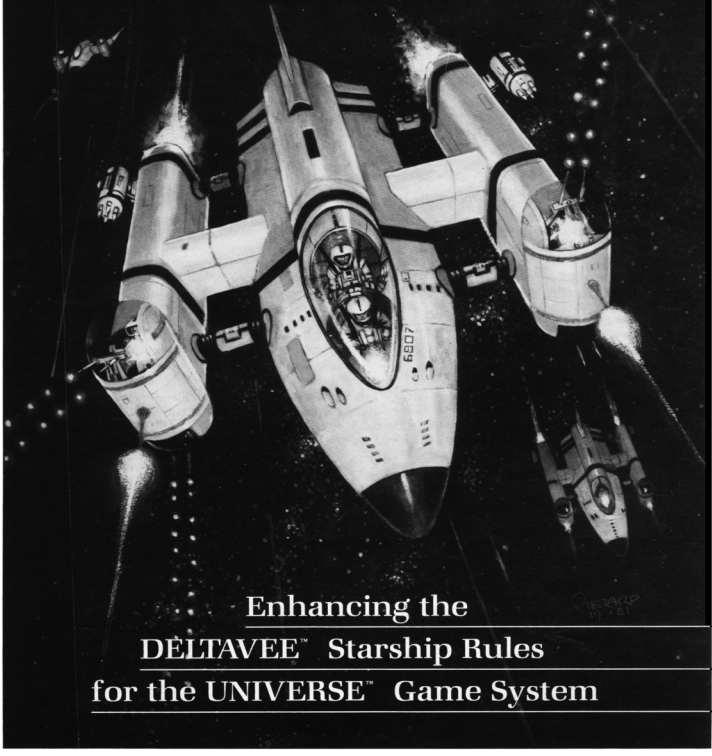
After Admiral Kraal's victory over the pirates near Zebulon, he was alerted to a sub-space SOS and took his fleet to pick up survivors. In reality, the Sathar had picked up his communications and had hastily sent a fleet consisting of one Sathar heavy cruiser, one Sathar light cruiser, and one Sathar frigate to the area designated by the SOS. When the UPF fleet arrived, they found the Sathar fleet heading toward them on a twelve o'clock intercept course.

In the ensuing battle, the UPF assault scouts, the freighter and the frigate were destroyed. The destroyer was damaged badly and repairs on her were so extensive that she was not recommissioned until the hostilities of the second Sathar war were over. Even Admiral Kraal's flagship, the *Constellation,* was badly damaged and out of action for the better part of a year. The UPF did manage to destroy all the Sathar vessels involved in the action, but at a terrible cost.

Set up: The Sathar and UPF fleets enter on a collision course at maximum weapon range. The Sathar are fully armed, and the members of the UPF have only the armaments remaining to them after their destruction of the pirate fleet (see Incident 217-K, scenario III). When the UPF fleet enters, the freighter is screened from the Sathar by the battleship *Constellation.*

Victory conditions: The Sathar receive a marginal victory if they destroy two UPF ships. They receive a tactical victory if they destroy three UPF ships, and a decisive one if they destroy four UPF vessels. The UPF receives a marginal victory if they destroy one Sathar vessel. If they destroy two Sathar vessels, they receive a tactical victory, and a decisive victory if they destroy all three Sathar vessels.

The Federation Strikes Back!



Enhancing the DELTAVEE™ Starship Rules for the UNIVERSE™ Game System

by Marvant Duhon

Through most of the 24th century, long range exploration ships were not as numerous as they once had been; nearly all were found at or beyond the periphery of known space. Other spaceships only traveled between bases or kept close to a single base; the bases provided facilities for the crew, supplies, and replacement pods as needed. When a ship ventured out without a friendly base as its destination, on a military operation or pirate foray, its next move was always an immediate return to base. In the five scenarios provided with the DELTAVEE game, surviving ships are usually dangerously low on energy and missiles and badly battered. Between battles a ship might repair damaged equipment and recharge its energy, but it could not replace missiles or repair destroyed equipment.

With the gathering of warclouds, a need exists for warships capable of sustained operations, that can fight a series of battles separated by jumps with no intervening return to base. Ships designed for this "main fleet" use require a jump pod, preferably an augmented one, and all but the small Daggers should carry an energy pod and a crew pod as well. Other pods usually fall within a narrow range for each class of ships, with the main choice being whether to outfit larger ships as generalists (with a balanced load of different pod types) or specialists (with some ships bristling with arsenal pods, others outfitted as battlecraft carriers, and so on).

For main fleet work, a Dagger's two pods are nearly always an energy pod and a hunter. If energy is available from support ships, an energy pod and a heavy weapons pod can be used; for independent scouting, the ship can carry two hunter pods. Three of the five pods of a Sword in a battle fleet should be a jump pod, a crew pod, and an energy pod. The other two could be an arsenal or heavy weapons pod and a battle communications pod. Some Swords could carry two blaster pods to provide flak defense for larger ships.

Spear (8 pod), Pike (12 pod), and Halberd (15 pod) class ships should carry a basic load of one energy pod, one crew pod, and one battle communications pod. To this can be added a couple of arsenal pods, one or two battlecraft pods, and perhaps a tractor beam pod. This alone would fill a Spear. Larger ships could have one or more blaster pods and duplicate energy, jump, and battle communications pods. Two level 8 tractor beam pods operating upon the same ship would work wonders, but this is a costly capability. When two or four pods of the same type are carried, they should be paired (e.g., pod 1 being the same as pod 9), so that both will be affected by the same die roll on the Hit Table. This gives less choice to the enemy player scoring a hit. A fleet flagship will usually carry a command pod.

Terwillicker-X Modifications

As larger military spaceships became more common, the Terwillicker-X battlecraft became less and less effective. Against a Spear or a heavily-armed Sword, the laser-armed fighters were merely annoying gnats. Both the X model and the earlier model 5000 had been designed for scouting and skirmishing, not fleet actions. However, it was easy to add pylons that could carry unguided or intelligent missiles. Model X-1 carried one missile beneath the hull, the X-2 had two (one on each wing), and the X-3 carried one in each of those three positions. The People's Socialist Alliance worlds employed several versions, the X-1G, X-2G, and X-3G. These had the laser removed and guided missile control equipment installed, permitting a guided missile to be carried. Most other fleets considered this a poor trade-off, but the PSA used these models in droves.

Each missile carried reduces the maneuver rating by one until it is fired. No Prepare Missile Command is required. Any number of missiles carried may be fired at once, all with the same direction and velocity. A battlecraft may not fire its burster in the Phase in which it fires a missile. The X-1G, X-2G, and X-3G may provide guidance to only one missile per Command Phase, in lieu of launching a missile in the previous Fire Phase.

Based on these developments and others, the Terwillicker-Y was built. It carries three missiles, but they are better installed so that there is no maneuverability loss. The burster is retained, and guidance can be provided to any number of its missiles per Command Phase, regardless of its actions in the previous Fire Phase. Its pod possesses 1 Battle Command, which can only be used for Commands involving a fighter.

Fighters are only missile armed on their first sortie. No reloads are carried in the pods, although projects are directed toward correcting that.

Additional Spaceship Types

The Terwillicker 3000 is an older battlecraft which still serves in many smaller navies. The Y model, a significant improvement over the X, is found in major battlefleets. Harmonics has its own entry into the battlecraft field, the Fugue. The Fugue is maneuverable enough to fly rings around the opposition, especially at high speeds, but it is lightly armed and armored.

The old Blades Battleax is still the big bruiser in some areas. As is the case with all level 6 ships, a battle communications pod will only improve its Targeting Program to -3. The Mace was a good design for its day, quite well-armored for such a little ship. Although a single pod seems small for a warship, the Mace is found on dozens of worlds. It is used not so much as a part of a navy, but for planetary defense. The Poniard was the standard military two-pod until the vastly superior Dagger came along; it is now relegated to a few backwater areas. The Sai originally served as a leader for a squadron of Poniards. Although it is far from "top of the line," it is retained by many navies.

The Saber was the model from which the Sword developed. The Pike and Halberd are new classes, built for main battle fleets. A Burster Class of 3 means that the hull burster may fire laser bursts or barrages or particle bursts; a Class 4 means that it may use laser or particle bursts or barrages.

The old Harmonics Oboe is an small exploration ship once sent out in large numbers across the universe. The Saxophone is the current extended exploration model, designed for extensive discovery and investigation missions. It is seldom seen in civilized space.

The Corco Beta is an older model cargo ship, slightly modernized and armored for use in asteroid belts. It is mainly used for in-system work these days. The Theta was big and clumsy, and is now generally unused. The Epsilon is a new

With the gathering of warclouds, a need exists for warships

design. Many have been sold to honest adventurers, but Corco developed the Epsilon with the needs of privateers foremost. Federation starfleets have had great difficulty with an owner-modified Epsilon with a maneuver rating of 9 and a target program of -6. Unconfirmed reports say the ship and pilot are so good that it can weave into an asteroid or planet hex. Not nearly so popular is the Corco Nu, famous for its large cargo capacity and for a larger appetite for energy. Few have been sold, and those only in settled areas, as they make too easy and attractive a target.

Table I:
Attributes of New Spaceship Types

Spaceship Type	Number of Pods	Velocity Rating	Maneuver Rating	Energy Capacity	Energy Burn Rate	Streamlined?	Burster Class	Armor Class	Force Field Class	Civ Level	Target Program
Terwillicker Spaceworks, Inc.											
Terwillicker 3000 (Battlecraft)	0	2	6	12	1	Yes	1	0	0	6	-1
Terwillicker Y (Battlecraft)	0	4	9	18	1	Yes	2	2	0	8	-4
Blades Research Institute											
Mace	1	2	6	24	2	Yes	2	2	1	6	0
Battleax	6	1	4	120	12	No	2	2	1	6	0
Poniard	2	2	5	36	4	Yes	2	1	1	7	-2
Sai	3	2	5	60	5	Yes	2	2	1	7	-2
Saber	5	2	7	72	6	No	2	2	1	7	-2
Pike	12	1	4	144	16	No	3	2	2	8	-4
Halberd	15	1	4	180	18	No	4	2	2	8	-4
Harmonics, Inc.											
Oboe	3	2	6	60	5	Yes	1	1	0	6	0
Saxophone	10	2	5	144	11	No	1	1	1	8	-4
Fugue (Battlecraft)	0	2	12	15	1	Yes	1	1	0	8	-4
Corco Group											
Beta	3	1	3	48	6	Yes	1	1	0	6	0
Theta	8	1	2	120	12	No	0	0	0	6	0
Nu	15	1	3	192	24	No	1	0	0	7	-2
Epsilon	3	3	8	60	6	Yes	2	2	2	8	-4

New Pod Types

Several weapons pods are provided, plus several support pods. The support pods have little or no effect during battles, but rather are for use between battles, allowing campaign games. It is assumed that ships have on board equipment for repairing damaged equipment and armor, but that destruction is permanent. Note: When there is no battle underway, each spaceship has one additional Battle Command available because the crew can devote itself to other matters.

The new spaceship pods available are:

Blaster pod — A damaged blaster pod has only two fires. A destroyed blaster pod does not function.

Command pod — This is the headquarters and quarters for the fleet commander. It may share its Battle Commands with any friendly ship or guided missile within its ship's active search range. (Active search range does not mean that a ship has performed an active search; it is the range the ship could search to). If damaged, it has only two Battle Commands. If destroyed it does not function.

Force Field Generator pod — This pod was originally designed as a way to retrofit a forcefield generator on large merchantmen fearing pirates, and was later adopted by larger warships. A level 7 pod produces a class 1 field, a level 8 pod produces a class 2 field. The effects of damage and destruction are the same as for hull-mounted force field generators. If a ship has more than one generator, each must be issued separate activation and deactivation commands. Rule 9.8 only applies to hull-mounted generators. There is no additional benefit from having more than one force field activated. A ship receives protection only from the highest level force field activated.

Electronics Warfare pod — The EW pod jams enemy communications. At the beginning of the enemy Command Phase, it may subtract up to four Battle Commands from those available to enemy ships within active search range of its ship. Some of those Battle Command subtractions may be applied to enemy missiles within active search range. Unguided missiles are unaffected, but other missiles have a maneuver rating one lower that turn. A guided missile so affected also requires that its owner expend an extra Battle Command to control it for each subtraction.

Intelligent and guided missiles and MIMS rolling for interception with a ship with an undamaged EW pod subtract two from the die required for interception (an A becomes an 8). Two is added to the firing program of enemy ships when they fire at a ship with an undamaged EW pod. A damaged EW pod may subtract two battle commands from enemy ships or missiles, but does not otherwise function. A destroyed EW pod does not function.

Missile Reload pod — A missile reload pod is a specially constructed cargo pod with interior buffering for its dangerous load. Normally it is designed to provide missiles to other ships, requiring a supply transfer pod. It may provide unprepared missiles to a pod on its ship on the issuing of a Provide Supply Battle Command, providing any number of missiles until the pod is full. A damaged pod does not function. When a missile reload pod with missiles remaining is destroyed, roll the die. On a "1" the ship is destroyed by a secondary explosion. Destroyed missile reload pods do not function and all missiles

are lost. Types of missiles carried vary with civilization level.

TABLE II: Number of Missiles in Reload Pods

Level	Unguided Missile	Guided Missile	Intelligent Missile	MIMS
6	40	20	0	0
7	25	20	10	5
8	20	15	15	10

Supply Transfer pod — A supply transfer pod allows transfer of energy and missiles between docked ships. It may be either on the provider ship or the recipient ship. The recipient ship must have the capacity to accept what is transferred; partly empty basic energy capacity and undamaged energy pods for energy, vacancies in undamaged weapons pods or undamaged missile reload pods for missiles. The providing ship must have sufficient energy or missiles to transfer, and nothing can be taken from a damaged pod. Provided missiles are not prepared.

A supply transfer pod has a number of ports, each capable of providing missiles or energy (but not both from one port on the same turn). Number of ports and rate of transfer per port varies with civilization levels. On a single "Provide Supply" Battle Command, which may be issued by a recipient or provider ship, one ship may supply one other ship (using as many ports as desired). Additional "Provide Supply" commands allow other ships to be served, although each port may only be used once per turn. A damaged supply transfer pod functions at one level lower than its original level; a destroyed pod does not function.

Table III: Supply Transfer Pod Data

Level	Missiles/Port	Energy/Port	Ports
5	1	1 unit	1
6	enough to fill 1 pod	12 units	2
7	enough to fill 2 pods	144 units	3
8	enough to fill a ship	enough to fill a ship	4

Level 8 pods (only) may service fighters, but if the pod is damaged, destroyed, or made vulnerable, any fighters docked for such servicing are destroyed.

Major Repair pod — This pod is used to jettison destroyed equipment, or to move such equipment on its own ship or one docked with it between docked ships. A ship may only receive equipment if it has an appropriate empty space (with no equipment, not destroyed equipment there). Except for pods, equipment may only be transferred between ships of the same class. Equipment may only be used after it is installed. Equipment from enemy ships requires one additional turn to transfer or install. By issuing more than one Major Repair Battle Command, repairs may be accomplished more quickly.

Table IV: Major Repair Pod Data

Equipment Item	Turns/ Jettison	Turns/ Transfer	Turns/ Install
Pods*	1	1	1
Engine	3	4	5
Bridge	2	3	2
Force Field Generator	1	1	2

* — Other than Major Repair Pod itself.

The Medium Weapon pod was called the heavy weapon pod before heavier pods came along. If damaged, all missiles are lost and it retains only the capability to fire laser or particle bursts. If destroyed, it does not function and all missiles are lost.

Homing Missiles

Homing missiles act like guided missiles which have received no Control Missile Commands, until a friendly Command Phase when they are six or fewer hexes from an enemy unit which was issued Maneuver Commands in its previous command phase. Each time this occurs, the homing missile homes on that enemy unit. The phasing player issues the homing Missile Maneuver Commands as if it were a Guided Missile being provided guidance, subject to the requirement that the homing missile end the phase pointing as directly as possible at its target. This will not always be the best intercept trajectory.

If more than one enemy unit within six hexes has been issued Maneuver Commands, the target selected will be the one with the highest Relative Energy Score. The Relative Energy Score is the amount of energy expended on maneuver commands (which may be zero) minus the range. If there is a tie for the highest Relative Energy Score, the Phasing Player selects the target from those with the highest score. Homing missiles are unaffected by electronics warfare pods.

Homing missiles may be substituted for intelligent or guided missiles in a scenario. Whether homing missiles require preparation before firing is determined by whether the missile it replaces would have.

Table V: New Pod Types Attribute Chart

	Laser/Particle Weapons	Unguided Missiles	Guided Missiles	Intelligent Missiles	MIMS	Battle Commands	Civ Level	Target Program	Jump	Special Rules	Number of Fires	Armor
Blaster	Yes	0	0	0	0	0	7	-4	No	No	5	2
Command	No	0	0	0	0	4	8	—	No	Yes	0	2
Force Field Generator	No	0	0	0	0	0	7-8	—	No	Yes	0	1-2
Electronics Warfare	No	0	0	0	0	0	8	—	No	Yes	0	1-2
Supply Transfer	No	0	0	0	0	0	6-8	—	No	Yes	0	0-2
Missile Reload	No	See special rules					6-8	—	No	Yes	0	2
Major Repair	No	0	0	0	0	0	6	—	No	Yes	0	0-2
Medium Weapon	Yes	8	6	0	0	1	6	-1	No	No	1	1-2

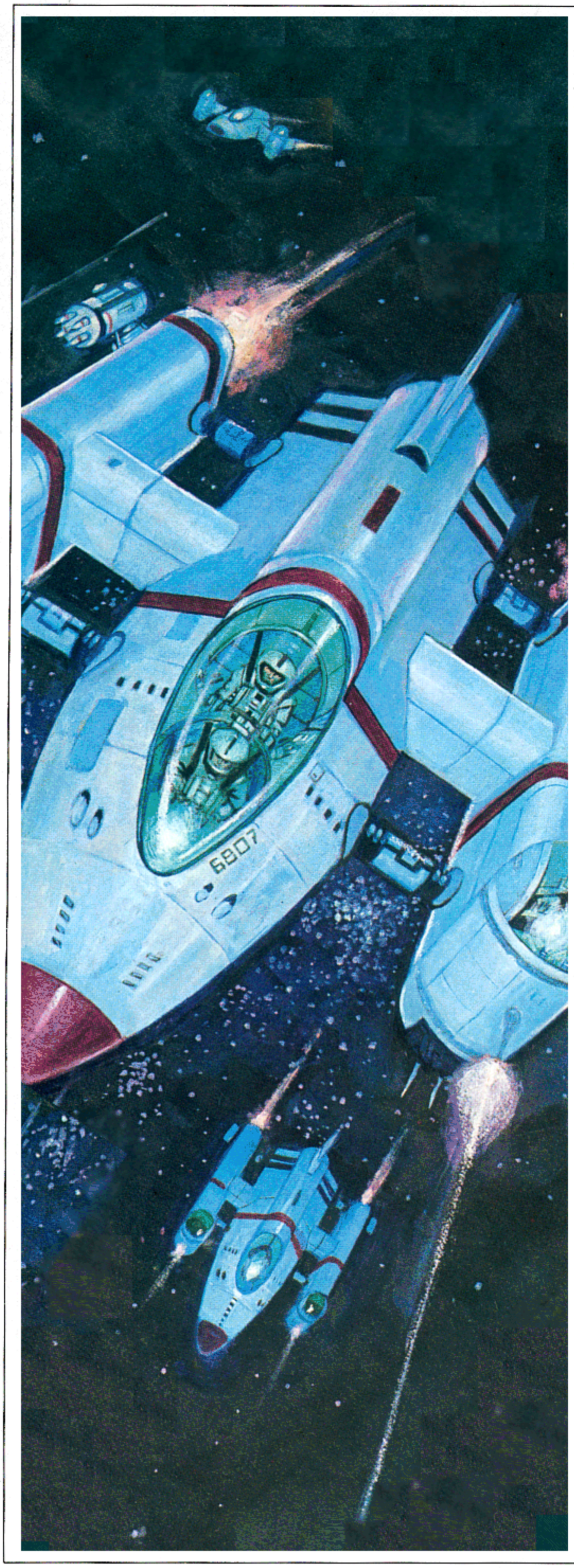


TABLE VI: Homing Missile Attributes

Civilization Level	Velocity Rating	Maneuver Rating	Energy Units
6	1	5	8
7	2	6	9
8	2	7	10

Planetary Installations

These rules are intended for minor outposts on unsettled planets or moons, or defensive remnants on civilized planets whose main defenses have been destroyed. The planetary atmosphere is assumed to be light or not present.

1. The rule that missiles entering a planetary hex are immediately destroyed is modified. The missile is destroyed at the end of the movement phase in which it enters the planet's hex.

2. Installations can only fire and be fired at through a single hexside. Even a small asteroid can stop heavy fire.

3. An installation is laid out just like a spaceship. It lacks a hull force field and burster. Its bridge and engine do not perform Maneuver Commands but help determine when an installation is completely destroyed (rule 11.0). Velocity is always 0, direction is as initialized (the installation may be partially protected by terrain).

4. The installation is assumed to be relatively camouflaged. The direction of the installation is not directly revealed to the enemy player. The installation's owner announces relative velocity figures for combats, so the direction it faces is soon obvious. The pod arrangement is not revealed, although the other player knows the number of pods and the effects (missiles, battlecraft, lasers, particle fire, tractor beams, jamming, or active force field) coming from each pod.

5. When the phasing player chooses a pod to inflict a hit upon, he does so without seeing the Log, choosing the pod by its number. Hits on a pod are known, and it is known when a pod is destroyed, but damage and vulnerability are not revealed.

6. If an Active Search (7.4) or Detection (3.0) of the installation is conducted, roll three times on the Hit Table. Any pod "hit" is revealed. Its type and damage or vulnerability status are revealed, but not missiles or energy remaining.

Scenario one: The Flight of Sambu

After a long career, Sambu the Pirate, known to his friends and associates as Sambu the Magnificent, had gone too far. His very successful raid on the Spaceship Resupply Depot on Gameer had provided him with the best assortment of pods ever possessed by a pirate, but now the Federation fleet was bearing down on him with a vengeance. If he didn't hyperjump fast, his fat was fried. Sambu had already equipped his fleet with his choice of pods when three Spears arrived.

Map Deployment: A B C D (E)

PLAYER 1 DEPLOYMENT: One Corco Iota (Spaceship Counter A) with Sambu aboard, one Corco Mu (Spaceship Counter B), three Corco Gammas (Spaceship Counters D, E, and F). All pods are Armor Class 2. Sambu may choose any pods for his ships within the following restrictions: No command or elec-

tronics warfare pods are permitted, only one battlecraft pod (Terwillicker-X) is available due to a shortage of pilots, and each ship must have a jump capability. Set up first speed and direction 3, on any hex of Map A. No force fields may be activated, but battlecraft and one missile per weapon pod may be prepared.

PLAYER 2 DEPLOYMENT: Set up second, direction 9 and speed 3, on any hex of Map B. One Spear (one crew pod, one energy pod, one battle communications pod, one augmented jump pod, one tractor beam pod, two battlecraft pods (with Terwillicker-X) and one arsenal pod (Spaceship Counter A)). Two Spears (Counters B and C), each with one crew pod, one energy pod, two battle communications pods, one augmented jump pod, one battlecraft pod (with Terwillicker-X) and two arsenal pods. No force fields may be up but battlecraft and one missile per pod may be prepared. All pods are Armor Class 2.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: Sambu wins by hyperjumping from any map to the 3 o'clock of Map D or a map above or below such a map. No other jumping is permitted. Player 2 wins by preventing this. Player 2's victory is especially sweet if he can board the ship with Sambu on it (capturing him), especially if no pirate ships hyperjump. If the bridge of Sambu's ship is destroyed, Sambu is killed.

SPECIAL RULES: A person or persons (Sambu in this case) may freely and secretly move between docked friendly ships. This holds for docked ships in other scenarios. Any ship of Player 1 which is beyond active search range of the ship holding Sambu, is on a map where jumping is permitted, and has a jump capability will "turn rabbit." That means that he must issue a jump command as soon as possible, if necessary issuing first a Prepare Jump command. Exception: He need not drop his force field if it means an enemy missile will hit him unshielded. This reflects the fact that Sambu was ready to sacrifice everyone else, and they knew it and were looking out for themselves.

PLAYER NOTES: Sambu chose to outfit the Gammas each with a hunter, a battle communications, and an arsenal pod. He demonstrated his famous ingenuity by previously docking the Mu (with 2 augmented jump pods, 2 energy pods, 1 battle communications pod, 2 arsenal pods, 2 force field pods, 2 burster pods, and 1 supply transfer pod) to his Iota (with 2 augmented jump pods, 1 energy pod, 1 battle communications pod, 1 battlecraft pod, 2 force field pods, and 2 burster pods), and trying to blast straight through.

Scenario two: The Battle of Yamani

Space is generally very, very empty, with light years between stars, but this area was emptier than most. The only bodies of any consequence were a rogue planetoid, Dragor, and its moon Yamani. On Yamani the People's Socialist Alliance had set up a small base facility that was very useful to their lines of communications in their war against the Federation of Planets. It was here that the long-awaited first clash of main battle fleets occurred.

Map Deployment: A B
C D

The planet Dragor is in hex D0101. Yamani is in hex B1313, moving with direction 6 and velocity 1. It maintains that velocity and a distance of 12 hexes from Dragor, changing directions at hexes D1307 (to 8), D0113 (to 10), C0507 (to 12), A0513 (to 2), B0107 (to 4), and B1313 (to 6). It maintains a constant facing relative to Dragor, so any installation on it maintains its alignment relative to Dragor. A base on the side of Yamani farthest from Dragor is always on the side farthest from Dragor, regardless of Yamani's direction. No star is nearby and these are rather small pieces of rock, so jumping is permitted at any point over 24 hexes from Dragor.

PLAYER 1 (FP) DEPLOYMENT: One Halberd command ship with 1 command pod, 2 battle communications pods, 1 electronics warfare pod, 3 energy pods, 2 augmented jump pods, 2 level 8 tractor beam pods, 1 arsenal pod, 1 battlecraft pod (with Harmonics Fugue), 1 blaster pod, and 1 crew pod;

Two Pike carriers, each with 1 battle communications pod, 2 energy pods, 1 augmented jump pod, 1 level 8 tractor pod, 6 battlecraft pods (with Terwillicker-Y), and 1 crew pod. On their first sortie, the Y's carry 2 homing missiles and 1 intelligent missile;

Two Spear battlewagons, each with 2 battle communications pods, 1 energy pod, 1 level 8 force field pod, 1 augmented jump pod, 2 arsenal pods, and 1 crew pod;

Four Sword flak cruisers, each with 1 energy pod, 1 jump pod, 2 Blaster pods, and 1 crew pod). All pods are Armor Class 2.

Set up in the bottom 3 rows of Map C, with at least one hex between each ship. Direction must be between 0 and 2 for each ship. Velocity must be the same for all ships, and be between 1 and 3. Missiles and battlecraft may be prepared (1 per appropriate pod).

PLAYER 2 (PSA) DEPLOYMENT: One 15-pod communications base on Yamani with 1 command pod, 1 long range communications pod, 1 battle communications pod, 3 energy pods, 1 level 7 tractor pod, 1 blaster pod, 1 crew pod, 1 level 7 supply transfer pod, 2 level 7 force field pods, 1 equipment pod, 1 major repair pod, and 1 level 7 missile reload pod. One 12-pod fighter base on Yamani with 2 battle communications pods, 2 energy pods, 5 battlecraft pods with Terwillicker X-1G, 1 crew pod, and 2 equipment pods. As long as there is an undamaged equipment pod, each fighter may reload 1 guided missile each time it refuels. One Pike with 1 battle communications pod, 1 energy pod, 1 augmented jump pod, 1 hunter pod, 1 tractor pod, 2 arsenal pods, 3 battlecraft pods (with Terwillicker X-3G), 1 blaster pod, and 1 crew pod. On its first sortie, each fighter is armed with 3 guided missiles;

Two Spears, each with 1 battle communications pod, 1 energy pod, 1 standard jump pod, 1 heavy weapons pod, 2 battle craft pods (with Terwillicker X3G), 1 blaster pod, and 1 crew pod;

Four Swords, each with 1 battle communications pod, 1 standard jump pod, 2 heavy weapons pods, and 1 crew pod;

One Sai guardship with 2 medium weapons pods and 1 heavy weapons pod. The Sai is in orbit around Yamani. It must remain in orbit until enemy ships are within 12 hexes. Until then it is invulnerable to unguided and guided missiles. All other PSA ships are between 2 and 6 hexes from Yamani, in adjacent hexes. They must all have a common velocity between 0 and 3 and a common direction between 6 and 9.

VICTORY CONDITIONS: The PSA Player wins if his communications base is undestroyed. If it is destroyed, the player with the highest number of undestroyed pods at the end of the battle wins. The pods of a boarded enemy ship count toward the total of the side that captured it, not the previous owner. The end of the battle is determined by mutual consent, and the battle is automatically over when only one player has units on Maps A, B, C, and D. ▲

Sword and Sorcery IN SUPERGAME™

by Jay Hartlove

© 1983 by Jay and Aimee Hartlove

One of the great attractions of role playing is it allows us to live in worlds more interesting than our own. Each different genre of games transports us into a world that differs from the here and now in unique ways. Players prefer certain game worlds because of their particular differences. The SUPERGAME system was written with the world of comic book superheroes in mind.

Comic book characters can do most anything you can imagine, so we had to write the game as a set of universally applicable rules with emphasis on categories of abilities rather than specifics, so players could fully develop the characters they want to play. But this means any kind of character can be generated and played, including those from other gaming genres.

One of the attractions of "sword and sorcery" role-playing games is the variety of monsters you can encounter. Such fantasy monsters are easy to create in the SUPERGAME system, where you build things giving them the exact abilities you want.

Another attraction is the thrill of finding special things, like magic weapons. In the SUPERGAME system, all beginning characters are put on equal footing with one another by limiting their overall effectiveness. There are no freebies or discounts in the character construction system; you buy everything the character can do with a set number of points. The notion of such a character using some weapon or device that he/she has found is inconsistent with the game's intent, since that would increase the character's total effectiveness if the character is allowed to keep the found object indefinitely. Our solution is an object breakage system.

The effectiveness of an object is measured by what it does, not by the particulars of how it works. Objects that do a certain thing are bought with the same number of SUPERGAME character construction points as super powers that do the same thing. Objects bought with a character's own points never break. If they are damaged, the objects are always allowed to be fixed before the next adventure. If lost, then recovery or replacement of the object becomes paramount to the character.

Found objects that aren't created from a character's own points are not indestructable. The longevity of such items is figured differently from one item to the next.

Hand weapons are commonly found objects in fantasy role-playing games. In the SUPERGAME system, the amount of damage done when striking with a hand weapon is a rolled percentage of the sum of the weapon's damaging power plus the wielding character's strength-

derived damaging power. Martial arts training adds to this percentage. The chance of breaking an ordinary weapon is the total amount of damage done in a strike expressed as a percentage. Each level of martial arts the wielder has decreases this chance of 10%. Well-made weapons have a 10% to 20% breakage resistance; that percentage is subtracted from the breakage chance rolled each time a strike is made.

To illustrate, we'll take a very strong character (Strength of 50) with hand-to-hand training (level one), using a well-made (15% breakage resistance), one-handed battle axe. The character's Strength gives him/her a damage base of 25 (50 • 50/100). To this we add the weapon's damage potential of 15. Once a hit has been made, we roll percentile dice to see how much damage it did; let's say we get a 70. To this we add 10% from the martial arts training. 80% of 40 is 32 points of damage. Without further modification this means a 32% chance of breaking the axe with that strike. Subtracting 10% for the wielder's martial arts skills and the axe's 15% breakage resistance leaves a total breakage chance of 7%.

Especially well-made weapons might have up to 50% resistance, while divinely-created or enchanted weapons would have up to 80% breakage resistance. As with all found objects, the abilities (Dexterity adds, damage done, breakage resistance, super powers) of hand weapons are entirely up to the game master's discretion. The SUPERGAME rulebook gives typical damage and Dexterity adds for the various types of hand weapons to use as guidelines.

Aimed weapons are even easier to figure. If they are not reloadable, then they simply stop working when they run out of ammo or power. Reloadable weapons do the same but characters then can try to find or make more ammunition. Invention capability and typical weapon loads for conventional weapons are both detailed in the game rules.

Objects that do things other than damage will rarely break during normal use. If the found object is powered, then referees can always have it run down after a set number of uses. Details on refueling or re-energizing devices, like deciding ammunition for projectile weapons, are left to the game master.

An easy way to fit permanently energized objects into game balance is to make them unusable by a single character. If two or more characters are required to operate something then no one character has his/her effectiveness increased by a significant amount.

A character's personal armor and defenses will usually protect a character's carried possessions as well. This does not apply to found objects, however (unless the character has an armor bubble or the object in question is very small). It's a good idea when designing a to-be-found object to give it a Physical score and (if appropriate) armor. The Physical score is the amount of damage an object takes before it is inoperable. For some objects, this score isn't very great.

You can't have a sword-and-sorcery world without abundant magic. In the SUPERGAME system, magic is a means of delivering a construction point purchased effect to a target. Characters that use magic do so as a constant part of their total effectiveness. To infuse more magic into your game world, you can have characters find magical scrolls or tablets. When a character reads one of these, the words burn themselves into the character's memory and the scroll or tablet disintegrates.

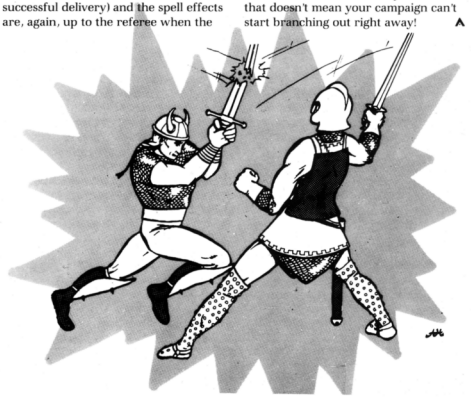
To cast spells, the character recites the magic words aloud (which is a physical action). The feedback of hearing the spell spoken causes brain nerves to fire (a mental action) which purges the memory of the spell completely from his/her mind, much like electroshock therapy but without the convulsions. The power of the spell (the pip plusses against the die roll which determines the chance of successful delivery) and the spell effects are, again, up to the referee when the spell is designed.

Comic book superheroes end up in whatever fantastic situation the game master can cook up for them. Superheroes are often sent into the past, the future, outer space, and other dimensions. But you don't have to transport superheroes to a sword-and-sorcery world if you would rather use characters who live there already. The adaptations listed here allow SUPERGAME rules to be used for a complete sword-and-sorcery campaign.

The advantages of using the SUPERGAME system are that it allows unlimited character description, it doesn't require the use of restricting character classes, and it totally balances the effectiveness of one character to another. You may wish to start beginning characters with less than the 250 character construction points suggested in the rulebook for superheroes. Since fantasy characters usually start their careers as "normal" people, 175 or 200 points should be plenty for any kind of character players might want to play.

Another particularly good use for these rules is in campaigns using time/space travel. In these campaigns, vastly different technologies and fighting techniques clash. This adventuring set-up is especially well handled in the SUPERGAME system.

Over the next year, DAG Design will be producing supplements based in other genres for superhero adventuring. They will include outer space adventures, inter-dimensional menaces, and of course, a sword-and-sorcery world. But that doesn't mean your campaign can't start branching out right away! A



AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS™ Game Booklet

Design: Aaron Allston. Steve Jackson Games, 1983. $10 (booklet).

The AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game booklet is a landmark achievement in game design. For the first time, two companies, Steve Jackson Games and Hero Games, have joined forces to produce a supplement that combines the best features from their top sellers, CAR WARS™ and CHAMPIONS™ game systems, respectively.

The supplement was written by a former employee of Jackson Games, but overseeing the work on the CHAMPIONS game section of the supplement was George MacDonald from Hero Games. The sweat put into this by both companies really shows in the final product as the rules are clear and succinct.

The booklet is divided into four sections, one of which is a handy index. The first section is about CHAMPIONS Autodueling, and includes extensive information on character skills, vehicle construction, movement, and combat. It ends with a nice scenario that makes excellent use of the rules given up to this point.

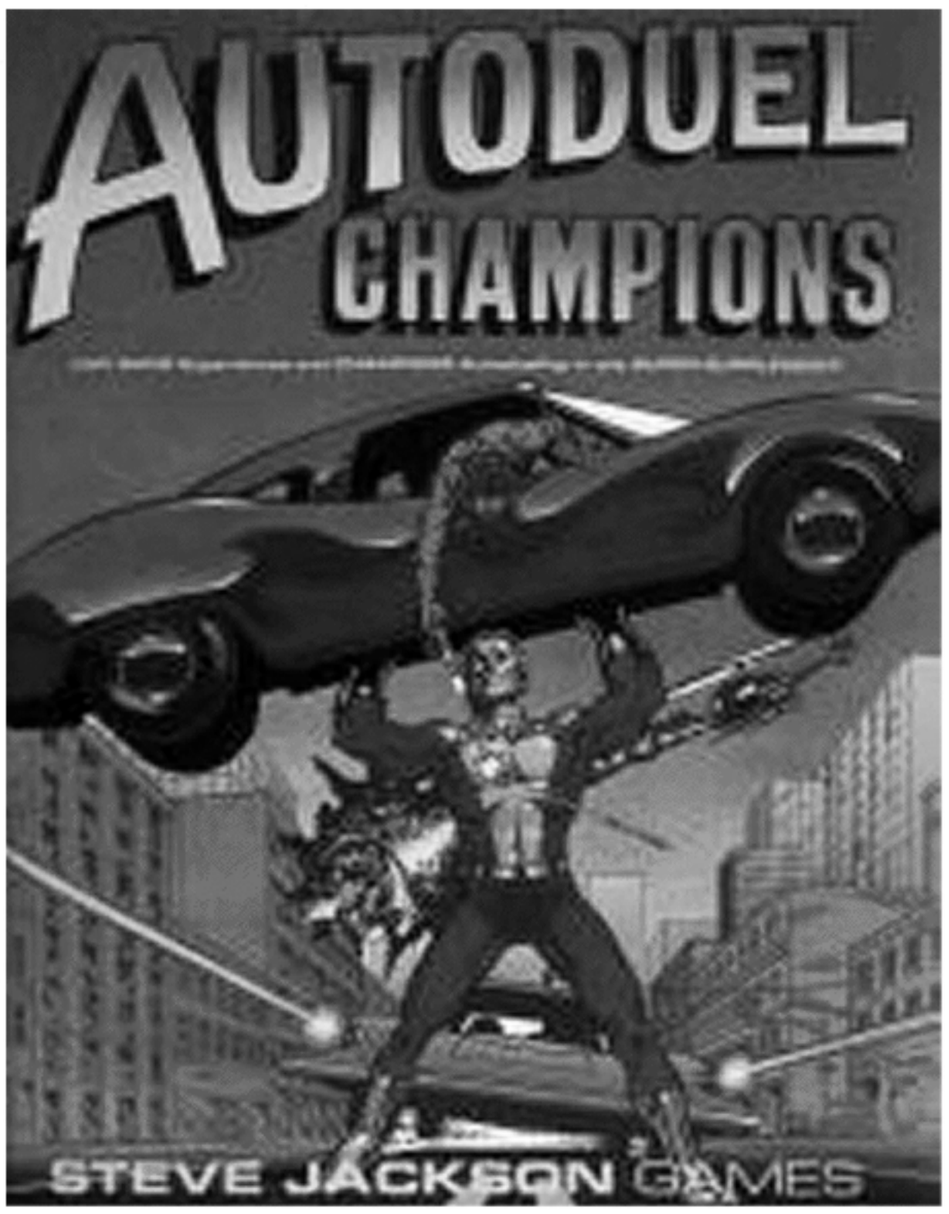
In the second section, helicopter construction, movement, and combat is explained in CAR WARS game terms. The rules are straightforward enough that it makes one wonder why the TRUCK STOP™ and SUNDAY DRIVERS™ game supplements were so long. . . . The only serious "fault" that I can find is that CHAMPIONS game characteristics are omitted (either intentionally or by accident), so this section is only for those who play the CAR WARS games or who don't mind doing the conversion work themselves.

The third section deals with CAR WARS game superheroics. If there is any fault with the AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game booklet as a whole, it is in the CAR WARS game section. Although character creation is covered, complete with skills as found in CAR WARS gaming and some of the skills from the CHAMPIONS game, it leaves one feeling empty, as if they haven't given you the full story. The superpowers, which are the fulcrum to superheroics, only number twenty-three total. Normal skills are given, but only twenty-three? This section also describes combat resolution and "knockback" (the process by which things are scattered about when punched by a superhero or slammed into by a vehicle). However, it only hints at items like "special effects" and "disadvantages"; puzzling terms if you aren't familiar with CHAMPIONS gaming. The section concludes with a scenario that uses the helicopter and superhero rules in CAR WARS games.

The AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game booklet is a fantastic addition to anyone's CHAMPIONS game campaign. Those looking for an expansion of the car chase/combat rules should look into this one. However (and it's a big "however"), those who only own CAR WARS games will be greatly disappointed by the AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game booklet due to the skimpiness of the superhero material. The descriptions are a good start and touch all of the bases, as far as activities governed by the skills and powers given, are covered. There just isn't enough "meat" on the bones to make the supplement worth the hefty price tag.

It's obvious that only half of the information in the AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game rules is usable at any one time. Perhaps a better marketing plan would have been to publish each individual section separately. That way those interested in the autodueling rules could get them for a reduced rate without having to buy the superhero rules. I would give it a 6 (on a scale of 1=poor to 10=truly inspired) because it was a good first effort at collaboration. Otherwise it would rate a 4.5 because of the waste of money to those who would only use half the book.

Reviewed by Jerry Epperson



If there is any fault with the AUTODUEL CHAMPIONS game booklet as a whole, it is in the CAR WARS game section. Although character creation is covered . . . it leaves one feeling empty . . .

CAR WARS™ Game Reference Screen

Design: *Autoduel Quarterly* Magazine staff. Steve Jackson Games, 1983. $5

Of all the "blow 'em away on the freeway" boardgames that have saturated the market, only the CAR WARS game survives with a large and steadfast audience. Though the game has its faults, the CAR WARS game system remains popular with the demands for more new material growing daily. It has spawned a host of supplements, and even has a magazine available to support the growing hoards of CAR WARS game fanatics, *Autoduel Quarterly* Magazine.

Now Steve Jackson Games has released a CAR WARS Game Reference Screen that has "all the charts, tables,

and diagrams you need for CAR WARS game adventures . . . on one convenient screen." Also included are enlarged copies of the various record sheets previously published in other CAR WARS game supplements.

The screen itself consists of three, 8½" × 11" heavy cardstock panels printed on both sides. I assumed that one side is meant for gamemasters and the other for players. Assumptions, however, can get you into trouble.

The charts and tables are arranged on the panels in no order. Listings which the GM might find handy are found on the player side and vice versa. The screen could have been great for refereeing, but as it is, "reference" is all that it can be used for. About as much use could have been had by printing all of the charts on flimsy paper and selling them for 50 cents.

On the player side of the screen (remember this is only an assumption based upon previously published GM screens), one can find: an index to all CAR WARS game materials, a weapon data table, accessories list, and repair chart. On the final panel is the catchy full-color illustration that can be found on the original CAR WARS game (suitable for framing, but little else).

On the GM side is: an advanced collision system, confetti (a new "littering

interstate" rule), "to hit" modifiers, weapon damage location list, control table, and a hazards and manuevers charts. The new collision system was published in *Autoduel Quarterly* #2 (at $2.50) and the confetti rule is worthless, so don't run out and spend your money for the these two minor additions.

Useful information which could have been included consists of: character creation, skills, vehicle construction, terrain effects (passing mention is made in the hazards table, but nothing useful), and even the insignificant vehicle boarding table for semi-trucks. These charts could have replaced the full-color cover (which could have been printed on paper, backed with advertising or something of the sort) and the advanced collision rules (much more useful on paper that can be folded and inserted in the game box than on a large screen).

What more can you say about a screen? It either does the job or it doesn't. On the Epperson Scale, the CAR WARS Game Reference Screen rates a "4" (on a scale of 1=poor and 10=divine inspiration). It gets the mission accomplished, but with a little more foresight and expense, it could have been invaluable. Should you hop into your Porsche 911, buzz down to the ol' hobby shop, and pick up a copy? Only if you use screens a lot in your gaming sessions. Otherwise there are plenty of cheaper methods to obtain the same result.
Reviewed by Jerry Epperson

Scouts Rulebook

Design: Marc Miller. Game Designers' Workshop, 1983. $6.00

Scouts is the sixth rulebook in the popular TRAVELLER® game series of science-fiction role-playing material. The distinctions among rulebooks, supplements and adventures are important. Adventures are just that, scenarios and situations to assist the referee in running a campaign by providing pre-made outlines for play. Supplements are informational in nature and highlight a world, a type of equipment (such as starships, which have frequently been the subject of supplements) or provide pregenerated lists of worlds, characters, or animal encounters.

Rulebooks, however, are something quite different, for they deal with the basic procedures of the role-playing system. Where supplements and adventures can often be regarded as optional, especially by enterprising referees who do a lot of this work on their own, rulebooks may substantially alter the way the game is played. As a consequence, the appearance of a new addition to the rulebook line is of considerable interest to all TRAVELLER gamers.

Scouts is a rulebook dealing with two distinct but interconnected topics. First is the Imperial service given over to the exploration of the frontier, survey and mapping of known space, communications via the X-boat system and reconnaissance during war: the Imperial Interstellar Scout Service. The second is a new method for generating the star systems with which the Scouts are so very often concerned.

Players and referees may have been wondering when the Scout service would get the expanded treatment that their more vainglorious brethren, the Imperial Marines, Army and Navy, received in *Mercenary* and *High Guard* (TRAVELLER game books 4 and 5 respectively). In 1980, the now-defunct Paranoia Press published *Scouts and Assassins*, an effort to expand the options for Scout characters. The booklet, however, is no longer available and the absence of material for Scouts is noticable. Now, GDW has taken on the task of dealing with the IISS.

The first twenty pages of *Scouts* is devoted to the IISS and an expanded Scout generation system. The material details the organization of the IISS; the service, we learn, is divided into seven offices, dealing with such tasks as administration, communications, explorations, detached duty (an important office for player characters, since it will be through this branch that they interact with the service if they are former Scouts), operations, technical services, and the Imperial Grand Survey, the office devoted to the job of preparing the subsector maps that are used in TRAVELLER game adventures. Much of the material is culled straight from a feature article on the Scout Service appearing in issue #6 of *The Journal of the Travellers Aid Society*.

The new character generation system is set up along the lines established in *Mercenary* and *High Guard*; a Scout's prior service career is created in considerable detail. The differentiation of branches allows for a richer variety of skills and requires the additions of Scout

ranks, an aspect of military life that has not been included in Scout material until this time. The addition of the ranks seems important primarily because of the inclusion of the bureaucracy as an option for Scout service, which also reflects in the fact that Scouts can now attend administrator school. The skills possible for characters in the IISS have undergone considerable expansion.

A wider range of Book 1 skills are available, and skills introduced in later books and supplements such as communications, liaison and reconnaissance appear. There are three new skills, apparently presented by GDW for the first time: equestrian (the use of animals for transport), naval architect (ship design), and, especially appropriate for the IISS, survey (mapping and charting star systems). The new opportunities for Scouts will result in more diversity among characters and better rounded Scouts in general.

A criticism that has been levied against the original TRAVELLER game rules concerns how they dealt with star systems. In short, they ignored systems and concentrated on worlds; each "system" is represented by a world, generated according to the rules provided. Other aspects of the world's solar system were left up to the referee to provide. The star system generation rules in *Scouts* changes all that in a big way. Nearly everything a player or referee could want to know about a star system is provided.

The star system rules are the main show in this volume; although the book may be called *Scouts*, the Scouts are just the warm up act to a star-system generation sequence that encompasses three-quarters of the book and totally replaces the world generation rules from Book 3.

Two new generation checklists are given. The first is probably of greatest use to referees who have already created their subsectors and have their main world data ready. This continuation procedure allows the referee to extrapolate backwards and generate a star system around a created world. The second system guides the referee in creating a star system from scratch. The continuation system works reasonably well, which comes as no small relief to people who don't want to trash their existing subsectors and start again.

The new opportunities for Scouts will result in more diversity among characters and better rounded Scouts in general.

The new system begins with the determination of the primary's characteristics. Stars may be solitary, binary or trinary, and the stars themselves are rated for type and size. Much attention is paid to orbits and the habitable zones for each star type. The presence of captured planets, gas giants and planetoid belts is determined. Once these basic star system features are known, the generation of the worlds within the system begins. This follows the procedures laid down in the original rules, but with significant modification dependent on zone the world's orbit occupies. The system now allows for the generation of satellites for individual worlds.

Once the main world is created, additional worlds are generated. Special rules cover the technological and political status of subordinate worlds; their technology level is lower than that of the main world, and the choice of government types is restricted. Subordinates worlds may also have spaceports, which are different from starports, and are often provided for a *raison d'etre* in the form of a mining, farming, military, colony or research facility. Should one feel it necessary, more data can be generated about stars and worlds. For example, stellar luminosity, effective temperature and bolometric magnitude can be determined by spectral class and size. Key attributes of worlds, such as average temperature, cloudiness, axial tilt, even greenhouse effects and albedo can be generated as well. Similarly, length of day and year can be computed. All of this can prove useful in TRAVELLER game situations, since most adventures take place on worlds. Information on temperature, day length and so on can be worked into the scenarios.

The book concludes with a chart that can be photocopied and used to store all the data generated for a given system, and several sample systems are given as well. One system is Terra, whose familiarity assists in understanding how the new system generator works.

Scouts adds much to Scout characters and especially to the generation of star systems and worlds. These latter rules add great detail to star systems, and a correspondingly greater cost in time and effort to create subsectors. Its value then, depends on how anxious the referee is to include the new information in his campaign.

Reviewed by Tony Watson

The Klingons

Design: John Ford, Guy McLimore, Greg Poehlin, and David Tepool. FASA Corporation, 1983. $15 boxed

Many gamers love to play the equalizer in role-playing games. They're the ones willing to risk themselves to chop some other character who has grown too big for his britches down to size. In AD&D® gaming, they play the neutral or evil characters. In STAR TREK™: The Role Playing Game, they play Klingons.

FASA Corporation has recently released their newest supplement/sourcebook for the STAR TREK game. It covers the Klingon Empire the way it should have been covered in the TV series and films. *The Klingons* game supplement comes boxed with a large 64-page booklet, two separate adventures for Klingon characters, character bridge station sheets for all Klingon vessels, and a set of 126 counters covering various Klingon races and warships.

Of course, the main attraction is the *Klingon Sourcebook*. Written by John M. Ford and the threesome that brought you the initial STAR TREK game book and adventures, it covers Klingon character generation, additional skills and skill descriptions, Klingon physiology and medical treatments, Klingon equipment, Klingon weapons, starship combat, and planetside adventuring.

One of the most interesting and informative sections in the booklet covers the history, structure, and organization of the Klingon Empire; the authors have taken great pains to build on the brief descriptions of the Klingon Empire that were given in the TV series, and expand them to a three-dimensional political entity. They have done their job superbly. Much of the material came from John M. Ford's Star Trek novel,

The Klingons game supplement adds a new dimension to the STAR TREK gaming experience. It allows you to recreate your favorite Klingons . . .

The Final Reflection, soon to be released by Pocket Books. By reading the sourcebook you can find out such things as the history of Klinzhai, the Klingon homeworld, or learn the details of Klingon culture and their beliefs. Learn all about Klingon Imperial Policy and why every Klingon is constantly playing the *komerex zha* (Klingonese for "The Perpetual Game"), the intricate weaving of intrigue, political power, social manipulation, and buck-passing that more often than not leads to the selection of a new Klingon Emperor. The booklet also covers the extents of the Klingon Empire, finally showing us just exactly where it is located in relation to the United Federation of Planets, the Romulan Confederation, and the Organian Treaty Zone.

In addition, the sourcebook covers the Klingon Imperial Naval and Marine Service, detailing ranks, uniforms, insignia, and decorations. The organization of the Klingon Imperial Forces is given with descriptions of the eleven departments of the Klingon military structure (Imperial Contacts Branch/Klingon Diplomatic Corps, Exploration/Colonization, Medical, Communications, Plans/Policies/Finance, Intelligence, Installations/Logistics, Personnel/Administration, Sciences, Training, and Engineering). A section on Klingon shipboard systems is very well done, concerning the many differences between Klingon warships and Federation vessels (agonizer booths, inspirational media rooms, surveillance facilities, etc.) and clears up the mystery of why Klingon warships are required to earn their names.

Finally, the Gamemaster section of the booklet gives hints on the playing of a Klingon character campaign, with a discussion on players and Imperial Policy, the infighting within the group of player characters to top each other (more on this later), and the best way to insult a Klingon.

Of the two adventures included in the supplement, the longer one, called "The Natural Order," is the most interesting. It gives actual examples of the day-to-day problems and pressures of life as a Klingon naval or marine officer. Taking place on the agro-colony of Delleren V, deep within the Empire, it centers around the possible ineptitude (or false accusation) of the planet's governor. The players must sift through all the evidence and discover the truth behind the intrigue. If they fail, they must find an acceptable scapegoat to save their skins from the High Command.

The other adventure, "Intrusion," is far less complex and covers the breakout of some Romulan prisoners on a light cruiser, who attempt to destroy the ship before they are captured again or killed. The adventure uses the Klingon D-7 deckplans that may be purchased separately or the smaller reproductions of the D-7 provided in the initial boxed set for the STAR TREK game. While basically a shoot-em-up, this adventure does familiarize you with the interior of the most common class of Klingon warship (and the only one presently with published deckplans). The counters provided help significantly in any game in which deckplans are used.

The bridge station charts included in the supplement are similar to those provided with the STAR TREK game, except that now the roles are reversed; the gamemaster runs any Federation ships encountered and the players are the bridge crew of a Klingon vessel. These charts can be used for any Klingon warship included in the recently published *Klingon Ship Recognition Manual* or used in conjunction with ships designed using the *Star Trek Ship Construction Manual*.

The beauty of this supplement is the detailed overview it has given an entire stellar empire. Of course, much more can be said on one subject or another, but this is an excellent beginning and gives anyone wishing to start a Klingon campaign the source material necessary to go out and create their own version of the Klingon Empire.

Which brings me back to the reasons for playing Klingon characters. Basically, it's fun being nasty without really hurting anyone. In a Klingon campaign there will be much more competition between player characters than in other role-playing games. For Klingons, backstabbing is a way of life. The only loyalty one owes is to oneself and one's particular line family (unless betraying that line family would get you closer to the reward that you seek). Klingons are constantly at odds with each other and enlightened self interest is the name of the game. This causes many an altercation between player characters and does seem more enjoyable than just being a good guy for the Federation.

Playing a Klingon character is an exercise in contrasts. It is both more subtle (political infighting, buck passing, etc.) and less subtle (What's a Klingon's favorite way to conduct diplomatic negotiations? Have an orbiting battlecruiser lock its disruptors onto your capital city) than playing a Federation Star Fleet character. It is particularly interesting when you are able to manipulate the situation to such an extent that you can discredit one member of your party while gaining all the glory and praise for yourself. An interesting way of doing this is to try what the Gamemaster section of the supplement suggests; choose a junior officer from among the player characters to be an agent for Imperial Internal Security. His/her job would be to spy on the other characters and ensure that they carry out their duty to the Empire.

As can be seen, Klingon campaigns will probably lead to the demise of more player characters than a Star Fleet game would. It is for that reason that the supplement suggests having more than one character to ensure continued enjoyment and participation in the game, should one of your personae come to grief.

The Klingons game supplement adds a new dimension to the STAR TREK gaming experience. It allows you to recreate your favorite Klingons from the TV series to add new nasties to the scene, all in a beautifully detailed background describing new details of the Klingon Empire. This is certainly a must for any avid STAR TREK game fan and a welcome addition to FASA's line of STAR TREK game products. While you plan out your Klingon campaign, remember the words of that ageless Klingon militant philosopher, Kuirok the Wordy: "If it doesn't fit — *FORCE IT!*"

Reviewed by Dale L. Kemper

SUPERWORLD™: The Superpowered Role-playing Game

Design: Steve Perrin. Chaosium, Inc., 1983. $20 boxed

The cover reads "Defend Justice and Smash Evil With Your Superworld Heroes." Indeed, that is what it is all about. Chaosium, Inc., has taken their minirule set for role-playing a comic book superhero and developed it into a full-fledged game in which players can adventure to save Truth, Justice and the American Way (or anything else for that matter).

The game comes with three booklets (the *Superheroes* Book, the *Superpowers* Book, and the *Gamemasters* Book). The rules are based on Chaosium's percentile skills system and use the same attribute rolls used by other games in that system: Strength, Constitution, Size, Intelligence, Power (a measure of will and luck), Dexterity and Appearance. Except for one slip, everything is described first and explained in use second (recharge rate is mentioned before it is explained).

The explanations take us through the transformation of Kent Fraser, staff photographer, into Stormbolt, defender of peace, truth and justice. While detailing the development of the character Stormbolt, the rules do a solid and clear job of explaining how to put together a character for a SUPERWORLD™ game.

By the time a player has read through to the glossary on page 31 of the first book, the player knows how to play the game. A character is put together by rolling characteristics on 2d6•6; once the characteristics have been rolled, the character's pre-superpowers identity is determined. Stereotypes for various professions are provided to aid in role-playing (e.g., policemen ". . . tend to be cynical . . . Their experience in the mean streets may have sparked in them a certain rough chivalry.") Players may choose their own occupations and income from the list, have them assigned, or roll from tables created by the gamemaster.

The player then chooses an origin for his or her superhero. The sample character received his powers from a freak lightning bolt. Others may choose to be aliens, magicians, mutants, or gamma-ray victims. A random method like Jeff Dee's excellent system in the VILLAINS AND VIGILANTEES™ game would make a good addition to the SUPERWORLD™ game system.

The characters powers and abilities are chosen next. This is done by choosing skills and powers and investing "hero points" in them. A character determines his hero points by first totaling his requisite points; this results in a number between 56 and 168. A set number of starting hero points such as is used by the CHAMPIONS™ game system might be a fairer way to do this.

The player then picks various weaknesses to add to his character. Each weakness adds several hero points, and may be minor (the hero is reckless or hates pickles) or major (the hero takes 4d6 points of damage per round from light) with a corresponding value in hero points given for the weakness. Common sense is encouraged by the authors here and the suggestion is a welcome one.

The powers, advantages, skills, and weaknesses (power disadvantages and handicaps) are very comprehensive. A great deal of feedback was used in keeping the game balanced and playable (one of the advantages in having the original rules completely rewritten). While the rules enjoin the gamemaster to use his own judgement if holes appear in the rules, the times that this will be necessary are going to be few and rare.

Several powers that caused a great deal of trouble in other systems (such as *Teleport*, which is outlawed in most CHAMPIONS games) have been defined so that the problems cannot arise. The only missing superpower here is the ability to create *Force Walls*, as used in the CHAMPIONS superhero game.

The game also provides a well thought out set of rules and advice to help gamemasters. The gamemaster is given guidance on how to handle criminal offenses (by superheros as well as by supervillains), animals, bystanders, various organizations, and the law. There is also some good advice on setting up a continuing campaign so that the players have more than just an isolated series of encounters with supervillains.

Two scenarios are included with the rules. One is extensive and should be used over several play sessions. It provides a good feel for how a campaign in action should be run and has several elements that a beginning gamemaster can use over and over again as the

campaign begins.

The second scenario, while being complete in itself, also shows the gamemaster how to cross over to other games — making the monsters of one game into the villains of the next. The game chosen for this purpose is the CALL OF CTHULHU™ game and the sample monster is the Shoggoth.

Various game aids are also in the box, including gamemaster sheets, character sheets, cardboard miniatures, and a set of dice (the dice are of excellent quality, something I am glad to say is becoming more common in the industry).

In play, the game moves well. Creating characters takes less than an hour for experienced players and about an hour and a half for a first-time player who has played D&D® games before. Melees went faster than RUNEQUEST® game melees (the parent game for the system) and results were predictable from skill and experience. The action rank system (which determines who acts when and who hits first) was fair and felt realistic.

Experience and improvement seemed a little quick, but then the power level of the game is much higher than in fantasy (you start with a superhero instead of becoming one at eighth level). Also, progression slows down as characters get better at their skills.

The inside of the bottom box has the RUNEQUEST game runes for chaos and change/movement in blue on one corner. The game is anything but chaotic, but should create change in any gaming group that sees it. It is well done, and worth the price.

Review by Steve Marsh

The ALIEN CONTACT™ Game

Design: Fred Chatham. Phoenix Enterprises, 1983. $22 boxed.

Despite the title, this game is not about any contact with aliens by Earthlings. It is instead a strategical warfare/diplomacy free-for-all among up to six players to determine domination of a "sector" of 100 areas, 54 of which contain stars. The stars come in six colors, as do the player pieces. For each player, possession of a star is worth resource and victory points totalling nine. The more resource points it represents, the fewer victory points. Each color star is worth a different combination for each color player. As an added complication, for each player the three highest value stars for resources are considered to have unbreathable atmospheres and so require special units to garrison them.

Each player starts at Tech Level 1 (of a possible 3) with one space station, five space ships, and five space marine units. These forces are placed in an area determined at random, and which therefore might not contain any star at all, let alone one of the same color as the player. Each player also gets one "pirate" unit which is also randomly placed, except that it cannot be in the same area as a space station.

Play proceedes in straightforward turns. The phasing player first moves his pirate, if he wishes, and then must attack a ship in the area it occupies, even if that means attacking one of his own ships. He may then move his space ships; after movement is completed, he can conduct combat in any areas in which there are other player ships or space stations he wishes to attack. Following any ship-to-ship combat in an area, he may then unload marines and attack any opposing marines that may be present. Combat is resolved in rounds: the tech level of the attacking unit is cross-indexed with that of the defender to find what number or less must be rolled on a ten-sided die to eliminate the defender, and the defender shoots back in the same manner.

Every third turn, following a player's combat resolution, a Resource Phase occurs. First, the player draws a card from the deck of seventy-two provided. This may call for some immediate result, such as some player losing ships or troops to a calamity, or it may be a card that can be saved for play later, such as giving the owner free marines, space ships or space stations. After drawing the card, players can conduct diplomacy, but only with a player with whom relations have been established. This is done by each having a diplomatic unit at the same star or space station. Each player has only two diplomats, and moving them about is slow (they travel by spaceships, which move as many areas per turn as the tech level of the ship, i.e. from 1 to 3).

Next, the player collects resources from stars he controls, and builds new units. To control a star, he needs to have a garrison of marines there (if the star has an unbreathable atmosphere, the marines must be of the "environmentally protected" type, which cost twice as much as the ordinary kind). The player must also control the "air space" of the star, which means having a spaceship or station in the area. The presence of another player's ships will negate control unless a diplomatic agreement otherwise has been reached. Any pirate ship present negates control as well.

To the best of my knowledge, that is what the rules say, or are supposed to say. The rules folder is only four pages, and of that a tad less than three are actually devoted to the rules. There are a lot of points that are unclear or just plain not covered. As a grognard of almost 24 years gaming experience, I am accustomed to reading between the lines and frequently do so without being aware of it. This is fine for me, but for the novice it is a nightmare.

Such points as how long a game is to last are never explicitly covered. Presumably all games last 40 turns, as that is the length of the turn record track. Do the players get their first two diplomats for free, since the building cost chart gives only a "replacement" cost for them? Another sticky case is the clear statement in the movement rules that marines are unloaded while the space ship carrying them moves, while the combat rules just as clearly imply that marines cannot unload until after the ship carrying them survives combat. But combat is not resolved until movement is completed. . . .

The components of the game are servicable, and the mounted mapboard is a nice thing to have, but the sketchy nature of the rules badly degrades the value of the package. This one could be a lot of fun for multi-player situations, but only if someone tightens up the rules and all the players agree to the fixes. Features such as the diplomat counter restrictions on diplomacy show the designer used his ingenuity. It is a shame he didn't also use diligence and provide a set of complete and unambiguous rules as well.

Reviewed by Steve List

By Ken Ramstead

Web of the Romulans

M.S. Murdock, Pocket Books, $2.95 (paperback)

Science-fiction fans have been especially fortunate of late with Pocket Books' *Timescape* series. Brought out every six weeks or so, they provide a steady diet of well-written, finely-crafted works that can satisfy even the most demanding of palates. Of particular interest to this reviewer is *Web of the Romulans*, by M.S. Murdock.

Like many other Star Trek stories, *Web* is set in the chronological heart of the series. Unlike others, though, it does not stand apart from the episodes. Its starting point is that amorous computer which we first saw in the TV episode *Tomorrow is Yesterday*. Reprogrammed with a personality by those fun-loving Cygnet XIV technicians, "Countess" had been the bane of Captain Kirk and an irritant to Mr. Spock. Countess's crush, though, has now grown to dangerous proportions, and Kirk must now desperately find a way to regain control of the Enterprise before the threat of a galactic conflict turns into a bloody reality. The Federation and the Romulan Empire lie poised on the knife-edge war, as hawks on both sides try to topple them irrevocably into the abyss. Only Captain Kirk and the crew of the Enterprise can avert Armageddon.

As more than one commentator has observed, the success of Star Trek is due to the fact that every book, every episode, and every movie contributes something to the whole. Therein is its strength and the secret to its enormous popularity. *Web* is no exception. The glimpse we get of the Romulan home world and of the novel's main Romulan characters is refreshing, to say the least. Romulan concepts of honor, loyalty, and love readily find an answering chord in human hearts, just as the baser emotions of cruelty and treachery are just as easily recognized. This empathic reaction is one of the book's strengths, as are the artful portrayals of protagonists like S'Talon, Captain Garson, and of course, Countess.

Web makes for good reading. The author has skillfully blended just the right amounts of humor and drama together to create a mixture that will hold any Trekkie's attention — at least until the next *Timescape* Trek novel appears.

The Stainless Steel Rat for President

Harry Harrison, Bantam Books, $2.75 (paperback)

Hold on to your credits! Slippery Jim diGriz, that Stainless Steel Rat (who has saved the galaxy at least twice, but who's counting) is back! The whole galaxy isn't at stake this time, though. But a tiny part of it does need the kind of housecleaning that only the Special Corps can provide. And to carry this housecleaning out, Inskipp of the Corps inevitably had to turn to the diGriz family — Jim, Angelina, and the twins, James and Bolivar. *Rat* fans know that when the clan gets together, the gloves will be off for this one. The back cover says it best. Jim's "vowed to restore truth, justice, and democracy to the world of Paraiso-Aqui, if he has to lie, cheat, and steal to do it!"

Long-time admirers of Harry Harrison will be pleasantly surprised with *The Stainless Steel Rat for President*. Gone are the lapses into morbidity that marred earlier novels like *Make Room! Make Room!* This is pure, unadulterated fun with just the right amount of gratuitous sex and violence thrown in for good measure. *The Stainless Steel Rat for President* is the product of a craftsman comfortable and satisfied with his work; Harrison has hit his stride with his latest effort, and his readers can hopefully look forward to more of the same.

The Man Who Used the Universe

Alan Dean Foster, Warner Books, $2.95 (paperback)

Alan Dean foster is well known to science fiction aficionados as the author of books such as *Outland* and *Alien*. His latest tome, *The Man Who Used the Universe*, does not fail to break new ground in the genre. Who else would have as major characters members of a race of creatures known as Nuels, beings whose gross, slime-covered bodies are as repulsive to themselves as they are to other sentients?

The main protagonist, though, is human, and *The Man Who Used the Universe* concerns Kees vaan Loo-Macklin's rise from eighty-third-class illegal to a position of unrivaled power and influence on the Nine Worlds and beyond: How to Succeed in Business with a vengeance! For Kees is the consumate businessman par excellence who weaves plans within schemes within plots to achieve the goal that he desires above all else. And the reader is carried along with him through page after page, effortlessly propelled by Foster's prose.

As cosmology, though it leaves a little to be desired. For instance, this reviewer seriously questions Foster's rationale for the expansionistic policies of the Nuel. That the Nuel find themselves as hideous to behold as others find them to be seems illogical and absurd. That they might find other races ugly would not be, though, for wouldn't Nuel conceptions of beauty and ugliness be shaped on themselves as the epitome of all that is comely and good? Further, one must also make allowances for the man who used the universe himself, who seems to be as soulless as the very computers he manipulates with such ease. Foster demands much credulity from his readers. But he also delivers much in return.

Warning: The cover art, while vivid and eye-catching, bears no relation whatsoever to the plot line.

Gunner Cade (plus: Takeoff)

C.M. Kornbluth & Judith Merril, A Tbr Book, $2.95 (paperback)

Although purists may violently disagree, a book's cover art and back-cover blurb are all important to the marketing of any soft-cover. The novel itself may make for first-rate reading. But if the author is relatively unknown, the prospective buyer will have little else to go by but what he holds in his hands. Soft-covers, more often than not, have to sell through that first impression and must do this through compelling artwork and an enticing synopsis.

And it was precisely the back-cover description and the front-cover art that made me buy *Gunner Cade*, by C.M.

Gunner Cade was an awful disappointment; an amateurish effort cursed with a wooly plot . . .

Kornbluth and Judith Merril. The concept of one man pitting himself against the might of a Solar Empire seemed too good to pass up.

I wish I had. *Gunner Cade* was an awful disappointment; an amateurish effort cursed with a wooly plot and based on the absurd premise that the survivors of a nuclear conflagration have cloaked the art of war with arcane and elitist rituals in order to protect themselves against death from the sky. All this is pretty tame stuff even for a book written in 1952, especially when one compares it with anything that came from the pen of Robert Heinlein during the same period.

In my haste to snatch *Gunner Cade* off the shelf, though, I almost overlooked the little notice on the cover announcing I would also be receiving *Takeoff*, by C.M. Kornbluth, as well. I assumed that it would be a short story, at most a couple of pages long, thrown in as filler for good measure. Needless to say, I was surprised when I abruptly collided into it halfway through the book, mercifully putting an end to the misadventures of the gunner. After completing *Takeoff*, I had to wonder why it had not given prime billing over *Gunner Cade*. *Takeoff* is certainly the superior work, a joy to read and well worth the slog through the murk of *Gunner Cade* to get to it.

Takeoff is all the more relevant in light of NASA's twenty-fifth anniversary. Science-fiction literature can just as often be a look into the past as it can be a door to the future. The scale of government funding and intervention that went into putting a man on the moon seemed inconceivable to interested observers like Kornbluth and Heinlein in the early 1950s. The latter addressed the dilemma of how to carry out such an operation without government involvement in *The Man Who Sold the Moon*, a gem I consider to be his finest work. Kornbluth attacked the problem in a different way, but the read is just as rewarding. *Takeoff* deserves a far better fate than being shackled with *Gunner Cade*. ▲

GAME ERRATA

Into the Void

by Carl Smith

The *Into the Void* module for the STAR FRONTIERS® game, in ARES™ Magazine issue #15, had some errors/omissions that are cleared up below.

Because of a lack of space, the statistics for the robot, Violet, were omitted. Violet is a V Series Medical Robot with arm-like extensions in the upper torso. The robot's head has vocal, audio, light/infrared, pressure, and sensor circuits for exo-biology. A Level 5 Medical robot, Violet has the equivalent of the following experience levels: Level 5 Medical, Level 4 First Aid, Minor & Major Surgery, Level 3 Control Infection, Cure Disease, Level 2 Neutralize Toxins, Analyze Eco-systems, Level 1 Activate Freeze Field, and Communication. Violet is fitted with a poly-vox, an interface for ship computers, and Level 5 security programs. Violet is used to dealing with Hota Lea, and can be difficult when dealing with other members of the crew if they improperly input information.

All ships listed as Sathar assault scouts should be Sathar frigates. The correction was made in the module, but not in the story.

The grav couches on the XV-1 were incorrectly numbered. They should have been numbered from 3-8, with 8 being Slard's seat. The deck plan key and ship map should then have been numbered from 1-27, with 5 added to each numbered location on the ship and in the key starting with area 4 (9), Gunnery Control.

NIGHTMARE HOUSE™ game

By David Marshall

A few minor glitches in the NIGHTMARE HOUSE™ game in ARES™ Magazine #15 have been identified and are herewith cleared up.

Part 4, Section H, #9: *(addition).* A Hunter can choose to use no Power Markers for this purpose only if the Hunter's Astral Body occupies or is next to the Power Point he is exorcising, and is in a different Power Point than his Psyche.

Part 4, Section H, #10: *(clarification).* The House moves any number of his own Power Markers from his section of the POWER WHEEL to each Power Point being Exorcised, up to the value of the Circle of Energy on which the Power Point is found, or, if the Entity is being exorcised, up to the value of the Circle of Darkness occupied by the Entity.

Part 4, Section H, #12: *(addition to the end of the paragraph).* If the Hunter is trying to Exorcise an Axis Control Marker, he may add 1 to the attempt for each Exorcised Room Marker already on that Axis.

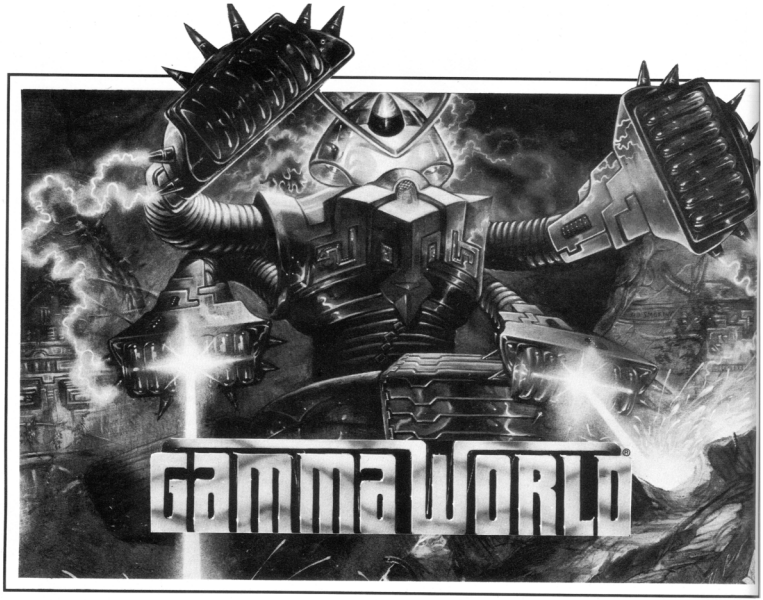
Part 4, Section H, #13: *(change and clarification).* The House rolls one die for each Exorcism being performed and modifies the result in each case by adding the numbers on any Power Markers that he moved to the Power Point being Exorcised and the number of the Circle of Energy in which the Power Point is located. Finally, if the Exorcism is directed against the Entity, the number of Controlled Axes is added to the die roll, but not the number of the Circle of Darkness on which the Entity is located.

Part 4, Section I, #1: *(addition/clarification).* In addition, the Hunter controlling any Character in the Crypt, Graveyard, Cellar, or Tower places that Character's Psyche Marker (whether vulnerable or not) in any Axis Control Point of his choice.

Part 6, #3: *(rules change).* If a Character's Soul is Vulnerable, and he or she loses a Physical Haunting, then in addition to paying the penalty of 2 Power Markers to the House, the Character rolls one die. If the resulting number is greater than that Character's Physical Strength Value, the Character dies. The House automatically gains immediate and permanent possession of the Character's Soul with the consequences described in Step 8 of the POSSESSION PHASE.

Part 7: *(addition to last paragraph).* If the Hunter was performing the Exorcism in his Astral Body and loses, he immediately becomes Lost on the Astral.

Part 8: *(addition to last paragraph).* Flip the Body Marker over to its Possessed Side. Any Tools the character possesses having a Psychic Strength modifier greater than 0 (zero) must be dropped into the Room Space that the Character's Body Marker occupies. ▲



You'll be devastated by the game

If you haven't seen what the GAMMA WORLD game has to offer lately, then you don't know Gamma World.

- **Revised GAMMA WORLD Game**

64 pages of expanded and improved rules, with a full color map, campaign module, dice, and more monsters, mutations, and tech items than ever before.

- **Revised GM Screen**

An invaluable playing aid and mini-module for the beginning GM.

- **ENDLESS QUEST™ Book**

Light on Quests Mountain. Pick a Path™ to GAMMA WORLD adventure in this fully-illustrated book based on the GAMMA WORLD science-fantasy role-playing game.

- **Modules**

Old favorites designed for use with the First Edition rules.

GW1: Legion of Gold.
GW2: Famine in Far-Go.

Two new modules for use with the revised GAMMA WORLD Game rules.

*GW3: The Cleansing War of Garik Blackhand.**
*GW4: The Mind Masters.**

** Coming soon.*

TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION

GAMMA WORLD, ENDLESS QUEST, PICK A PATH, PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION, and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc. ©1983. All Rights Reserved.

THE VOYAGER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY SERIES $10.00

BUG-EYED MONSTERS

They Want Our Women!

On silent grav sleds, the alien creatures slide through the forest, readying their lasers and stunners, drooling slightly in anticipation. They choose their first target: a little clapboard house nestled in the woods above town. They attack. The sounds of lasers and stunners are soon met by cries of fear and rage. Wild with lust, they fail to notice when one human makes it to a car and careens away to rouse the citizenry of the small town against the alien threat.

Ugly, slobbering, bug-eyed monsters! They land in remote American towns and make off with women.

BUG-EYED MONSTERS is the new West End release by Greg Costikyan, designer of the successful *Creature That Ate Sheboygan.*™ In this game, Greg returns to the "Creature" genre, bringing a flying saucer with menacing monsters to the quiet remote American town of Freedom, New Hampshire.

One player, as the monster, must attempt to kidnap the earthling women (the most beautiful in the universe). The other player must rally the citizens of the town to stop the repulsive invaders and save his womenfolk from a fate worse then death.

A special "Aliens Kidnap Presidential Hopeful" scenario is also provided. Dwight Eisenhower, campaigning for the New Hampshire primary, along with an entourage of state troopers and secret service men, is surprised by a party of bug-eyed monsters. Will they kidnap America's war hero?

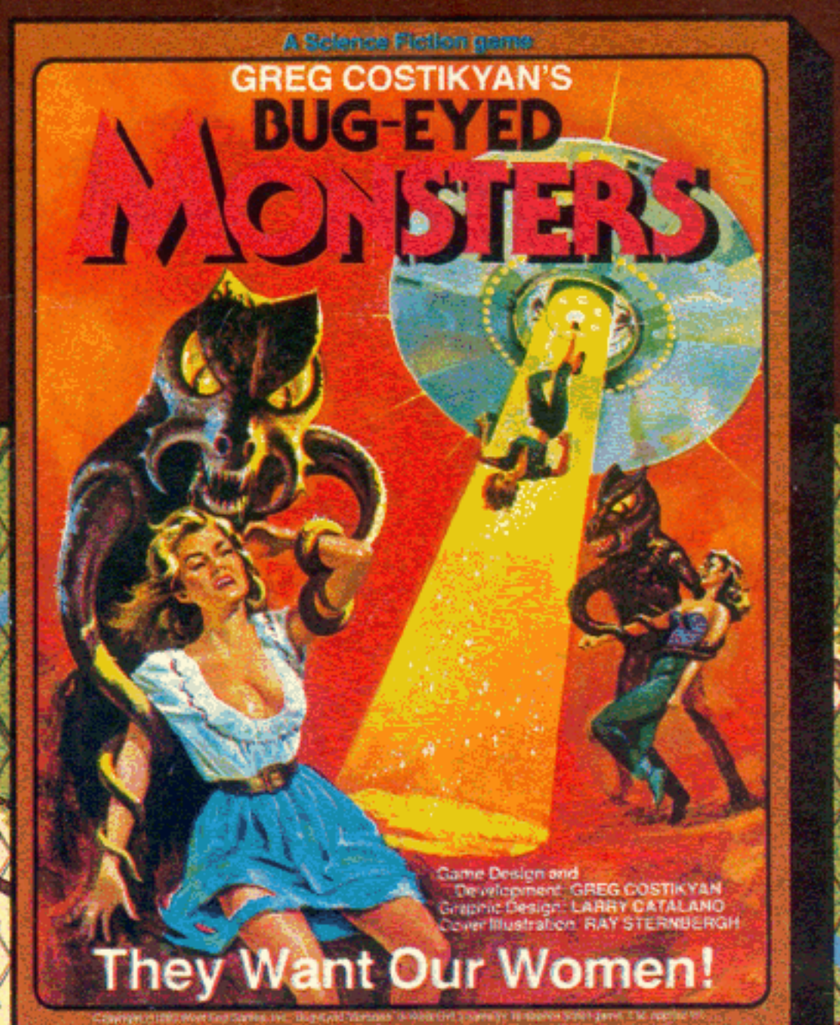
A simple but elegant game system with clear brief rules makes BUG-EYED MONSTERS a good introduction to adventure gaming, but its subject and smooth play will appeal to the hardcore gamer as well.

THE DESIGNER

Greg Costikyan is the designer of nine published games, including THE CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN,™ SWORDS AND SORCERY,™ DEATH MAZE,™ RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT,™ and TRAIL BLAZER.™

The above titles are all the trademarks of TSR Inc. with the exception of TRAIL BLAZER which is the trademark of Metagaming.

- one 22" x 17" game map
- 160 full-color, back-printed precision die cut 5/8" counters.
- one 8-page rules booklet
- two dice and full-color game box (1" wide bookshelf size box)



WEST END GAMES

Complexity: Low
Solitaire Suitability: Low
Players: Two
Game Scale: Individual Person
Playing Time: An hour or less for experienced gamers