



TERRAN TRADE AUTHORITY HANDBOOK



The
Terran Trade Authority
Roleplaying Game



A TERRAN TRADE AUTHORITY HANDBOOK

**THE
TERRAN TRADE
AUTHORITY
ROLEPLAYING GAME**



The Terran Trade Authority



The Terran Trade Authority Roleplaying Game

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FOREWORD

The seed of the Terran Trade Authority, and the future over which it presided, actually began to germinate more than fifty years ago. In 1950s England there was a weekly boys publication called *The Eagle*. Part comic, part magazine, it featured a cartoon hero called Dan Dare, his sidekick Digby and his sleek spacecraft, Anastasia. His space adventures in pursuit of his nemesis the Mekon and superbly drawn by Frank Hampson, held me spell-bound. To the 7 year old me, the boundary between fiction and reality blurred as I travelled with him among the stars.

Each week, the magazine also included a minutely detailed cutaway drawing of some technological marvel...the steamship *Queen Mary*, The Empire State Building or the latest jet aircraft. In one issue, perhaps in editorial desperation, the center spread was a cutaway of the fictional spacecraft *Anastasia*. There on the page I could see how the controls operated, how the engines were constructed, and even where spare helmets were kept. Suddenly, the future inhabited by the indomitable Dan Dare stepped across the fantasy/reality interface and burned a place in my mind forever.

The years passed, the boy grew up and as events would have it, I found myself in the publishing business. My job was to conceive ideas for books, whip up support and find authors or artists to turn them into live projects. On one business trip, I had time to kill at Heathrow airport and wandered around the bookstore. I stopped by a rack of SF paperbacks, intrigued by the quality and imagination of the cover art. The images pulled me right back in time. Here were the strange and wonderful craft that Dan Dare might have known from his identification manual.

If he'd had one.

Throughout the rest of that trip, my mind was full of spectacular ships and distant star systems. On my return, I traced some of the artists whose work had gripped my imagination and in talking to them, the first tender shoot of the TTA pushed towards the light. I began writing the identification manual that should have existed. At first it just detailed the ships my boyhood hero might have encountered, but I soon realised that they needed a context to explain their existence and, piece by piece, the Terran Trade Authority emerged.

I have always had a magpie mind, attracted indiscriminately by the glitter of ideas new to me. From technology and astronomy to history and the mechanics of social evolution. Suddenly these disparate threads drew together in a hypothetical future. It was so clear in my mind that it was more a case of recording events than inventing them and in less than two furious months, the book was finished.

The rest, as they say, is history. The success of the first book led to others and with each title the story of the TTA expanded and flourished. There were four books and eight spin-off projects including an abortive film script between 1978 and about 1980. Perhaps it was the speed and intensity with which it took place, perhaps it was just creative burn-out, perhaps it was marriage, kids and mortgage, but eventually I felt I had no more to say, no places to go. For whatever reason, I began to feel that the ghosts in that distant boy's mind had finally been exorcised. The TTA had acquired a life of its own and didn't need me anymore. That was almost 25 years ago.

I had created the TTA for myself, or rather for the small boy waiting excitedly by the door every Thursday. I really hadn't thought about the fact that all those books must have gone somewhere, been read by someone. To my astonishment, I recently learned that the TTA was not just still alive but that others were willing to nurture and re-invigorate a dream that had faded from my mind.

It's a strange sensation to be re-introduced to a child made a stranger by distance and circumstances. I wasn't certain how to feel at first but out of the confusion came a sense of gratitude toward those whose enthusiasm and commitment will carry the TTA forward into an invigorated future. My thanks to them

...and especially to *you*.

Stewart Cowley





DEDICATION

Scott would like to dedicate this book to his wife Alison and 2 beautiful daughters; Hannah & Mhairi.

Jeff would like to dedicate this project to his wonderful wife Masako, whose support and encouragement carried him through the tough times, and to Pam Bliss, my “big sis” and favorite writer, whose keen eye and constructive criticism were invaluable!

Adrian would like to dedicate this work to his wife, Katinka, for all her patience, understanding, trust and support, and for understanding why, after more than 25 years, the TTA books can still make me act like an excited 12 year old boy!

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REACHING FOR THE STARS

From the ancient astronomers and astrologers of Egypt and Greece to the early science of Galileo through to Einstein and Hawking in the 20th century, humanity has always looked to the stars. Even today, modern stellar explorers like Gibson, Madden and Tsang continue to delve into the cosmos. These names along with that of Henri DeVass are household names, testament to humanity's fascination with the stars and what lays beyond known space.

The twenty-second century will be remembered as one of the most significant periods of human history. Those qualities of direction, purpose and unity which are the essential ingredients for real progress had gradually been dissipated in a fragmented world. Humanity had become preoccupied with the minutiae of daily living and men of broader vision were finding themselves an unheeded minority. Man needed a quest to fire his imagination and extend his abilities. For a while he found one in his early attempts to explore the vastness of space, but the exhilaration was soon replaced by a growing resentment of the massive costs and minimal returns. Instead of being a springboard to escape a shrinking world, space became another weapon in mankind's civil war.

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Paradoxically, the strain of meeting the demands imposed by space programs and the difficulties of sustaining enthusiasm led to a renewal of effort, for it was soon realized that real progress could only be made by a sharing of objectives and the means by which they could be achieved.

True Spaceflight began midway through the 20th century. On October 4th, 1957, the USSR (a federation of states then under communist rule and dominated by Russia) launched the first object to be put into orbit around the Earth. The 83 kg Sputnik satellite sparked a “space race” with the USSR’s greatest rival of the day, the United States of America.

This period of fierce competition between the USA and USSR saw great leaps in technology and science and ran from the Sputnik launch in 1957 until roughly 1975. Important to both nations for both military and propaganda reasons, the governments of the day invested huge sums of money in their space programs attempting to one-up their rival.

On April 12, 1961, the Russians once again beat their American rivals, this time being the first to send a human being to reach orbit. Twenty-three days later the Americans followed suit, sending astronaut Alan Shepherd into space aboard the Freedom 7 missions. Astronaut John Glenn became the first American to orbit the Earth on February 20, 1962 aboard Friendship 7.

Embarrassed by being second in almost all space attempts, the Americans finally trumped the USSR by being the first nation to place a man upon Earth’s moon. After the many Soviet successes, especially Gagarin’s first manned flight, the American President committed massive funds to become the first country to land a man on the moon and safely return him to the Earth.

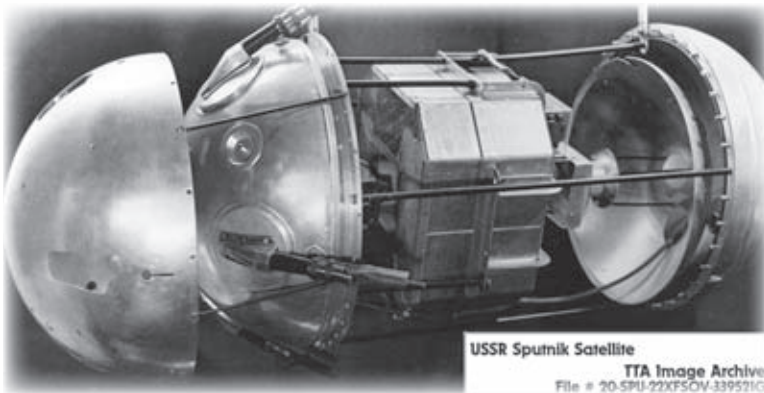
On July 20th, 1969, the Americans finally got their “first”. American astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first human in history to set foot on the moon, or any planetary body other than the Earth for that matter.

The space race also saw other “firsts” although these were less publicized than Sputnik and the moon walk.

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In July 1975 the “space race” came to an end as the American and Soviet governments began to work in a limited cooperation toward spaceflight and space exploration. The joint Apollo-Soyuz mission was the first international manned spaceflight. It was designed to test the compatibility of rendezvous and docking systems for American and So-

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viet spacecraft and to open the way for international space rescue as well as future joint manned flights.

The pace of an international cooperative effort to space exploration began to accelerate in the final decade of the 20th century as the old Soviet Empire crumbled with the fall of communism. The new Russian federation found itself near bankruptcy but still continued with space research although now as a junior partner to the US and the newly formed European Union. During these waning years of the 20th and early years of the 21st centuries new technologies open new doors.

This era saw the construction on the first orbital space stations as well as the first commercial space flights although these were only flights into near orbit at this time.

While the twenty-second century will undoubtedly be remembered as one of the most significant periods of human history, those qualities of direction, purpose and unity, which are the essential ingredients for real progress, had gradually dissipated in the fragmented world of the 20th and early 21st centuries. Humanity had become preoccupied with the minutiae of daily living and men of broader vision were finding themselves an unheeded minority. Man needed a quest to fire his imagination and extend his abilities. While humanity's early attempts to explore the vastness of space was a good start, the exhilaration was soon replaced by a growing resentment of the massive costs and minimal returns. Instead of being a springboard to escape a shrinking world, space became another weapon in mankind's civil war.

Paradoxically, the strain of meeting the demands imposed by space programs and the difficulties of sustaining enthusiasm led to a renewal of effort, for it was soon realized that real progress could only be made by

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a sharing of objectives and the means by which they could be achieved. This task would have proven impossible were it not for the political will of mid-21st century nations to come together in a spirit or cooperation for the betterment of all mankind.

The many conflicts and wars of the early 21st century gave birth to this new radical school of thought and thus it was, that mankind finally began the long voyage into space.

The early 21st century was a turbulent time for humanity. A terrorist attack on two of the world's tallest buildings in New York City sparked off a prolonged period of conflict between the United States of America and much of the less-developed nations of Earth.

On September 11th, 2001, an extremist Islamic terrorist group known as Al-Qaeda destroyed the World Trade Center in New York City by flying two hijacked passenger planes into the buildings. The resulting fires caused the building to collapse with thousands of deaths and even more injuries. This incident began the long period of minor conflicts between the United States and several smaller nations—initially Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria—that the US accused of sponsoring or harboring terrorists.

With the collapse of the old Soviet Union a decade earlier, the United States of America had emerged as the world's only true Super Power. By 2010, the supposed “War on Terror” had become but an excuse for an increasingly imperialistic US government to impose its will on other nations.

This led directly to the of 2013. Begun when Taiwan finally declared independence, this war could be considered World War Three were it not for the fact that many American allies opted to abandon the superpower in its push for global dominance.

Having been through two World Wars in the 20th century, and because of the growing strain on diplomatic relations with the United States, the European Union opted to stay out of the war. North Korea did join the conflict on the side of their ally, China. Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and South Korea all declared war on China with the Americans. To make matters worse, both Cuba and Venezuela publicly voiced their support for the Chinese although they stopped short of joining the Chinese alliance. Venezuela did however cut all trade relations with the United States. This was critical to the US as it received up to 1/5 of its oil supply from the South American country.

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The Sino-American War was long and brutal. In the end, China was forced to withdraw from Taiwan and sue for peace. The American government of the day was controlled primarily by the by a hawkish group of pro-war individuals and corporations who encouraged the government to push for unrealistic concessions. The cease fire negotiations dragged on for 9 months during which time the US and allied militaries pushed further and further into Chinese territory. By the end of 2016, it was obvious that the US administration would accept nothing less than unconditional surrender, something the rest of the world knew the Chinese could never accept.

The American public had, by this point, enough of war and pro-war politicians and within weeks, President Schering was impeached over an otherwise innocuous corruption scandal. Congress forced his Vice President into a peace treaty with China, finally officially ending the War on June 6th, 2017. The military-industrial elements in the US government lost all hope when they were resoundingly defeated in the next election and from that point forward, the US strove to restore its image as the protector of freedom in the world and largely abandoned its neo-imperial aspirations.

One positive thing to come out of the Sino-American War seems to be the fact that the nations of the world put an increased value on cooperation following the War. Never wanting to see another Super Power able to force its will on the rest of the world, the United Nations took on major reforms and sought to truly be a force for freedom and equality in the world.

By 2050, the United States and China were on friendly terms again and were actively working together on many fronts including scientific research and space missions. The European Union too, had a flourishing space program by this time, in many ways more advanced than that of the Americans.

In 2053, led by South African President James M'Tombe, the nations of Africa (with the exception of Egypt, Somalia and Kenya united to form the Pan African Union (Kenya would join 2 years later). This was followed later by all South American countries uniting under the MercoSur Confederacy.

By the end of the twenty-first century these major national blocs were co-operating in an expanding range of projects, thereby avoiding the wasteful process of duplication and parallel research that had been previously inevitable.



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The United Nations also started to change about this time as the myriad of National ambassadors slowly shrank in number as the major regional blocs began replacing their constituent national ambassadors at the UN with a single ambassador representing each bloc. This greatly accelerated diplomatic dealings amongst these nations and many joint ventures were fast tracked as a result.

In 2090 the World Community Research Council was formed to manage and co-ordinate these activities, and to allocate funds contributed by its member nations. The WCRC became the largest research establishment on Earth, operating a number of major stations such as the North African Space Research Centre.

Within a short time the investment made in space technology began to reap dividends. During the early years of the last century extensive facilities on our moon were established and industrial bases began to show a return. Most significant were the host of new materials and techniques which provided a basis for a rapid acceleration in the growth of industrial technology. For example, vacuum mills in free-fall were able to produce large quantities of valuable new alloys and uni-directional stress components, many of which were responsible for major advances in the development of new spacecraft. These, together with the earlier successes in the field of nuclear engineering, led in turn to the building of further facilities on Mars.

Another important point had been reached because the creation of the bases required men to work on their construction and maintenance. In turn these men required support for the long periods of time they would be away from Earth, so their families accompanied them. It was then but a short step to the provision of regular access to and from the home planet, and though expensive, space travel had become an everyday reality.

By today's standards, these early craft appear amusingly primitive and even dangerous, consisting of little more than a hollow tube with engines at the back and elementary controls at the front. It is almost inconceivable that people could have subjected themselves willingly to the discomfort and risks that space travel presented at that time. It is impossible to catalogue here all the thousands of individual developments and discoveries which led to our present skills in astro-engineering, but a few examples stand out as revolutionary.

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Although the principles of nuclear drive systems had been put into practice as far back as the late 2080s, the work done by the McKinley Corporation, who now produce the Ion UltraDrive engine, transformed them into highly efficient and economical power sources, and many of today's ships are equipped with engines that are virtually identical to those introduced in 2087. More important still was the invention of the Warp Generator by Henri deVass fourteen years later. This device creates a distortion of distance and time in a way which folds up space. Point A meets point B and an object at either point can transfer to the other. When the generator is shut down, space unfolds and the object has arrived. Journeys that would otherwise take years can be made in a matter of weeks. Although, in theory the transition can be made almost instantaneously there are a number of complications which prevent this. Time is required to build up sufficient power to satisfy the enormous energy requirements of the generators prior to a jump and also to replenish reserves afterwards. In addition, ships have to move under conventional power to and from specified warp zones to avoid the possibility of either drawing other objects into the jump or of collision when emerging.

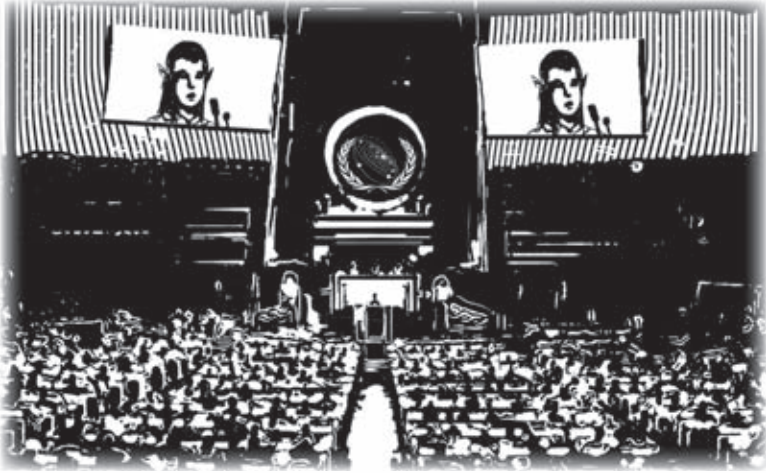
Despite these limitations the deVass Generator opened the road to the stars and led to our first contact with an alien intelligence.

In 2136, a manned survey ship made contact with the inhabitants of Alpha Centauri I, 4.3 light years away, and this meeting led to a happy and rewarding association. In 2145 the Trade and Technology Exchange Agreement was signed with the government of Alpha Centauri (Alpha has been a unified world for hundreds of years before human contact), and one of the most important benefits we gained was the acquisition of anti-gravity technologies. These were successfully brought together in 2145 by Dr Hans Berger in his Gravity-Resist Projector, and the form of spacecraft was transformed overnight. Now ships of very large proportions could safely be landed under most gravitational conditions, the Colonial III being a good example of this application.

Contact with the Alphans accelerated the movement toward a single world government as the Alphans were less than enthusiastic about signing dozens of individual trade agreements with the still fragmented governments of our world. Making it clear Alpha would deal only with a single entity, the United Nations appointed the World Trade Authority (which was the successor organization to the World Bank and World Trade Organization of the late 20th and early 21st centuries) as the sole representative of all Earth governments in matters of trade and technol-



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ogy exchange. This organizations was later renamed the Terran Trade Authority in 2142 and the TTA has since grown into one of the most important and influential organizations on Terra.

The next major influence on spacecraft design was due to more unfortunate circumstances. In 2147 one of our survey ships was approaching Proxima Centauri, an inhabited system with which Alpha had a long history of conflict and antagonism, when it was attacked and destroyed. Soon afterwards Alpha was subjected to the worst thermonuclear attack it had ever experienced, this being followed by the destruction of one of our spaceliners with a full complement of passengers. The Proxima War had begun. It was to last for twenty years, during which time a wide range of military ships was produced by all three star systems.

The state of war always accelerates technological development and the hideous cost in lives and resources was at least to some small degree offset by the considerable advances made in the field of space travel. Navigational systems, hull design and materials, power units and communications all reached new levels of sophistication as a result of the long period of heavy investment and intensive research.

Ships designed during this era feature strongly in this book. Until the war, space travel was still a fairly limited activity and this was reflected in the comparatively small number of different types of spacecraft. The Proxima War bred dozens of new craft, many of which were adapted for peaceful roles afterwards due to the exigencies of the reconstruction. As

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a result there is now a wide variety of ships to be seen in the spacelanes and although mainly commercial or military in function, more and more purpose-built personal transport vessels are making their appearance. In contrast to these diminutive new members of the spacecraft family are the gigantic settler ships poised to take humanity further still, to new worlds light years away.

The accomplishments of the twenty-second century are only the beginning of man's adventure in space, but for many people, this era with its setbacks, successes and optimistic gambles will always be the golden age of spaceflight.

PRELUDE TO WAR

Among the three known sentient, space-faring races, it was the Alphans who were the first to develop warp technology almost 200 years ago. Discovered accidentally as a side effect of temporal experiments, the warp effect was initially dismissed as a curiosity, but further experiments showed that a stable field could be generated over very large areas, large enough to encompass a ship. The Alphans had begun exploring the environs of their star, Alpha A, soon after achieving spaceflight, as well as the planets of its binary partner, Alpha B, even establishing a colony world on the sister star's second planet.

They had plenty of space on their two worlds, and were not anxious to colonize new ones, but their planets were resource-poor and the warp system was seen as a possible way to greatly expand the search for raw materials. As the system was being perfected and tested, a survey ship, powered by conventional drives, was dispatched to Proxima to canvass the system for mineral wealth. This was the longest journey ever undertaken by an Alphan crew, and as a result a small Ring was chosen for the task and trained for the mission, rather than relying on chosen specialists who would have found the separation from their Rings for such a long time to be too much to bear. This decision, while necessary, ultimately contributed to the tragic events to follow.

The survey crew arrived at Proxima after a journey of several months and was astonished to find that the second planet, far from being a lifeless ball of rock, possessed a breathable atmosphere, oceans... and life. Scans revealed what were clearly settlements on the surface. The Proximans, at the time, were not as scientifically advanced as the Alphans. Having passed through their industrial revolution phase a cen-



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tury and a half before, they had slowly developed atmospheric craft and low-orbit space capability. The Proximan homeworld was not united at the time, instead being split into a number of nations bound by a tight web of intrigues and alliances.

The Alphan crew had not been trained for a first contact situation, instead being merely briefed on the technical aspects of prospecting and surveying. As Alpha had not yet developed hyperwave transmitters, any messages sent back home would take two months to arrive, even traveling at the speed of light. The Ring conferred and decided that, given the importance of the discovery, they should attempt to find out all that they could. In retrospect, it can certainly be said that curiosity, the desire to be credited with first contact, and their lack of training got the better of them. After sending a message home, they headed for the surface.

The Alphans had chosen a coastal city as their landing point, which unfortunately was the capital of the most powerful of these nations, called Tanaaikol, run by a reactionary and militarily hawkish government. Thinking that one of their enemies had somehow acquired a secret weapon, they scrambled atmospheric fighters and intercepted the descending Alphan ship. The Alphans were alarmed at the response and could not understand the instructions they were receiving. When the Alphans attempted to break off and return to orbit, they were fired upon by the Proximan aircraft. The Alphan ship, stricken, crashed into a lonely stretch of countryside, killing its crew.

The crash site was quickly surrounded. The Tanaaikol government sent an investigative team and quickly grasped the situation. The Alphan ship, though not flyable, was still largely intact, as were the bodies of the crew. The wreckage and bodies were removed to government laboratories and the Tanaaikol leaders kept the incident secret.

There were several reasons for this, the first of which was religious. The dominant Proximan religion held that their people were the most perfect form of life in the universe, and perhaps the only one with sentience. Many Proximans firmly believed, in fact, that a deity had created them directly. In addition, their religious tradition held that good things sprang forth from the ground, while the sky was the domain of the devil. The introduction of powered flight and orbital satellites had touched off many nerves in the more superstitious members of the population, who feared divine retribution. To have the population know that aliens (or demons?) were among them would, the government feared, set off a panic and cause them to doubt authority.

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The second was political. Tanaaikol saw the Alphans' obviously advanced technology as a key to furthering their own power on the planet. If other nations learned of the ship, they would demand access to it, or perhaps even launch a preemptive strike to keep Tanaaikol from utilizing its secrets.

The third was scientific. What new and important knowledge could be gleaned from the ship? Though the Alphans were physically dissimilar, they were enough alike that there might be some kind of link. The Proximans were already deeply into genetic experimentation, and the seizure of alien DNA was an unexpected gift. Finally, there were the underlying questions, weighing heaviest of all: Where had they come from? Were there other races out there like them?

The Alphan ship was unarmed. This, plus the lack of any obvious military equipment, led the Tanaaikol government to conclude that the ship was never a threat. There followed a bit of hand-wringing at the moral implications of firing on an unarmed ship, but that was quickly overtaken by greed at the bounty of knowledge that was to be gained. Over the next several years, the best scientists available to Tanaaikol dissected the ship and its crew, studying every minute detail, and applying what they had learned... meanwhile, the government was making plans for what to do when the visitors showed up again...

Meanwhile, back on Alpha, the ill-fated survey team's message had arrived. The Alphans were stunned at the news of a first contact situation. The mystery deepened as no further transmissions were received from the mission. Whether they had suffered a malfunction, crashed, or met their demise at the hands of the natives was not discernible. The Alphan government urged a cautious response, but Rings friendly with the Ring that had crewed the survey ship demanded action. There was another survey ship in the field, equipped with powerful detection equipment, engaged in a mapping operation in a position about halfway to Proxima. It was sent immediately to monitor the system. This second ship stayed to the limits of its supplies, monitoring transmissions on Proxima, before returning. No signal was received from the first ship, and no trace of the crew was found. However, the data gathered allowed Alphan scientists to gain a basic understanding of the Proximans, as well as to crack the language barrier.

Following up on the situation further in a timely manner was not in the cards, however. If the aliens were hostile, sending another survey



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craft would be dangerous. The new expedition had to be better-equipped. Outfitting a team was not the problem... sifting through theory and designing a curriculum to train them was. In addition, perfecting the warp system was proving troublesome. Alpha could always send conventionally-equipped ships, but with the possibility of hostilities, having a quick means to disengage and report back was deemed essential. All of these factors, compounded by political bickering over the details of the mission and the sheer cost of mounting another expedition in an era when spaceflight was still fairly new, further slowed the process. The second expedition would not return to Proxima for over forty years.

The second expedition was indeed well-equipped for its day. A large carrier ship, equipped with the de-bugged warp generator, was outfitted with three dual-environment landing craft equipped with weaponry and sophisticated detection gear. The last transmission from the doomed survey ship had indicated that the aliens had apparently only achieved low orbital spaceflight capability, and the ships the Alphans sent would surely be enough to deal with that level of technology.

The short jump was completed without incident and after a few days of braking maneuvers, the carrier reached its target. Initial scans of the planet confirmed what the first teams had found. Then, one of the detection crew frantically shouted to the command ring. Something was coming over the planetary horizon...

The Alphan crew stared in shock as they found themselves confronted with a squadron of twenty ships, their design obviously based upon the lost research vessel, but brandishing various primitive but effective-looking weapons systems as well. The Alphans' shock increased as sensors indicated that a fleet of similar size was coming up on them from astern.

The Proximans had been busy in the intervening decades. Tanaikol had parlayed the technology gained from the survey vessel into political and technological dominance of Proxima. They had also secretly worked on a military space presence, designed for the day the aliens came back...

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The Alphans, however, were ready. The Proximans were astounded to find themselves being addressed in their own language. After several hours of tense negotiation, the Alphans agreed to send a team of four to the surface in one of the landing craft. Having made planetfall, the Alphans

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found themselves hustled away to meet with a series of Proximan leaders, with whom they conferred for several days.

The first questions asked, of course, sought to determine what had happened to the first ship. The Proximans claimed that it had crashed, offered their condolences, and explained that it had been very helpful in creating their own first fleet. Requests to see the craft were rebuffed, however, and the Alphans soon suspected that they were not being told the whole truth.



Meanwhile, a wild card was in play. Within the Proximan delegation was a carefully planted spy for Omnooře, Tanaaikol's main rival nation. She gave a full report to her government about the situation, and Omnooře decided that this was their best opportunity to weaken the iron grip that Tanaaikol held on their world. While realizing that their actions may cause a panic, they also saw an opportunity to carve a new niche in the resulting chaos.

Omnooře contacted the Alphan carrier ship, still in orbit, and advised them that Tanaaikol was manipulating them for their own political gains. The Tanaaikol ships immediately picked up the signal and alerted their leaders. The Tanaaikol leaders realized that their carefully-guarded secret was secret no more. The two governments exchanged tense calls. The Omnooře demands were simple: either announce the presence of the aliens yourself, allow us to do it, or suffer the effects of an immediate pre-emptive thermonuclear strike...

Tanaaikol's leaders, after a few tense minutes of study, realized that they had to take the initiative to maintain any semblance of control. They agreed to reveal the Alphans to the world, and they did.

What happened next was the beginning of the tragedy that would culminate a over century later in the nuclear destruction of Alphan cities,



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a twenty-year war and finally the razing of the Proximan homeworld. While the Proximans technically “started” the war, it was the Alphan reaction to their Proximan brethren and their planet that many historians point to as the true seed of the conflict.

The Alphans were now taken around openly, and saw much of the Proximan culture firsthand. In doing so, they found themselves confronted with ideological opposites, socially and religiously benighted, with bodies that seemed to be stunted parodies of their own. When they discovered that the Proximans were dominated by one sex which held sway over the other, and that their society was arranged in strata by subjective worth, some of the members allowed these differences to offend their egalitarian ideals. In addition, the higher gravity wearied them, the low light levels depressed them, the strange foods they were offered sickened them, not to mention that they found the Proximans to be unbearably ugly. They were also frustrated by their fruitless requests to see the remains of the first ship or the bodies of the crew.

When the Proximans did not respond to what the Alphans had decreed to be rational modes of thought, they began to treat their hosts in a patronizing manner. Perhaps most disastrously, the members of the Alphan team found themselves shocked by the grip that “primitive” religious mystery (the Iwēgeq religion) seemed to have over the people, and began to lecture them. Their intentions were good, at the heart of things. The team really did want to help. But not being holders of Proximan values, they could not understand how deeply rooted those values were, nor could they fathom the level of pain and sacrifice the Proximans would be willing to undergo to defend them.

The unrest that the Omnooře government had hoped for did indeed materialize, fanned by the Alphans’ own miscalculated attempts at education. Riots broke out not only in Tanaaikol, but in other nations that also had Iwēgeq followers. Iwēgeq leaders called for the expulsion of the aliens. Some of the more radical elements even put prices on their heads. Over the next few days, the ranks of protestors grew, the calls grew more strident, and the response more hysterical, until the Alphan contact team had to be taken into protective custody.

What the Omnooře government had not counted on was the fact that the unrest might not serve to cripple Tanaaikol, but to unite Proxima. Tanaaikol, in a surprise move, revealed the existence of their space fleet, and said that they had been building it for years in a heroic attempt to

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prepare for the coming war against the threat from the skies. The other Proximan nations, inflamed by propagandistic loops of the most insulting Alphan comments being continually broadcast, pressed by the hysterical voices of the Iwêgeq believers, rushed to join in alliance with Tanaaikol.

The Alphan ship, monitoring all of this, sent a demand to return their crew. The Proximan fleet, in response, closed ranks around the Alphan ship and demanded that they surrender. While the Alphan ships were certainly more advanced, the sheer weight of Proximan numbers would be telling in the end. Leaving the crew on the ground would be heart-breaking, but it was more important to prevent any more ships falling into Proximan hands, and, above all, to protect the secrets of the warp generator.

The battle that ensued, recorded by the Proximan fleet and orbital stations, was later broadcast by Tanaaikol to the entire planet. The Alphan carrier pretended to acquiesce, beginning to drop into the upper atmosphere of Proxima. Abruptly, it nosed upward, blasting out of the atmosphere at full power. The shock wave took out one of the Proximan ships, which by a stroke of terrible luck fell on the outskirts of a small coastal village, killing most of the two thousand residents. This incident would be used as a further rallying point in years to come.

Meanwhile, the Alphan carrier was accelerating as fast as possible to jump distance. While it could certainly outrun the Proximan ships, it

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could not outrun their missiles or lasers, which were already starting to impact on the ship's stern. Two Alphan volunteers, in a selfless act of sacrifice, each took one of the remaining armed landing ships and roared off to engage the Proximan fleet. They managed to destroy ten Proximan ships before being destroyed themselves, and in the resulting confusion the mothership was able to disengage and head back to Alpha.

What happened to the team on the ground is still somewhat speculative, as the sources come from declassified and / or seized Proximan government documents revealed after the end of the war. It seems that attempts were made to interrogate them. Two of the team, in an unguarded moment, committed suicide, and the remaining two were being moved to separate locations. The Omnooře spy was on one of the moving teams and apparently killed the other guards. The spy then gave the Alphan her original clothes and tools and took her to the hangar where the last landing ship was located. Spotted by guards, the Alphan apparently remotely fired the ship's weapons systems, destroying the hangar and the ship and killing herself in the process. What happened to the fourth Alphan is still unknown.

The second survey ship returned to Alpha and informed their stunned and horrified world of what had happened. Alpha had neighbors... hostile neighbors. Emergency government sessions debated different courses of action. A policy of containment and of gradually building up Alpha's own forces was decided upon. Certain Terran experts often point to this decision as Alpha's biggest and most puzzling mistake, a sure indication that the Proximan threat was not correctly assessed and that the Alphans refused to take their adversaries seriously. Alphans, never overtly militaristic, nonetheless had more advanced ships than the Proximans. An immediate all-out strike, they say, could certainly have wiped out Proxima's fledgling space fleet, and perhaps averted the coming war. Defenders of the policy point out that Alpha did not have the resources or will at the time for the prolonged ground war that would have been needed to topple the governmental structure. A preemptive strike would only have inflamed the Proximans' religious passions further, and even if the fleet had been totally destroyed, without removing the government, the fleet would simply be rebuilt. Plus, the Proximans had shown what they could do when given a single survey ship to work with. Any Alphan military ships destroyed in battle and subsequently salvaged would just give the Proximans more materials and technical knowledge to work with.

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On Proxima, Tanaaikol was consolidating its power. Taking full advantage of the religious fervor, the Alphans were depicted as the demons who had come from hell (the skies) to wreak havoc on the life-giving ground. Members of the Proximan space force were painted as the ultimate heroes, brave warriors who willingly ventured into hell to slay the demons on their own ground. Recruitment skyrocketed. A worldwide task force was established to coordinate resource allocation for building up the space fleet. Research and development continued at a feverish pace. The Proximans obviously expected some sort of retaliation. When it didn't materialize after a couple of years, the government began to grow anxious. The populace began to question whether the threat from the skies was real or just a power play by Tanaaikol. Dissent began to grow.

Ironically, it was the Alphans who once again unknowingly fanned the flames. Enforcing their government's policy of containment, Alphan patrols had noted that Proximan ships were venturing further and further from their homeworld. A line was drawn, and when a Proximan ship crossed it, it was captured by the Alphans and the crew questioned. Unfortunately, the command ring of this particular Alphan ship was overzealous, a little too eager to prove their superiority and take revenge for some of the past incidents. They utilized powerful drugs on the Proximans, who subsequently were released to pilot their ship home. They arrived; brainwashed, hollow shells of their former selves, spouting praises to the Alphans and their superior society.

All seemed quiet for many years after. Then the raids began. In a move that caught the Alphans completely by surprise, a small Proximan task force struck at a gas refinery station orbiting the gas giant Alpha III, destroying it and two Alphan patrol vessels. While this Proximan force was subsequently chased down and destroyed to the last ship, the fact that they had somehow managed to slip through the Alphan lines undetected threw the government into a panic. Reports from the Alphan ships that engaged the Proximans and analysis of the wreckage showed a new level of sophistication in design.

The Alphans rolled up their sleeves and made improvements in their own fleet. Slowly, their advantage returned. Proximan raids continued on a sporadic basis, inflicting damage on Alphan operations but always at a heavy loss to the Proximans. The Alphan government, meanwhile, temporarily overturned their previous "containment only" policy and launched occasional sorties into Proximan space, destroying mining op-





erations on the outer planets and, in a spectacular success, completely destroyed an orbital shipyard that set the Proximan shipbuilding program back at least half a decade. However, it was noted that by this time the Proximans were producing their own fully unique and effective ship designs, free from Alphan influence.

As years went by and the tit-for-tat raids continued, both sides grew weary of the conflict. The Alphan government reinstated its policy of containment and from that point forward showed remarkable restraint and never pressed the advantage into Proximan space. They had grown to understand their enemy by this point and had finally realized that the religious fervor that fueled the Proximan raids would start to die if the enemy remained distant and nebulous. They proved correct as on Proxima, once again, citizens began to question the diversion of resources and the rationale behind the raids. The enemy, to them, appeared to have been vanquished. The government held on, insisting vigilance and a proactive stance was necessary to prevent disaster. Then, something completely unforeseen occurred

THE PROXIMA WAR

Had humanity chosen the closer but far less likely Proxima Centauri as a first target for exploration, history might be very different. But the Terrans were, of course, drawn to the nearby sun much like their own. The Proximans learned of contact with the new alien race, which threw their governments into a flurry of action. The people of Proxima were rallied once again, to a fever pitch not before attained... hell had allies, now. The incursions would begin anew, leading eventually to enslavement. The hawkish elements of the united Proxima began to exile and silence millions of dissenters who wanted nothing to do with what was coming next...

The Terrans learned of the Proximans from the Alphans. To their credit, the Terrans took the warnings with a grain of salt, surmising that the views they were getting were tainted. For many years, they tried to initiate contact with the Proximans, but were ignored. The Terrans had the best of intentions, seeking to simultaneously make first contact and act as intermediaries to resolve the long conflict. Sadly, the fanaticism on Proxima was once again in full swing, and to the Proximans, they were already in a state of war. On August 2, 2147, soon after the Pathfinder IX survey ship arrived in the Proxima system, it was destroyed.



Even after Pathfinder IX was destroyed, most Terrans were willing to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The Proximans, however, were by this point driven purely by paranoia and fanaticism. Expecting retaliation from both the Terrans and the Alphans, the government made plans. They had ratcheted up their shipbuilding and recruiting programs again, and were close to achieving wartime strength. Against a combined enemy, a proactive approach was deemed necessary.

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The thermonuclear missiles themselves were simple and rugged. The propulsion and guidance systems were the best Proxima could mus-

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ter. And the ships that carried them were the latest design, staffed by the most loyal and fanatical of crews. In seconds, major Alphan cities were nothing more than columns of black smoke and radioactive ash. Millions were dead, with millions more to join them in the aftermath. It was January of 2148.

The Terran government was quick to offer assistance and relief supplies to Alpha in the terrible first weeks of the attack's aftermath. Alpha immediately declared war on Proxima and urged Terra to do the same. While roundly condemning the Proximan action, declaring war was a difficult step to take because the Proximans had not yet communicated directly with Terra. In fact, no Terran had at this point even seen a Proximan, except through holos and descriptions from the Alphans. Two months later, however, a further incident occurred that left the Terran governments with little choice.

Regular passenger service to Alpha had been stopped after the attack, both due to security risks and the turmoil of the aftermath. Terran relief groups, however, continued to send personnel, and several passenger lines donated the services of their ships and pilots to ferry them to and fro. It was a case of terrible bad luck that the Interstellar Queen *Tigran* arrived out of warp in the vicinity of a Proximan scouting party, parked at distance and quietly probing the Alphan defenses for weaknesses. The Proximans immediately made for this target of opportunity. The crew of the *Tigran* picked up the signature of the Proximan drives coming to life, but there was little they could do as they had just emerged from the jump and their power was drained. Meanwhile, Alphan and Terran ships in system scrambled in a desperate attempt to reach the unarmed passenger liner first. After several minutes of maximum acceleration, the Alphan and Terran fleet achieved visual range just in time to watch in horror as the *Tigran* was ripped apart by Proximan missiles, while Proximan ships swooped about, mercilessly picking off the lifeboats and shuttles that had been launched. The smaller Proximan force quickly disengaged as their enemies drew near. Two hundred sixteen relief volunteers and twenty-two crew members were killed in the attack. Fourteen had survived in shuttlecraft that had been spared; had the Alphan and Terran ships arrived just a few seconds later, they too would have been killed. Testimony by the survivors and their rescuers fueled the outrage back on Terra. Massive demonstrations and fiery speeches by politicians of all stripes forced Terran governments to quickly call for a declaration of war from the U.N., which was announced on March 14, 2148. This incident, along with the destruction of Pathfinder IX, is sadly

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the limit of most of today's youngsters' knowledge of the causes of the war, overlooking the hundreds of years of misunderstandings and bad blood between the Alphans and Proximans that preceded it.

The first year of the war was quiet, as the allies sought to rebuild Alphan defenses and Terra sought to expand her own fleet back home. There was much grumbling about the need for a "quick lesson" to be taught to the Proximans, but such an exercise would have been foolhardy. In February of 2149 the Terran Defense Force was formed by the U.N. to coordinate all Earth national militaries in space. Proxima had achieved its objective; with Alpha reeling and Terra unprepared, it had bought the time it sought to bolster its preparations.

The first allied battle fleet was convened in Alphan space early in January of 2050. It was an odd assemblage of ships and, as history was soon to prove, deeply flawed. The Terrans had not yet fought a full-scale engagement in space, so their ships were designed around simulations and guesswork rather than practical experience. The Alphans, on the other hand, had the experience in fighting; however, their fleet was designed around the idea of containing the Proximans, not engaging their full military might. In addition, their forces were badly depleted after the Proximan first strike (Alphan ships, being fitted with gravity resist, were often based on planets rather than orbital facilities, and so had been struck on the ground).

This motley fleet got its first test only three weeks later, and the results were disastrous. The Proximans struck hard at the Alphan industrial facilities around Alpha III; the allied fleet sallied forth to meet the attackers and soon found themselves outclassed both technologically and tactically. The Proximan ships were more advanced than anything the allies had yet seen, and their tactics were honed by years of raids with Alpha. The allies fought bravely but were soon overwhelmed and forced to retreat inside the asteroid belt.

The allied fleet was nearly shattered, and the Proximans consolidated their position around Alpha III. The Alphans had lost a major source of raw materials as well as important industrial facilities, further hurting their already reeling shipbuilding program. The Proximan hold on Alpha III was thus a major thorn in the Allies' side. At this time, of course, Proxima still lacked warp technology, and early strategies reflected this thinking. As lack of warp drive both confounded quick strikes by Proxima, as well as greatly reducing the capability for



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escape and re-supply by those units in the field, it forced the Proximans into large, self-supporting fleet actions. While the Proximan forces may have been technologically superior at the start of the war, the need for large fleet actions made their early tactics somewhat predictable, and their movements easy to track.

However, Alpha III was not easy for the Proximans to hold, and quick guerilla strikes by the Allies over the following year kept the Proximans off-balance. The Proximans tried an advance on Alpha II in July of 2151. Alpha II was a critical prize; if the Proximans could take it, they would have a convenient platform from which to launch attacks on the Alphan homeworld. The Allied response was desperate and fierce. The Proximan fleet was harried on all sides by Allied interceptors that darted in and out of the asteroids. When the fleet emerged, they were attacked from the rear by another wave of interceptors that had been held back while the main Allied fleet engaged them at the fore. Although Allied losses were heavier than the Proximan losses, they managed to inflict enough damage to make the taking and holding of Alpha II impossible. The Proximan fleet fell back and regrouped at Alpha III. The inner system was safe for now.

The Allies knew that eventually the Proximans would develop warp drive, either on their own or by copying a captured system. To this end, Terra began preparations for an invasion of their own system, developing the famous *Three M's* three-tiered defense plan: **M**ines (seeker mines on the outer edge of the system), **M**ajors (Sentinel Majors), and **M**ars (main headquarters of the local defense interceptor squadrons). As it turned out, this system was put in place not a moment too soon. The first use of warp technology in battle by Proxima caught Terra by surprise, but not unprepared.

The military nuances of the Battle for Mars are the most-studied aspect of the Proxima War, and not just among Terran scholars. Argument rages over whether it was an ambitious and well thought-out plan or a rash and terrible miscalculation on Proxima's part. The fact that Mars, not Earth, was the primary target of the coming Proximan strike shows the importance that Proxima had (correctly) attached to the Martian shipyards. If they could destroy or damage Terran industrial capacity, as well as showcase the vulnerability of Terra, they could isolate their enemies by forcing the Terrans to invest their remaining ships in defending their own system. On the other hand, it can be argued that Proxima was foolish not to press their advantage in the Alpha system first; by razing or

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capturing Alpha I, they would knock the Alphans out of the war, allowing Proxima to concentrate on the Terrans. What might have been is sure to remain a fertile ground for speculation for many years to come.

On August 21, 2152, the Proximan fleet arrived on the outskirts of the Sol system. The daunting size of the Proximan force outstripped even the most generous estimates, and it quickly became clear to the tracking station personnel relaying the data that the existing defense fleet might not be enough to stop it. Messages were quickly beamed to Alpha Centauri, ordering reinforcements from the front-line expeditionary fleets. Throughout the inner planets, people stockpiled supplies and huddled down to anxiously wait.

The Sentinel Major control ships launched from their bases around the outer planets and activated the unmanned Sentinel major weapons carriers parked in various orbits, and this line of defense began to close with the Proximan fleet. By this time the first hits from the seeker mines, seeded outside the orbit of Pluto, began to tell on the Proximan ships. A few hours later, the first wave of Sentinel Majors plowed through the Proximan formation, sowing chaos and inflicting major damage. The Proximans, though they had lost one-third of their entire fleet by the time the Jupiter perimeter was breached on August 25, did not slow.

When it became obvious that Mars was the target, Earth's complement of interceptors roared to reinforce their counterparts already beginning to engage elements of the Proximan fleet inside Jupiter's orbit. The Terran defense ships were for the most part old and outmoded compared with the Proximan fleet, but their crews were desperate and determined. Great sacrifices and unimaginable decisions were made in the blink of an eye. Terran CAM 117s bore through withering fire and tore into the Proximan flanks, expending their fuel and weapons in massive gouges before drifting away to be helplessly picked off. Other Terran ships, badly hit or with weapons expended, became battering rams, shielding groups of interceptors behind their bulk and even detonating their reactors in the midst of the Proximan ranks. Still, the enemy came on, throwing up curtains of defensive fire and hammering the Terran lines with hails of rockets and particle beams. As Mars's orbit was reached; groups of Proximan freighters, ignored until now in favor of the enemy capital ships, began disgorging schools of K7 Piranhas, which quickly dived into the atmosphere. They were met there by Terran Vulcans and Thunderbolts, and the skies of Mars lit up with weapons fire.





Meanwhile, the Proximan missile carriers began launching their payloads, targeting Martian industry and the heart of the Terran shipbuilding program. Ground-based defenses knocked down many of these, but a few got through and turned their impact areas into seas of fused glass. The Terran forces were stretched to the breaking point when the first signals from the arriving main fleet reached the relay stations. Both sides intensified their efforts. Finally, it became clear that the Proximan force was too weakened to stand up to the remaining defense forces and the nearing Terran fleet. The Proximans withdrew, having damaged, but not destroyed, their target.

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While the attack on Mars had essentially broken the Terran home defense fleet, the Proximans had lost over half of their strength without obtaining their objective. The shipyards were quickly repaired and production was soon back on schedule. Bolstered by this success, the Allies launched a new assault on the Proximan stronghold at Alpha III. While this battle was largely indecisive, the Proximans realized that holding their position there was no longer worth the effort, since their development of warp generators obviated the need for a forward base. Their fleet withdrew in July of 2153. With the exception of Barnard's Star, it was the last time that Proxima would hold any territory in the Allied systems.

At this point, while the Allies had suffered incredible losses of ships and crew, and were barely able to field a fleet, the Proximans had been forced to retreat twice within the space of a year. Despite their numerical and technological superiority, they had been unable to achieve their objectives or hold the territory they had gained. The Terran high command decided to press their perceived advantage, as well as exact a bit of vengeance for the Proximan attack on Mars. In September of 2153 the newly refurbished 3rd Expeditionary Fleet arrived in Proximan space. It quickly became apparent that the capacity of the Proximan shipyards to replace losses had been greatly underestimated. The Terran fleet drew into a defensive formation and were beset on all sides by wave upon wave of Proximan ships. While several Terran ships did escape, the fleet was all but decimated as a fighting unit, and several ships and their crews were captured. It was back to square one again.

The next two years were fairly quiet. Both sides rebuilt their forces and probed the other for weaknesses. There were many minor skirmishes between small groups of ships as each side tested the borders and attempted to glean information. Twice, Proximan probes broke the outer perimeter of the Sol system and set off the early warning system, but no fleet appeared.

Meanwhile, careful study of captured Proximan ships revealed a peculiar deficit in their scanning technology. It was found that their long-range sensors could seemingly be easily confused by false signals. This knowledge became important in the coming Battle of Alpha I.

In June of 2155, Allied intelligence indicated a Proximan build-up for a fresh assault. It was suspected that the target would be the Alphan

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homeworld. While the Terran and Alphan fleets were certainly healthier than they had been two years ago, the Proximan fleet was sure to be larger and perhaps better-equipped. Using the newly-discovered weakness in the Proximan scanners, a group of gutted hulks were towed into an elliptical orbit around Alpha I and fitted with remotely-controlled engines and devices that would, to the Proximan scanners, indicate a large and well-equipped fleet. Meanwhile, bogus Allied orders indicating that the suspected target was the Sol system were allowed to fall into Proximan hands. The stage was set, and the Allies could only hope that their guesses were correct.

They were. A massive Proximan attack fleet warped in and headed for Alpha I. Detecting the bogus Allied “fleet” and believing they had caught the enemy off-guard, the Proximan commanders split their forces in two, sending a majority of the heavy ships to intercept the “fleet”, keeping it away from the planet while the missile carriers and ground attack craft went to make short work of the apparently undefended homeworld.

Too late, the Proximans realized their mistake. As their commanders uncovered the ruse, the Alphan defense forces rose from their camouflaged bases on the surface while the Terran ships, lying in wait under minimal power behind cover of the Alphan moon, came to life and drove into the phalanx of Proximan capital ships from the rear. The Proximan missile carriers and ground attack craft, missing most of their protective escort, were annihilated. The missiles that they did manage to launch were mostly intercepted, either by ground installations or, in a few cases, by atmospheric defense craft that selflessly guided themselves into the missiles’ paths.

Meanwhile, the Terran fleet was in a dogfight with the main Proximan force. The Proximan fleet managed to cut through the Terran line and set course back toward Alpha I, only to be met head-on by the Alphan defense craft that had just finished off the missile carriers. Soon, the Proximans tried to give up the fight and headed for deep space, only to be met by another detachment of Alphan interceptors launched from carriers sent from the bases around Alpha II, which had been quietly positioning themselves to cut off any escape. Pressed on all sides and now facing a numerical disadvantage, the Proximans fought hard but were ultimately destroyed almost to the last ship. This resounding victory is widely regarded by historians to be the real turning point of the war.

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The Allies pressed their advantage, engaging Proximan fleets in neutral space and winning additional victories. The Proximans, however, turned two of these defeats into victories in March of 2156. The remnants of two Proximan fleets, engaged and defeated by Allied forces, converged in Alphan space and made a surprise attack on Alpha III, destroying the newly-rebuilt bases and industrial facilities. However, during this battle an Alphan missile struck the Proximan command vessel, killing their top admiral, which was a major blow to Proximan morale and battle planning. While they had destroyed their target, the Proximans could not hold this prize and were forced to retreat.

The war went on. It became clear during the next four years that Proxima's best shots had been landed, and their military infrastructure was in slow decline. Political infighting on the Proximan homeworld intensified as opposition to the war grew. The lesser nations of Proxima began to resent the fact that their people and resources were being co-opted to fight a war that had been started by one of them in what was increasingly viewed as a poorly calculated bid for supremacy rather than an act of cultural and religious defense. The quick victory that Tanaaikol had promised never materialized, and that nation was forced to divide its attention and resources in increasingly draconian efforts at putting down opposition and keeping its coalition together.

Working together, Alpha and Terra had closed the technological gap and finally began to exceed the Proximan designs. The Proximan Shark interceptor, for example, came into action in early 2156; its impact, however, was diminished as the Alphan Stingray followed just a few months behind and the Terran Hornet a year later. This time gap between the Shark and Stingray marked the last time that the Proximans would ever have even a temporary technological advantage.

As warp generators became cheaper and smaller, and as resources for building large ships diminished, the shape of battle shifted away from fleet actions to quick strikes by small groups of warp-equipped ships. The threat to the Sol system diminished as the Proximan ability and desire to commit resources to another huge strike shrank. Terra was thus able to concentrate more and more of its fleet to the task of containing Proxima from Alphan space. Allied strikes on Proximan forward bases became more frequent and penetrated deeper into Proximan territory. In 2160 they struck into the Proximan system itself, with TDA commandos staging a daring and successful raid on industrial facilities on Proxima V.



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In a surprise move, Proximan forces seized the Alphan mining colony at Barnard's Star in November of 2161. This attempt at distraction and at disrupting the flow of raw materials into Alpha's industrial facilities ultimately had little effect, and the colony was re-taken with little effort in July of 2162.

2163 and 2164 saw the jaws continuing to tighten around Proxima. Although the Proximans scored a couple of small successes, foiling a raid by Alphan commandos on their mining facilities on Proxima I and defeating a large Allied strike fleet with the help of a timely solar flare, these were only temporary blips as losses continued to mount. Continued political infighting and outright rebellion by nations on Proxima shook their planetary coalition. Tanaaikol's capitol city was rocked by terrorist bombings, and several officials were assassinated in an attempted coup. By the end of the year, however, the majority government was back in control, extending their iron grip in a series of ever more repressive police actions. While they had the lid on the situation for the moment, the pressure continued to mount. By 2164 repeated Allied raids on mining and manufacturing facilities had slowed Proximan ship production to a paltry 20% of 2155 levels. Advanced ship designs could not be put into production because any stoppage to re-tool the shipyards would be suicidal, and raw materials were now in short supply. The Proximans could only continue with their old designs and repairing and modifying such ships as they had, which were by now hopelessly outclassed.

In 2165, the Allies launched a full-scale invasion of the Proxima system. Starting at Proxima V, they moved inward, securing one planet before moving in on the next. Captured mines and industrial facilities were immediately turned over to the manufacture of Allied ships. Proximan strikes against targets in Alphan space diminished and finally ceased, as all remaining ships were pulled back to defend the home system. 2165 to 2166 marked some of the most intense ship-to-ship fighting of the war as increasingly desperate Proximan forces began using tactics like ramming enemy capital ships with interceptors or detonating unmanned freighters loaded with warheads, scrap metal, and rocks in the midst of Allied fleets.

In April of 2167, the Allied fleet had reached Proxima II and faced the remnants of the Proximan battle fleet. As the Allies closed in, the commander of this fleet was detained in a mutiny by her senior officers, who were mostly natives of the minor nations of Proxima. They offered to hand the fleet over to the Allies with the understanding that their crews were to be treated fairly and that Proxima was to be spared major bom-

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bardment. These terms were agreed to and the war in space ended on April 15, 2167. While these promises were for the most part kept, news and rumors of subsequent atrocities (see below) leaked to the general population of the POW camp to which these officers were assigned. One of them expressed bitter regret at having trusted the Allies in a journal entry, the night before she and her cohorts were murdered at the prison by Tanaaikol loyalists.

The Terran high command had hoped that the Proximans might surrender when pressed back to their home planet, but this was not the case. Tanaaikol still held sway on the planetary surface, and if anything their proclamations that invasion by the enemy was surely coming actually helped to bolster their position somewhat. By this point, a large faction of Terrans urged an end to their involvement in the war; the threat to Terra had been eliminated, and the resolution should be left to the Alphans. The war had dragged on for almost two decades, and the Terran high command hesitated... how many more lives would be lost to winning a ground war?

However, it quickly became clear that, left to their own devices, some more hawkish types in the Alphan war ring would push to end the war “their way”, obviating the need for a ground war entirely. The Terrans responded tersely that they would not allow genocide. A political crisis loomed among the Allies. With a majority of Alphans and a vocal minority of Terran citizens calling for the sterilization of Proxima, cooler heads were brought together and a plan hammered out. It was agreed that Proxima should be rebuilt with a new government, in such a way that a war of this type would not happen again. The point was driv-



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en home by a single Alphan elder, standing at a war ring meeting, silently displaying holos of reconnaissance photos of the Proximan surface, showing hundreds upon hundreds of prison camps filled with Proximan political dissenters; the blood of war, obviously, was not on the majority of Proximan hands, and an entire race should not be punished for the actions of one government.

The ground war began in June of 2167. Proximan orbital shipyards, turned over to the manufacture of Allied craft, supplied a steady stream of equipment to ground forces. The Tanaaikol government collapsed in early September of 2167 under assaults by Allied forces and militia groups comprised of Proximan political dissenters freed from the prison camps. Allied forces captured or jammed the main Proximan media outlets and broadcast war news as well as offering the Proximan governments guidelines for surrender. It was a time of pure chaos, as infrastructure, services, and economies collapsed planet wide and roving gangs and warlords held sway over local populations. There were also a couple of incidents that in post-war years would inflame passions and help spark the insurgency that continues to this day. In December of 2167, Alphan troops attacked the Proximan city of Jaßna. The Proximans claim that the city's population, swelled by refugees, might have been as high as 100,000 people. Alphan troops, they claim, went on door-to-door killing sprees, or rounded up and massacred the residents in public parks. The Alphans claim the city only held six thousand residents and was a known stronghold of Tanaaikol government officials, and it was these loyalists that had set fires and detonated stored munitions rather than let themselves be captured. While the real truth might never be known, the recent discovery of what might be mass graves lends terrible credence to the Proximan version. In another incident, in February of 2168, missiles launched by Terran attack ships struck a temple that was packed with over 3000 refugees, killing everyone inside; the Terran claims that they mistook the structure for a disguised industrial facility are discounted by many Proximans.

By July of 2168, scattered Proximan units continued to fight in the field, but any large-scale resistance was impossible to sustain. In November of 2168 political leaders from the major Proximan governments gathered with Allied officials at the city of Algol and offered their unconditional surrender; the signing of the treaty on November 1, 2168 finally put an end, after more than two decades, to an incalculably costly and destructive war that had ended hundreds of millions of lives and set back all three cultures by decades.



WORLD GOVERNMENT

With the end of hostilities the governments of the nations of Terra began work in earnest to form a true world government. Obviously a necessity in light of interstellar politics, many organizations and nations did initially oppose the concept. However, within 2 years the Treaty of Union was signed, replacing the United Nations with the Terran Federation.

Unlike its predecessor, the Terran Federation is a true governmental body with members elected to a Congress from all nations on Terra with additional members from both the Mars and Lunar colonies. Old national governments are now simply regional authorities and answer to the central Federation government (with the World Council sitting in Berlin).

THE TERRAN TRADE AUTHORITY

The TTA is simultaneously the most important and most controversial business venture in the Terran sphere. The TTA controls resource allocation and sets all regulations for any Terran company that has a presence in space, especially in the sphere of interstellar commerce. These regulations, and the right of the TTA to maintain this monopoly, are enforced by the Terran military. Those who are familiar with the Terran Federation's government charter and its professed ideals of free trade and commerce may be confused by this apparent contradiction. The debate over the TTA and its powers is usually the top order of business at every new session of TerraFed, and has grown increasingly divisive as supporters of the current system make the struggle out as rich vs. poor (the TTA is the great equalizer, acting as a distributor of wealth and assuring that small countries have chances to develop businesses and trade) while its opponents call it a fascist system, with the TTA doling out resources only to those corporations and entities that toe its party line.

The TTA is jointly administered by the 225 member nations who form the Terran Federation and who all own "shares" in the corporation. These shares allow the members equal voting power, even without equal investment. Thus, the majority of shareholders are poorer government entities who have a vested interest in keeping the status quo. Meanwhile, the richer nations and their corporate interests vie for a way to grab a larger share of the power.



THE TTA: FACTS & FIGURES

Founded: 01 / 2042

Home Office: North Africa, Terra

Type: Consortium. (government department of the Terran Federation)

Products: Consulting, asset management and distribution, financial products, research and development, shipping, passenger carriage, aerospace hulls, defense shields, ship systems.

Number of Employees: 623,500 (Earth home offices), 8300 (Mars office), 1950 (Lunar office), 605 (Jupiter orbital complex office), 435 (Alpha Centauri ambassadorial offices / customs crew), 285 (Proxima Centauri ambassadorial offices / customs crew), approximately 8800 various field agents, enforcement and inspection personnel, and part-time consultants in all locations.

Whatever their methods, and whatever the controversy, the TTA offers a bewildering variety of services. They lend money and do consulting work for aerospace manufacturers and suppliers. They oversee all Terran space operations, setting and enforcing safety regulations. As during the Proximan War, they ration and distribute critical shipbuilding materials to the various manufacturers. They also administer trade agreements and inspect cargoes both outbound and incoming from the Centauri systems. In the manufacturing sector, perhaps the most important products the TTA produces are the variety of energy-absorbent defense shields, of which it is the sole supplier. The TTA also manufactures medical and scientific research equipment specially designed for shipboard use. Finally, they have a branch that designs low-cost, reliable transportation systems. The most famous of these is the under-ocean railbus system that recently opened its first branch from Europe to North America, but the TTA also operates local services, everything from monorails and mini-railbus systems to low-orbit shuttles. These latter ventures are almost always run at a considerable loss, but are designed to offer affordable access to the entire planet and to space from all portions of Terra, especially areas where local governments are otherwise too financially strapped to do it themselves.

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Perhaps the TTA's most important contribution has been the great Mars Shipyards, the largest and most ambitious building project ever undertaken in the Sol system. Ground was broken in 2136, following first contact with Alpha Centauri. A decade in the making, the project

Roleplaying Game



TTA SUBSIDIARY OFFICES

- ** *The Federal Law Enforcement Authority*
- ** *The Institute of Astronautics*
- ** *The Institute of Medical Sciences*
- ** *Interstellar Trade Directory & Data Control*
- ** *Public Office of Information*
- ** *The Research Council*
- ** *The Settlement Welfare Service*
- ** *Traffic Control & Customs*

was undertaken to fill the gap in manufacturing capacity which the then World Trade Authority predicted would arise when interstellar trade became a reality. The first ships started rolling off assembly lines in 2138, just in time for the signing of the first Terran-Alphan trade agreements one year later. The project was completed in 2146, by which time it was already the largest shipyard in existence. Its importance increased tenfold during the Proxima War. This was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the Proximan battle fleet chose Mars as their main target in 2152 rather than Terra itself.

HISTORY

After first contact with the Alphans was made in 2136, Earth was faced with a dilemma. The Alphans had achieved world government several hundred years before, and could thus act as a unified body in any trade agreements with the Terrans. The Alphans, for their part, were less than enthusiastic about signing dozens of individual trade agreements with the still fragmented governments of Earth. Making it clear Alpha would deal only with a single entity, the United Nations appointed the World Trade Authority (which was the successor organization to the World Bank and World Trade Organization of the late 20th and early 21st centuries) as the sole representative of all Earth governments in matters of trade and technology exchange.

Thus, the Terran Trade Authority came into being in 2142. At the time, the TTA was merely intended to knit the trade clout of Terra into a cohesive unit. Like the organizations that preceded it, the early TTA was little more than a money lender, consultant, and resource for the various trade ventures.

The Terran Trade Authority



When the Proxima War broke out, however, it was critical that there be a single body to control distribution of resources, construction facilities for warships, etc. Since the infrastructure was already in place, the TTA was given emergency powers by the United Nations Security Council. As the war dragged on and on, the services provided by the TTA became more and more critical, as it had to shrewdly distribute an increasingly thinning collection of raw materials and ships.

When the war ended, controversy erupted. Corporations involved in aerospace and interstellar trade immediately called for the removal of the TTA's wartime powers. However, a sizable faction opposed this, pointing out that the crisis had not yet passed; if Terra and her Alphan allies were to recover, and if Proxima were to be rebuilt in order to avoid its otherwise certain descent into anarchy and chaos, the TTA must be allowed to continue to regulate and administer the rebuilding process. The corporations and their supporters argued that free enterprise was the answer to the problem, not collectivism.

The first World Congress, a precursor to the Terran Federation, was convened and voted on the issue. The resulting proposal to strip the TTA of its powers failed by a single vote. This was mostly due to the disproportionate influence of smaller, less developed nations, who saw in the TTA the key to developing their own economies. It was the first time in a very long time that the governments of Earth had gone directly against corporate wishes, and it almost resulted in civilian-corporate warfare on Terra.

The anti-TTA faction now argued that since the World Congress had not originally invested the TTA with its powers, it could therefore not uphold them. Had the defunct UN Security Council, composed of economic powerhouses, still held sway, it would doubtless have stripped the TTA of its powers. A proposed vote by the former Security Council nations was thrown out and tensions continued to rise. At this point, the United States and Australia attempted to pull out of the World Congress.

They quickly found themselves isolated, however, as the EU, unexpectedly, stayed in. It soon became clear that the other nations would work together to prevent the USA and Australia from accessing space without going through the TTA, including resorting to military force if necessary. Closed-door meetings led to a face-saving maneuver: the agreement to form an oversight committee to watch the TTA's activities, as well as strict limits on the TTA's enforcement powers. The former was adopted, the latter skirted around by making the Terran Defense

Roleplaying Game

Force the de facto enforcement arm of the TTA by adopting the TTA's regulations as law in the first session of the Terran Federation.

REBELLION

There are, of course, many who still resented bitterly the degree of control the TTA had over their commercial activities and the powers it has to enforce them. In that respect the Authority is almost a law unto itself, and often the balance of the vast network of interstellar trade is maintained at the expense of minority interests. This has been particularly so in the case of the shipbuilding industry which has for many years, prior to and even during the Proxima Wars, been one of the most powerful forces in the hands of any group of individuals. The dawning of the age of humanity's expansion into space has channeled huge resources into the industry and its allied fields. The growing reluctance of the population to contribute significantly to government-originated programs coupled with the undeniable need for the exploitation of space gradually allowed the initiative to fall into the hands of commercial interests.

And so the giant astro-engineering corporations grew into being, the largest of which is Consolidated Aerospace. Possessing the largest privately owned shipyards in the Solar System and controlling many of the associated industries such as electronics and nuclear research plants, Consolidated Aerospace were obviously unhappy to see their influence over the expansion into space reduced and control placed in the hands of an outside agency. Though they resisted bitterly they were unable to prevent the inevitable, and the organization was eventually absorbed into the TTA structure. After considerable initial problems a workable relationship was gradually achieved, but one man never accepted the change of direction.

Harcourt Apesley was a self-willed and independent man who had joined Consolidated as a boy in one of the machine shops. He never socialized and spent every waking moment trying to satisfy his consuming interest in astrophysics. He gradually worked his way up to becoming Chief Engineer of the main fabrication Yards, before leaving to set up a company producing highly specialized electronic detection equipment with a degree of sophistication far in excess of current needs. Ordinarily it seemed to be the recipe for disaster, but after the contact with the inhabitants of Alpha Centauri had revealed that Man was not alone in the Universe, Apesley had anticipated the war which was accelerate the evolution of space travel so dramatically.



The Terran Trade Authority



As a result his company flourished and he sold out to Consolidated for a seat on their main board. There was no-one to match his dedication, drive and ambition and it was only a matter of time before the effective control of the corporation was in his hands. He was like a man possessed and involved himself directly with every aspect of Consolidated's activities, from product development through various manufacturing stages to sales and exploitation. He anticipated the move to explore and colonize worlds outside our own system, and while others were seeking to exploit the growing demand for small private spacecraft, concentrated on building massive vessels capable of carrying settlers across the vastness of space. His vision was to see Consolidated Aerospace represented on every new world, with manufacturing bases there building the ships to drive even deeper into the Galaxy.

Already the largest shipbuilding facility on Terra, under his direction three out of every five major craft in production came off his slips, and it was not surprising that he fiercely resisted the increasing degree of control that the TTA imposed on his activities. Following the Proxima War, Apesley's demands for raw materials could only be met at the expense of other areas of manufacturing, and it was felt that there was a risk of supply exceeding demand and therefore introducing an element of premature obsolescence in times that could ill afford unnecessary consumption. In late 2170, relationships between the two organizations, always stormy, became impossible and in one of its first official acts as the new world government, the Terran Central Administration instructed the TTA to cut off essential supplies until Apesley agreed to co-operate in the implementation of a program of planned growth.

On receiving this ultimatum, Apesley retired to one of his isolated research centers in Brazil where he remained closeted with a number of friends and colleagues for some days. There was much to-ing and fro-ing of private craft during this period, carrying some of the most important men in the astronautics industry as well as some influential government figures. Eventually he emerged from seclusion and returned to Consolidated's main European headquarters. He appeared to be a changed man, and meekly agreed to accept the Authority's stipulations with scarcely a murmur. He offered to personally reorganize the giant corporation to reduce production targets and allow the involvement of the TTA in all major new development projects. Many of the subsidiary organizations would be redirected towards other commercial ends at the discretion of the Authority. It was a greater concession than had ever been hoped for and the offer was received with enthusiasm.

Roleplaying Game

For the next few months, Apesley threw himself into a program of visits and conferences that would have destroyed a lesser man. Curiously, one or two of his key men disappeared soon to be followed by others until one day, Apesley himself failed to turn up where he was expected. Efforts to trace him revealed the disturbing fact that unaccountably large numbers of his staff from all levels were missing and although reasons had been given in most cases, checks proved them all to be fabrications. Gradually reports started to flood in of missing ships, equipment and materials. Entire craft had disappeared and vast quantities of supplies had been re-routed to unknown destinations.

On March 17th, 2171, an emergency meeting of the Central Administration was called, attended by the senior officials from many of the government agencies of TerraFed. Much of the missing material had military applications and constituted a grave threat to security. As discussions were in progress, a top priority message came in from Terran Defense Authority headquarters in Osaka, Japan. It read:

“Communications disrupted locally. Contact with various overseas bases lost. Something is wrong. Have ordered General Alert. Please standby to authorize Maximum Alert Status. End.”

Two minutes later Vesta thermobombs began to rain down on Osaka, Japan.

Various key military and government centers round the world found themselves similarly under attack. The Central Information Bureau was virtually wiped out in a thermobomb raid. The Military Intelligence Office in Rome suffered a similar fate, and the TTA headquarters in North Africa was destroyed in a surprise nuclear strike. Important military bases reported that they were under attack from an extraordinary range of vessels carrying armament ranging from nuclear weapons to almost useless industrial laser guns.

Nearly all the craft appeared to be commercial types modified to carry armament. There were even tiny private transport vehicles fitted with simple chemical rocket launchers striking at military launch sites. Minor bases were being surprised and overrun and used as refueling and arming facilities. More dangerously, military vehicles were captured and pressed into service. Apesley's *Impossible Army* was a threat to the very

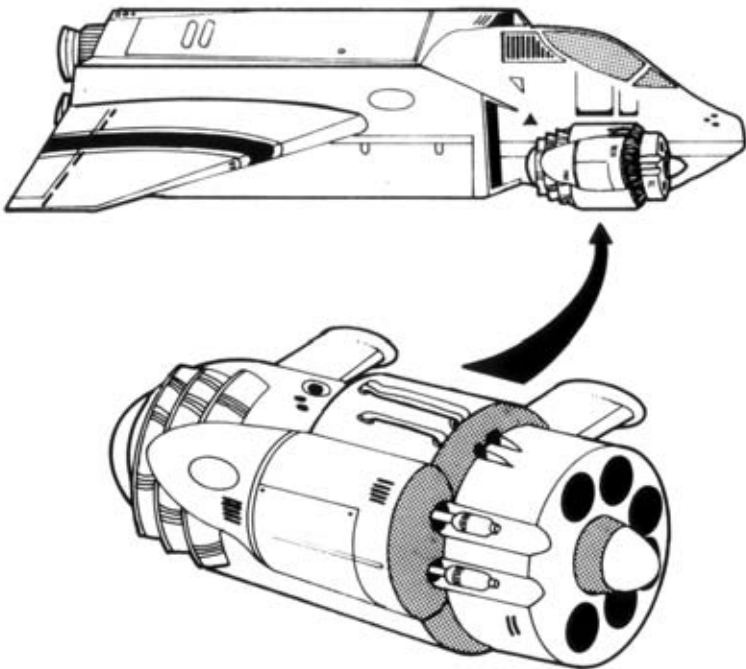


The Terran Trade Authority

existence of the nascent Terran Federation. Every civil ship and an increasing number of government ones became suspect and the Defense Authority, never having anticipated a civil uprising of this order, was thrown into confusion.

Apesley was utilizing his considerable knowledge of electronics and communications to intercept and distort messages and instructions. The government forces had no knowledge of his deployment or supply bases and the various operational detachments felt as though they were fighting a Will o' the Wisp. They were simply not equipped to react to this kind of enemy. Desperate attempts were made to intercept the motley bands of assorted craft and contain them until reinforcements arrived from other parts of the System. The situation was further complicated by the evacuation of the civilian population from target areas.

The very preposterousness of Apesley's action was his principal advantage, and he exploited it as much as he could. His ships would move into civil flight paths, follow normal operating procedures, and were almost impossible to distinguish from the regular traffic. Suddenly



Rebel "clip-on" weapon pack used to convert civil ships for offensive roles.

Roleplaying Game

veering off to strike at their target, they would then disappear in the same way. Soon all civil traffic was grounded to prevent further use of this technique, but by now sufficient military craft with their sophisticated electronic equipment, were in his hands for him not to be so dependent on his earlier improvisations.

The nearest major Defense Force base was on the moon, but the Consolidated Aerospace fabrication yards there had been taken over by Apesley's men who were already tying-up a considerable proportion of the Lunar Squadrons. The latter were badly hit initially but the rebel forces were much easier to locate and strike than back on Earth. They were destroyed without much difficulty once the Defense Forces had recovered from their early astonishment. But valuable time had been lost, and the situation on the Home Planet was becoming extremely serious. Apesley had even taken the opportunity to bomb out of existence the big Australian manufacturing complex of his main competitor, Avery Astronautics, as well as the Southern Hemisphere Control Center of the Terran Defense Authority.

But the picture was soon to alter. Interceptor squadrons based on Mars were already on their way and these craft were far more advanced than the second line of ships with which the Terra-based units were equipped and which were really only intended for policing roles. Ten days after Apesley's extraordinary onslaught was launched, the first detachments of the sleek and efficient craft entered Earth's atmosphere. By now the security forces had regrouped and were coordinating operations fairly effectively. The movements of the rebel forces were now being monitored and the interceptors moved in.

He was still gaining access to supplies of fuel and heavy armaments and had sufficient servicing facilities to keep his ships in the air almost continuously. But it was people he was running out of.

The strange and various collection of hastily converted civil craft and captured government ships were no match for the new arrivals and rebel losses mounted dramatically with minimal casualties among the interceptor crews. But there were still too few of them and the battle was far from won as Apesley continued to strike at the launch sites and communication centers of the government forces. He was still gaining access to supplies of fuel and heavy armaments and had sufficient servicing facilities to keep his ships in the air almost continuously. But it was men he was running out of. The lack of replacement crews began to





tell as the round the clock operations took their toll in exhaustion and a growing accident rate. He began to lose ships through simple pilot error and morale was declining rapidly. Gradually crews began to disappear, trying to escape what was now becoming inevitable by heading out into space. The interceptors were able to strike at Apesley's bases without even coming under fire, and the security forces were starting to recapture their previous positions.

With the arrival of further interceptors from the now secure Lunar bases, opposition collapsed and Rebel crews began surrendering their ships without a struggle. All that remained was the mopping up operation and the long, painful business of counting the cost.

Apesley himself was spotted trying to escape the planet, but escaped retribution by overloading the reactor on his ship as the interceptors closed in. What he had hoped to achieve in the long run remains a mystery, but he had come nearer than any human in history to gaining control of Terra.

AFTERMATH

Today, the TTA thus finds itself in a very delicate position. While both pro- and anti-TTA factions agree that the TTA is necessary for presenting a united front to interplanetary trade partners, the degree of the TTA's power and the scope of its activities remains a source of extreme friction and political disagreement.

Main points of the pro-TTA faction's stand:

- ▶ Without the TTA's strong central authority, a "wild west" vision of space will come into being, with corporate sabotage and even warfare over raw materials in the asteroid belt, untested and shoddily-maintained fly-by-night passenger services that endanger the lives of citizens, rampant corporate corruption and favoritism, and wildly fluctuating market prices for extraterrestrial imports and exports.
- ▶ The TTA provides services and opportunities to less developed nations, which would disappear under corporate control.
- ▶ Centralized control is a perfectly acceptable concept if it results in benefit to the whole. Without it, the Proxima War might have been lost.
- ▶ Manufacturers are more than happy to use the Martian ship-yards without owning any part of it, and the capacity of those great slips ensures that no company, in the end, is "giving away" capacity.

Roleplaying Game



Main points of the anti-TTA faction's stand:

- ▶ The TTA has been granted regulatory powers far in excess of what is needed to fulfill its purpose. The purpose of the TTA can be maintained while scaling back their stifling control.
- ▶ The TTA's original mandate, to have strong central control in wartime, has long since expired. Its continued monopoly is illegal and immoral.
- ▶ Handing control back to the private sector would not only boost efficiency but open up new market opportunities, to the benefit of all.
- ▶ The practice of allocating shipyard space to competitors is, in effect, the seizure of private property, which is illegal under Terrafed law.

PRESENT DAY

The present day for game purposes is June 11th, 2173. Over the last couple of years the still-young TerraFed has been busy establishing itself. The TTA headquarters have been rebuilt in Osaka, Japan and work continues in the radiation cleanup of the old North African compound destroyed during Apesley's Rebellion.

The massive reconstruction projects on both Alpha and Proxima Centauri continue and the diplomatic corp is hard at work in bringing the Proximan's into full alliance.

The first jet-tube RailBus routes are now open between Europe and North America with 3 more routes set to open later this year (Nigeria to Brazil, San Francisco to Manilla and Perth to Durban).

Finally, *the* media event of the year seems to be the pending launch of the Voyager settler ship. Within two years of Henri DeVass' demonstration of his prototype Warp Generator in 2127, the first Pathfinder survey ships were on their way to Alpha Centauri, Vega and Arcturus. The result of the Alpha probe is common knowledge. Pathfinder Vega found nothing, but the Arcturus mission signalled from forty-one light years away that it had found two habitable worlds, one of which was very close to Terra's conditions. The advance party verified the suitability of the new world even during the height of the Proxima War.



Voyager is now set to embark on its historic mission and will carry with it 1200 passengers, their personal goods and the equipment they will need to colonize a distant planet. Although not humanity's first interstellar colonization voyage (small corporate sponsored missions have established small colonies in the Epsilon Eridani system) it is by far the largest endeavor thus far and is also unique in being the first colonization officially organized by the Terran Federation (through the Settlement Welfare Directorate of the TTA).

MAJOR TTA AFFILIATES

CONSOLIDATED AEROSPACE

Founded: 01 / 2023

Home Office: Frankfurt, Terran Federation

Type: Publicly traded, limited liability corporation.

Products: All aspects of ship design and construction, from hulls to engines, internal systems, fittings, and electronics. In addition, Consolidated maintains research labs for weapons systems, nuclear research, robotics, and terraforming equipment.

Number of Employees: 341,000 (Earth, home office, research facilities, orbital testing and manufacturing centers), 15,500 (Mars, branch offices, research facilities, and shipyards), 1150 (Jupiter orbital complex branch office / testing center), 135 (Neptune orbital research center), 30 (L3 LaGrange Point research center), 40 (Alpha Centauri III information office), 25 (Proxima Centauri information office).

PROFILE

Consolidated Aerospace is the largest manufacturer of spacecraft and ship equipment on Terra and is second only to the great collective Alphan government shipyards among the known worlds. Consolidated has its hands in every aspect of starship research, development, and manufacturing. They can design, as their marketing department is proud of saying, "everything from cupholders to drive units to complete interstellar liners". They are responsible for some of the most enduring and famous designs in history, ships that have served both in war and in peace: the Gunships that helped to defend Mars in the Proxima War, the Skymaster 28 that ferries executives system-wide, and the Voyager and Connestoga that will carrying humanity to new star systems, to name

Roleplaying Game

just a few. Consolidated Aerospace also manufactures a variety of surface-to-orbit shuttles, optimized for various atmospheres, as well as mobile and permanent launch facilities suitable for a wide variety of planetary surface conditions, habitat modules for asteroid mining or space construction, vac suits, environmental controls, and strap-on boost packs to move various size cargoes in orbit.

Consolidated is a publicly-traded company, but its distribution system has been co-opted, as with all other aerospace firms, by the TTA. Consolidated has resisted this integration more vigorously than most, complying on the surface while lobbying in TerraFed Congress for relief. However, with Harcourt Apesly's rebellion still fresh in everyone's mind, Consolidated has been under very close scrutiny and has had to tone down their opposition. Consolidated has been involved in other controversies as well. During the "Three Day Coup", in which disgraced Prime Minister Preston of Australia attempted to strike against TerraFed airbases in an attempt to keep Australia from joining that body, accusations surfaced that certain Consolidated personnel may have supplied the PM's forces with strike craft. Consolidated claims that the craft were stolen from one of their facilities, and that two Consolidated technicians (found dead with the former PM and his loyalists in the wreckage of their bunker after orbital missile strikes) had joined of their own will and were traitors to the company. Investigations and hearings that followed failed to find any definitive evidence and the case was closed. Conspiracy theories on this topic continue to be popular fare among the masses, however.

While they may be politically outspoken, Consolidated is quite conservative in its corporate philosophy. "Slow steady, and sure" has always been Consolidated's motto. Never taking any great risk, Consolidated is rarely the first on the scene with a new innovation, rather taking the





time to carefully and exhaustively research it, finally entering the market with a product that has been perfected. Consolidated has a long-earned reputation for reliability and safety as a result.

HISTORY

Consolidated Aerospace was born in a merger of General Dynamics, a major defense contractor, Schilling Inc, a German-based aerospace designer, and United China Aerospace Corporation, a recently privatized government concern. When naming the new company, executives took a page from their own history book. General Dynamics was formed partly from a merger with Convair, which was formed from a merger between Vultee and Consolidated Aircraft, a manufacturer of atmospheric vehicles from the early 20th century. The new Consolidated Aerospace was officially incorporated in 2023, exactly one hundred years after Consolidated Aircraft came into being.

The new mega-corporation did not fare so well during its early years. Integrating three large companies, each operating under a different set of laws, proved to be more problematic than models had indicated. In addition, while United China Aerospace had massive amounts of intellectual property and talented staff, the company was bankrupt following the Sino-American War, and there was a massive amount of debt to be assumed. In addition, General Dynamics and Schilling found themselves having to free far-flung UCA facilities from the grip of various warlord groups that had taken control of some of the outlying provinces of China. This resulted in one of the first full-scale corporate wars, in which troops loyal to a corporation, rather than a government, fought to retake territory.

This conflict lasted less than a year, and featured a couple of appalling incidents of “smart” weapons going awry and striking civilian areas. The resulting lawsuits, brought by both the Chinese government and various plaintiffs in the World Court, almost ended Consolidated before it began. Consolidated entered bankruptcy and for five years was administered by the World Bank, paying reparations to the Chinese government and civilian survivors. It is a testament to the dedication of the company’s workforce and the strength of the second “push into space” that, five years after emerging from bankruptcy, Consolidated was well on the plus side of the ledger. It would take a few more years beyond this, however, for the public relations problems connected with this incident to fade.

Roleplaying Game

Over the years that followed, Consolidated manufactured atmospheric craft, including military equipment for many nations, as well as low-orbit shuttlecraft and various rocket boosters, research stations, and habitats for the growing number of low-orbit space manufacturing facilities. Consolidated also designed and built all of the crewed survey ships that went back to the moon, brought humans to Mars for the first time, and explored the outer solar system in detail.

As the commercialization of space moved into high gear, Consolidated was there, constructing and utilizing orbital manufacturing facilities, the forerunners of the massive Nomad mobile complexes which are a frequent sight throughout the solar system today. From these early orbital platforms they turned out mining equipment used in the asteroid fields, bulk freight carriers to service the automated lunar mining stations, and additional manufacturing platforms to be sold to other companies. Consolidated built the Jupiter complex, an important link between the inner and outer solar system. Meanwhile, on Earth, they were turning out a number of excellent craft to take advantage of the explosive growth in space tourism. The safety, reliability, flexibility, and low operating cost of these craft helped to make space tourism a popular activity. By the end of the twenty-first century, a shuttle ride and stay in an orbital hotel was no more expensive than a jumbo jet flight and weekend junket to a neighboring city had been a century before.

When the moon and Mars bases were constructed early in the twenty-second century, Consolidated was utilized as consultants, as well as manufacturing habitats and environmental control systems. As humanity's presence expanded further into space, the possibility of first contact was more and more on governmental minds. Since it was not known if such contact would be friendly or hostile, Consolidated was contracted, secretly at first, to study and design the first space warships. Their first designs were crude and purely defensive in nature, but it must be remembered that, much as the earliest atmospheric aircraft pioneers had found, there were no "rules" to go by, and no standard to compare their designs to. Thus, for being little more than educated guesswork, products like the CAM 100, 110, 11X, 115, and 117 Gunships and the Sentinel Minor and Major were unqualified successes, not only performing on their own terms but proving somewhat successful in combat in the Battle for Mars when it counted the most. Consolidated also built the Sentinel launch bases on various moons of the outer gas giants, the first permanent installations attempted there.



The Terran Trade Authority

During the war, of course, Consolidated quickly turned practical experience into a number of successful designs. They were also invaluable in turning their entire capacity over to the manufacturing of warships, both their own and other companies' designs, as well as constructing compact mobile factories that could be set up in war zones and use local raw materials to produce munitions, fuel, and other items critical to keeping our forces fighting. Receiving one of these mini-factories, dropped from orbit or atmospheric aircraft, was a welcome relief to the troops, who gave them the affectionate nickname of "candy stores".

In the post-war world, Consolidated is turning its eyes to the next big thing- designing the Voyager II colony ship and Connestoga super-freighter, both the largest of their kind ever built, for the eventual colonization effort among the stars. By building reliable products and looking forward, Consolidated looks to be a major player in the aerospace market for the foreseeable future.

AVERY ASTRONAUTICS

Founded: 08 / 2103

Home Office: Melbourne, Australia, Terran Federation

Type: Publicly traded, privately held, limited liability corporation.

Products: Ship hulls, drives, electronics, guidance systems, and internal components.

Number of Employees: 34,007 (Earth, head offices, manufacturing and test facility), 17,730 (Luna manufacturing and launch facility), 1065 (New Sydney free orbital research and manufacturing facility), 70 (Kuiper Belt test facility), 65 (Alpha Centauri III branch office).

PROFILE

In the arena of philosophy, Avery Astronautics is almost the mirror opposite of its main rival, Consolidated. While they both design, test, and manufacture spacecraft and surface-to-orbit shuttlecraft, Avery is well-known for taking big risks in its designs. As a result, Avery has had some spectacular successes and awesome failures in its history. Still owned and controlled by the family that founded it, Avery is probably most famous for its seminal Hornet, which many credit for definitively turning the tide of the Proxima War in favor of the Terra-Alpha alliance, and the beautiful and wildly successful Interstellar Queens, by far the most recognizable ship in service. Successes like these help to cover the memories of unmitigated disasters like the Draco, a space racer in the same mold as the much more successful Orion. The Draco, of course,

Roleplaying Game

had the unfortunate tendency to fly apart during high-gee maneuvers. Viewers of the 6th annual Luna Cup will not soon forget the sight of former champ Nurzhan Kojobaev rounding the final buoy and having both outboard engine pods finish the turn while his cabin pod continued in a straight line...

Avery's penchant for innovation has also led it to take risks like founding the Avery Astronautics orbital research and manufacturing facility. Rather than look to established sites like Mars to expand their shipyard operations, Avery's penchant for innovation led it to build the largest privately-owned orbital facility in known space on the outer edge of the asteroid belt.

This facility was opened in 2132. Dubbed "*New Melbourne*", it is currently home to over a thousand workers. This location has proven to be advantageous for several reasons. It gives easy access to raw materials from the belt, it is a convenient waypoint between the inner and outer planets, and most importantly it is relatively free from the prying eyes of competitors and government inspectors. New Melbourne is constantly being expanded, and the head office is toying with the idea of moving their headquarters there in the next decade or so. Avery has also established a test facility in the Kuiper belt for similar reasons. They are also the first Terran aerospace firm to open a full-fledged branch office in the Alpha Centauri system. The Alphan government, of course, controls all shipbuilding operations, but Avery is making contacts and gently trying to get in on the action in an intellectual property, consulting, and design capacity before taking the next step.

HISTORY

Avery was founded in a roundabout way. Fraternal twins Victor and Imandeep "Iman" Avery were born to an Indian mother and Australian father in Geelong (near Melbourne, Australia) in 2061. The Avery family was already fantastically rich, the parents being heads of a software business. The children were educated at the best universities the world



AVERY
ASTRONAUTICS



The Terran Trade Authority



had to offer. Iman proved herself to be an excellent software designer, while Victor was a shrewd marketer with killer instincts. The family business was turned over to the brother – sister team in 2088. Business acumen seems to have run in the family, because within a decade they had expanded the business fivefold and found themselves sitting on a personal fortune exceeding three billion dollars.

The Averys were hardly idle rich. Both were fond of adventure and took many trips into space, as well as getting involved with racing decommissioned military craft. Both agreed that they were bored with the software business and wanted to do something different. One day they were at an aeronautics trade show, looking at the latest offerings and not impressed with what they saw. Over dinner, they hatched the idea for their own aerospace company.

Neither sibling had the slightest idea of where to start, but they began to research in earnest. Within a few years they had lured away several top engineers from what would become rival companies, recruited the cream of the crop from technical universities with the promise of huge pay and complete design freedom, and sank almost all of their immense fortune into purchasing infrastructure and building facilities. In retrospect, the idea of building a complete company from the ground up like this was insane, and had every chance of becoming the biggest business fiasco in history. Indeed, after several fruitless attempts to gather start-up capital, the Averys simply drained their own accounts to build their El Dorado. The fact that Avery Astronautics was a huge and almost immediate success was a surprise to everyone but the Averys themselves.

The reasons for this success are many, but come down to the fact that they were good to their word to their designers. Knowing what they liked, but not sure how to achieve it, the Averys, as they put it, “put faith in their artists”. In other words, they simply handed the design reins over to their people with instructions to build their own personal dream ships. This they did, and the designs, mostly racers and personal shuttlecraft at first, were radical, bold, and inspired. Avery was swamped with orders, and the fact that they had the faith to put manufacturing capacity in place beforehand made it certain that all customers were satisfied in a timely manner. Avery began to gain a reputation as an excellent place to work, and over the next years they managed to attract talent from many competitors.

Roleplaying Game

After first contact with the Alphans, and after becoming some of the first civilians to visit Alpha I, Iman and Victor handed the reins of the company over to Iman's children and retired with their families to a private island they had purchased in the South Pacific Ocean.

Avery Astronautics, under its new directors, began to branch out from mere dream machines and high-end toys and worked on identifying and developing new markets. The Colonial series of super freighters, for instance, were designed to take advantage of the coming wholesale colonization of the moon and Mars. They also launched the visually-stunning and luxurious (for their time) Interstellar Queen series, one of which, the Tigran, famously became the victim of an unprovoked Proximan attack that helped to ignite the war.

As war erupted, Avery turned their manufacturing capacity over to the production of other companies' warship designs. Avery engineers began by making suggestions for improvement, then finally sent their own design proposals to the government. Within five years, 80% of Avery's capacity was given back and was being used to produce its own designs. Avery's series of radical and brilliant warships culminated in the Hornet, recently named in an industry poll as the "Best design of the Proxima War period". After the Hornet began rolling off the slips (and winning engagements), other corporations were forced to switch some of their capacity over to manufacturing Avery designs.

After the war, Avery went back to manufacturing civilian ships, recently branching out into the space construction industry with entries like the popular MRT 114 Mule. Avery remains active in the defense industry as well, with several exciting new designs for the next generation of interceptors and system defense ships reportedly on the drawing boards.

Iman and Victor Avery, long since retired, had one more "first" left in them. After the war ended, they visited Alpha I once more, touring the destroyed cities and donating large sums to the rebuilding effort. In the process, they became the oldest persons up until that time (at age 108) to make an interstellar voyage.





MCKINLEY SYSTEMS, INC.

Founded: 07 /2075

Home Office: Ottawa, Canada, Terran Federation

Type: Publicly traded, privately held, limited liability company.

Products: Ion drive systems, battery systems, ship control systems, electronics, dual-environment airframe design.

Number of Employees: 16000 (Earth home office / manufacturing facilities), 1350 (Lunar office / test station), 24 (Jupiter orbital complex offices / test station).

PROFILE

McKinley is the largest Terran producer of ion drive systems. Many non-industry persons might be surprised to learn that they are also manufacturers of battery systems, avionics, electronics, and even a design house for dual-environment airframes. The name McKinley is invariably associated with its main product, however... so much so that among starship technicians and crews, “McKinley” or “Mickey” is becoming shorthand for “ion drive”.

McKinley designs ion drives of all sizes for all applications from ultra-efficient and light units for probes to high-output cruise drives for military craft to massive systems large enough to push a Colonial III across the solar system. McKinley manufactures most of their own designs, though occasionally for high-volume jobs they must subcontract manufacturing facilities from other concerns.

McKinley’s other systems are not nearly as well-known but are of excellent reputation. One niche market McKinley is attempting to exploit is the design of atmospheric and atmosphere-to-space shuttle design for specific atmospheric densities and conditions. They are especially looking to exploit the newly-opened Proximan market in this regard, as most of Proxima’s domestic passenger capability was destroyed in the war. By designing a system perfectly suited to Proxima’s denser atmosphere, they hope to get a jump on the competition, or at least sell their data to another manufacturer. The promise of future colonization efforts is also driving this expansion. However, it is certain that McKinley will still be synonymous with ion drives for the time being.

HISTORY

August McKinley was born in his namesake month in 2015, in the small town of Stephenville, Newfoundland, Canada. An only child, his father was an aviation engineer who built custom aircraft and his mother

Roleplaying Game



an environmental scientist and university professor. McKinley showed a keen early interest in engineering and helped his father in the shop. When August was fifteen, he assisted his father in designing and building a low-weight, extremely fuel-friendly light aircraft that his mother would often pilot to the University of Prince Edward Island, where she was a frequent guest lecturer. In the shortages and general privation caused by the Sino-American war, having a private aircraft was a source of great pride to the McKinleys. August worked with his father in the family business, which began to branch out into control systems for the post-war “second push” into space. Rushing to take advantage, the elder McKinleys invested heavily in the ill-conceived and ill-fated Polar Star project, which sought to establish a polar-orbit launch base on Devon Island. After a series of unfortunate malfunctions and two failed launches, the project was folded, leaving the McKinleys bankrupt. August was only twenty-two when the project fell through. Recalling the hardship that resulted led him to strive for something bigger, McKinley would later note in his biography; “It was the first major setback I’d had in my life. While it would not be the last, I was determined at the time to make it so.”

That second wind, however, would prove a long time in coming. McKinley won a scholarship to the Illinois Institute of Technology, where he studied aerospace engineering. After graduation, he had a productive but undistinguished twenty-year career with the then-fledgling Consolidated Aerospace. Growing frustrated with the conservative climate of that company, he decided to try his hand at research. McKinley returned to his alma mater in a research and teaching capacity. After a decade of this, McKinley felt himself burned out and miserable. Taking a sabbatical, McKinley returned to his childhood home to visit with his



by now elderly parents. Being in his father's shop again, watching his father continue to work, he was inspired. He was also pleased to see that his mother was still occasionally utilizing the by now battered but still solid and reliable aircraft he had helped to build over half a century ago. One night he was walking alone by the shore when he had a revelation. "I recalled those early days working with my father on mother's aircraft." McKinley later wrote. "I remembered the pride of craftsmanship and frugality that went into its design. I realized that doing my own thing was what I really needed... but I was scared, even after all these years, because of what happened with Polar Star. But at that age, you start to think, your chances of making an impact start to diminish. So you go for it."

August McKinley founded McKinley Systems, Inc. on July 7, 2075, just a month shy of his sixtieth birthday. His goal was to "design, test, and manufacture equipment for the peaceful exploration and exploitation of space". Starting as a one-man operation, he had one hundred employees by 2080 and over a thousand by 2085. At first he made control systems and airframes for surface-to-orbit shuttles, as had his father. But McKinley soon found himself drawn to ion drive systems. Ion engines, as every schoolchild today learns, work by electrically ionizing and accelerating a heavy gas. Ion drive units were first utilized on an experimental level as early as the last years of the 20th century. These early drives, like their modern counterparts, had the advantage of an excellent acceleration-to-weight ratio. This came at the expense of speed, however. Early ion drives needed several days to accelerate an average payload by just 100km / hr. The key to ion drives were their vastly reduced fuel weights (1 / 10th or less of chemical rockets), meaning that, over enough time, ten times the acceleration could be achieved for the same mass of fuel. Thus, early ion engines were mainly used on unmanned space probes and computer-controlled bulk materials carriers where speed could be sacrificed for efficiency and payload. For most manned craft, however, the faster acceleration of chemical and later nuclear / hydrogen drives were necessary, even at the cost of increased fuel mass.

McKinley's knew that to give ion engines a wider application, he would have to increase the rate of acceleration. The only way to do that was to increase the speed of the ionized particles. Doing so, however, required a great amount of power, the generation of which required equipment and / or fuel that eliminated the weight-saving advantages of ion engines in the first place. McKinley succeeded in making modest gains, and his company was breaking even, but breakthroughs remained

Roleplaying Game

elusive. Although he was still a majority shareholder in his company, McKinley spent little time in the boardroom, instead working alongside his “pit crew”, as he called them, always arriving first and going home last. When asked about this, he would always shrug and say “I’m an engineer. That’s all there is to it.” McKinley bucked the trend that says that most people make their contributions early in life and then fade away. McKinley himself said that he was always determined to become stronger as he went along.

The turning point came when he met Ratana Prammanee, the Thai engineer who had developed “battery skin”, a highly-efficient electrical storage medium that could be molded into a variety of shapes or even sprayed onto a surface, hence its name. Battery skin could store immense amounts of energy. In addition, battery skin could absorb sunlight or be charged from waste heat generated by the ship’s reactors, extending the range of ships and making it perfect for the applications McKinley had in mind. McKinley hired her, luring her away from the Pan-Pacific Space Consortium, and soon McKinley Systems scientists, with their newfound power source, were boosting exhaust speeds by factors of several thousand. One of McKinley’s assistants recalled, “They made the strangest pair... McKinley, the octogenarian, stooped, disheveled, white-haired bear of a man that he was, and Prammanee, the elegant, dark wisp of a woman, almost fifty years his junior.” However odd they may have looked together, the pair helped usher in a series of remarkable breakthroughs, resulting in the prototype of what would later become famous as the McKinley Ion Ultradrive.

First installed on unmanned ships, it was quickly adopted for the weight-conscious purpose McKinley originally envisioned: driving survey ships and passenger shuttles, as well as manned freighters. From these early successes, McKinley continued to work to upgrade the efficiency and size of the drive units. In 2113, he announced the success of his project in trade journals, but the real test was yet to come. On May 3, 2114, at the age of 99, McKinley traveled to the Avery Astronautics facility on Luna to watch the launch of the Colonial II, the first super-freighter equipped with a McKinley Ion Ultradrive as its main propulsion system. The fact that the system worked perfectly assured McKinley Systems Inc. of its future, and August McKinley decided that he had earned his retirement. On his 100th birthday, McKinley left the company in the hands of its board of directors and returned to his native Newfoundland. The controversy that followed six years later, with Prammanee suing McKinley Systems for not sufficiently recognizing her contributions,



The Terran Trade Authority



was settled with McKinley's intervention, as he made a surprise visit to the courtroom where the issue was under debate... appearing for the plaintiff. It was an odd sight to have McKinley testifying against his own company, but as Prammanee later recalled, "When it came down to it, you could always count on August to do the right thing." It would be the last time August would be involved in the company's business in any way. McKinley died on September 15, 2127, aged 112 years.

Some say that it was sad that McKinley missed first contact with the Alphans by only nine years. McKinley was indeed keenly interested in the notion of other sentient intelligences in the universe. On the other hand, the Proxima War would probably have broken his heart, especially since McKinley had adamantly refused that his products be used in military ships. However, the reliability and power of his drives doubtless saved countless human lives during the conflict. The TTA, of course, in gearing up for war, utilized the best systems at hand, and McKinley's ion drives were the best around. Prammanee, by this time a board member at McKinley, put up a half-hearted attempt to honor August's wishes, but she eventually reached the same conclusion; better to use the drives in systems beneficial to Terra than have all be lost to the war.

After the Proxima War, with the expansion of passenger travel to Alpha and Proxima Centauri, McKinley's engines have helped usher in a new era of safe and efficient travel, something August McKinley would no doubt be very proud of.

OTHER TERRAN CORPORATIONS OF NOTE

Below is a list of some of the other Terran corporations affiliated with the TTA. They are not necessarily the largest, but they are the ones that make the most news.

AeroStar

An up-and-coming developer of cutting edge spacecraft systems, AeroStar has a strong interest in the shipbuilding, military, and electronics fields. It is one of the oldest corporations in the Terrafed and it is owned by the Janus family that has controlled the company for over a hundred years.

BioGenome

Once a much more powerful and profitable company than it is today, BioGenome is one of the leading producers of tailored genetic creations, such as methane consuming moss used in terraforming. Bigenome is

Roleplaying Game

currently in talks with several Proximan companies and may become the first inter-system corporate mergers in history.

Morrigan Incorporated

One of the largest manufacturers of weapons, armor, and military vehicles in the Sol system, its primary customers are the TDA, corporate security forces, and the FLEA. Morrigan's founder sold the company in the 2170 to join a group of religious colonists planning a colonizing voyage to 61 Cygni. Since the end of the PRoxima Way, Morrigan has been actively pursuing contracts with both the Alphan and Proximan governments. It is the corporation most often suspected of using force against competitors and the FLEA have been investigating it lately due to accusations from the TTA that Morrigan is selling weapons to pirates.

Australys Minerals Corporation

One of the major mining outfits in the Asteroid Belt, Australys Minerals is undergoing a drastic reorganization after several years of falling profits. The workers of Australys Minerals have suffered greatly under this reorganization.

Mirage Corporation

Considered by many to be a maverick company in the TTA fold, Mirage specializes in developing economic opportunities other companies have not thought of, such as casinos orbiting Venus. Mirage's profits vary drastically from year to year as some of its ventures flop or succeed, but on average its fortunes have been improving regularly for many decades.

Gionet Consolidated Industries

The largest mining outfit in the Sol system, it has operations in the Asteroid Belt, Titan, Europa, Mercury, Mars, and on Luna. Gionet is notorious for the poor treatment of its workers and its corrupt corporate leadership.

Lion's Head Entertainment

Lion's Head is the dominant media company of the solar system. While Consolidated Aerospace or Avery may be the most powerful corporations in the solar system, Lion's Head has the most hold on public opinion.

Marshal and Marcus Technologies:

MMT is the leading manufacturer, distributor, and retailer of non-





The Terran Trade Authority

perishable consumer goods from electronics to furniture to ground vehicles. MMT superstores can be found on every continent on Terra, on Luna, on Mars and now even on Alpha I.

Sony/Matsumata Production

A manufacturer and distributor of high end, high price tag consumer goods such as ground vehicles, computers, and space travel equipment.

Series Technologies Inc.

The leading manufacturer of computers and computer parts in the Sol system. It is estimated fifty percent of the computers in the solar system were made by Series Technologies and an even higher percentage use Series Technologies' wide range of software.

Harod Enterprises

The leading manufacturer and supplier of foodstuffs and clothes in the Sol system, Harod Enterprises is also a major force in the mining, industrial equipment, space station construction, and insurance business.

TIMELINE OF THE FUTURE

2062	World Trade Authority formed to co-ordinate international commerce
2087	Introduction of nuclear powered engines; Commercialization of space becomes increasingly common.
2090	Foundation of the World Community Research Council.
2098	WCRC North African Space Research Centers now operational.
2104	The first space freighter, Colonial I, enters service
2105	Work begins on the first Lunar Station.
2111	Lunar Station Omega fully operational.
2121	Work begins on Mars Station.
2114	Introduction of the McKinley Ion UltraDrive in Colonial II spacecraft.
2115	Martian Queen makes first commercial passenger flight to Mars.
2118	First shipment of new alloys from Lunar industry reach Earth.
2127	Warp Generator constructed by French scientist Henri DeVass.
2135	WCRC and UN authorize the first use of the DeVass Generator. Manned survey ship enters Sirius star system and returns.

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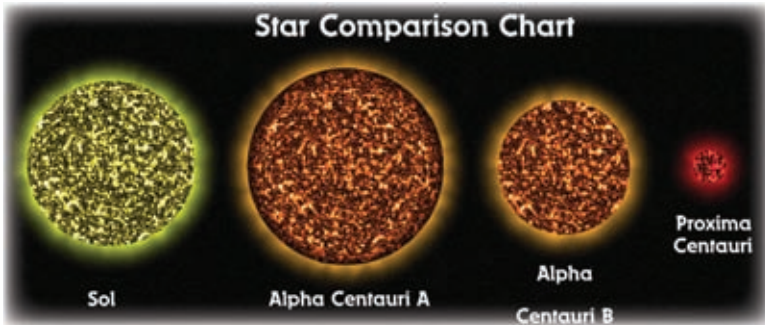


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- 2136 European Union manned survey ship makes contact with inhabitants of Alpha Centauri I.
-
- 2137 Alphan language barrier is broken.
-
- 2139 World Trade Authority becomes Terran Trade Authority. Trade & Technology Exchange Agreement signed with Alpha Centauri.
-
- 2141 First orbital industrial center in Jupiter orbit completed. Dozens of unmanned survey ships sent to star systems up to 50 lights years from Terra.
-
- 2142 First energy absorbent defense shield (EADS) produced by TTA. TTA Mining operations begin in Epsilon Eridani system.
-
- 2145 Working from existing Alphan technologies, Dr. Hans Berger introduces the Gravity Resist Generator. First primitive colony ship launched from Beijing, China.
-
- 2146 Mars Orbital shipyards completed. Mining operation begin in the Barnard's Star system. Several small colony ships launch from Earth and Mars shipyards for the Epsilon Eridani system.
-
- 2147 Pathfinder IX survey ship destroyed by Proxima Centauri. Alpha Centauri I suffers unprovoked thermonuclear attack. Alpha Centauri and Proxima Centauri in a state of war.
-
- 2148 TTA Interstellar Queen space liner destroyed en route to Alpha Centauri III. United Nations declares war against Proxima Centauri. US, EU and Pan-African military spacecraft leave Earth for Alpha Centauri.
-
- 2149 Terran Defense Authority formed by United Nations.
-
- 2150 TDA and Alphan fleets shattered in Battle for Alpha III. Proximan forces capture Alpha military base and shipyard at Alpha III.
-
- 2151 Battle of Alpha Centauri IV. Proximan fleet forced to retreat to Alpha III.
-
- 2152 Proxima develops Warp capability. Battle for Mars.
-
- 2153 Second Battle of Alpha III. Proxima abandons Alpha III. TDA expeditionary fleet destroyed in Proxima system.
-
- 2155 Battle of Alpha I - Proximan Fleet all but annihilated.
-
- 2156 Third Battle of Alpha III. Two Proximan fleets converge to destroy Alphan bases at Alpha III.
-
- 2160 TDA commandos destroy Proximan industrial facility at Proxima IV.
-



The Terran Trade Authority

2161	Proximan forces capture Alphan mining colony at Barnard's Star. Proximan's destroy the colony as Alpha is poised to retake it.
2165	Invasion of Proxima Centauri system.
2166	Bases and complexes at Proxima IV captured or destroyed by Alphan fleet.
2167	Battle of Proxima Prime
2168	Treaty of Al-Gol signed. War ends.
2170	Terran Federation established (seats in Congress for all Earth nations along with 4 seats for Luna and 8 for Mars).
2171	Apesley's Rebellion rocks the Terran Federation.
2173	First jet-tube opened on Earth between Europe and North America. Massive reconstruction effort underway on Proxima Centauri I. Voyager colony ship set to establish large human colony at Arcturus



THE WORLDS OF THE TTA UNIVERSE

ALPHA CENTAURI

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Alpha Centauri is a double star system, consisting of Alpha Centauri A, a class G2 (yellow) star, slightly larger and 50% more luminous than Terra's sun, and Alpha Centauri B, a class K1 (orange) star, slightly smaller and 50% dimmer than Sol.

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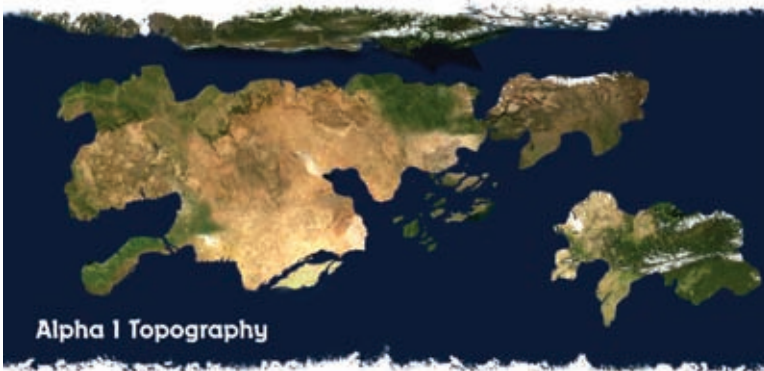
Three planets orbit Alpha Centauri A.

Roleplaying Game



PLANETARY OVERVIEW: ALPHA I

Alpha I is the homeworld of the Alphan people. It is an Earthlike planet, with large landmasses that cover just under 50% of the planet. Slightly smaller and less dense than Earth, it has a surface gravity of 0.9 g. The oceans are exceptionally deep and teem with life. Alpha I is poor in mineral resources and fairly quiet tectonically. Many older mountain ranges spread across the surface, slowly crumbling over the eons. In the main, however, Alpha I is a world of lush, hilly, semi-tropical forest, giving way to flat, verdant grasslands and finally to large expanses of equatorial desert. Alpha I is warmer than Earth as a whole, with small ice caps at the north and south poles. There are three main continents, including one that makes up over 40% of the planet's surface, which covers large portions of the northern hemisphere and equatorial regions. A smaller continent, rocky and mountainous, is the main feature of the southern hemisphere, and a third continent (appearing as a large island, but it is on its own tectonic plate) is situated at the north magnetic pole. Most Alphans live in the forest, grassland, and desert areas of the main continent, and most of the larger cities are thus situated near the equator. Racially distinct groups of Alphans also populate the smaller southern continent and the higher latitude forests of the main continent. Alpha I is home to 6.6 billion individuals. Alpha I is orbited by a large, airless, rocky moon that is darker and less luminous than Terra's Luna.



PLANETARY OVERVIEW: ALPHA II

Alpha II is a frigid world similar to Mars in the Sol system, with a thin, un-breathable atmosphere. It is home to single facility, a small commercial mining operation. Alpha II is a mineral poor planet and hold little for player characters.



PLANETARY OVERVIEW: ALPHA III

Alpha III is a ringed gas giant approximately the size of Neptune and of similar composition.

PLANETARY OVERVIEW: ASTEROIDS

There is also a large asteroid with two smaller companions located well inside the orbit of Alpha I. While not considered a planet, it is sometimes affectionately referred to as Alpha-null or Alpha one-half, and is home to a solar observatory and other scientific instruments.

SYSTEM OVERVIEW: ALPHA B

Alpha Centauri B is also orbited by three planets. Alpha B-1 is a rocky, arid world with a tenuous atmosphere. Alpha B-2 is an ocean planet with a thick, breathable atmosphere and a surface gravity of 0.81 g. Over 90% of the surface is covered by water. The largest land mass is only the size of Greenland, with multiple small island chains dotting the rest of the surface.

The world orbits close to the primary and is warm and tropical, with a dizzying array of marine life. This planet was colonized by the Alphans soon after they achieved spaceflight, and approximately 350,000 now call it home. It is also a very popular tourist destination, hosting tens of thousands of in-system and out-of-system guests every year. Scientists have commented on the eerie similarities between Alpha B-2 and Proxima IV (see entry), including their size, surface gravity, and even the pattern of islands that dot their surfaces. Alpha B-2, however, seems to be a completely natural world and any similarities must be counted as coincidence until further evidence is gathered.

Alpha B-3 is also a rocky planet, but exceptionally massive, over fifteen times the diameter of Earth and with a surface gravity of over 9.5 g. Most scientists believe Alpha B-3 to be the core of a gas giant that either never formed or somehow lost its atmosphere.

Alpha Centauri A and B circle their common center of gravity in an eighty-year orbit, with the stars varying in distance from each other by 11 to 35 AU during this period. While not luminous or close enough to influence climate, Alpha B is always an obvious presence in the sky of Alpha I. Alphans thus experience a complex pattern of days and nights over the course of their year, as well as a larger pattern over the course of 80 years, with both, either, or neither sun visible at various times. Al-

Roleplaying Game

pha B is bright enough by itself to turn night into orange-tinted twilight, making ground-based astronomy in the Alphan system a somewhat limited affair. Watching Alpha A set, experiencing several hours of star-lit skies, having Alpha B rise, soft and wan over the horizon, seeing the stars fade but not quite go out, to be followed by the full light of day as Alpha A rises is an experience that individuals from the single-star systems talk about for the rest of their lives. A similar show is available to viewers on Alpha B-2.



THE CITY SHIPS OF ALPHA

The first travelers to Alpha Centauri after the signing of the Trade Agreement in 2139 were scientific teams dispatched to work with their new colleagues in the exchange of knowledge which was to be so fruitful for both parties. Whereas the diplomatic missions had remained within the confines of Alpha's capital, Ergotha, the scientists were able to travel freely in the company of their opposite numbers. It was during their early explorations, made to familiarize themselves with the culture of their hosts, that they first saw what must stand as the greatest technological marvels of known space: the City Ships of Alpha.

It is impossible to convey the overwhelming impact that these extraordinary constructions have on those who have seen them first hand. Situated in the vast, bleak desert region of Alpha One, they dominate the horizon until the curvature of the surface hides them from view.

The Alphans themselves are uncertain of their exact age and origin as they have been there throughout recorded history and are shrouded in myth and legend.

Three of these megalithic structures exist and are obviously inhabited, but there has never been any communication with their occupants as far as the Alphans are aware. Attempts to communicate have always failed, while landings on their upper surfaces have proved impossible as a protective field diverts any object making an approach. It is believed that the citizens of these strange edifices have never participated in the evolution of other life-forms on the planet and have always remained within the perimeters of this otherwise lifeless region.

The most remarkable and almost inconceivable aspect of the cities is that they are capable of flight. Every few years one or more of them rises silently from the huge pedestal on which it rests and moves through the thin atmosphere to a similar stone column in another area of the desert. These columns are scattered throughout the district, though never less than a thousand miles apart, and there seems no reason why one should differ from another. The Alpha scientists have tried to identify a pattern in these movements, but

Roleplaying Game



no consistencies can be found either in the journeys of the cities or in the siting of the columns. One thing which is certain is that they represent a level of technological knowledge that we can only guess at. Their means of propulsion, for example, obviously depends on a gravity-resist process of some kind but how the enormous power this would require is generated cannot be explained. It seems to be a natural law that conversion of energy must always result in a by-product, whether heat, light or converted matter. The by-product from such a level of energy must be correspondingly great, but what it is or where it goes is another question. Seismographic surveys have established that the columns consist of solid masonry, while their temperature, with that of the air surrounding the City, fails to show any untoward variation.

Popular hypotheses abound; they are even, perhaps inevitably, regarded as the seats of deities and are the focus of a number of religious factions.

Another view widely held is that the inhabitants are the ancestors of the humanoid races and are now quietly observing the evolution of their progeny. Only time, and probably a great deal of it, will tell whether we shall eventually be allowed contact with whatever intelligence has shaped these objects.

Meanwhile they exist as awe-inspiring enigmas that have a profound and somewhat humbling effect on all who see them. Not surprisingly, of the visitors who have made the journey to the desert, a great number return to contemplate the City Ships again.

At the beginning of the Proxima War, Alpha I was the target of a devastating thermonuclear attack. While incalculable damage was done to the cities, industries, and population, both in the immediate aftermath and in the long-term effects of radiation exposure, the Alphans, assisted by Terra, have largely rebuilt their infrastructure and commerce. However, the effect on Alpha I's environment is still being assessed. Due to large amounts of dust thrown into the upper atmosphere by the nuclear strikes and a spate of recent volcanic activity, the average planetary temperature has fallen several degrees over the past two decades. More water is being retained in the ice caps at the poles, shrinking the oceans slightly



and further drying the climate at the equator. The city of Kitet, located on the main continent north of the tropic zone, recently experienced its first snowfall in recorded history. Scientists are studying methods to reverse these trends to prevent the planet from entering an ice age.

SOL

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Sol is a class G2 (yellow) main-sequence star of average size. Unlike many star systems, it is not a binary. The system consists of nine planets, more than 130 moons and a large number of small bodies (the comets and asteroids).

The inner four planets are rock based. These are the planets of Mercury, Venus, Terra and Mars. Beyond the orbit of Mars lies an extensive asteroid belt followed by the outer, gas giant planets of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Beyond these giant planets lies a frozen ball of ice and rock—Pluto.

The orbits of the planets are ellipses though all except Mercury and Pluto are very nearly circular. The orbits of the planets are all more or less in the same plane (called the ecliptic). Pluto's orbit deviates the most from the plane of the ecliptic with an inclination of 17 degrees. All of the planets orbit in the same direction (counter-clockwise looking down from above the Sun's north pole); all but Venus, Uranus and Pluto also rotate in that same sense.

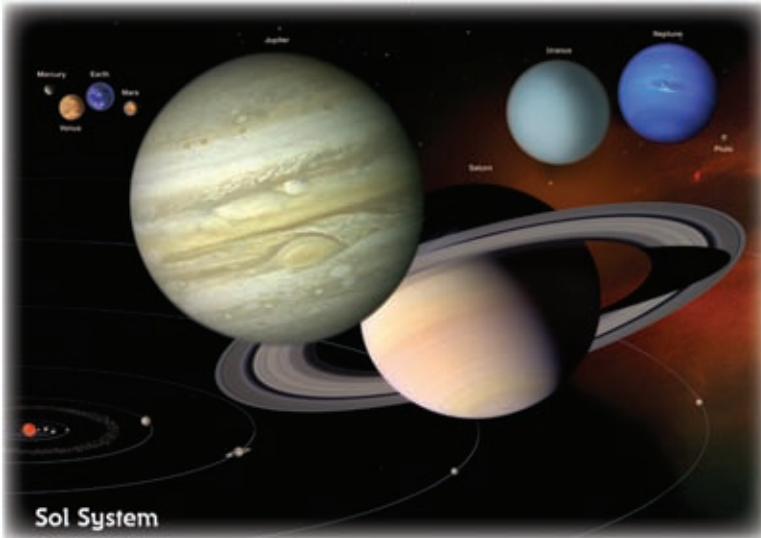
While Terra itself never fell under attack during the Proxima War, (though Mars did), the resources and number of personnel consumed in fighting and winning the twenty-year war were truly appalling. In the aftermath, however, Terra was still the most intact of the combatant worlds. It was on Terra's initiative, coordinated by the TTA, that massive rebuilding efforts commenced, both for their Alphan allies and for their Proximan adversaries. This effort continues, spearheaded by the TTA.

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MERCURY

Mercury is the closest planet to Sol and because of this it has little atmosphere and is far too hot to consider colonizing for the time being. Some corporations have considered building solar power collection sites

Roleplaying Game



on the surface of Mercury, but thus far have been unable to perfect the technology needed to resist the harsh Mercurial day and have instead looked at creating orbital facilities.

Mercury's core is largely made of iron so several corporations have filed claims to mining rights to Mercury, but until one of them can demonstrate the ability to actually mine the planet the TerraFed government is holding off granting anyone mining rights.

The only orbital facilities currently above Mercury are the Caspera 2 Scientific Research Post and the Australys Observation Facility. Caspera 2 is a TTA outpost dedicated to studying Mercury and how humans can one day harvest its resources. The Caspera 2 facility orbits Mercury every 78 days and is heavily shielded to protect its inhabitants when not in the shadow of Mercury. The inhabitants of the Caspera 2 Research Post serve at most two year tours before transferring to other TTA scientific outposts. The Caspera 2 facility is considered one of the worst assignments a TTA scientist can pull due to the fact it is hideously boring and the station is always uncomfortably warm, with only the Neptune and Pluto being less desirable.

The Australys Observation Facility has the same goals as Caspera 2, only its better funded and is only interested in allowing Australys Minerals Corporation to mine Mercury. The two facilities have a long standing rivalry and often work to sabotage each other's experiments, hoping

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to find the means to colonize Mercury first. Much like Caspera 2, the Australys Observation Facility is not considered a very favorable assignment.

Several smuggling groups have begun using low orbits around Mercury to temporarily hide contraband, hoping the proximity to the sun and the sparse population of the area will help hide the goods. The scientists on Caspera 2 have reported suspicious activity in the region and have retrieved some of the hidden cargo containers, but have yet to discover how large scale the operation is. The FLEA patrols are so seldom and regular it is easy for the smugglers to avoid them, making it unlikely the smugglers will be stopped anytime soon.

VENUS

Like Mercury, Venus's surface is far too hostile to currently consider settling. The second planet from Sol, Venus, is a hellish world of high temperature, crushing atmospheric pressure and acidic rains, but by introducing sealed colonies of blue-green algae in massive atmospheric converters, the carbon dioxide is slowly being replaced with oxygen, and it is hoped that the planet may become fully terraformable and inhabitable within the next two centuries.

The Venus Orbital Zone has recently become a hotspot of corporate development due to the fact it rarely sees official TTA activity but is much closer to Earth than the Outer Planets. Because of this several new independent space stations have been constructed in orbit around Venus, most of which are industrial or agricultural facilities. There are a small number of research facilities as well and Expergen is moving its main research center to Venus in the coming months. Several corporations have made noises about moving their operations to the Venus Orbital Zone, with some corporate heads saying the CBC should move its headquarters to Venus.

TERRA

Terra is the third planet from the Sol star and has over 70% of its surface area covered in oceans. Temperate and teeming with life, Terra is the home planet of the Terrans, also known as humans.

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Seven major continents as well as multitudes of island chains are spread around the planet's surface and represent a wide range of temperatures and conditions. Terra is tectonically active and experiences crustal movement and volcanic activity, though not to the extent of Proxima.

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Terrans live anywhere on their planet, from the freezing arctic regions to the steamy tropical jungles near the equator, from temperate forests and grasslands to arid deserts, though most of the population tends to favor the warmer regions.

Terra has a single moon known as Luna. Humans first began exploring Luna during the latter half of the 20th century and began colonizing the moon (under sealed pressure domes). It currently has a population of over 100,000 people and has a seat in the Terran Federation government. Most residents of Luna work in the mining and manufacturing sectors.

MARS

The fourth planet, called Mars, appears to have once been bountiful, but by the time humans achieved space flight the only life there were tiny microbes located in water pockets deep under the surface.

Although humans explored Mars very soon after they had achieved space flight (utilizing robots), it took over a century to begin colonization in earnest. The planet quickly became an important commercial center, and is home to the great Mars Shipyards.

Mars is a provisional independent district of Earth, able to send representatives based on population (which is miniscule compared to any zone on Earth) but not senators. This does not bother Mars too much, for most of the residents of this fascinating colony world are either busy with their own pursuits or too maverick to pay attention to politics.

Although Mars is quite a bit further from Earth than Luna, it has been further developed because of its much more hospitable surface conditions. Terraforming is now underway with the hopes of making the Martian surface survivable without air tanks or pressure suits within the next two centuries.

Mars is perhaps most famous for the Battle for Mars, the only major engagement of the Proxima War to take place inside the Sol system. The famous Mars Shipyards, the primary target of that Proximan attack, continue to represent the face of Martian industry. However, Mars has many more facets.

It has attracted an extraordinary collection of scientists, entrepreneurs, engineers, mercenary work crews and snake-oil salespeople... all of them with their own eccentric reasons for wishing to work and live





away of the comforts of Earth. It is, if anything, quite a “wild west” atmosphere.

Unlike Luna, Mars is far enough away from Earth that it’s not as easy to monitor, which suits most of its residents just fine. Not that most of them have anything to hide—as one geologist studying Martian bedrock put it, *“I can work undisturbed for months at a time... and that’s the way I like it.”* Mars has a population of around 300,000, about half of those transient. Almost all of them live within the Tri-City Complex, which boasts facilities that are a bit cruder than back home, but not too bad for “roughing it”.

THE ASTEROID BELT

The asteroid belt lies between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter and is a beehive of commercial and industrial activity. The hundreds of thousands of asteroids in The Belt range in size from fist-sized rocks to massive planetoids more than 200 km in diameter.

Thousands of humans live and work in The Belt, primarily extracting ore and rare metals from the thousands of orbiting rocks that comprise it. While thousands of people live in stations here (and even surface domes on the larger asteroids), The Belt currently has no representation in the TerraFed government.

Because of the difficulty involved in successfully astrogating the The Belt, this region of the system also houses many criminal and pirate hideouts. In general, the Belt is a rough area of the system and those who visit had better be prepared for anything.

JUPITER

Jupiter is the fifth planet from the Sun and by far the largest. Jupiter is more than twice as massive as all the other planets combined (the mass of Jupiter is 318 times that of Terra).

Jupiter is about 90% hydrogen and 10% helium with traces of methane, water, ammonia and “rock”. Jupiter has a core of rocky material amounting to approximately 15 Earth-masses.

Above the core lies the main bulk of the planet in the form of liquid metallic hydrogen. At the temperature and pressure of Jupiter’s interior, hydrogen is a liquid, not a gas. It is an electrical conductor and the source of Jupiter’s magnetic field. This layer probably also contains some he-

Roleplaying Game



951 GASPRA

951 Gaspra is one of the main mining stations controlled by Australys Minerals Corporation and its primary product is a rare magnesium silicate used in electronics. It is built on one of the larger asteroids in the Asteroid Belt and has been in operation for almost fifty years, clearing out the innards of the asteroid. In many ways it is an excellent example of the problems facing the workers in the Asteroid Belt; it is overcrowded, crime and brawls are rampant, workers suffer under very poor working conditions, and the workers are paid little for their efforts.

Australys makes a sizeable profit off the facility, which it boosts all the more by cutting every corner it can. This has led to widespread unrest on 951 Gaspra, resulting in especially harsh reprisals from the Australys' security forces. For the time being most of the active resistance on 951 Gaspra has died down after numerous raids and several unfortunate accidents resulting in the death of several leaders of the workers. FLEA were kept out of these operations by Australys Security and have been forced to stand idly by and do nothing despite the gross abuse of the workers on 951 Gaspra.

One of the major problems facing the workers is a disease they have come to call the black coughs. The black coughs are caused by dust kicked up in the mining process that is not properly filtered by the environmental systems, allowing the workers to take in large amounts of asteroid dust by breathing. This causes problems with the victim's lungs absorbing oxygen and forces them to cough up black phlegm in the later stages of the illness. There are medicines available that eliminate the black coughs, but they are rare and expensive.

lium and traces of various *ices*.

The outermost layer is composed of ordinary molecular hydrogen and helium which is liquid in the interior and gaseous further out. The visible atmosphere is just the very top of this deep layer. Three distinct layers of clouds exist in the atmosphere consisting of ammonia ice, ammonium hydrosulfide and a mixture of ice and water.

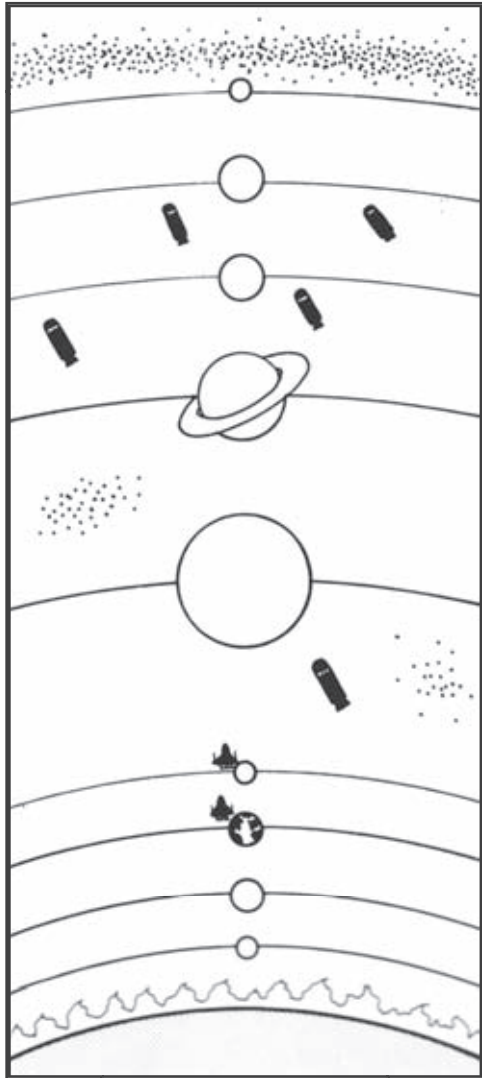
Jupiter radiates more energy into space than it receives from the



Sun. The interior of Jupiter is hot: the core is being around about 20,000 degrees Kelvin.

Jupiter has 68 moons, the laargest of which are Io, Ganymede, Europa and Callisto. Each of these large moons contain human commercial and industrial colonies working primarily in the mining and manufacturing sectors. Several stations and NOMAD industrial complexes also orbit Jupiter and her many satellites with total jovian population estimated to be approximately 65,000 people.

Jupiter is also home to a major military installation in the form of Terran Defence Force Europa Base. Europa Base is the central command for all system-wide defenses and is home to the command fleet of Sentinel Defense craft.



SATURN

Saturn is a gas giant like Jupiter, but it is slightly smaller and surrounded by a massive ring structure filled with asteroids and space dust, including valuable minerals and a large amount of ice. Like Jupiter the technology does not yet exist to penetrate Saturn's violent atmosphere to reach its metallic hydrogen surface. Such efforts are even more unlikely to take place on Saturn than on Jupiter because Saturn's winds are much stronger than Jupiter's, reaching speeds above the speed of sound. Because of this Saturn's main economic promise lies in its ring system and

Roleplaying Game

many moons. The TTA has built several orbital research stations above Saturn to investigate its resource potential, but thus far they have had far more luck with the ring system than the planet itself.

There are no TTA or corporate mining operations in the ring system as yet due to the abundance of resources in the much more convenient Asteroid Belt. Some independent miners unable to afford the price for asteroid mining rights charged by the TTA's Outer System Resource Management Directorate have come to the ring system to try their luck. Most have been successful in finding minerals worth harvesting, but whether the value of these minerals covers the cost of traveling all the way to Saturn and back remains to be seen. In recent months the TTA has set up a Land Management Department office in TTA Ring Station Zero, the largest space station orbiting Saturn and the de facto administrative center of the area, and has begun trying to reign in independent miners with limited success.

In addition to Saturn's rings, the TTA and several independent corporations have been investigating its many moons for possible economic development.

Most of the moons are little more than icy chunks of rock that have some value as source of minerals and water, but the moon Titan was long held as the most valuable piece of real estate in the Outer System due to its suspected suitability for terraforming. Titan has an atmosphere thicker than any planet save Venus that contains a large percentage of nitrogen, leading many researcher to believe it could be converted to a suitable environment for humans with far less effort than any other planet or moon in the solar system.

NEPTUNE & URANUS

Both of these gas giant planets are smaller than either Saturn or Jupiter and are largely undeveloped, save for a modest test facility operated by Consolidated Aerospace. Only the desperate come to these planets looking for economic opportunity. Any resources harvested here take a long time to reach Terra and the transportation costs are enormous. Even pirates and smugglers don't hide near these planets because they are so far away from the Inner Planets. Until Jupiter and Saturn become more active in terms of development, Uranus and Neptune will remain little more than after thoughts.

There is, however, a large amount of scientific interest in the planet due to their many anomalies, such as Uranus's severe axial tilt, both



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planets' powerful magnetospheres, and Triton's retrograde orbit. Neptune's atmosphere is also of great interest due to its high methane content and storm formations.

Triton is currently considered the most promising piece of real estate amongst the moons of Uranus and Neptune. Its retrograde motion indicates it is a rogue moon captured by Neptune's gravity. The moon has an extremely thin atmosphere but clouds of nitrogen have been found in addition to frozen nitrogen on the surface, possibly making the planet attractive as a nitrogen source. Some scientists initially hoped to terraform Triton but its enormous distance from the inner system currently makes this idea infeasible.

PLUTO & THE KUIPER BELT

Once considered the ninth planet, Pluto is only one of thousands of objects in a debris cloud called the Kuiper belt. Most of the Kuiper Belt lies between 41 and 50 AUs from the sun and there are tens of thousands of objects in the belt, which was formed by leftover debris from the birth of the solar system. The smaller of these objects are occasionally sent into the inner solar system by Neptune's or Uranus's gravity. Pluto and its largest companion, Charon, are simply the largest of these objects.

Pluto is also home to a highly sensitive sensor array used by the TTA Department of Traffic Control.

The Sol System Warp Zone begins approximately 1 AU beyond Pluto's orbit. No warp travel is permitted inside the solar system under extremely harsh penalties.

TERRA IN THE LATE 22ND CENTURY

In 2173, Terra is a place of great contrasts. It is a world at once united like never before in history, with a provisional world government representing hundreds of former nations. It is also a world with deeper divisions between its people than ever before; political, social, and monetary. While Alpha and Proxima have their upper and lower classes, their richer and poorer, Terra displays greater extremes than either of these worlds. On the other hand, while Terra suffered economically from the Proxima War, the planet itself was left untouched, making recovery and the transition to the post-war world easier than on Alpha or Proxima.

Terra's economic division is the direct result of unchecked economic profiteering in the centuries before. But the tide had begun to turn for the less fortunate peoples of earth as they united and combined their

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political voices in the old United Nations. When first contact with Alpha Centauri came, the seemingly endless potential of new materials and markets seemed poised to help lift the spectre of inequality forever.

But then the Proxima War came... two decades of destruction, of resources allocated to the war effort rather than used back home, and of eyes turning away from the masses and to a new and terrible purpose.

When the smoke cleared, things had slid backwards. While the poor still had their voice from numbers, the well-off now had more capital than ever before from running the industries that war demanded. The wealthy wield the majority of their political power through their sovereign governments, while the poor get theirs through the World Council and the TTA. The two sides now circle one another warily in the post-war world, each looking to gain an advantage, while forward thinkers from both sides try to get them to sit down together and work out how both can benefit.

REGIONS

Earth is divided into six major administrative zones, though old national borders are still respected. The zones are: Europe & Russia (often abbreviated "EU'Russia"), Asia (comprising China, India, and most Southeast Asian continental nations), Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, New Guinea, Japan, The Philippines, and the Pacific island nations), Africa (including the Middle East), North America (including Greenland) and South America. In addition, there are also the off-world provisional zones of Mars and Luna.

EUROPE & RUSSIA (EU'RUSSIA)

EU'Russia is a huge district, running from Iceland (it's westernmost outpost) to Big Diomed Island in the Bering Strait, over 195 degrees of longitude east. As such, it is a noble experiment that has mostly succeeded—the traditional tensions and mistrust between Western and Eastern Europe, and between Eastern Europe and Russia, have been put aside to try for a better future for all.

This is not to say there have not been tensions and growing pains; the old European Union, comprised mostly of Western European nations, was the first large-scale joint economic venture ever undertaken on Earth, and their experience and skill in large-scale administration contrasted sharply with that of Russia, still in bureaucratic chaos after so many years, fighting off coup attempts in high offices and threatening disintegration into many smaller regions.



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Now, however, it looks like a match made in heaven. Western Europe has the capital and infrastructure, while Russia has huge amounts of space and untapped natural resources. The retreat of the permafrost from much of Siberia due to climate change has opened up vast tracts of once unusable land and made it into the world's second-largest breadbasket, not to mention making it easier to extract the remaining mineral wealth under her soil. EU'Russia is home to the World Council, which is located in the special administrative district of Berlin; once a symbol of divisions, Berlin now is a symbol of world unity.

Also in EU'Russia is Spaceport Roma and the massive commemorative statue that marks the spot where the first confirmed alien visitors—an Alphan delegation—first set foot on planet Earth. Despite its leadership and sparkling history, EU'Russia also has the world's second-highest poverty rate and an infrastructure that, while extensive and comprehensive, is also the oldest on Terra, two problems that need to be addressed if EU'Russia plans to continue pointing the way to the future. EU'Russia also is dealing with severe environmental damage in its central regions, the “three hundred year-problem” that still has no answers. In addition, other regions are gaining in power and importance, threatening EU'Russia's once unquestioned leadership role.

ASIA

The Asian sector has managed to parley its massive population (over two-fifths of the world's total) into great amounts of political clout in the world government. However, they also must deal with the economic and infrastructure demands of such a huge population in a relatively small area.

Asia is blessed with a huge variety of landforms and ecosystems, from the tallest land-based mountain ranges on Earth to sea-level marshes, from the vast deserts of western China to the lush tropical rainforests of Malaysia. It is also blessed with a great many semi-tropical and tropical shorelines, offering both good sea farming opportunities and warm-weather getaways for wealthy tourists. It is also a very seismically-active region, and the destructive potential of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the resulting tsunamis must constantly be guarded against.

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With its huge workforce, Asia was the prime mover behind the governmental reforms that helped to break the upper-class monopoly on power and resulted in the current balance between both interests that defines the World Council and the TTA.

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Unfortunately, the size of the population is also a drain on the resources of the region and it has been difficult as a result for Asia to serve the best interests of its people. Draconian birth control strictures and adopting the old Chinese practice of limiting the number of children per family to one region-wide have cut into the population growth (and sparked a number of riots and protests), but the fact remains that Asia has the greatest disparity between rich and poor in the world today.

Nearly two-thirds of all humans living in poverty live in Asia, and unlike the “New Tribes” of the African continent, who choose a simpler lifestyle, many of Asia’s poor have no choice in the matter.

Perhaps no place on Earth is a better capsule for the diversity of lifestyles than Starport Indra, located on the outskirts of Bangalore. The complex is the newest and most technologically advanced spaceport on Earth, and includes a space elevator attachment point (one of the few located on land). The gleaming main spire of Indra Tower rises over 1.5 km from the ground, and the rich and powerful dine on the best fare Terra can offer at the summit restaurant. At its base, however, one can find people leading pack animals around its massive circumference, on their way to market or back to their simple homes, many of which lack electrical power. What can be done about this disparity has stumped the best minds put to the problem for the last two centuries.

AFRICA

No part of the world has undergone more massive changes in the past two centuries than Africa. A largely poor continent torn by ethnic strife in the late twentieth century, Africa has reinvented itself as, in many ways, the model for the rest of the world to follow in gracefully combining national interests with the greater aims of world government. The fact that they got such a late start relative to the other zones makes their achievement all the more impressive.

It took until the late twenty-first century for Africa to finally throw off the artificial borders first imposed by colonial rule and come together in a united economic bloc. At that point, Africa found itself with many advantages that the rest of the world envied: the relative lack of previous economic development had served to protect a great deal of Africa’s wild lands, and the shifting climate expanded the extremely valuable central rainforest areas, allowing biotech money to pour in.



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The climate shift also expanded the North African deserts, but this was even a blessing, as it led to large, clear, remote, easily-secured areas on which to site the WCRC North African Shipyards.

With national borders redrawn along old, traditional lines, inter-necine strife was greatly reduced. The famines and diseases that had caused so much suffering were finally curtailed, allowing the population to stabilize.

Today, Africa is a study in contrasts, but those contrasts are mostly matters of free will rather than desperate poverty that endures elsewhere. The North African Shipyards and brand-new BioCongo Corporation offices (integrating with the hundreds of thousands of acres of protected forest and grassland that is their laboratory and production facility) are jewels on Terra's crown.

While the Middle East had long ago pumped out the last of its petroleum, their governments had shrewdly invested and as a result have become a major power in the world banking system. Among this land of technological splendor and economic acumen are many mid-sized cities and towns, where life goes on peacefully and local economies flourish with ecotourism dollars, since Africa is one of the last remaining places on Earth where large, truly wild fauna run free.

Among these lovely places are scores of peoples who have shunned technology to live their lives as herders and nomads, very much as their ancestors did. Unlike many other places on earth, these people have chosen this lifestyle rather than being forced into it by economic or social conditions. Africa has been cited as the district best poised to continue economic expansion and looks to be a major political power in the post-war world.

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OCEANIA

Oceania has the least landmass of any of the districts, but the most extensive coverage by area, as it encompasses most of the Pacific Ocean and has administrative control over Antarctica (which technically remains neutral territory) as well.

Oceania is an excitingly diverse area and has been ranked “best district in which to live” for six out of the past ten years by the World Council. Oceania has the lowest poverty rate of any world district and boasts an educational network that is the envy of the rest of the world... no small feat considering the diversity of cultures and values that its population holds.

Oceania has a combination of high-tech industry, natural beauty, and a population base that is largely young and well-educated. The Australian outback is home to the GAS (Great Australian Shipyards) and Alice Springs is one of the world’s busiest spaceports. New Zealand is home to many major technological research centers and has the highest national per-capita standard of living in the world. Indonesia, New Guinea, and the Phillipines are biodiversity hotspots and home to world-leading pharmaceutical and medical research firms.

The Pacific Islands are host to many space elevator facilities as well as some of the most exclusive resorts in the solar system. Even Japan, the burned-out industrial shell that chose to throw its lot in with Oceania rather than Asia, is making a major comeback, restoring its blighted cities to the appearance they had over 1200 years ago, at the height of the country’s artistic refinement. As a voting bloc, Oceania is somewhat hampered by its limited population, but its powerful industrial interests somewhat compensate for this.

NORTH AMERICA

Two hundred years ago, the world was dominated by the United States of America, both culturally and militarily... which makes North America’s current status as the world’s biggest backwater all the more ironic. This is not to say that North America doesn’t have its great cities... Chicago, Denver, Vancouver, and Mexico are all world-class metropolises, and Miami Spaceport is probably the most famous facility of its kind.





North America also has perfectly adequate and suitably prosperous manufacturing facilities and a fair standard of living for most of its people (though the poverty rate is third-highest in the world). It just doesn't lead the world in any category any more, save one. The climactic shifts turned central Canada, once intensely cultivated only in its southern reaches, into the world's largest farmland. However, climate change also turned the prairies of the old United States into uninhabitable dustbowls. Climate change also affected many of the great cities of the east and west coast, either swamping them (save Vancouver, which built upward), pounding them with intense storms, or frying them in miserable summer heat. North Americans moved inward (Chicago is the capital of North America's regional government), but the continent never quite recovered economically.

The slower lifestyle that farming dictates has both rubbed off North America's inhabitants and colored perceptions of them in the world (perhaps a bit unfairly). It's true, however, that many North Americans tend to be insular and provincial, staying in their communities, holding on tightly to their quaintly radical and old-fashioned religious beliefs, and tend to be irritatingly unaccepting of alternate points of view.

As the second least-populous district on earth, its political voice tends to be compromised, and unlike Oceania, its business interests are not sufficiently powerful to compensate. As a result, North America has of late become a hotbed of local political action, with many radical groups demanding that food exports be cut back or even that it secede from the World Council. Sabotage on certain World Council and TTA holdings (including the administrative center of New York, which is a free city-state) has led to fears of worse strife to come.

SOUTH AMERICA

South America has been called the "World Factory". Indeed, manufacturing is of primary importance to the South American people, and a good percentage of it is done the old-fashioned way, by human workers rather than MekTeks. While most outside observers shake their heads and wonder at this, South America has made it work.

When the shifting climate and human migration had begun to wreak havoc on the Amazon rain forest, one of the world's greatest resources, South America banded together, becoming the second continental economic collective after Europe. Powerful governmental intervention saved a portion of Amazonia, but the large cost of operating in the jungle interior led biotech firms to choose Africa and Oceania first.

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At the same time, wide-scale mechanization was threatening the livelihood of the continent's manufacturing base. South America joined forces with the Asian nations (South America is the second-largest voting bloc by population in the world) in the political actions which resulted in the workers making their voices heard. Working on strongly socialist principles, South America shunned the rest of the world and established new industries calculated to have an impact on earth's future—aerospace manufacturing, space architecture, environmental support systems, energy generation, and others. Shunning robotic help except in cases of dangerous work, workers sacrificed competitive pay for steady work and future profits.

Still, the gamble was failing and economic prospects looked grim... when the Alphans made contact. Learning of the Alphans' collective ways and distaste for robotics, South America quickly endeared itself to our allies and overnight found themselves the number one interplanetary export bloc on Earth by a fair margin.

During the war, South American companies led the way in providing materials and expertise in cleaning up and rebuilding Alpha's ruined cities. Today, the upturned palms of the "Crafted By Human Hands" label has become an intersystem symbol of quality.

Though South America enjoys the second-lowest poverty rate in the world (right behind Oceania), it also has the second-lowest median income. As a EURussian official commented, "*You don't go hungry there, nor do you grow rich*". Indeed, South America's insular socialist tendencies and stubbornness opening up its industries to outside investment tends to put off most of the rest of the world (though they are deeply admired by the Alphans for this reason). The other members of the World Council thus put up with South America's eccentricities for the important diplomatic and market foothold they maintain in the Alphan system.

CLIMATE

The major climactic shifts that began in the early 21st century and caused widespread migration, famine, and shifting of geopolitical power have been stabilized by expensive scientific countermeasures. Average worldwide temperatures have been stabilized at about 18° Celsius. The long debate about whether to restore the ice caps that had shrunk by over 40% in the last two centuries rages on, but with booming new farmlands and year-round vacation opportunities in central Canada and Siberia, and with most major coastal cities now located further inland, it is unlikely that the new status quo will be upset.





Pollution and environmental destruction have finally been curtailed, but a lot of damage has been done to Earth's ecosystem. Reversing the damage will be a long and expensive process, but progress is being made.

TRANSPORTATION

Earth has many starports, too many to list here. Exo-system passenger flights to Alpha and Proxima are all shuttled through the two TTA staging stations in geosynchronous Earth orbit.

Military vessels (including military-chartered freighters that sell extra bunk space to civilians) depart for Alpha and Proxima from the Mars or Jupiter orbital facilities. Access to the TTA staging stations (and lower-orbit facilities) can be by shuttle from almost any major city, or, for a more leisurely trip with incredible views, by space elevator car.

In-system flights are usually connected through high-orbit transfer stations, which also are equipped to handle cargoes and raw materials flowing in from the other planets.

Freight from out of system can come into the staging stations or can land on Terra at one of the newly-opened intersystem customs offices at Moscow, Tripoli, Miami, Buenos Aires, Alice Springs, or Bangalore (please have your medical papers in order to avoid being quarantined along with your cargo). From place to place on Terra, there are commercial passenger aircraft (slow but inexpensive), low-orbit spaceplanes (fast but more expensive), and a variety of rail and ground vehicle options, from high-speed hoverbus to human-powered taxi. The first under-ocean high-speed tubeway bus system has also opened with major service between regional cities, with more links currently under construction.

URBAN LIFE

City life on Terra is as varied as the individual cities, so a comprehensive description is all but impossible in limited space. Some general characteristics can be covered, however.

Most modern cities, i.e. those with significant new construction or improved infrastructure since the year of first contact, tend to be tightly centrally planned and strictly zoned. High-rise towers sprout from the earth, with plenty of green space in between. But they are not just stacks

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PTVM RailBus

When the first intercontinental subsurface transport route was in its early planning stages, the Terran Trade Authority was casting its cost-conscious eye around for space vehicles that could be adapted for use in such a system. The tubeways were to contain a vacuum to avoid the air resistance that the high speeds envisaged would otherwise have entailed. It made sense to look at vehicles that were already equipped to function in that kind of environment. One of the first to be considered was their own PTV Shuttlebus, which they had introduced in 2145 to ferry personnel to and from orbital stations of various kinds. The Shuttlebus was a compact little ship designed to carry twenty-eight passengers in addition to its two-man crew, and the basic frame was simple and strong enough to tolerate the modifications necessary to adapt it for tube travel.

The design for the system was worked out with this vehicle in mind and was based on a three-tracked system with each track enclosing a linear magnetic accelerator chain to provide enough power to move the vehicle at fifteen hundred miles per hour. Modifications to the vehicle itself were relatively simple to make. The two stubby lateral wings of the original bus were removed and replaced with traveler arms which required no further bracing as the hull was already stressed for a similar loading at these points. A third arm was then fitted to a new mounting on the upper surface.

Apart from revising the electronic circuitry the only other significant change made was to remove the small reactor and drive units which were now redundant, and thus extend the cabin area. With suitable space for the stowage of luggage, this meant that the PTVM (Public Transport Vehicle Magnetic) Railbus, as it now became, could carry a total of thirty-eight people including the two crew members. Although there was no longer any need for a navigator, his place was taken by a cabin officer to look after the passengers.

of apartments; built to be fully self-contained communities, they include shops, services, and recreational facilities.

Public transportation zips workers to the industrial and commercial sectors of cities, and plenty of parkland gives relief to the eye. Individual space in larger cities may be somewhat cramped but adequate.



MIAMI SPACEPORT

The largest commercial landing complex in existence, the Miami Spaceport or “EmEss” as it is more usually called, is the heart of all civil and commercial traffic in known space. The port area now occupies most of the southern tip of North America’s Florida from Fort Myers to West Palm Beach and south to Miami, with the exception of the West Coast road to the Everglades National Park. It is divided into a number of regions, each being identified with a specific aspect of commercial space travel. The largest individual region consists almost entirely of manufacturing and servicing sites and includes a number of static test fields, each of several square miles.

Most manufacturers operate facilities in this area and there are few modern ships that have not spent some time there in the course of their production or development. The remaining regions are traffic handling sites for the various space routes.

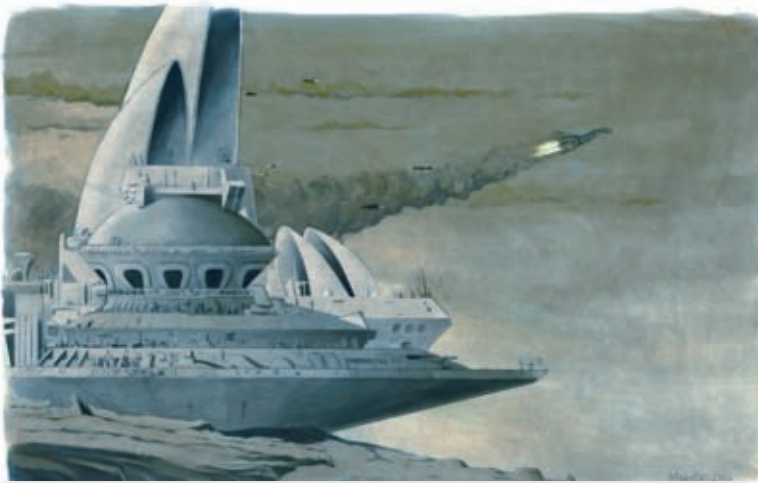
Each site consists of arrival and departure lounges, terminals for surface or atmospheric transportation, transfer points, fuelling and service bays, warehousing and the many other facilities demanded by space travel today. The largest of these sites is near Miami itself and, being responsible for handling most of the domestic traffic, is also the oldest.

The new central control building has been constructed on the exact spot from which the first Martian Queen took off on her historic journey, while the nearby First Class Passenger Restaurant is a reconstruction of the Leisure Deck of that ship.

The Control Centre itself coordinates the movements of all commercial traffic in known space and is connected to plotting stations along every trade route both domestic and interstellar. The distinctive communication shells are capable of transmitting to and receiving from every vessel in space and can immediately pinpoint any craft emerging from incoming warp jump.

In addition to the surface facilities of the port, there are three orbiting terminals. Two of these are transfer stations for non-Terran cargoes, the third being a depot for the transfer of dangerous cargoes. All three are equipped with quarantine hospitals. These

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consist of docking and service areas linked by tubular arms containing transport lines, accommodation, leisure areas and the many other facilities required by modern space travel.

The Miami complex is well worth a visit even if you do not intend to travel, as the entertainment facilities here are probably the finest available. Among the best known are The Museum of Contemporary Arts, The Galactic Technology Museum, The Ethnology Study Centre, and the new Las Vegas Theatre Complex which features the best in entertainment from all three systems.

Older cities retain their usually haphazard development, or “character” as some like to explain it. Quality of housing and service establishments will vary greatly in older cities, and appearances may be deceiving. Some poorer cities lack basic amenities like reliable electricity and sewage for all residents. Places like this will tend to have haphazard development and extreme contrasts, with walled family compounds bordered by rows of shacks.

Generally speaking, cities in prosperous areas will have fairly low population densities as compared to cities in the early twenty-first century. This is because telecommuting makes it possible for employees to work remotely, so place of residence has become a matter of choice among the middle and upper classes. These people live in the city because they like it. In poorer regions, population densities will be much

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higher, as the people have little choice but to flock to the highest concentration of people and jobs in order to make a living.

Larger cities, of course, have a wide range of entertainments available. Performers from all over the planet make their rounds of the big cities, and there is certain to be something for everyone. As the War ended and trade resumed, some Alphan theatrical and dance troops have even made the journey to Terra.

Most cities have automatic beacons that synch databuddies and other personal data devices with local time and send a list of events and services available there. The most modern cities have fleets of Meks on call, and ErrandMeks to carry packages and act as guides. Humans can also be found to fill these roles, of course.

Accommodations for out-of-town travelers range from “capsule” hotels to plush penthouse suites, from fleabag flophouses to respectable bed-and-breakfasts. Your databuddy can help, but it is important to always be aware of where you are and what to expect.

CRIME

Crime is still a problem on Terra, as it is in all places where economic promise does not live up to the reality, where greed overshadows judgment, and where law enforcement is less than adequate. The majority of violent crimes still happen as a result of private conflicts, and such crimes against strangers remain, relatively speaking, rare by comparison. Still, assaults, robberies, rapes and murders occur too frequently.

So-called “white collar crime” is uncommon within the ranks of corporations and government offices, but it does occur despite all of the checks, balances, and countermeasures in place. Besides the obvious damage to local business confidence and tourism, the crime rate on Terra has been a sticking point with the Alphans, who insist that humanity could use their help in the matter... all such offers have been firmly rebuffed.

The criminal justice systems of Terra remain firmly in control of individual member-nations of the Terran Federation. This was one point of national sovereignty where the World Council and the TTA have feared to tread. The TTA customs and law enforcement branch sets the rules in space, but has no jurisdiction on Terra. Therefore, it is wise to know the local law code wherever you go, for the simple reason that national or

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even community law is enforced, and every justice system is a little different. Thus, something that is a minor crime in one place may be more serious in another, and not a crime at all in a third locale.

The one exception to this are crimes against humanity or a large segment of humanity; such cases as genocide or large-scale terrorism are referred to the World Court and heard by a rotating panel of nine judges.

RURAL LIFE

Life in rural areas of Terra is similarly diverse. Rich or poor, life in the countryside follows a slower pace. Except for a few modern accoutrements, homes and farms in rural areas may appear unchanged over the centuries, or they may be wildly contemporary.

Small towns, offering a compromise between city convenience and small-town fellowship, are a popular choice for many. No matter how remote, however, modern technology makes it so that no one is truly cut off from the rest of society, unless they prefer it that way. In the remoter areas of the planet many people can be found who have decided to retreat from the world at large, usually for religious reasons. These people live simple lives with little or no modern technology- the New Tribes of Africa, the Amish of North America, and the Fu Fellowship of Western China are three famous examples.

LUNA

Luna, like Mars, is a provisional independent district that sends representatives but not senators, to the World Council. Unlike Mars, however, Luna is not satisfied with being a provisional member. In fact, there is quite a bit of tension between Luna and Mars from what the Lunarians see as a laissez-faire Martian attitude towards political duty and the Martians see as pompous posturing by the people of Luna.

Luna was the site of the first permanent extraplanetary base, and soon mining operations were turning a tidy profit. Luna currently has a population of around 375,000, nearly two-thirds of them transient workers. Unlike Mars, which tends to attract mavericks, most residents of Luna are normal workers with families, very few of whom came with the thought of staying permanently but found themselves bewitched by the moon's stark beauty and attracted to the enormous profits to be made in mining and materials fabrication.





As a result of its importance to Terran industry, more and more Lunar residents are clamoring for their home to be made an official, full-fledged district.

Some Lunar businesspeople are getting involved in the politics, promising to do more to raise the issue back home in exchange for some political power. More radical elements are also trying to enlist the aid of various large orbital facilities, prompting tersely-worded warnings from the World Council about sedition. The debate over Lunar sovereignty looks to continue for quite some time to come.

PROXIMA CENTAURI

SYSTEM OVERVIEW

Proxima Centauri is a red dwarf star, spectral class M5, with only 10% of Sol's mass and .006% of its luminosity. Five planets orbit the primary, with the second being an Earth-like planet that supports life.

PLANETARY OVERVIEW: PROXIMA I

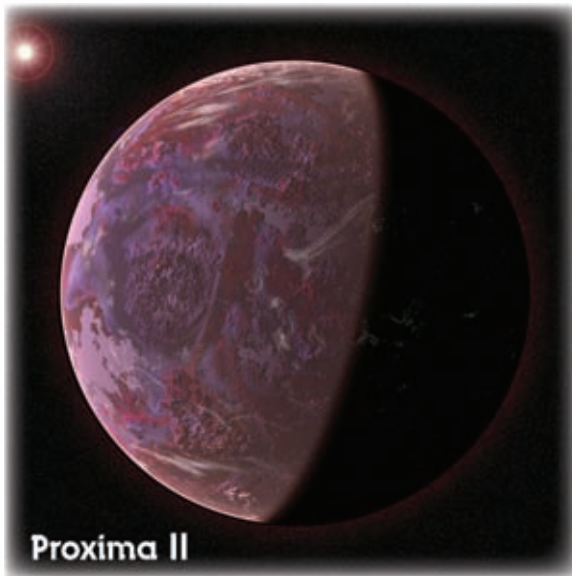
The innermost planet in the Proxima Centauri system is actually little more than a large asteroid which whirls around the primary at less than 3% of the Earth-Sun distance; its orbit is unstable and one day this planetoid will be flung into a wider elliptical orbit.

PLANETARY OVERVIEW: PROXIMA II

Proxima II is slightly larger and denser than Earth and has a surface gravity of 1.2 g. It lies only 5% of the Earth-sun distance from the primary and is thus tidally locked- the same side of the planet faces the primary at all times. Thus, Proxima has eternal day on one side of the planet, eternal night on the other, and does not experience seasonal change.

Proxima has a thick, oxygen-rich atmosphere, 20% denser than Earth's, which serves, along with the oceans, to spread the heat around the planet's surface and somewhat equalize the energy received from the star. Temperatures on Proxima's day side form a "bullseye" pattern of concentric rings. The center of the bullseye can reach temperatures of 50 degrees Celsius, while temperatures on the terminator (the day / night boundary) hover at around freezing. Proxima is about 60% ocean, of which 45% is on the dayside of the planet. Proxima's surface is split

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into tectonic plates and has eight sizable continents and a number of oceanic islands. The crust is rich in minerals, and is fairly thin. As a result, magma upwellings caused by tidal forces from the primary have created huge geothermal fields, which were tapped by the early Proximans as an energy source.

The homeworld of Proxima II is a dangerous and uncertain world on which to live. The primary is a flare star, and its close proximity to the planet means that huge solar flares periodically bathe the planet in radiation. On the other end of the scale, sunspot activity can cut available energy by up to one-third for months on end. Travelers to Proxima are advised to be well-trained for these events. That being said, it is also a world of strange beauty, especially to those raised under a yellow sun; the landscape blooms with fungus-like forests and other, stranger plant life, fed on regular rainfall, beneath a reddish sun (appearing four times larger in the sky than Sol does on Earth) and a deep blue sky (in which Alpha Centauri A and B are clearly visible as well, about a fifth of a light year distant). New mountains, freshly born from volcanic activity, reach majestically skyward. Numerous mineral-rich hot springs offer a welcome and delightful respite to weary travelers. From space, one can see bands of desert, vegetation, and snow, arranged not in bands around the planet's circumference but in circles on the planet's day side, melding gently into one another. On the night side, the bullseye pattern contin-

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ues, ending in the center in a massive snow-covered icecap that covers fully a quarter of the planet's entire area.

The Proximans have undergone the most radical changes of all of the societies discussed in this book. Five hundred years ago, they were a primitive people, organized into tribes and small towns, scraping out an existence on the harsh surface of their planet. It is estimated that at that time the planetary population was only around two to three million. After the intervention of two scientific prodigies (who are now revered as religious prophets) and a tragic early confrontation with the Alphans, the Proximans are now a spacefaring industrial power with the most advanced genetic engineering technology known, a complex social structure with strict hierarchies of profession called "strata", and a population of around 3.5 billion. In the aftermath of the devastating Proxima War, the Proximans have rolled up their sleeves and are doggedly rebuilding their world... and, more importantly, peacefully contributing to interplanetary science and commerce. In the process, they are questioning their old institutions and customs and trying out new ones. This has led to innovation, but has also led to political and social backlash, and violence and even guerilla actions are not uncommon... but the rewards

are great as well. For those of adventurous spirit, Proxima is an exciting place to be.



PLANETARY OVERVIEW: PROXIMA III & V

Proxima III is a planet about the size of Earth's moon, and is composed of rock and ice. Proxima V is another rocky body about the size of Mercury and is an important source of Proximan mineral wealth.

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PLANETARY OVERVIEW: PROXIMA IV

Beyond Proxima III, lying in an orbit just inside of where Earth would be in the Sol system, is the most mysterious world yet discovered.

Proxima IV, orbiting at an average distance of 130 million kilometers from the primary (a little less than Earth's distance from Sol), should be frozen solid like Proxima III. Instead, it is an ocean planet, with a thick atmosphere and very little landmass. Proximan scientists have long studied the planet, and with the added assistance of their post-war Terran and Alphan colleagues, new revelations are coming at a furious pace. Studies have led to two intriguing conclusions.

The first is that Proxima IV seems to be generating its own internal heat by a completely unknown process. The second, based upon fractal analysis of island distribution and the fact that the sea floor is almost uniformly (and extremely) deep, seems to bear out an inconceivable notion; the planet appears, either partially or completely, not to be a natural object.

What power or race could engineer a whole planet or modify an entire planetary surface, and why Proxima IV is where it is, are questions of very hot debate among scientists, philosophers, and theologians. Observers have also noted the eerie similarities between Proxima IV and Alpha B-2 (*see above*), some poetically commenting that Proxima IV seems to be a kind of strange mirror of the Alphan planet.

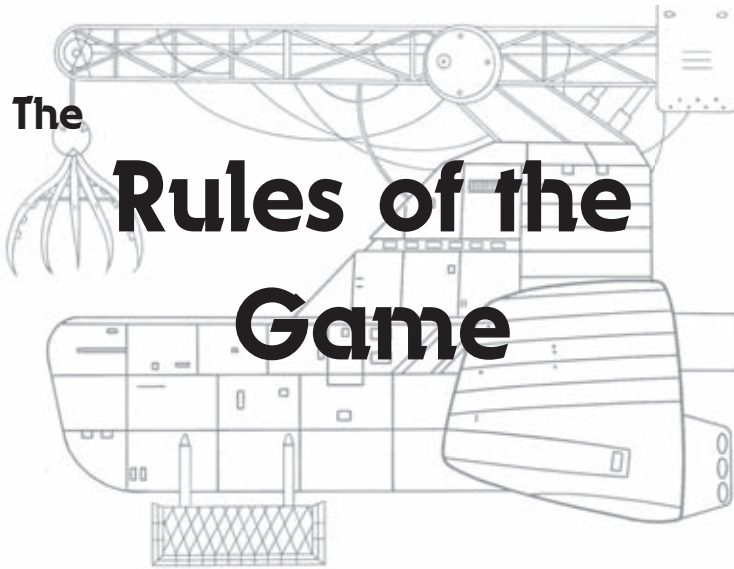
Due to the post-war chaos, study of Proxima IV proceeds slowly. No indigenous fauna has yet been discovered on Proxima IV, and no permanent bases have been established, as those that venture to the surface seem to find the experience inexplicably disquieting and ultimately unbearable. Two orbital lab facilities keep close watch on this fascinating world, hoping to glean more of its secrets. Tourist travel to Proxima IV is currently prohibited and the planet is under military jurisdiction.







The



Rules of the Game

INTRODUCTION

The Terran Trade Authority RPG is a role playing game designed for two or more players. One person must play the part of the Gamemaster (called the GM), while the others take on the role of Player-Characters (called PCs).

OBJECT OF THE GAME

Role playing games are like simulations of your favorite movie or television series. The Gamemaster helps establish the setting and the basic premise of each adventure, while the Players take on the roles of the series' main characters. Together, the participants will create an ongoing series of adventures called a campaign. A TTA campaign is open-ended, and can last as long as the Gamemaster and Players like.

The only object of the game is to have fun.





THE ROLE OF THE GAMEMASTER

The Gamemaster plays a vital part in the TTA game, serving as a combination narrator, moderator, and role-player. As narrator, the GM must set the stage for each adventure the Players will undertake, helping to describe what the PCs see, hear, and sense about their surroundings. As moderator, the GM is required to judge the results of all actions undertaken by the PCs and to remain fair and objective at all times. As role-player, the GM must play the parts of all non-player characters (NPCs) and creatures that the PCs meet during the course of their game careers.

GMs have to know the rules of the game, as well as the TTA setting. They have to be creative, and they should always remember that the PCs are the focal point of the campaign. If the players are enjoying the game, the GM is doing a good job.

THE ROLE OF THE PLAYER

The main role of each player is to choose and create a Player-Character that will serve as his or her game persona. Because every PC must interact with the TTA milieu, you should be familiar with your character's culture, homeland, and profession. Develop a personality for your PC: is he brave or cowardly, selfish or altruistic? What are his likes and dislikes? What is he afraid of, and what does he believe in? Does your PC have a goal in life? The more you know about your PC, the more interesting he or she will be to you and to the other players in the game.

Players should learn the basic rules of the game, particularly those that pertain directly to their character's Skills and Equipment. The guidelines in the Character Creation section will tell you everything you need to know about making a good PC.

MATERIALS

To play the TTA RPG you'll need at least one twenty-sided die (called a d20). These can be found at any hobby or game store. Pencil and paper usually come in handy, too. Everything else you'll need to play has been provided in this book.

GETTING READY TO PLAY

Like most RPGs, TTA is not a "pick-up and play" type of game. To get the most out of your TTA campaign, the Gamemaster and players should spend some time looking through the Introduction to the TTA Universe section of this book, which describes the three inhabited star

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systems and their inhabitants. The Gamemaster's Section in Chapter 8 contains advice on planning a TTA campaign that will be best suited to your group. The GM should read this section and discuss it with the players before beginning play.

THE OMNI TABLE

All actions in the TTA game are resolved by a single, simple procedure:

1. Compare the character's Skill or Attribute Rating with the Degree of Difficulty (the relative ease or difficulty of the action).
2. Take the difference (a positive number, a negative number, or zero) and add it to a d20 roll.
3. Consult the Omni Table for the result.

The graphic shows a grid with a large, faint 'TTA' logo in the center. The text is arranged in two columns: 'Roll' on the left and 'Result' on the right. The rows correspond to the three steps in the procedure above.

Roll	Result
0 or Less	Mishap
1 - 5	Failure
6-10	Partial Success
11-19	Success
20 or more	Critical Success

OMNI TABLE KEY

Mishap: not only does the attempted action fail, but it fails miserably and may have additional negative consequences (accidental damage to the character attempting the action, opposite of the intended effect, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results of any Mishap, based on the circumstances surrounding the attempted action.





Failure: the action fails to achieve the intended result.

Partial Success: the action is only moderately successful, achieving part but not all of the intended effect (such as half-damage from an attack or partial effect from a Psi Power, for example).

Full Success: the action achieves the intended result.

Critical Success: the action is even more successful than intended, achieving the player's stated intent and also yielding additional benefits of some sort (attack causes a Critical Wound that disables the opponent, increased effect from a Psi Power, etc.). It's the GM's job to determine the actual results and extent of any Critical Success, based on prevailing circumstances.

OMNI TABLE MODIFIERS

Omni Table die rolls may be subject to bonuses or penalties for any of the following modifiers:

- ⊗ **Attributes**
- ⊗ **Skill ratings**
- ⊗ **Intent**
- ⊗ **Degree of Difficulty**
- ⊗ **Opposing Attributes or Skills**
- ⊗ **Multiple actions**
- ⊗ **Non-proficiency penalty**

ROLLING THE DICE

All actions in the TTA game are accomplished by rolling dice and comparing the result to the Omni Table. This includes combat, skill use, Psi Power use, resisting environmental conditions, etc. Various things go into this simple dice roll including a character's stated intent for the action, how difficult the particular action might be, whether the action is opposed or not, etc.

INTENT

Intent is a player's description of what his or her Character hopes to accomplish by a particular action. This helps the Gamemaster determine the chance of success for the attempted action, as well as its actual outcome. For example, the Intent of an attack might be to injure, disarm, trip, or any of a dozen other stratagems. If the player informs the Gamemaster beforehand of the character's intentions, the GM will be better prepared to interpret the Omni Table die result. Intent is also important in helping the GM establish an action's Degree of Difficulty.

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DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Degree of Difficulty is a modifier determined by the Gamemaster. It is based on the GM's appraisal of how hard or easy it would be for an individual with an Attribute or Skill Rating of "0" to attempt a given action. The Degree of Difficulty modifier typically ranges between +10 and -10, with easy actions being given a bonus (+1, +2, etc.) on the Omni Table die roll, and difficult actions being given a penalty (-1, -2, etc.). The character's Intent and any extraordinary circumstances surrounding the proposed action are also factors in determining Degree of Difficulty.

Degree of Difficulty is covered in more detail in the *Gamemaster's Info* chapter including detailed examples and suggested Degrees of Difficulty for many actions and tasks.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

Whenever a character attempts an action that is directly opposed by another individual or creature, the opponent's ability rating is used as the Degree of Difficulty. In such cases, the Degree of Difficulty will either be the opponent's Skill Rating or an Attribute Rating, whichever is most appropriate.

Lt. Sullivan wants to use her Stealth skill to sneak past a Proximan guard. Because this is an Opposed Action, the Degree of Difficulty is the guard's ability to detect the Terran. The Guard has PER +3. Sullivan's Stealth skill rating is +9. Lt. Sullivan's player rolls a d20 and adds +6 (the difference between Stealth +9 and PER +3) to the roll.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

As a basic rule, each character is allowed to take one action per round. Optionally, this rule can be modified to allow characters to take Multiple Actions in a single round. For each action already performed during the round, characters suffer a cumulative -5 Omni Table penalty. Extra actions can be performed during a character's turn, or later in the round as responses to the actions of other characters. The GM decides what constitutes an "action" and what doesn't. Simple things like quickly looking around a room or dropping an item probably aren't actions that would add to the multiple action penalty. More complex procedures like drawing a weapon or dismounting from an vehicle probably would count as extra actions. In some cases, the GM may ask the player to make a skill or attribute roll to determine the success of ordinary tasks performed

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as part of a multiple action sequence (a DEX roll to quickly throw off a bulky coat and still make an attack, for example).

Thena'a the Alphan free trader wants to throw her empty mug at a rude Terran across the table, then stand up and punch him in the face. First, Thena'a's player makes an attack roll to hit with the mug. This is a normal attack roll since it is Thena'a's first action during the round. Next Thena'a's player rolls to see if she punches the Terran. This attack roll suffers a -5 penalty (in addition to any other modifiers) since Thena'a has already acted once during this round. If Thena'a wanted to then take a third action, her player would roll with a penalty of -10.

Note that a result of Mishap on any Multiple Action die roll prevents any additional action from being taken in that round. For example, if Thena'a's first die roll results in a Mishap, she does not get to attempt the second action.

OTHER MODIFIERS

Combat, Psi, and some of the more complicated Skills have additional rules and modifiers that the Gamemaster and players should know about. These are covered in their relevant sections of this book.

ATTRIBUTES

Attributes represent natural abilities, such as strength, intelligence, and dexterity. Each has a numerical value, referred to as its Attribute Rating. In the TTA game, the Attribute Rating for a humanoid of "average" ability is "0"; an attribute rating of +1 or greater is above average, while a rating of -1 or lower is below average.

Attributes can be used as modifiers to specific Skills by adding the Attribute's numerical value to the level of the Skill (the total is referred to as the Skill Rating; q.v.). Attributes can also be used to determine the result of actions for which there is no specific skill; for example, lifting a heavy object (a function of the Strength Attribute) or trying to locate a lost item (a function of the Perception attribute).

Whenever an Attribute is used by itself for an Omni Table die roll, it is always doubled. Note that this applies to negative-rated Attributes as well. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same.

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In the TTA game system, there are eight different primary attribute ratings:

Intelligence Rating
Will Rating
Strength Rating
Constitution Rating

Perception Rating
Charisma Rating
Dexterity Rating
Speed Rating

In addition to these, there are six secondary attributes that are derived from either primary attributes or the race or Path of the character in question. These are:

Combat Rating
Psi Rating
Renown

Ranged Combat Rating
Piety
Hit Points

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Intelligence Rating (INT)

This is a measure of the individual's intellect and powers of reason. Intelligence is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to deduce the basic meaning of obscure or unfamiliar maps, dialects, or writings, appraise the relative value of goods, solve puzzles and mysteries, and so forth.

Perception Rating (PER)

This is a measure of the individual's sensory awareness, taking into account the abilities of sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, plus such intangibles as instinct, intuition, and psychic talents. Perception is the deciding factor whenever an individual attempts to detect unseen presences or ambushes, detect illusions, locate lost or hidden articles, notice important details or changes in surroundings, or utilize any sensory ability.

Will Rating (WIL)

This is a measure of the individual's willpower, determination, faith and wisdom. Will Rating determines how well a character is able to resist temptation, bribery, seduction, torture, coercion, interrogation, or Psi Powers of Influence.

Charisma Rating (CHA)

This is a measure of the individual's powers of persuasiveness, including such intangibles as leadership and the ability to command the respect of others. Charisma Rating affects a character's ability to lead





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or persuade other individuals, make a favorable impression, negotiate, bargain, or haggle.

Strength Rating (STR)

This is a measure of an individual's physical power. Strength Rating determines how much weight a character can carry or lift, how much damage a character does with a hand-held weapon, and so forth. It is also the deciding factor in attempts to bend or break objects, force open or hold shut a door, and restrain other characters or creatures.

Dexterity Rating (DEX)

This is a measure of the individual's agility, coordination and maneuverability. Dexterity Rating is an important factor in most physical skills and determines how well a character can perform acts of manual dexterity, dodge or evade an attack, keep his or her balance, or catch a thrown object.

Constitution Rating (CON)

This is a measure of the individual's endurance, stamina, and durability. Constitution Rating determines how well a character can resist the effects of disease, wounds, poisons, toxins, exposure, hunger, and thirst.

Speed Rating (SPD)

This is a measure of how swiftly an individual is capable of moving, either on land, in the water, through the air, or by other means. Speed Rating determines Initiative in combat, as well as attempts to pursue others or escape pursuers.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Combat Rating (CR)

This is a measure of a character's natural ability in melee combat situations. It reflects a combination of physical and mental attributes, cultural and social factors, biological traits, and personal inclination. Combat Rating serves as the modifier for most melee combat-related skills (i.e. brawling, blades, etc.). To determine a character's CR, add STR, DEX and SPD and divide by 3 (rounding down). To this total add any CR bonuses received from Path choice. The result is the CR rating.

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Ranged Combat Rating (RC)

This is a measure of a character's natural ability in ranged combat. It reflects a combination of agility, mental acuity, perception, cultural and social factors, biological traits, and personal inclination. Combat Rating serves as the modifier for most ranged combat-related skills (i.e. firearms, lasers, etc.).

To determine a character's RC, add PER, DEX and SPD and divide by 3 (rounding down). The result is the RC rating. To this total add any RC bonuses received from Path choice. The result is the CR rating.

Psi Rating (PSI)

This is a measure of a character's natural mental powers. Psi Rating serves as the modifier for using any psionic power. Psi powers are not common in a normal TTA game but this Attribute is included here for those GMs who wish to introduce psionics into their campaigns. Additionally, future TTA sourcebooks may include new sentient races that possess mental abilities that will require PSI.

Only characters with access to the Mentalism Order (see Psionics Talent Tree) may actively use this attribute; characters without the Mentalism Order may only use their PSI to defend against attack by psychic means.

All starting characters begin with +0 in PSI; characters with the Mentalism School determine their starting PSI by adding INT, WIL and CHA and dividing by 2.

Piety (PTY)

This attribute is a measure of a character's faith in their religion or philosophy. A character's piety rating will affect his reaction rolls when dealing with the officials of the religion or other faithful.

Starting characters begin with a PTY of +0; this may be affected by Path selection and certain Quirks.

Renown (REN)

Renown measures how well-known a character is among the general population of a town, city, region or even system wide. REN of +1 might indicate the character is locally famous. Likewise a -1 indicates local infamy. A +3 REN might indicate the character's fame has spread to neighboring nations and cities while a +5 REN means his exploits





are being told across the planet. Keep in mind, Renown is not always an honest assessment of a character's skills or exploits. As word travels of his accomplishments, some bending of the truth takes place as rumor builds upon rumor. However, unless someone attempts to spread deliberately misleading lies, a character's Renown is largely based on his actual actions. Like Piety, Renown will influence a character's Reaction Rolls in many circumstances.

Starting characters in the TTA RPG begin with a REN of +0; this may be affected by the selection of certain Quirks during character creation.

Hit Points (HP)

This is a measure of a character's ability to sustain injury before dying. The average number of hit points that an individual or creature possesses is determined by race (and may be further modified through the selection of Quirks). This total is modified, one time only for beginning characters, by adding or subtracting a number of points equal to the individual's Constitution Rating. Thereafter, Hit Points do not increase. Hit Points are not used as an Attribute Modifier nor are they used to make Omni Table rolls.

ATTRIBUTE BENCHMARKS

Most normal humanoids have attributes in the -5 to +5 range, with zero being the "average." Attributes greater than +5 are considered "superhuman" and attributes below -5 indicate a serious disability of some kind.

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE ROLLS

1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the Omni Table to use a Primary Attribute, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Attribute you're using, and what it is you're trying to accomplish.

2. Double the Attribute's Rating

Whenever an Attribute is being used as the primary modifier for an action it is always doubled first. This rule applies to plus-rated (positive) and minus-rated (negative) Attributes. Zero-rated Attributes remain the same (two times zero = 0).

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Tanakal the Proximan needs to make a Strength roll to attempt to lift a massive boulder. Tanakal doubles her STR attribute of +4 for a total of +8 to her roll.

NOTE: The above rule applies **ONLY** to Primary Attributes. When making Omni Table rolls using only Secondary Attributes as the modifier, the Attribute is **NEVER** doubled.

3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Attribute is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster must determine if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the Omni Table.

First, take the character's doubled Attribute Rating and apply it as a modifier — positive, negative, or zero. Then, you'll need to determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent.

When Tanakal tries to lift the boulder, her player rolls her doubled Strength rating (+8) versus the Degree of Difficulty for the weight of the stone. The GM decides that the stone is difficult for a normal (0 STR) human to lift, so he sets the difficulty at -5. Of course, Tanakal is stronger than you average Terran so she still has a +3 modifier to his roll ($8 - 5 = 3$).

Other factors that may apply include the character's physical condition (wounded, tired, etc.), the footing (slick, unstable, etc.), and so on. Comparing applicable bonuses and penalties, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's Omni Table roll.



4. The Attribute Roll

To determine whether the Attribute is used successfully or not the player rolls a d20 on the Omni Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

5. Judging the Result

With all Omni Table rolls, it is the GM's job to translate the results, taking into account the modified die roll total and the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors. Review the information of Omni Table results in this chapter for examples.

ATTRIBUTES AS MODIFIERS

Attribute Ratings are used as modifiers for applicable Skills, increasing or decreasing the affected skill accordingly. The total of Skill level and its Attribute modifier is referred to as the Skill Rating.

Theresa has a level of +3 in the skill, Acrobatics, and a DEX of +2 (DEX is the modifier for this skill). Theresa's Skill Rating in Acrobatics is therefore +5.

IMPROVING ATTRIBUTES

Like skills, a character's attributes may also be increased by expending XP. The cost to improve a Primary is 20 XP for the first increase to the Attribute. the second time the player wishes to increase the Attribute, the cost is 40 XP. The third time the attribute is increased, the cost is 60 XP. An Attribute may only be increased a maximum of three times (i.e. +3 total).

Secondary Attributes may not be improved by spending XP although derivative attributes like CR and Psi will improve as the character improves the Primary Attributes that affects the relevant Secondary Attribute. Secondary Attributes like Piety and Renown may be improved or reduced by the GM as a result of in game activity of the character. This is always at the discretion of the GM.



ABILITIES RELATED TO ATTRIBUTES

REACTION ROLLS

The first impression that a character makes on any new acquaintance is determined by making a Charisma roll on the Omni Table. Failure indicates an unfavorable or even hostile reaction; Success indicates acceptance (or at least ambivalence), while Critical Success will always yield the most favorable response possible under the prevailing circumstances. At the Gamemaster's discretion, reaction die rolls can be employed for encounters of almost any sort. In some situations, skills such as Fashion can be used for reaction rolls, depending on the nature of the individuals being encountered, their native culture, and other factors.

MOVEMENT

Individuals and creatures can move up to 50 feet in one round's time per +1 SPD or minus ten feet per -1 Speed Rating (40 ft/rd at SPD -1, 30 ft/rd at SPD -2, etc.). This rate of movement assumes an even surface, a straight course of travel, and limited encumbrance. When using a character's or creature's Speed Rating to determine distance traveled, remember that one mile per hour is equivalent to about nine feet per round. A character or creature may double this distance at a full full run but this can usually only be sustained for short periods of time. It is only rarely necessary to keep track of movement on a foot-by-foot basis, however. See the "Movement" section of the Combat section for more details.

ENCUMBRANCE

The maximum amount of weight that a humanoid with average ("0" Rating) Strength can carry is their own body weight, plus twenty-five pounds per each additional +1 Strength Rating or minus ten pounds per -1 Strength Rating. Negative encumbrance is not possible. A creature whose weight limit is negative can lift and carry less than one pound. At maximum encumbrance, individuals suffer a penalty of -5 on all Omni Table die rolls related to movement of any sort (including all combat and Psi Power use that requires gestures). Encumbrance figures for quadrupeds are quadrupled.

COMBAT DAMAGE

Damage totals for physical attacks employing natural or other melee weaponry are modified by adding the attacker's Strength Rating to the weapon's Damage Rating (DR). Damage totals for most ranged weapons such as firearms are not modified by the user's Strength, although hand-thrown weapons such as rocks or spears are.



SPD CONVERSIONS

SPD	Ft/Rd	MPH	SPD	Ft/Rd	MPH
-5	0	0	22	1150	131
-4	10	1	23	1200	137
-3	20	2	24	1250	142
-2	30	3	25	1300	148
-1	40	4	26	1350	154
0	50	6	27	1400	159
1	100	11	28	1450	165
2	150	17	29	1500	171
3	200	23	30	1550	176
4	250	28	31	1600	182
5	300	34	32	1650	188
6	350	40	33	1700	194
7	400	46	34	1750	199
8	450	51	35	1800	205
9	500	57	36	1850	211
10	550	63	37	1900	216
11	600	68	38	1950	222
12	650	74	39	2000	228
13	700	80	40	2050	233
14	750	85	41	2100	239
15	800	91	42	2150	245
16	850	97	43	2200	250
17	900	102	44	2250	256
18	950	108	45	2300	262
19	1000	114	46	2350	268
20	1050	120	47	2400	273
21	1100	125	48	2450	279

Note: This table is used for all ground based movement (including ground vehicles). For information on Aircraft and Spacecraft movement scales see *Chapter 6: Spacecraft & Interstellar Travel*



SKILLS

SKILL RATINGS

Skills are abilities acquired through training and practice, such as combat and magic. There are two terms used to describe Skills: Level and Rating. Skill Level indicates the character's degree of training, with "0" representing a basic level of proficiency. A Skill's Level can be improved with training and experience (see Improving Skills, in this section).

Skill Rating is the combination of a character's training (Level) and natural ability (a related Attribute). Each Skill has an Attribute that acts as its modifier; for example, the modifier for the Thieving skill, Sleight of Hand, is Dexterity. To determine the thief's overall Skill Rating, add the level of the Skill plus its Attribute modifier. Whenever a Skill is used for an Omni Table die roll, always use its Skill Rating.

SKILL ROLLS

1. Stating Intent

Before rolling on the Omni Table to use a Skill, the player needs to state his character's intent. Tell the Gamemaster which Skill you're using, and what it is you're trying to accomplish. Don't forget: Skill Rating (Skill level + Attribute modifier) is always used for any type of Skill roll.

2. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates which Skill is being used and describes the character's intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls on the Omni Table.

Apply the character's Skill Rating as the modifier for the attempted action. Then determine the Degree of Difficulty. If the character's action is being opposed by another individual or creature, decide which of the opponent's abilities will be used as the Degree of Difficulty. If it is a Skill, the opponent's Skill Rating is used for this purpose. If it is an Attribute, the opponent's Attribute Rating is doubled and used as the Degree of Difficulty.

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If the action is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if a character is trying to pick a lock, the complexity and condition of the lock determines the Degree of Difficulty.

Comparing Skill Rating and Degree of Difficulty, the GM arrives at a single figure. This is the modifier that will be applied to the player's Omni Table Skill roll.

3. The Skill Roll

To determine whether the Skill is used successfully or not the player rolls a d20 on the Omni Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

4. Judging the Result

The GM interprets the result, taking into account the modified die roll total, the player's stated intent, and any other relevant factors.

USING SKILLS THAT YOUR CHARACTER DOESN'T HAVE

When a character attempts to use a skill that he or she does not know, there are two different ways the GM can handle the situation.

1. Let the character use a similar, related skill in place of the required skill. The GM will assess an additional Degree of Difficulty penalty based on how related she thinks the two skills are. This is called the Substitution Penalty.

Jamal has been cornered by two miners who think he stole their paychecks. Jamal has no weapon but has picked up a stout stick from the ground and wants to defend himself with it. Jamal does not have the Weapon (hafted) skill, but he does have Weapon (small blades) at +5. The GM decides that this is close enough and lets Jamal's player use the Small Blades skill with only a -2 penalty.

2. Let the character attempt the action as if they had the skill at level zero. The GM may assess additional penalties if she feels that the skill requires a great deal of training or experience to even attempt.

Commander Cowley wants to sneak aboard a suspected pirate spacecraft while it is docked in Gaspra Station. Cowley does not have the Stealth skill. The GM lets Cowley's player roll on the Omni Table as if Cowley had a Stealth skill of zero. Cowley's

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player rolls with a +2 modifier (Stealth 0 + Dexterity rating of +2 = +2). Note that Cowley's player does not double his Dexterity rating since this is strictly a skill roll, not an attribute roll. The GM rules that since sneaking around is a simple task only a -3 substitution penalty is necessary.

Later on, Cowley encounters a locked foot locker that he wants to open. Cowley does not have the Disable Device skill but he wants to try to pick it anyway. Once again, the GM lets Cowley's player roll on the Omni Table as if he had a Disable Device skill of zero. However, the GM rules that lockpicking is a very precise and sophisticated skill that requires training (not just nimble fingers) so Cowley takes an additional penalty of -10.

IMPROVING SKILLS

As players earn Experience Points (XP) for adventures, they can use accumulated XP to improve their character's Skills. The cost in XP to improve a Skill is equal to twice the new Skill level (not the total Skill Rating, which is the combination of Skill plus Attribute modifier).

For example, the Alphan scientist, Etarre, has the Skill, Science (Physics), at a Level of +5. To improve his Skill Level to +6, Etarre must spend 12 XP — twice the new Skill Level of +6.

Skills can only be improved one Level at a time. Though PCs can improve more than one Skill at a time, the same Skill can only be improved once per week of game time.

PREFERRED SKILLS & ACQUIRING NEW SKILLS

Experience Points accumulated though adventuring can also be used to acquire new skills. Additional Skills can be acquired at a cost of one XP per each week of time required to learn the new talent, for those skills on the character's preferred list, and at a cost of two XP per week of time required to learn the new skill for all those skills not on the character's Preferred list.

A character's preferred skills are all those skills acquired from Race and those available to the character from the Paths they have chosen. Even if a character did not take a rank in a particular skill at character creation, so long as the skill is found on the Preferred Skill list of one of the character's Paths, it is a preferred skill for that character.





If a new Skill is completely unrelated to the PC's Path and therefore not on his Preferred list, he or she may need to hire a qualified person to teach the new talent. For example, if a magician wanted to acquire the Skill, Tracking, he might have to hire a tracker or hunter to teach him this talent.

Once the necessary XP and time have been expended, the player can add the new Skill to the PC's Preferred Skills list. All new Skills have a beginning Level of +1. To improve the skill level, the cost in XP is equal to the twice the new level of the skill, as explained in Improving Skills.

COOPERATIVE EFFORTS

If two or more characters both have ranks in a given skill, they may be able to work cooperatively to achieve a shared goal. More often than not, this will give the character some benefit as long as they are near the same level of competence (+/- 5) and working towards a common goal, but always keeping mind the old adage: "Too many cooks spoil the stew." When two characters work together using the same skill, allow the player with the higher skill rank to make the Omni Table roll but award a bonus to that roll equal to 1/3 of the relevant skill ranks of the characters assisting.

In many cases, a character's help won't be beneficial, or only a limited number of characters can help at once. When a cooperative effort may be useful is always at the discretion of the GM.

TIME IN THE GAME

In the TTA game, time is measured in discrete units, called rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long, enough time for a character to trade blows with an opponent, use a Psi Power, or do anything else that can be accomplished in six seconds or less.

Except in combat and similarly critical situations, it is usually not necessary for the Gamemaster to keep such strict track of time. For example, a day's ride can be covered by the GM in a single sentence, if nothing special is planned for that day. The Gamemaster should feel free to take a flexible approach about time in the game and use detailed round-by-round descriptions of the action only as needed. Similarly, the Omni Table can be used to cover a few seconds of action, or an entire day of warfare.

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EXPERIENCE POINTS

In role playing games such as TTA, characters earn Experience Points (XP for short) for their accomplishments. These points can be used to increase the level of a character's Skills. Experience points are awarded by the Gamemaster, as follows:

- 1-20 XP per adventure or gaming session, based on the difficulty of the adventure and the style of campaign being used by your group.
- Bonus of 1-10 XP for good role playing, based on the persona that the player has created for his or her character (see Chapter 4: Character Creation). The GM may elect to increase or reduce this figure based on the style of the group's campaign.
- 1 XP per each game week that a character devotes to training, which can be used to improve the Skill being practiced.





COMBAT

In the TTA game, as in real life, Combat can be a very deadly affair. Although drawing your sword or blaster pistol should be considered a last resort when more sensible means of settling a dispute fail, there will inevitably be those instances where it is necessary. When this occurs, a familiarity with this section will greatly increase your character's chance of survival.

Like all actions in *Omni System*TM games, Combat results are determined by rolling a d20 on the Omni Table. However, the level of detail required to simulate Combat in the game is significantly greater for Combat than for Skills or Attributes.

As with all Skills, Combat Skills also have Attribute Modifiers, which are called Combat Rating (CR for short) and Ranged Combat Rating (RC for short). The term, Combat Skill Rating, always refers to the combination of a Combat Skill's level plus the character's CR or RC modifier.

COMBAT ROUNDS AND TURNS

During combat, time is measured in rounds. A round is roughly six seconds long: enough time for combatants to draw weapons and exchange attacks, move up to the maximum allowable distance based on their Speed Rating, or cast a Psi Power. During a combat round, each character is given a chance to take action.

A single character's action within a round is called a turn, as in "it's Gor's turn to attack." Once all characters involved in the combat have taken their turn, the round is over.

DAMAGE & PROTECTION

In the *TTA RPG*, it is not necessary to make a separate die roll to determine how much damage an attack does. Instead, weapons and other forms of attack do a set amount of damage based on their Damage Rating (DR for short), and the Omni Table die roll.

Protection Rating (PR) describes the protective value of armor. In the *TTA* game, armor is rated according to the number of Hit Points it absorbs per attack.

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DAMAGE RATING

A weapon's Damage Rating (DR for short) is equivalent to the maximum number of Hit Points it is capable of doing in the hands of an individual or creature of "average" (0-rated) Strength. For example, a club with a DR of 6 will do a maximum of six HP damage. When using hand-held weapons, combatants add their Strength Rating (STR) to the Damage Rating total. For example, a bouncer with a STR of +2 will do a maximum of 8 HP damage with that same club (DR 6 plus STR +2 = 8). Remember that damage totals for most ranged weapons, such as firearms or laser weapons, are not modified by the user's STR, although many hand-thrown weapons such as rocks are. Details are provided in the Equipment chapter

The *Omni Table* result indicates how much of the total DR a weapon does on a given attack, as follows:

- * Partial Success: Half the total DR.
- * Full Success: Full Damage Rating.
- * Critical Success: Full DR + Critical Wound.

A complete list of Damage Ratings for weapons can be found in the Equipment chapter.

EXCEPTIONAL WEAPONS

Not all weapons are created equal. The quality of weapons can vary greatly, even between weapons of the same type. Exceptional weapons may either be an ingenious design or may just be crafted with a greater care. Most exceptional weapons will grant the bearer a bonus of +1 to DR. Rare weapons may grant a bonus of up to +2 to both DR and the Attack roll.

PROTECTION RATING

In the TTA game, armor is rated according to its ability to absorb and reduce damage, which is referred to as its Protection Rating (or PR for short).

The PR of any type of armor is equivalent to the amount of damage it will absorb, in Hit Points from each successful hit. For example, armor with a Protection Rating of +3 will reduce the damage of an attack by three HP. This will apply to most attack forms but there may be some exceptions which will be detailed in the appropriate chapter.



Heavier types of armor usually have a higher PR, but will cause the wearer to suffer a penalty for Encumbrance unless he or she is strong enough to carry the additional weight. Detailed information on the Protection Rating of various types of armor can be found in the chapter on Equipment.

EXCEPTIONAL ARMOR

It is rare that any particular piece of armor far exceeds its peers. Sometimes a suit will be made thicker than is normal or using advanced materials, providing it with a higher PR, but this often has the effect of also making it much heavier. Occasionally, a suit will simply be designed to distribute its weight better and thus is treated as if it were lighter than it actually is when being worn.

SHIELDS

Hand-held shields (commonly used by the FLEA riot squads) provide additional protection by making the bearer harder to hit. A shield reduces an attacker's Combat die roll by the shield's rating. The disadvantage is that while using a shield the defender suffers a penalty of -2 on all Dexterity-related die rolls.

OVERVIEW: PROCEDURE FOR COMBAT

Anytime a character engages in Combat, use the following procedure:

1. Combatants roll for Initiative (each makes an Attribute roll using Speed Rating; the opponent with the highest roll goes first)
2. Player states Intent (what kind of tactic is the character attempting, and what is its specific intent?)
3. GM determines bonuses or penalties (based on the character's and opponents Combat Skill Ratings, and other factors)
4. Player rolls to attempt the action
5. GM judges result.



COMBAT ROLLS

1. Rolling for Initiative

At the beginning of any Combat situation, each combatant makes an Attribute roll using their respective Speed Ratings. This is called rolling for Initiative. The character with the highest Initiative total is allowed to act first, and may choose a Tactic based on the slower opponent's Intent (see #2). The combatant with the next highest total goes next, and so on until all the combatants have taken their turns.

If you prefer a high degree of detail in your game, combatants can roll for Initiative each round. If you prefer a simpler approach, have the combatants roll for Initiative only for the first round of Combat, to establish who goes first, second, and so on. Then have all opponents proceed in turn for the remainder of the fight.

2. Stating Intent

Before rolling for Combat the character must state his character's Intent. This is done by choosing a weapon or Combat Skill, and a Combat Tactic. There are four categories of Combat Tactics in the *Omni System*TM: **Attack**, **Defend**, **Movement**, and **Stunt**. Each has a number of variations, as described in the chapter on Combat. For example, a character's Intent might be to shoot a pistol, parry with a truncheon, retreat, or try to trip or distract an opponent.

The winner of the Initiative roll can choose to declare Intent first or wait until other combatants have done so, in order to anticipate their opponents' moves and act accordingly. Either way, the individual who has the Initiative rolls first.

3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player indicates the weapon and tactic being used and describes the character's Intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied before the player rolls on the Omni Table.

Apply a bonus based on the Combat Skill Rating chosen by the character. To save time during the game it's a good idea to have players figure their characters' modified Combat Skill Ratings in advance and record these numbers on their Character Sheet.

Apply a modifier based on the Degree of Difficulty. If the Combat tactic is being opposed by another individual or creature, the Degree of

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Difficulty is always based on the defender's abilities. Decide which ability is most appropriate, based on the following considerations:

If the defender is using a weapon, use the defender's Skill Rating in that weapon as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the defender is unarmed, use the defender's Brawling or Martial Arts Skill Rating. If the defender has no such talent, use his or her basic Combat Rating Attribute as the Degree of Difficulty.

If the attack is unopposed, then the Degree of Difficulty is based on how simple or difficult it will be for the character to achieve his or her stated intent. For example, if Tsenenka the Alphan is trying to hit an unwary opponent with her type CL1 laser pistol, the Degree of Difficulty would be based on such factors as the targets' range and degree of cover, not the opponent's combat abilities

Compare applicable bonuses and penalties, and use the total as the modifier that will be applied to the player's Omni Table Combat roll.

4. The Combat Action Roll

To determine whether the Combat action is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the Omni Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.

5. Judging the Results

After the player rolls, the GM will interpret the Omni Table result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding of the action, and other factors. Combat actions intended to cause damage will produce one of the following results:

Mishap: *the attack fails due to a mishap of some sort; the attacker stumbles and falls, hits himself, hits an unintended target, breaks the weapon being used, etc. (GM's ruling)*

Failure: *the attack misses the intended target.*

Partial Success: the attacker scores a glancing blow that only does half the attack form's total Damage Rating (rounded-up to the nearest whole number).

Full Success: *the attack does its full Damage Rating.*

Critical Success: *the attack does full Damage Rating and achieves*

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the attacker's stated Intent. If the Intent was to injure or kill, the victim suffers a Critical Wound, and must make a roll using his Constitution Rating to determine how badly he is hurt. Subtract the Damage Rating of the attack from this CON roll. Partial Success means the victim suffers a penalty of -5 on all further actions until healed of the Critical Wound. Failure or Mishap means the victim is incapacitated until healed. See the chapter on Combat for more information of Critical Wounds.

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE GAME

HEALING

The average individual or creature heals at the rate of 5 Hit Points per day, plus one additional point of healing per +1 Constitution Rating. Individuals with negative Constitution Ratings heal at the rate of 5 HP per day, minus one point of healing per -1 CON Rating (the minimum rate of healing is one point per day).

Individuals who have suffered a Critical Wound, a permanent injury, or a close brush with death may require a period of convalescence. If the victim receives immediate medical attention, he or she may be fully recovered after just a few hours of sleep. Otherwise, recovery time could range from a day or two to a week, several weeks, or even longer. The amount of time required to make a full recovery in such instances is up to the GM to decide, based on the nature and extent of the victim's injuries.

DEATH & DYING

Individuals or creatures reduced to zero or less Hit Points are rendered unconscious and on the verge of death. Should this happen the Gamemaster must roll on the Omni Table, using the victims Constitution Rating and current Hit Points as modifiers. The total will yield one of the following results:

- ☛ **Mishap:** barring a miracle of some sort, the victim's career has come to an untimely end. If the victim was a PC, the player can create a new character.
- ☛ **Failure:** things are looking grim. The victim is fading fast and will need to make another CON roll every minute at a cumulative penalty of -1 per minute. A result of failure or worse on any of these subsequent CON rolls results in death. A result of partial success



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or better, and the victim gets to live for another minute. At best, the victim will suffer a permanent injury of some kind (as per a result of Partial Success).

- ✱ **Partial Success:** the victim will recover, but will suffer some sort of permanent injury. Possibilities include disfiguring scars, a 1-point reduction of one of the victim's Attributes, amnesia, or some other disability appropriate to the circumstances surrounding the victim's "near-death experience" (GM's ruling)
- ✱ **Full or Critical Success:** the victim will recover completely, with or without medical attention, and suffer no permanent damage.

These rules should be reserved only for PCs or important NPCs. Any other individual reduced to 0 HP or less can simply be considered dead at once.

COMBAT TACTICS

In a game where a character's stated intent can dramatically affect the chances of success or failure, the choice of tactics plays an important role. For example, why engage the armored Terran assault team head-on when your guerilla unit can harry them from a distance, taking pot shots and wearing them down?

There are four basic categories of tactics available to characters using the *Omni System*TM: Attack, Defend, Move, and Stunt. Each counts as a single action; using more than one Tactic in a single round of combat requires the attacker to take the standard penalty for Multiple Actions (see Rules section). Attacks (and any Psi Power use), Movement, and Stunts can only be performed during the character's turn. Defensive tactics can be used at any time during the round.

The following section contains descriptions of each of these tactics and their most common variations.

ATTACK

An attack can be defined as any action intended to injure, restrain, stun, or otherwise hamper an opponent. There are four kinds of attacks in *The Omni System*TM, close attacks, ranged attacks, grappling attacks, and subdual attacks.

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CLOSE ATTACKS

A Close Attack is a maneuver that attempts to cause damage to an opponent at close range. Any type of hand-to-hand combat, with or without weapons, is considered a Close Attack. Unless the intended target is unaware or incapable of defense, a Close Attack is considered an Opposed Action.

To simulate a Close Attack, the attacker rolls on the *Omni Table*, adding the Skill Rating for the weapon or attack form being employed. The defender's Skill Rating is used as a negative modifier (see Defense, q.v.).

A Close Attack can be used against multiple targets, at the standard penalty for Multiple Actions (cumulative -5 per extra target). Alternately, a single target can be hit multiple times with a "rapid fire" attack, with the same penalties being applied. "Rapid fire" attacks can be dodged or parried as if they were a single attack.

Corporal Francois Cannels is ambushed by a disgruntled local Proximan in an alley and has only a sheath knife handy. The corporal has a Skill Rating of 17 with Weapon (Small Blades) (the appropriate attack skill in this case). The local is unarmed so she must defend with her Brawling Rating of +9. The total attack roll modifier is +8 (17 - 9 = 8). Francois' player rolls a 10 for a total of 18: Full Success. The GM describes how the knife cuts into the abdomen of the hapless Proximan.

RANGED ATTACKS

A Ranged Attack is defined as any attempt to hit an opponent or target from a distance. Common Ranged Combat attacks include using a firearm or laser weapon, using a shoulder mounted missile or using hand-hurled weapons such as javelins, rocks, or knives.

If the intended target is unaware of the Ranged Attack or is immobile, the Degree of Difficulty is based on the target's range and availability (size, visibility, degree of cover, etc.). If the defender is actively trying to dodge or evade a Ranged Attack, the Degree of Difficulty is based on range and availability plus the defender's modified defensive Combat Skill or Attribute Rating. Penalties for range and availability are as follows:

- ▶ Target is within half effective range: no penalty.
- ▶ Target is beyond half effective range: -5.

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- ▶ Target is beyond effective range: -10.
- ▶ Target is beyond 2 times effective range: -20.
- ▶ Target is moving: -3, plus an additional -1 per point of target's Speed Rating.
- ▶ Target is protected by cover: -1 per 10% cover.
- ▶ Target is smaller than man-sized: -1 to -10.
- ▶ Target is larger than man-sized: bonus of +1 to +10.

All penalties for range and availability are cumulative. For example, if a target is beyond half effective range and is moving at a SPD of +1, the total penalty is -9.

Depending on their rate of fire, some ranged weapons can be used vs multiple targets, or for “rapid fire” Ranged Attacks. The standard penalty for Multiple Actions applies to Ranged Attacks as well.

The effective range for hand-thrown weapons is 50 feet plus 10 feet per +1 STR. Ranges and firing rates for all other missile weapons can be found in the chapter on Equipment.

Commander Cowley is firing his pistol into a charging group of pirates while the celebrity he is protecting tries to make her escape. The lead pirate is a mere 75 feet away, which is within the effective range of Cowley's pistol. The pirate knows he is about to be shot at, so he rolls to one side as he moves in. Cowley takes a penalty equal to the pirate's Defensive Skill Rating of +9. Cowley's Pistol skill rating is +14, for a total Omni Table modifier of +5. Cowley's player rolls a d20 and gets a 5 for an attack total of 10: Partial Success. Cowley's bullet does only half damage as it grazes the pirate's thigh.

GRAPPLING ATTACKS

A Grappling Attack is any attempt to grab, restrain, or throw an opponent through the use of strength, leverage, or special grappling weapons. Grappling Attacks are handled as per Close Attacks. However, a defender who has been grabbed or restrained may take no further actions until he attempts to escape by making a successful *Omni Table* roll using his Strength Rating (doubled), Brawling -3, or Martial Arts skill -3. If the defender's escape attempt is unsuccessful, on the next turn the attacker can either throw or choke the defender without the need for a second attack roll. A thrown defender can be hurled up to 5 feet away (+1 foot per +1 STR), and/or body-slammed (DR 3 +STR). Choking causes 4 DR per round until the defender escapes or is rendered unconscious.

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Grappling Attacks cannot be used against multiple targets. A single target can be both grabbed and choked or grabbed and thrown in the same turn, at a -5 penalty for the extra action. While engaged in a Grappling Attack, the attacker has a -5 penalty to his defensive skill rating and the victim has an effective 0 defensive skill rating.

Boris is having a few drinks in a bar, and has had the misfortune of drawing the attention of the local tough, Darby. Boris knows that Darby, who is far larger and stronger than he, will try to get him in a hold and choke him. Boris, who is faster, decides to be the first to try to get a hold. He jumps on the back of the brawny tough and attempts to apply a choke hold. Boris' Brawling Rating is +14 while Darby's is +8. The GM decides that since Boris is attempting a very daring maneuver (tumbling through Darby's defenses to get at his back) he receives a -3 to his Omni Table roll. Boris' player rolls a 7 and adds the modifier of +3 for a result of 10: Partial Success. The GM rules that Boris has successfully grappled Darby but his choke hold causes no damage.

Because of their unusual nature and wide variety of effects, Grappling Attacks have different *Omni Table* results than standard Close Attacks as follows:

When Attacking:

Mishap: The attacker has twisted himself into an awkward position and failed to effectively hold his opponent. The opponent receives a +5 bonus on their next attack vs. the grappler.

Failure: The attacker fails to grab the defender.

Partial Success: The attacker gets a partial hold but has little leverage. No choke or throw attacks may follow this attack. The defender gets a +5 bonus to his or her attempt to escape this hold.

Full Success: The attacker achieves the hold they were attempting. They may throw or choke the defender with their next action, or simply continue to hold.

Critical Success: The hold is especially well-placed and strong. The defender takes an additional -5 penalty to an escape attempts.

When Escaping:

Mishap: The defender twists himself into an even worse position. He takes an additional -5 penalty to any further escape attempts. Note that further Mishap results do not add to this penalty. The maximum is -5.

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Failure: The defender remains in the hold.

Partial Success: The defender slips part-way out of the hold. Add +5 to his next escape attempt.

Full Success: The defender escapes the grapple.

Critical Success: The defender performs a perfect reversal. The defender may make an immediate attack on his opponent at full skill, flee, or perform any other action.

SUBDUAL ATTACKS

A Subdual Attack is an attempt to knock-out an opponent by non-lethal means. This Tactic requires the use of a blunt weapon (such as a club, flashlight, plastisteel bar, punch, kick, etc.) and can be used as part of any attack. Damage from a Subdual Attack is tallied the same as for other forms of attack. However, if a subdual attack causes an opponent to be reduced to 0 HP, the victim is merely rendered unconscious for 1-20 rounds. HP lost as a result of a Subdual attack is restored shortly after the victim regains consciousness (1-10 minutes, or with a successful CON roll against Difficulty 10, per the GM's ruling).

DEFENSE

A Defense can be defined as any action intended to avoid or block an attack. There are two types of defense tactics in the *Omni System*TM: Dodge and Parry.

An opponent who does not have the initiative or who willingly surrenders the initiative can elect to either Dodge or Parry an impending attack. To do so, the defender must declare the intent to defend before the opponent rolls for the attack.

The procedure for defense is the same as for attacks. The defender rolls on the *Omni Table*, adding their defensive skill rating and subtracting the attacker's skill rating. Read the *Omni Table* for the outcome of the Defensive tactic. Note that in the case of a full or critical defensive success, there is no need for the attacker to roll to hit.

DODGE

Dodging is a defensive maneuver that moves the character out of harm's way. This may be as simple a maneuver as ducking, or as complex as a back flip. Dodging is effective against close, ranged, and grappling attacks. Any of the following Skills or Attributes can be used for a Dodge attempt:

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- ▶ Evade Skill Rating
- ▶ Acrobatics Skill Rating at -5
- ▶ Defensive Martial Arts Skill Rating
- ▶ Dexterity Rating or Combat Rating (as per rules for substituting Attributes for Skills)

Cowley manages to disable all but one of the pirates before the gang reaches the fleeing celebrity. The last pirate leaps aboard the truck that Cowley is in, tearing at him with his dirty knife. Not wanting to lower himself to fighting like an animal (or being dragged from the bed of the truck) Cowley elects to dodge the pirate's attack. Cowley's Brawling Skill Rating is +10. The pirate's Brawling skill rating is +9. Cowley rolls with a +1 bonus ($10 - 9 = 1$) and gets a final result of 8: Partial Success. The evasive maneuver doesn't entirely avoid the pirate's attack, so Cowley will take 1/2 damage if the pirate's attack roll succeeds.

PARRY

A Parry is a defensive maneuver that interrupts an attack by putting something in the attacker's path, such as a shield or weapon. Riot shields are designed expressly for this purpose, and give defenders who have a shield a +2 bonus when used for Parrying (or +1 for individuals who don't have Parry skill and are attempting this tactic). This maneuver is known as a Shield-Parry.

Any of the following Skills or Attributes can be used as the modifier for a Parry attempt:

- ▶ Parry Skill Rating
- ▶ Weapon Skill Rating at -5
- ▶ Defensive Martial Arts Skill Rating.
- ▶ Brawling (no penalty if parrying a Brawling attack; penalty of -5 if parrying a weapon attack)
- ▶ Combat Rating or Ranged Combat Rating (substitution)

Ranged Attacks can also be parried, but at an increased Degree of Difficulty (penalty of -5 to -10). Attacks by exceptionally large and powerful opponents that overwhelm the defender cannot be parried, such as being run over by a ground vehicle or charging elephant.

Note that a result of Mishap when attempting to Parry means that the defender is not only hit by the attack, but whatever was being used to parry has been damaged or destroyed (GM's ruling).



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After Thena'a's attacks, the guard decides to hit back with his fists. Thena'a chooses to actively defend against this attack, by parrying with her knife. Thena'a's Weapon (Small Blades) Skill Rating is 17 She does not have the Parry skill and so uses her Weapon skill at -5 to parry and the guard's Brawling Skill Rating is 10. However, Thena'a has already performed one previous action in the round, so she takes an additional -5 to her Parry roll for a total modifier of -3 (17 - 5 - 10 - 5 = -3). Thena'a's player rolls a d20 and gets a 14 for a total of 11: Full Success. Thena'a will take no damage from the guard's attack and there's no need to roll to see if it hits.

MOVEMENT

Movement is a tactic intended to increase or close the distance between attacker and defender. There are three variations: Retreat, Flee, and Advance. Note that in all three cases, rugged or difficult terrain can decrease the maximum distance that can be covered in a round, and may even require DEX or skill rolls to navigate safely.

RETREAT

A Retreat is an attempt to disengage from an attack in an orderly and measured manner. The retreating opponent can move up to half her normal Movement Rate per round while continuing to fight or defend against attack without penalty.

FLEE

Fleeing is an attempt to disengage from an attack without regard for considerations of defense or attack. Instead, the main goal is to escape as quickly as possible. A Fleeing opponent can move up to his full Movement Rate per round, but may not attack or defend while doing so. Attempting to Flee while engaged in Close Combat of any type exposes the fleeing opponent to one Unopposed attack from each opponent within range. A successful Dodge or Parry will allow an individual to Flee on the following round without being exposed to a Close Attack.

If a Fleeing character is being pursued, both the character and pursuers) must make Attribute Rolls vs their respective Speed Ratings once for each round of pursuit. Compare *Omni Table* die rolls and Speed Ratings to see if the Fleeing individual escapes or gets caught, using the following guidelines:

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Mishap: stumble and fall; you're injured and cannot continue next round.

Failure: stumble and fall; you can get up and continue next round.

Partial Success: move up to half your maximum Movement Rate.

Full Success: move up to your maximum Movement Rate.

Critical Success: maximum Movement Rate plus you gain an additional 50' on opponent.

Note: for Mishaps and Failures that occur during aerial or aquatic pursuits, substitute stumbles for collisions, unfavorable wind/water currents, and/or crashes as applicable.

ADVANCE

An Advance is an attempt to close with an opponent at half maximum Movement Rate or less. This tactic allows the individual to attack or defend while moving, without penalty. It is also possible to use this tactic to Advance under cover, making it more difficult for opponents to target the advancing individual with Ranged Attacks (q.v.).

A high speed Advance is called a Charge. This tactic allows the individual to move up to his maximum Movement Rate, though at the expense of any attempts at defense. Attacking while Charging is possible, at a penalty of -3 for Close Attacks and -5 for Ranged Attacks. When making Close Attacks while Charging, add the character's Speed to the damage rating, as well as Strength. See the Combat Skill, Mounted Combat, for additional modifiers.

STUNTS

A Stunt can be defined as any type of unconventional maneuver attempted during the course of Combat. This tactic includes such flamboyant maneuvers as leaping from high places, swinging from ropes or chandeliers, vaulting over opponents, and the kind of daredevil moves that are commonly seen in most action-adventure movies. It also covers "dirty tricks" like tripping, throwing dirt in an opponent's eyes, and so on.

Any applicable Skill or Attribute can be used as a modifier for a Stunt, though most actions of this sort carry a stiff penalty for Degree of Difficulty (GM's ruling applies in all cases). Characters who possess Martial Arts, Acrobatics, and certain Performing Skills generally fare better at Stunts than those who do not have such specialized abilities.

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Under certain circumstances, a Stunt can be combined with another tactic without incurring a penalty for Multiple Actions. For example, leaping over a bar counter and kicking an enemy can be accomplished in one fluid action, and need not entail any added penalty for multiple actions. However, leaping over a rail, swinging from a chandelier, and kicking an enemy who was across the room would count as an additional action, resulting in the standard -5 penalty.

Since every stunt is different, we won't provide you with an exhaustive list here. It's always up to the GM to determine what the Degree of Difficulty is for any given stunt, based on the specific circumstances and how "cinematic" she wants the game to be. It's usually a good idea for the GM to tell her players ahead of time just what sorts of stunts will be allowed.

Thena'a cuts a rope with a laser blast, bringing down a bazaar stall on the heads of two FLEA agents. (Weapons (Pistol): Difficulty -10 for a small target).

Theresa whirls her long coat in the rushing thugs' faces as she jumps behind the bar. Hopefully, the coat will momentarily stun and blind the thugs, allowing Theresa to seemingly vanish. (Acrobatics; Difficulty -15 to confuse all three thugs).

AIMED SHOTS

An aimed shot is an Attack intended to hit a very specific target and/or cause a very specific effect. Almost any Combat Tactic can be used in conjunction with an Aimed Shot. A Ranged Attack intended to cut a ship's sail, disable a moving automobile, or knock a weapon from an opponent's hand, is an Aimed Shot. So is a Close Attack intended to disarm an opponent by striking his hand, or a Shield Parry used to deflect a missile in a specific direction. The ability to temporarily stun or subdue an opponent with a single blow, a staple of the action-adventure genre, can also be accomplished with an Aimed Shot.

Aimed Shots are handled much like other Combat Tactics, the main difference being that maneuvers of this sort usually carry a pretty severe penalty for Degree of Difficulty — not surprising, given the fact that an Aimed Shot is by its nature much more difficult to accomplish than a standard attack. A result of Success or Critical Success is required to achieve the intended effect; for Aimed Shots, an *Omni Table* result of Partial Success is the same as Failure.

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Aimed Shots can also be used to hit the small parts of an opponent that are not covered by their armor, and thus ignore its Protection Rating. The additional Degree of Difficulty penalty for this tactic is equal to the total PR of the armor worn. For example, to strike through a seam in medium combat armor (PR 6) the attacker would take an additional -6 to his or her attack roll.

FIREARMS & AUTOMATIC WEAPONS

Firearms like sub-machine guns, assault rifles and many energy weapons can fire at a much higher rate of fire than handguns and archaic weapons. The multiple action rule is applied differently to rapid fire firearms. Characters are able to fire a number of shots per round up to the listed rate of fire (RoF) of the weapon used, representing a single action. These shots must be fired at a single target. In the case of shotguns and similar area effect weapons, shots must be fired into a single 10-foot target area. If a character changes targets, the multiple action rule applies.

Automatic weapons can obviously fire more than 2, 3 or even 10 bullets in a single round, however this is abstracted in the *Omni System*™ in that it is assumed a large number of bullets are being fired but only the number up to the RoF will possibly strike a target. For the purposes of tracking the amount of ammunition used, the actual number of bullets fired by an automatic weapon is equal to 3 times the RoF.



Spacecraft Combat rules may be found in the Spacecraft chapter.



CREATIVE COMBAT

All too often, combat in the game consists of little more than “I shoot him with my pistol”, “I do 13 damage”, “I dodge”, “I parry”. With the dramatic opportunities combat presents in *The Omni System*™, this monotonous approach fails to enliven the game, or fire the imagination. Role-playing need not stop when combat begins.

DESCRIPTION IS EVERYTHING

Combat is full of sensations. Describe the grunts and cries of combatants, the report and clash of weapons, the expressions on individual faces, the moves opponents make, their actions and reactions, the smells and emotions.

No combatant is ever completely aware of everything going on around them in a fight. A good GM trick is to occasionally, secretly, tell one player that their character notices something another character doesn't, such as a pit their colleague may be about to step backwards into, a hidden sniper drawing a bead on their friend, an opponent blindsiding their unsuspecting compatriot, and so on, and give them a round or two to do something, even if only to quickly shout a warning. This trick can bolster the sense of camaraderie and teamwork among the players surprisingly well, and adds more dynamism to the conflict.

CONSIDER THE CONSEQUENCES

Only psychopaths and other miscreants enter combat at the drop of a hat. Use of force should be appropriate to the situation, and bear in mind the character's outlook on life. Like people in today's world, most people in all but the most chaotic and horrific post-apocalyptic settings are almost always aware of the possible consequences of their actions, and if their actions go counter to morality, local law, or common sense. Lethal force should only be used when faced with little recourse, unless the character is a deviant, or a native of a violent culture. For example, someone using a knife in a barroom brawl would be considered a sick thug, unless their assailants were also brandishing such lethal weapons. Characters who behave in violent fashion, or react with disproportionate force, should expect to be reviled, hunted or executed, by local authorities, relatives and allies of their victims, and so on. Consequences are something every character should consider and expect.

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THINK ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

One of the most overlooked aspects of any combat, and the first that should be borne in mind, is the actual location of the fight. Considering the characters' surroundings for a moment can add a whole new dimension to a conflict. Ask yourself such questions as:

- * Are there objects that can be ducked behind, jumped on, off, or over, interposed between the attack and target, or that might impede a combatant, such as boulders, tables, pillars, trees, balconies, etc.?
- * Are there perils in the surroundings that might harm, kill, or otherwise inconvenience an incautious or unlucky combatant, such as a cliff-edge, open pit, lava flow, untriggered trap, or patch of ice?
- * Does the environment in any way prohibit the use of certain weapons, or make their use more difficult? Some weapons, for example, require considerable space to be swung effectively, such as baseball bats, so a fight in a short, narrow corridor would make their use very difficult. Similarly, fighting in close formation may make it hazardous to use some weapons, as the space needed to use them may be occupied by an ally.
- * Weather conditions, such as powerful gales, thick fog, etc. can make the use of missile weapons problematic at best, and even melee combat can be effected if you can't see any opponent more than a yard away, or if a lot of flying debris, sand, etc. makes life difficult.

With a good grasp of the environment comes the ability to bring it into the conflict. Imagine how it can be used to the benefit or detriment of the combatants. Opponents can be forced towards perils, boulders can be used as cover, and so on. A Mishap on any roll during the combat may also involve the environment somehow, such as a trip or blunder into an object, suddenly finding oneself maneuvered to the brink of the lava flow, a missed attack resulting in the weapon getting stuck in a tree or pillar, etc.

Avoid getting caught up in precise details; keep the play fast and fluid. Accurate distances are not important; use vague terms such as "close", "a stone's throw away", or "right next to you", and if ranged combat or distance matters, simply make a rough judgement of how long (in rounds) it will take to cover the area, or if the attack is basically close, short, or long range. You don't even need to consult the ranges of the



weapons to make such a call. Just keep things moving. Stopping to check ranges, the amount of area someone with X SPD can cover in a single round just slows the action down.

BEWARE OF BYSTANDERS

The presence of bystanders during a fight is also often overlooked. Crowds often gather to watch fights, and may goad the opponents on, and even place wagers on the outcome. Not only can bystanders get in the way, they can easily be hit by stray shots or blows, taken hostage or used as shields by nefarious individuals, or even enter the combat themselves on either side, or against both, the classic example of which is the local military or law enforcement attempting to stop the conflict and incarcerate the combatants.

Firing into any melee, whether bystanders or involved or not, is a very dangerous proposition, due to the continual movement of the combatants. Missed shots may easily hit an unintended target, such as an ally. Aside from intelligent bystanders there are always cases of animals becoming involved somehow. Herd animals may stampede, posing a threat to everyone, while a predator may leap unexpectedly into a melee, in the hopes of taking a wounded individual on the periphery of the fight. Certain alien motive plants can also provide an added element to a fight, especially if they are not recognized as such from the onset.

USE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

The character should also exploit the environment of the fight. Many objects, such as chairs, rocks, ropes, tools, wall hangings, spray cans, etc. may be used as impromptu clubs, missiles, entangling implements, incendiaries, and so on. Rugs may be pulled from under assailants, barrels of oil spilled to create slick patches, chandeliers shot down to fall on assailants below, and so on. Even an unskilled or unarmed combatant can be terribly effective if they make intelligent use of their surroundings.

WANTON DESTRUCTION

A battle can take a serious toll on the surrounding environment, and the effects are worth thinking about. Use of fire in any form may ignite combustibles, and create a hazard. Attacks that miss their intended target may hit something else, thereby damaging it, and the use of items as cover, fighting platforms, etc. will almost certainly result in them being ruined in some way. A fight will practically always leave signs of its occurrence, even if only in the form of splashes of blood.

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FIGHT WITH STYLE

The majority of weapons can be used to perform a variety of strikes, in a variety of ways. Give some thought as to what form an attack takes. Is it a thrust, a lunge, a wild swing, an overhead blow, a feint, or a back-handed swipe? A weapon can even be used in unorthodox ways. A strike may be made with the flat of the blade, possibly subduing or intimidating an opponent. A nightstick may be used to thrust. A blow to knock out can be made with a gun butt or knife pommel. Many melee weapons can even be thrown if the situation is desperate enough.

The reach of a weapon (its comparative length) is also worth bearing in mind. A character with a notably longer weapon than their opponent may not only keep their opponent at bay, and strike them first, but they may effectively prevent their opponent from attacking, if the opponent is unable to get inside the reach of their weapon. However, should the opponent with a shorter weapon manage to step inside the reach of the longer weapon, they may make its use next to impossible as well.

The pistol the character carries is not their only weapon. Try and add the occasional unarmed strike; it is more interesting, and can surprise an unsuspecting opponent. A swift kick can force an opponent back, giving the character room to maneuver or flee, while a solid punch can stun, and a head butt can bring you in so close that your opponent cannot bring any weapon larger than a dagger to bear.

Consider how a combatant can be taken out of the fight quickly without necessarily being gradually bludgeoned or sliced in a protracted melee. Opponents can be disarmed, tripped, pinned, grappled, thrown, knocked out, entangled, or knocked over, for instance.

Few combats should ever be to the death; only the most deeply unintelligent, insane, frenzied, or foolishly courageous combatants will continue fighting when badly wounded or outclassed. A hasty retreat is a key survival strategy for practically every living being. Particularly bloodthirsty or lethal maneuvers, such as attempts to slice an opponent's head off, pierce their eyes, or eviscerate them should be rare, and used only when dramatically appropriate. Should players continually attempt such maneuvers against every opponent, they should expect all of the NPCs they fight to respond in like fashion.



DON'T JUST STAND THERE

The way some combats are conducted, it is hard to imagine the combatants doing much more than standing toe-to-toe trading blows. In truth, combat is continually in motion. Bear some thought as to how the characters move about, and how this can be used to advantage or disadvantage.

- * Do they try and outflank an opponent, or move to a better attacking position?
- * Do the combatants circle each other warily?
- * Do they attempt to close in, or move away?
- * How do they dodge: duck, sidestep, roll, or leap?
- * Do they press an opponent, forcing them back, or yield and give ground?
- * Do they charge or leap into a fight, weapon raised high, calmly walk forward, or wait for their opponent to come to them?

Once again, the environment is very important when considering the motion of the various characters. Cables or ropes may be swung from, pillars ran around, tables dived under, jumped on or over, and so on. Characters with the Acrobatics skill can make particularly impressive use of motion, such as cartwheeling, backflipping, somersaulting, and going into elaborate springs or rolls, although anyone can roll, leap, or dive.

Combatants who find themselves on the ground may be in peril if their opponent is still standing, and may be forced to roll or flail wildly in an attempt to avoid being struck, and provide themselves with the momentum needed to regain their feet.

Motion in certain environments can add a whole new dimension, quite literally, to a fight. Airborne combats, for example, can feature attacks from above or below, diving attacks, swoops, and so on, while underwater combats also occur in three dimensions, but slow down motion, and make non-thrusting weapons far less effective.

KEEP TALKING

Just because the action has started, doesn't mean the talking has ceased. Characters should engage in appropriate dialogue when fighting, hurling expletives, insults, and imprecations at opponents, shouting warnings and encouragement to colleagues, screaming battlecries, en-

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gaging in the cut and thrust of witty repartee with like-minded antagonists, and so on. Just as players speak the words of their characters when roleplaying any other situation, they should do so in combat sections of the game.

COMBAT IS A BLOODY AFFAIR

The damage opponents suffer can be as detailed or vague as befits the gaming group's tastes, playing style, and campaign style.

Never simply state the amount of Damage inflicted by any blow—describe it. Small amounts of damage comparative to the character's HPs might be cuts, nicks, grazes, or bruises, while heavy damage can be bone-crunching impacts, deep slices causing blood to flow, and so on. GMs of truly grim campaigns may even inflict penalties on a character's actions if they are significantly hurt, and may interpret particularly damaging strikes as incapacitating or mutilating. Likewise, heroic campaigns may seldom involve damage worse than bad burns, or broken bones, all of which they recover from very quickly. At worst, a Heroic character might lose an eye or limb, giving them a dramatic reason to seek revenge.

Combat in a game can, and should, be as gripping and exciting as any fight scene in an action movie, and if given as much thought and effort as possible, will take its place alongside any other roleplaying scene for a sense of character and drama.





PSI

Note to players and gamemasters: The rules and mechanics used for special Psi powers are presented here as optional. The 3 standard playable races (Terrans, Alphans and Proximans) do not normally have Psi powers but individual GMs may want to allow them in their games and new alien races encountered could easily have strange Psi Powers where these rules will be used.

PSI IN THE GAME

As mentioned above, the default assumption of the TTA game is that Psi powers are non-existent or extremely rare at best. However, ESP, telepathy, mind control and bending of spoons can all be simulated using the following rules.

Because the number of possible psionic abilities that might be encountered in alien species is vast, the Psi mechanics do not try to cover them all. Rather, a solid framework is provided for the mechanics of Psi Powers, allowing players and GMs to create their own powers using the nine Modes as guidelines.

ABOUT SCHOOLS & MODES

A School is a particular Psi tradition. Members of the same School derive their powers from the same source, and tend to observe similar rituals and practices.

All Psi-aware characters restricted to a single School. A Psi-aware Terran (Mentalist School) would not be able to learn a new alien Psi School later in the game.

A Mode is essentially an effect, such as Attack, Influence or Sensory. Modes are used as a basis for creating original Psi powers, if the player or GM so desires.



USING PSI POWERS

1. Stating Intent

Decide what kind of Psi Power you want to use, based on the Modes your character knows; if your character doesn't know the Mode, you can't use the power of that type. Keep in mind your character's School, how its members use their Psi abilities, and whether or not they use rituals of any sort.

Once you've done this you can describe the type of Psi Power the character is using and its intended effect. Is the power attacking something nearby? Is she waving her arms and chanting? The important thing is to state your Intent clearly, so the GM and other players can picture your action in the scene.

2. Choosing Power Level

Each time a Psi Power is used, the player must decide how much mental energy his character will invest in it. In game terms, the quantity of energy behind a Psi Power is known as its Power Level. Psi Power users can usually cast a Psi Power at any level desired. However, the higher the Power level, the more difficult the Psi Power is to cast, and the greater the chance of a magical Mishap.

3. Determining Bonuses and Penalties

After the player has described the Psi Power and the desired effect, the GM must determine if any bonus or penalty will be applied. This is done before the player rolls to cast the Psi Power.

Use the character's modified Skill Rating in the chosen Mode as the primary modifier. Then apply a penalty of -1 per level of the Psi Power that is to be used as the Degree of Difficulty. Compare the two figures to get the modifier that will be applied to the player's Omni Table roll.

Sheshesh the Dalubian has a skill rating of +7 in the Move mode and wants to use his Psi to use the Levitate Psi Power (a Kinetic mode Psi Power) at Level 6. His final Omni Table modifier is +1 ($7 - 6 = 1$).

4. The Psi Power Roll

To determine whether the Psi Power is successful or not the player rolls a d20 on the Omni Table, applying the GM's modifier to the die result.



5. Judging the Result

After the player rolls, the GM interprets the Omni Table result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding of the action, and other factors, as follows:

- ◆ **Mishap:** the Psi Power fails, resulting in potentially disastrous consequences (brain damage, etc.)
- ◆ **Failure:** the Psi Power fails.
- ◆ **Partial Success:** the Psi Power has half the intended effect, range, duration, or potency (GM's ruling based on the type of Psi Power used).
- ◆ **Success:** the Psi Power works as intended.
- ◆ **Critical Success:** the Psi Power is cast as efficiently and effortlessly as possible. This Psi Power does not contribute to the Psi user's Mental Fatigue Penalty for the day.

PSI MISHAPS

A mishap when using psionic Psi Powers can be catastrophic to the character and could lead to one or more of the following effects:

- ◆ No noticeable effect (50% chance of side-effect occurring later)
- ◆ Psi Power rebounds upon Psi user
- ◆ Psi Power strikes unintended target (random direction)
- ◆ Reverse Psi Power effect (rebounds upon Psi user)
- ◆ Reverse Psi Power effect (random direction)
- ◆ Psionic backlash. Psi user takes a permanent -1 penalty to INT.
- ◆ Severe psionic backlash. Psi user takes a permanent -1 penalty to INT and CHA.
- ◆ Psionic backlash. Psi user loses all ability to use psionics (character has Psi attribute reduced to -5)
- ◆ Brain fry. Psionicist loses all ability to use psionics (character may never use Psi again in the future)
- ◆ Brain fry. Player is reduced to -3 INT and -2 CHA and loses all psionic abilities.

THE MENTAL FATIGUE PENALTY

Using Psi Powers is mentally exhausting. Each time a Psi Power used, the character incurs a cumulative penalty of -1 on further mind-power die rolls for that day, with one exception: Psi Powers that result in a Critical Success do not contribute to this penalty. A minimum of eight

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hours of rest is required to recover normal Psi abilities. “Rest” includes sleep, meditation, or any other form of relaxation.

Sheshesh wants to use his “Mental Dart” {Psi power He has already used three Psi Powers in the last few hours, so Sheshesh suffers a -3 Mental Fatigue Penalty (in addition to any other Omni Table modifiers). After the Psi Power is used, Sheshesh’s player notes on his character sheet that his new Mental Fatigue Penalty is -4. The next time he uses a Psi Power, he will take an additional -4 penalty to his Omni Table roll.

PSI POWER CREATION

Before game play begins, players of psionic characters have a bit more work than other players. The TTA game uses a flexible Psi system and as such, players are free to create their own unique Psi Powers for their characters. Before game play, players of Psi users receive 5+INT Psi Powers available for use. They must use the rules presented in this chapter to create the Psi Powers that their characters know or may choose from the sample Psi Powers given. These Psi Powers may be of any Mode in which the character currently has ranks and must follow the rules associated with the character’s particular School. These Psi Powers or Psi Powers now become the core of the character’s repertoire.

ACQUIRING NEW PSI POWERS & PSI POWERS

Players may expend XP to learn new Psi Powers. A number of weeks equal to the power level is required for study after which the player must spend 1 XP times the power level in XP. Once this has been done, he or she may add the new Psi Power to their repertoire.





MODES

Every Psi Power employed, in the TTA game has one primary effect, or Mode. This idea holds true regardless of the outward form the Psi Power takes. Does the Psi Power heal injury? Does it move objects? Once you know the Psi Power primary effect, you know its Mode, and how it works in the game. The following is a list of the six Modes and their primary effects. Each is described in detail later in this chapter.

- ◆ Attack
- ◆ Illusion
- ◆ Manipulate
- ◆ Influence
- ◆ Kinetic
- ◆ Sensory

Like all other skills, though, Modes are improved as per the rules in *Chapter Three - Skills*. When a character learns a new Mode, they are actually learning many different concepts and theories of how to manipulate their Psi ability in the particular function of the Mode in question.

Psi users never refer to Modes by name. Instead they discuss specific Psi Powers and their effects, such as telepathy or ESP.

MODES

ATTACK

The Mode of Attack is a literal unleashing of destructive Psi energy to harm or destroy another being or object. Once used, Attack Psi Powers have an instant duration and their Hit Point damage rates are equal to the level of the Psi Power being used (e.g. a level 4 Attack Psi Power inflicts 4 Hit Points of damage).

Most Attack effects are ranged attacks and are subject to the modifiers and adjustments based on the range and position of the intended target (*see Ranged Attacks in Chapter One*). In this case however, ranged Attack Psi Powers may be not be dodged.

Sample Use of the Attack Mode

"I create a powerful sense of agony in his mind, hoping the pain will render him unconscious long enough for me to make my escape."

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INFLUENCE

Psi Powers that affect and manipulate a being's thoughts and emotions fall within the sphere of the Influence Mode. The subject of an Influence effect will obey a single command from the Psi user, such as "*Halt where you are*", "*Sleep*" and "*Tell me your name*". The command is sent telepathically into the subject's mind, and need not be spoken aloud unless the Psi user so desires. The subject will attempt to carry out the instruction to the best of its ability until the duration of the Psi Power elapses.

No subject can be ordered to accomplish an instruction that contradicts its basic nature or abilities; for example, a Terran cannot be commanded to fly. Dangerous actions, such as attacking an enemy, can be commanded and obeyed, but blatantly harmful or suicidal actions will suffer penalties (at GM's discretion). This includes instructions to attack a being many times more powerful than the subject: commanding an unarmed civilian to attack an armored patrol might warrant a -10 penalty, while an experienced soldier would do so at only -1.

The target of an Influence effect can resist being controlled by making a WIL roll. For every 2 power levels, the target takes a -1 penalty to WIL.

Additionally, a Psi user may alter a target's scores in any mental- or social-type skill or attribute. For example, a Psi Power that would see the target become forgetful or scared might have the same effect of lowering the target's INT or WIL ratings.

The subject of an Influence effect recalls the events that occurred while under the Psi Power's control. If the Psi user attains a Critical Success on the Psi Power roll, the target will believe the actions undertaken were his own idea and not suspect the influence of Psi, no matter how strange or uncharacteristic the deeds were.

SAMPLE USES OF THE INFLUENCE MODE

"I psychically weaken his desire to search everywhere in the room, hoping I can convince him not to check the crate where the bloodstained knife is hidden."



KINETIC

This is the Mode for any Psi Power effects that move, levitate or manipulate objects and beings without the Psi user physically touching the target. Levitation, telekinetic movement and all similar effects made possible by the Kinetic Mode require the Psi user's full attention and concentration to maintain. It is not possible to use other Psi Powers while levitating upward or while manipulating a target, though it is possible to leave the item or being suspended motionless in the air without canceling the Psi Power while the Psi user turns his or her attentions to creating another effect.

A Kinetic Psi Power at level 1 can affect up to 100 pounds (STR +0), and allows the Psi Power user to control the target range up to 50 feet. For each 3 levels of the Psi Power (starting at level 3) the effect gains a +1 STR rating, and adds 50 pounds to the total weight allowance. Objects or creatures manipulated with this Mode travel at a default SPD of -4 (10 feet per round) and can be moved anywhere within the Psi Power's effective range. The target of the effect can be affected by an increase in SPD, with each -1 penalty on the casting roll equating to a +1 in SPD.

The STR rating of any Kinetic effect must be divided between holding and lifting the target. For example, the Psi user may wish to prevent a foe from fleeing his presence. A level 9 Psi Power would allow the Psi user to hold his opponent with a STR rating of +3. If the Psi characters also wished to levitate the target off the ground, he would have to add 6 more power levels for a lifting STR of +2 (enough to lift 150 pounds).

Grappling attacks such as throwing and choking foes are also covered by the Kinetic Mode. In these cases, the Psi user cannot hold the target in place or restrain them in any way.

Distant manipulations are certainly possible, such as pulling a lever from across the room or slamming and bolting a door from several dozen feet away. These actions use the same rules for STR rating as lifting or otherwise manipulating targets, and can also be used to wield a weapon or employ a physical ability such as juggling or writing. In this case, the Psi user's Skills or Attributes are used to determine the success or failure of the manipulation (for example, a Psi user using a Kinetic effect to unlock a door must make a lock-picking roll after the Psi Power is cast).

SAMPLE USES OF THE KINETIC MODE

"I use my mind to increase the pull of the Earth's gravity on a small area around the FLEA agents, essentially holding them in place."

Roleplaying Game



MANIPULATE

The Manipulate Mode covers all effects that alter the physical forms of objects and beings. The level of the Psi Power required depends on the changes that the Psi user wishes to wreak upon the target.

This mode is primarily used to psychically heal or cause wounds or to increase the Psi user's own natural attributes as follows:

Healing/Harming: 1 HP recovered/reduced per power level. Can also cure or cause disease by healing/inflicting 1 disease level per power level. Heal/Harm effects only affect living beings, and the standard Manipulate rules for duration are waived. All Heal and Harm effects have a Range of Touch. The range can be increased at the rate of 2 power levels per 10 foot range increase.

Increased/Decreased Skill Rating: +1/-1 in skill rating per power level.

Increased/Decreased Attribute: +1/-1 in Attribute per 3 power levels. (PER is changed using the Sensory Mode instead)

Alter Protection Rating: The PR of the Psi users skin can be enhanced +1 per 3 power levels.

SAMPLE USES OF THE MANIPULATE MODE

"I touch the alien soldier and concentrate upon the mental vision of his arm erupting into vicious boils and blisters."



SENSORY

The Sense Mode is used to divine the location of specific people, objects and creatures. For purposes of Opposed actions, a Sensory effect's rating is equal to its power level. For example, a level 4 Psi Power used to detect the lies of a spy with a Deception skill of +6 would be subject to a difficulty of -2 (4-6 = -2).

Perhaps the most useful Sensory effect is clairvoyance - the ability to see into other locations via psionic vision. The range of a clairvoyant Psi Power is limited to one mile per power level. Only the five standard senses are effective within a clairvoyant Psi Power.

SAMPLE USES OF THE SENSORY MODE

"I meditate to detect the number of sentient minds within the nearby area, to determine how many enemies we'll face once we leave the room."

REVERSE: OBSCURE

The reverse of the Sensory Mode is Obscure, and it conceals objects, beings and locations from both psionic and mundane detection. For example, an individual location can be concealed against Sensory Psi Powers, a lie can be masked with Psi to make it more believable, or their Psi Powers can be confused. Use the Obscure Psi Power as the difficulty modifier against any attempts to divine what is being hidden. Obscure effects cannot be deployed to make anything truly invisible, rather they make them go unnoticed.



Roleplaying Game

A SAMPLE PSI SCHOOL



MENTALISM

Psonian Psi Powers come from sentient minds and Mentalists are those who study and practice these esoteric mental arts. Mentalists view themselves as scientists unlocking the hidden secrets of the human mind. Often studying psionics from childhood, most Mentalists receive their training in special government or corporate run training centers established specifically to tap the unseen powers that Mentalists possess.

Mentalists effect Psi Powers through the direct manipulation of their mental energy. There are no special incantations or rituals required no mantras, no prayers, just concentration.

Because their mental abilities are rarely understood by laymen, Mentalists are often persecuted for their mental powers and in some games may even be outlawed and hunted.

PHYSICAL COMPONENTS

Mentalism requires very little in the way of physical components. A mentalist does need to concentrate to properly use the powers of their mind however (see Limitations).

ADVANTAGES

Mentalism uses Psi Powers instead of spells and therefore has entirely invisible effects. It produces no images or sounds and cannot be detected by normal means.

LIMITATIONS

Concentration is required to use any mentalist Psi Power. Distractions make it much harder for the Mentalist to gain the proper composure required to focus their mental abilities.

Normal distractions like crowds and the hustle and bustle of city can easily be filtered out by a trained Mentalist. Focus can even be maintained in a rain or snow storm thanks to their rigid training but strenuous or dangerous situations that threaten the Mentalist are much harder to push down.

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In situations of combat involving the Mentalist or in situations of extreme danger (earthquake, hurricane, burning building, etc.) a successful Concentration skill roll, using the level of distraction as the Degree of Difficulty is required. A Mishap could cause the Mentalist to become unconscious or may cause a -5 penalty to all further Psi Power use until the Mentalist is able to rest or meditate. A Failure indicates the automatic failure of any attempt to use a Psi Power for 2 rounds. On a partial success, the Mentalist suffers a -5 penalty to any Omni Table rolls used for mental powers in that round.

The outward manifestation of any Mentalist Psi Power is always mental. No physical manifestations or effects are possible. Therefore, while Mentalists have access to things like the Attack mode, all such attacks affect the targets mind and brain and not his body. Mentalists may be able to use the Manifest mode to heal by tapping into hidden areas of the brain that will allow it to focus antibodies and similar biological functions on healing. The one exception is the Kinetic mode. This mode will obviously always have a physical effect but at the same time mastering Kinetics is difficult for most Mentalists (who are most comfortable dealing with matters of the mind).

MODES

Not available: None

Bonuses: Influence +3, Sensory +3

Penalties: Kinetic -5

Manipulate Effects: A mystic can manipulate only their own mental qualities.

SAMPLE MENTALISM PSI POWERS

Clairvoyance (Sensory)

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1 mile

Casting Modifiers: -5 (Level 5)

Description: By means of this Psi Power the Mentalist stretches out his or her consciousness and is able to see events transpiring up to one mile away. While the Psi Power is titled clairvoyance, it also covers clairaudience as the Mentalist has both sight and auditory capability using this Psi Power. The degree of difficulty of this Psi Power may be modified by the familiarity the Mentalist has with the area to be viewed. A known place, like the Mentalist's home or office may be at +0 while an unknown industrial complex or deep into an unfamiliar wilderness area may suffer a -5 to -10 penalty.

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Precognition (Sensory)

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1 mile

Casting Modifiers: -6 (Level 1, -5 duration)

Description: Mentalists with this Psi Power are able to expand their conscious into the future to a limited degree. By concentrating on a particular item or person, the Mentalist may see up to 6 hours into the future. The Precognition is generally a vague sense of what is to come (PER +0) but by increasing the level the Mentalist may also be able to increase the clarity of the vision (+1 PER per spell level).

Telekinesis (Kinetic)

Duration: 5 rounds

Range: 50 feet

Casting Modifiers: -11 (-6 SPD, -5 Order penalty)

Description: This is one of the more difficult disciplines that Mentalists study as it focuses more on the external world than the mind. Through this Psi Power Mentalists are able to affect physical object through the power of their minds. A single object up to 50 pounds in weight (STR +0) may be moved at a rate of 20 feet per round (SPD -2) by means of this Psi Power.

Receptive Telepathy (Sensory)

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 50 feet

Casting Modifiers: -7 (Level 10, +3 Order bonus)

Description: This Psi Power is sometime know as ESP or mind reading. With it the Mentalist can reach into the mind of another sentient being and “read” his or her thoughts. Any Receptive Telepathy attempt is opposed by the target’s WIL.

Psychic Shock (Manipulate)

Duration: Instant

Damage: 10 HP

Range: Touch

Casting Modifiers: -10 (Level 10)

Description: By grasping a victim and focusing his mind upon the target, the Mentalist is able to invade the mind of the target and inject a deep sensation of pain causing actual damage to appear on the target’s body as the mind overpowers the body. This Psi Power is not commonly taught in Mentalist schools but is taught to many special psi-operatives employed by various corporations and government agencies.

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Mindprobe (Sensory)

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 50 feet

Casting Modifiers: -variable (12th level, -difficulty of probe, +3 due to Order modifier for this mode)

Description: By concentrating, the Mentalist can use this discipline to reach into the mind of another and read surface thoughts, re-live memories, or even bring to light hidden knowledge and blocked memories. The target may resist with a WIL check at -12, though individuals who have been trained to keep secrets may receive a bonus to the resistance check. For example, a spy may add their Deception skill level. The level of knowledge sought determines difficulty of the probe as follows:

- Surface thoughts -0
- Recent memories -3
- Old memories -6
- Forgotten memories -9
- Suppressed memories
- Subliminal observations -12

Psychic Jamming (Sensory-Obscure)

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 50 feet

Casting Modifiers: -11 (Level 10, -4 duration, +3 Order bonus)

Description: By sending out waves of psychic “static”, the Mentalist may effectively block incoming attempts to use other Sensory mode Psi Powers. All attempts by other Psionic characters to use Sensory Psi Powers in the range of the Psychic Jamming must be opposed by the level of this Psi Power.



SKILLS & QUIRKS

SKILL BENCHMARKS

Like Attributes, Skills are more than a collection of numbers to be manipulated and optimized. Skills are the most fundamental way of describing a character - even more so than Attributes. “Stealth +5” is not just a number to be used with the Omni Table. It’s an aspect of the character, and it tells a lot without ever rolling dice or assessing modifiers.

The Skill Benchmarks section below is provided to help players and GMs better understand how their character’s skill ratings correspond to more familiar levels of ability.

For example, a character with a +10 skill can be expected to know most things a professional in that field would know, have contacts with other professionals in the field, and be up-to-date on the latest developments and theories.

Skill Rating	Description
0	Novice
3	Apprentice
5	Competent
7	Adept
10	Professional
15	Expert
20	Master
30	Grandmaster
40	Legendary



SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

ACROBATICS

Ability to perform most types of acrobatic maneuvers, including tight-rope walking, tumbling, leaping, vaulting, and break-falling (falling up to 20 feet without taking damage). Group actions include pyramids and flinging other acrobats (or non-acrobats) into the air. This skill can also be used when attempting contortionist feats like wriggling free from ropes.

Training period: 24 weeks

Modifier: DEX

ADMINISTRATION

The knowledge and ability to maintain and run an orderly organization, be that a small electronics shop, the supply chain of an expeditionary force or a multinational corporation.

Training period: 8 weeks

Modifier: INT

ANIMAL HANDLING

Ability to capture, tame, train, and/or breed domestic animals or wild beasts. Taming takes one week per every three Ability Levels of the creature; training to perform a single task on command, such as carrying a rider, attacking, or guarding, requires an additional four weeks, or longer if the beast is particularly fierce or stubborn in nature. The Intelligence of a beast typically determines the limits as to how much a creature can learn.

Training period: 5 weeks

Modifier: WIL

APPRAISE

You can appraise common objects with a partial success or greater. Appraising a rare or unfamiliar item requires a full success or higher. If the check is successful, you estimate the value correctly; a failure means you are unable to even venture a guess at the item's value or you err and value the item at 50% to 150% of its actual value.

Training period: 10 weeks

Modifier: INT

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ARTILLERIST

Proficiency in the use of large heavy weapons such as mortars, howitzers and other artillery. Includes the abilities to target, fire, and load the weapon, and to accurately judge distances.

Training period: 10 weeks

Modifier: RC

ASTROGATION (NEW SKILL)

Astrogation is a new skill introduced in the TTA RPG. It covers the skills and knowledge required to navigate in the vast emptiness of space. This process normally requires advanced calculations and a thorough knowledge of astronomy and space sciences. Like the Navigate skill (which is only useful while on a planet), Astrogation is used by a character to find his or her way while in space without directions or other specific guidance.

Training period: 26 weeks

Modifier: INT

BALANCE

You are adept at walking on slippery, uneven or otherwise precarious surfaces. A partial success lets you move at half your SPD along the surface with a check required once per round on any dangerous surface. A failure means you are unable to move for 1 round. A mishap means you slip and fall. The difficulty varies with the type and the condition of surface.

Training period: 4 weeks.

Modifier: DEX

BRAWLING

Proficiency in an unsophisticated form of hand-to-hand combat. Brawling is typically used for Close Attacks and Grappling, although characters can also use it to employ make-shift weapons, such as broken bottles or furniture, or to use such “dirty tricks” such as eye-gouging and biting. The Damage Rating and Omni Table penalty for such weapons and tactics is usually between -3 and -5. Individuals can also use Brawling to attack with natural weaponry.

Training period: 4 weeks.

Modifier: CR





CLIMB

Basic ability to climb rocks, walls, trees, ladders, ropes, etc. The availability of hand-holds, the condition of the surface or object being scaled and similar factors can all contribute to the Degree of Difficulty for this skill (GM's ruling).

Training period: 4 weeks

Modifier: DEX

COMMAND

Ability to organize, coordinate, and direct groups of trained combatants. Individuals with this skill can personally command up to 10 combatants or one lower-level sub-commander per level of ability. Each sub-commander can in turn direct 10 combatants or one subordinate per level, thereby establishing a hierarchy of command.

Training period: 20 weeks.

Attribute **Modifier:** CHA

COMPUTERS (SPECIFIC)

In the TTA universe, the Computer skill is not only used to access data from computers but also to operate systems and devices that are controlled by computers such as the various computer systems found aboard spacecraft and stations. This skill is used whenever a character needs to use or obtain data from a computer or write or modify computer code or to bypass computer controlled devices or operate onboard computer systems of a spacecraft or space station. Each sub-skill covers a major type of computer system such as personal and portable computers and mainframe computers, or individual starship systems. Computers (ship systems) cover the use of most major onboard computer systems like communications, life support, sensors, etc. All weapons and defense systems are governed by the Computers (tactical) sub-skill.

Training Period: 24 weeks

Modifier: INT

CONCENTRATION

This skill is used whenever a character is performing an action and is disturbed in some way. Whenever a character is attempting an action that requires his full attention and is distracted or otherwise interrupted, a Concentration check is required. This normally involves a skill that requires careful attention, like adjusting ship sensors or sharpshooting. Examples of situations that require Concentration checks would be attempting to use a skill while under attack, in the midst of a bustling crowd, and so on.

Training Period: 8 weeks.

Modifier: WIL

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CONTORTION

Contortionists are able to bend in twist into a variety of strange and unusual positions. They may be able to dislocate joints or otherwise contort their bodies to escape all sorts of bonds, or fit into otherwise impossible spaces.

Training period: 20 weeks

Modifier: DEX

COOK

The ability to prepare food in such a way as to ensure that it will be edible and reasonably tasty. A failure or partial success creates an edible, if unappetizing meal, while a full success creates a meal that is quite palatable. A critical success will be spoken of for weeks as a meal that was fit for a king. A critical failure will be unfit for even a character's dog to eat. There are various sub-skills including Alphan, Proximan and various types of terran cuisine.

Training period: 4 weeks

Modifier: PER

CRYPTOGRAPHY

The ability to decipher cryptograms, codes, and secret or dead languages, and to write in code. Each text that a cryptographer attempts to decipher is given a difficulty rating, usually equal to the encoder's level of cryptography. Decoding a text requires one hour per level of the text's difficulty. The Degree of Difficulty will take into account the language or code and whether it is intricate, exotic, or very old writing.

Training period: 32 weeks

Modifier: INT

DECEPTION

The ability to deceive other individuals without arousing their suspicion and to win their trust by deceitful means. Includes the use of various scams, rigged games, and the like. Also includes the ability to disguise one's background, profession, and so forth. A Deception check is usually opposed by the target's Deduce Motive check.

Training period: 10 weeks

Modifier: CHA

DEDUCE MOTIVE

This skill is used to sense whether someone is being truthful, bluffing or to notice hidden meaning and innuendo in a conversation. A suc-





Successful check lets you avoid being bluffed (see the Deception skill). You can also use this skill to determine when something odd is going on or to assess someone's trustworthiness.

Training period: 8 weeks

Modifier: PER

DEFENSIVE MARTIAL ARTS

Proficiency in one of many arts of weaponless, defensive combat. The basic principle of this art is passive resistance—in effect turning an opponent's offensive energy back upon him and avoiding harm by dodging or eluding attacks. Defensive Martial Arts cannot be used offensively. Successful use of Defensive Martial Arts allows the stylist to avoid an attack while disarming, throwing, or grappling the attacker. Defensive Martial Arts skill rating may be substituted for STR while in grappling combat. Defensive Martial Arts always inflicts Subdual Damage, rather than normal, lethal damage.

Training period: 30 weeks

Attribute **Modifier:** DEX

DEMOLITIONS

Setting a simple explosive to blow up at a certain spot doesn't require much skill, but connecting and setting a detonator does. The Demolitions skill is used by a character to place an explosive for maximum effect against a structure or to disarm an explosive device. A Failure result when using this skill can be extremely dangerous to a character and anyone nearby.

Training Period: 16 weeks

Modifier: DEX

DIPLOMACY

Knowledge of the finer points of protocol, oratory, and negotiation. Individuals with this talent may seek positions as ambassadors, mercantile representatives, public officials, and so forth. The Diplomacy skill is used to change the attitudes of others including negotiations of all types. Debates and arguments are resolved using opposed Diplomacy check. Changing another's attitude using Diplomacy takes at least one minute to accomplish (usually longer).

Training period: 16 weeks

Modifier: CHA

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DISABLE MECHANISM

The ability to foil locks, traps, vehicles, electronic systems and other simple or complex mechanisms, typically with the use of some type of tools. Characters may spend more than one round attempting to open a particular lock or otherwise disable a device; for each additional minute (specified in advance), add a +1 modifier (up to a maximum of +10). On the subject of lock picking (likely the most common use of this skill), characters can attempt to open a lock that they have previously failed to open, with a -5 modifier for each previous failed attempt. This skill may also be used to design and install lock mechanisms, traps, secret doors or passage ways, etc. although the Handicraft (artificer) skill is required to construct such mechanisms.

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: DEX

DISGUISE

This skill is used by characters who wish to change their appearance in some manner, usually involving some form of costume and possibly makeup and prosthetic devices. Your Omni Table roll determines how good the disguise is, and it is opposed by others' PER check results. If you don't draw any attention to yourself, others do not get to make PER checks. If you come to the attention of people who are suspicious (such as a guard who is watching corporate employees walking through the main doors), the Disguise check is immediately opposed. You get only one Disguise check per use of the skill, even if several people are making PER checks against it. The Disguise check is made secretly, so that you can't be sure how good the result is.

Training period: 4 weeks

Modifier: CHA

DRIVE

The Drive skill covers the ability to operate a single type of land or simple waterborne conveyance, such as a cart, coach, automobile, motorcycle, sailboat, yacht and so forth. This ability does not include navigation skills or other detailed knowledge, which is covered under Lore (Geography) or Navigate. The skill is divided into 3 generic sub-skills. Drive (civilian) covers all civilian ground vehicles such as motorcycles, ground cars, and hovercraft. Drive (military) covers ground military vehicles such as APCs, battle tanks, etc. The Drive (watercraft) sub-skill is used to operate all types of watercraft.

Training period: 4 weeks

Modifier: DEX



ENGINEERING (SPECIFIC)

While the Handicraft skill is used for creating fairly simple devices like armor, weapons, furniture and works of art, the various Engineering skills are used to create more advanced or complicated devices. Engineers are able to design and oversee construction of complicated construction projects. Engineers are able to draft and appraise plans and schematics for such projects, determine the suitability of proposed construction sites, and spot potential structural weaknesses and strong points. Like Handicraft, Engineering is a compound skill with each sub-skill treated separately.

Electronic: The used in designing and creating electronic systems of various complexities. These systems could run from basic lighting, to audio systems, computers, alarm systems and even advanced starship systems.

Training period: 26 weeks

Modifier: INT

Mechanical: This skill allows the character to design and build mechanical devices and systems from simple pumps and locks to automobiles and spacecraft.

Training period: 16 weeks

Modifier: INT

Nuclear: This skill allows the character to design, build, repair and safely operate nuclear power sources from small spacecraft propulsion systems to massive fusion power generator.

Training period: 52 weeks

Modifier: INT

Robotics: Anytime a MekTek or robot comes into play, from activation and deactivation, altering its functions or missions, identifying a MekTek visually to repairing and modifying, the Engineering (robotics) skill is used

Training period: 44 weeks

Structural: This skill allows a character to build wooden, concrete, or metal structures from scratch, including walls, houses, bridges, and so forth. When building a structure from scratch, the character describes the kind of structure he or she wants to construct; then the Gamemaster decides if the structure is simple, moderate, complex, or advanced in scope and difficulty. This skill encompasses both technical knowledge like architecture as well

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as the ability to physically build this type of object.

Training period: 26 weeks

Modifier: INT

ETIQUETTE

Knowledge of proper protocol and custom for specific situations within a given culture. Characters may use their Etiquette skill rather than their CHA rating when rolling for reaction from those of similar cultures. Etiquette is normally only used in gentle society and it is up to the GM to determine the appropriate penalties to the Degree of Difficulty when attempting to use it in foreign cultures. Etiquette is also species-specific and is a “must” skill for all aspiring diplomats, off-world businesspeople, and anyone else who wishes to spend time on another world without contributing to the myth of “uglo-human”, “uglo-alphan” or “uglo-proximan”.

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: CHA

EVADE

Evade is the ability to avoid being struck by an attack, such as a blow from a hand-held weapon, an arrow, bullet or a magical bolt.

Training period: 6 weeks

Modifier: CR

FIRST AID

Skill in the arts of basic medicine and first aid. Characters with this skill are able to identify and utilize common remedies, provide aid and comfort to sick and wounded individuals, and serve as midwives. A successful Heal check will restore up to 4 HP (2 with Partial Success) to a character if performed shortly after the damage is received. More thorough restoration of lost Hit Points and curing of diseases requires the use of the Medicine skill. Diagnosis, treatment, drug dosages, methods of surgery, and other medical issues will vary widely even for the near-human races like Alphans and Proximans. For truly alien species, the player might find his or her skill next to useless. The GM must determine how “close” the species are in this case and assign penalties accordingly.

Training period: 8 weeks (per species)

Modifier: INT





FORGERY

Ability to duplicate written documents, seals, signatures, and so forth. Also includes the ability to create counterfeit replicas of currency, cut stones, or other valuables, which are practically indistinguishable from the genuine articles.

Training period: 6 weeks.

Modifier: INT

GAMBLING

Familiarity with any of a variety of games involving skill and chance, including the ability to detect or engage in illicit methods of determining the outcome of such contests (cheating).

Training period: 4 weeks.

Modifier: INT

HANDICRAFT

Like Lore, Perform, Survival and Science skills, Handicraft is actually comprised of a number of sub-skills. These sub-skills are all tracked separately so you could have several Handicraft skills each at different ranks. The various Handicraft skills are used whenever you need or want to create an item. The Degree of Difficulty depends on the item to be created. If you succeed with a Critical Success, you have created a masterpiece. This exceptional item is then worth from 150% to 300% its normal value and/or it will convey a bonus to anyone using it (usually +1 to +5 for weapons, armor or tools) The Handicraft skill is also used to repair items. A partial success is required to repair a broken item. A few examples of Handicraft sub-skills are included below and GM's are encouraged to create new ones as needed in their campaigns:

Artificer: Skill in the making of useful and decorative wares and items from crystal, stone, wood, bone, clay, silver, gold, copper, brass, steel, iron, gemstones, fine fabrics, needlework, glass, and ceramics. The artificer may learn how to work with one type of material per +5 ability in this skill. Artificers can identify their own and their competitors' handiwork, and appraise, as the Appraise skill, any item that they can produce.

Modifier: DEX

Artisan: Skilled builders and craftsmen specializing in one or more of the following: carpentry, masonry, plumbing etc. The artisan may learn how to build one type of device per +5 ability in this skill.

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Modifier: DEX

Brewer/Vintner: Skill at brewing, distilling, or concocting one type of alcoholic or non-alcoholic beverage.

Modifier: INT

Gunsmith: Skill in the fashioning of personal of firearms. This includes such weapons as pistols, rifles and shotguns as well as more primitive firearms such as the muskets, flintlock and blunderbuss.

Modifier: INT

Fine Arts: Skill and natural talent of creating works of arts. These could include paintings, sculpture, drawings, modern art, photography, writing, etc.

Modifier: DEX

Weaponsmith: Skill in the fashioning of quality weapons using metal. This includes such weapons as swords, axes and flails.

Modifier: STR

Training period on all Handicraft skills is 8 weeks.

Note: *The Handicraft skill is generally used whenever a character wishes to build or construct relatively simple items. More complex items (like internal combustion engines and electronic items require the relevant Engineering skill. Other items, like chemical compounds, explosives and the like may be created using Alchemy or the relevant Science skill.*

INTIMIDATE

You are adept at using words, whether clever rhetoric or harsh insults, to demoralize and berate others into acting in a manner you choose. You can change another's behavior with a successful check, with the Omni Table result determining the degree to which you succeed.

Training period: 5 weeks.

Modifier: CHA

INVESTIGATE

Proficiency in the time-honored art of acquiring information. The Investigate skill is used in place of PER for rolls to listen in on conversations, gather rumors and innuendo and otherwise quietly acquire information about a specific topic. A Partial Success will get you general information about a person, place or commonly known news and trivia. A full or critical success is required for more detailed information. The detail of the information sought, how common the knowledge is and

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whether having this information is dangerous will all affect the Degree of Difficulty.

Training period: 8 weeks.

Modifier: CHA

LITERACY

A player may fluently read and write any one language that they speak for every +5 ranks in Literacy. A character who is fluent or better in a particular written language (see Speak Language skill) will generally have little difficulty reading any but the most in-depth tomes on a particular topic.

Training Time: 30 weeks

Modifier: INT

LORE

Like Handicraft, Lore actually comprises a number of sub-skills. Lore skills cover academic knowledge and information on a specific topic.

There are a myriad of potential Lore skills, some examples follow:

Agriculture: planting, producing and harvesting various crops and livestock.

City: customs and important figures and places in a given city or space station.

Folklore: myths, folk beliefs, and legends.

Geography: cartography, physical geography.

History: conflicts, historic figures, major battles.

Law: laws and customs of at least one land.

Mining: mining techniques, metallurgy, gemcraft, etc.

Nature: flora and fauna, weather patterns, seasonal cycles, etc.

Planet: Like Local but an overview of a single planet or moon.

Star System: Like Local but an overview of an entire star system.

Streetwise: Street and urban culture, local underworld personalities and events.

Tactics: Tactical and strategic theories of warfare.

General knowledge in a particular sub-skill requires only a partial success in most cases. More obscure knowledge could require a better Omni Table result. GM's are encouraged to create their own Lore skills as required by their campaigns.

Training period: 8 weeks.

Modifier: INT

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MEDICINE

The skill needed to properly treat the ill and injured. While the First Aid skill covers basic first aid, those with the Medicine skill may effectively diagnose and treat more severe injuries and diseases and may even perform surgery when required and when the proper facilities and equipment are available. The proper use of the Medicine skill will restore up to 12 hit points to wounded characters providing the physician has sufficient equipment, medicines and time. A full Medicine skill check requires 12 hours of time. Diagnosis, treatment, drug dosages, methods of surgery, and other medical issues will vary widely even for the near-human races like Alphans and Proximans. For truly alien species, the player might find his or her skill next to useless. The GM must determine how “close” the species are in this case and assign penalties accordingly. The GM must also roleplay the patient (if conscious), who may decide not to be treated by an unqualified doctor.

Training period: 40 weeks (per species)

Modifier: INT

MODE

The various Mode skills will only come into play if the Gamemaster opts to include Psionics in their campaign. By default, there are no Psionic characters amongst the Terrans, Alphan or Proximans but these types of characters could easily be added by using the Mentalism School. (see *Psi* in Chapter 2: Rules)

NAVIGATE

The Navigate skill is used by a character to find his or her way to a distant location without directions or other specific guidance. Generally, a character does not need to make a check to find a local street or other common urban site, or to follow an accurate map. However, the character might make a check to wind his or her way through a dense forest, a labyrinth of underground caverns, the service ducts of a starship or the sewers of New York.

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: PER

OFFENSIVE MARTIAL ARTS

Proficiency in one of the many styles of weaponless combat. Basic moves include punches, snap kicks, double leaping-kick (employed versus two opponents at close range, with no penalty for two attacks), head-butts, throws, and various disabling blows. Offensive Martial Arts



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emphasizes offense and attack at the expense of defense, achieving lethal results. A n Offensive Martial Arts stylist inflicts a Damage Rating of 4 while unarmed (+STR). Targets struck with a successful Offensive Martial Arts attack must make a CON roll (minus the attacker's STR) or be stunned for 3 rounds. Stunned characters act with a -3 penalty to all skill rolls. While utilizing Offensive Martial Arts, characters receive a +2 modifier to all attacks; however, they receive a -2 modifier to all defensive maneuvers.

Training period: 45 weeks.

Attribute **Modifier:** CR

PERFORM

You can impress audiences with your talent and skill. Like Handicraft and Lore, Perform is actually comprised of several sub-skills. The various sub-skills are: dance (DEX), musicianship (guitar, harp, flute, bagpipes, etc.) (DEX), juggling (DEX), acting (acting, mime, etc.) (CHA), oratory (CHA) and singing (CHA).

Training period: 8 to 52 weeks

Modifier: DEX or CHA (see above)

PILOT (SPECIFIC)

Ability to operate an aircraft or spacecraft of some type. This ability does not include navigation skills or other detailed knowledge, which may covered under a Lore skill, Navigate or Astrogation. The subdivisions of the Pilot skill include: atmospheric aircraft, helicopters, small spacecraft (1-2 crew), medium spacecraft (4-12 crew) and capital ships.

Training period: 50 weeks

Modifier: DEX

PROFESSION (SPECIFIC)

This skill covers a variety of sub-skills much like the Handicraft, Lore or Perform skills. A Profession skill reflect a character's ability to perform the various tasks required of a particular profession. Characters with a Profession skill may earn a set amount of wealth per game month not spent adventuring. This amount is determined by the Gamemaster and is dependent on a number of setting specific factors. Example professions include: laborer, miner, clerk, lawyer, salesman, teacher, bureaucrat, etc.

Training period: 52 weeks

Modifier: Variable (GM's discretion)

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RESEARCH

The ability to search for specific information in a systematic, efficient manner. This skill can be invaluable for any student, scholar or scientist. A mishap on a Research check might indicate the researcher locates incorrect or flawed information, skewing their report or the results of any further research into that subject. A partial success could mean the researcher is on the right track and with additional time spent on research, should find the information they seek. The time required to do research depends on the available resources.

Training period: 2 weeks

Modifier: PER

RIDE

Ability to ride one type of steed, such as a horse or camel.

Training period: 2 weeks

Modifier: DEX.

SCIENCE (SPECIFIC)

Knowledge of one or more of the physical sciences. Like Handicraft and Lore, the Science skill consists of a number of sub-skills. These include: astronomy, biology, botany, chemistry, geology, mathematics, metallurgy, physics, zoology, etc. The prefix “xeno-“ can be added to most of the available science skills; the regular skill applies to your home world, while the xenoscience is used off-world. Note that some sciences are the same everywhere you go; there is no “xenophysics” or “xenomathematics”. In these cases, it is merely a matter of learning a new language / symbol set. Each xenoscience skill gives the PC general knowledge of off-world ideas and applications. Players, much like real scientists, may also choose a specialty within their xenoscience; this represents the subject they studied for their thesis and / or field work. Examples for human PCs might include: xenoarchaeologist, specializing in early Alpha; xenobiologist, specializing in Proximan microbiology.

Training period: 50 weeks

Modifier: INT

SOCIAL SCIENCE (SPECIFIC)

Knowledge of one or more of the social sciences. Like Handicraft and Knowledge, the Social Science skill consists of a number of sub-skills. These include: anthropology, criminology, economics, sociology, psychology, etc.

Training period: 40 weeks

Modifier: INT





SEARCH

The practiced and studied use of Perception, Search is used when carefully looking for traps, secret doors and other details that may be hidden or concealed. You generally must be within 10 feet of the object or surface to be searched.

Training period: 8 weeks.

Modifier: PER

SEDUCTION

Ability to influence by charm, suggestion and sex appeal. This skill can be used in place of Deception or Etiquette in certain situations.

Training period: 16 weeks.

Modifier: CHA

SLEIGHT OF HAND

Ability to perform various tricks and legerdemain, including card tricks, palming (concealing small objects in the hand), passing or switching small objects without being detected, ventriloquism, picking pockets and so on. Individuals with this talent can employ it to cheat or “fix” games of chance or to detect cheaters. Knowledge of the game to fix is required.

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: DEX

SPEAK LANGUAGE

The ability to understand and be understood in a certain language. Characters are rated in their proficiency with a language on a three-tiered scale, as follows: Native, Fluent, or Basic. A speaker who is at least +10 (Native) on this scale can pass himself off as a native. Sample languages include: Yanqaholl (Proximan), Standard Alphan, High Alphan, English, French, Spanish, Chinese, German, Thai, etc.

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: INT

Skill Rating Language Proficiency

+0 to +3 Basic

+4 to +9 Fluent

+10 or greater Native

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STEALTH

The ability to move silently, hide in shadows, and otherwise avoid detection. Normally Stealth is opposed by a character's PER roll. Note that using this skill in an unfamiliar environment may entail a penalty of -1 to -10, based on the Degree Difficulty involved (GM's ruling).

Training period: 12 weeks

Modifier: DEX.

SURVIVAL (SPECIFIC)

Ability to forage for food and water, navigate, and find or construct suitable shelter in the wilds. Also includes knowledge of the flora and fauna of a given region, including techniques for hunting, capturing, and using their remains. Each different terrain is a different Survival skill. The different sub-skills include: savannah, forest, jungle, desert, arctic, swamp, alpine, aquatic and urban. GM's are encouraged to add any other terrain types they deem required as new planets and moons are explored..

Training period: 30 weeks.

Modifier: CON

SWIM

Staying afloat and getting from place to place in the water. Characters can attempt lifesaving techniques using this skill, with negative modifiers dependent on conditions in the water, size and weight of the victim, and so forth. Note that while encumbered or wearing any type of armor or even heavy clothing, a character will suffer severe penalties to their Swim skill.

Training period: 4 weeks.

Modifier: STR

THEOLOGY (SPECIFIC)

The in-depth study of one particular religion or philosophy. Knowledge of Theology includes the ability to recite passages of important texts or orations, explain critical teachings, describe underlying symbolism, identify relevant relics, cite historical examples, and so forth. Theology has several sub-skills, each tracked separately. There are sub-skills for each different religion found throughout known space. These sub-skills include: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Kek (Alphan), Boun (Alphan), Iwēgeq (Proximan), etc.

Training Period: 22 weeks

Modifier: INT





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TORTURE

Ability to acquire information by unsubtle, usually physical methods. Failure can result in accidental death of individual being tortured. This skill is normally opposed by a character's WIL.

Training period: 6 weeks

Modifier: DEX



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TRACKING

Ability to read and follow tracks and traces left by creatures or beings. A tracker can identify and estimate the age of such tracks and often determine under what conditions (flight, exhaustion, heavy encumbrance, etc.) they were made. The surrounding terrain and the age and overall condition of the traces affect the Degree of Difficulty for this skill. This skill may only be used in a natural environment. It is normally impossible to use this skill to track someone in an urban-like environment.

Training period: 10 weeks

Modifier: PER

WEAPON

Proficiency with any single category of weapon. Melee weapon skills are used for both attack and defense. Ranged weapon skills can only be used for Attack. Gamemasters are free to create new or unique weapon groups as required by their campaigns. For example, unique and exotic weapons may be weapon groups unto themselves.

Training Period: 20 weeks for the first weapon and 4 weeks for additional weapons.

Modifier: CR

Weapon Group	Example Weapons
Archaic Ranged	bows, crossbows
Blades, large	rapier, saber, katana
Blades, small	dagger, knife
Flails	whip, chain
Hafted	axes, club, picks, baseball bat
Heavy Weapons	OPA-19 Particle Accelerator
Pistols	LAS-R, 9mm pistol, AL-1
Rifles	TACMIL, 10 mm rifle
Thrown	knives, rocks, grenades
Vehicle Weapons	any weapon mounted on a vehicle*

* Does not include Spacecraft Weapons (these use the Computers (tactical skill)).



QUIRKS

Quirks are personality traits, physical characteristics or other eccentricities of fate that differentiate characters of similar backgrounds, profession or station in society. Some Quirks are restricted to a single Race or Path (like Shell for Proximans) while others are open to all characters. Which Quirks a character is able to select is dependent upon their Race and Path selection

Many Quirks give the character situational bonuses or penalties while others allow the character to *bend* the rules of the game in some fashion.

ACQUIRING QUIRKS

Many races automatically receive one or more Quirks at character creation. These are Quirks that all members of the race possess like an Alphan's Vomit at Will or a Proximan's Fat Stores.

In addition to racial Quirks, each Path has a list of available Quirks. Players may opt to exchange some of their allotted skill ranks to acquire any of the these Quirk. (*see Character Generation*)

OPTIONAL RULE

Normally, Quirks are available only during character creation. However, at the GM's discretion, players may acquire new Quirks during game play through XP expenditure. A new Positive Quirk could require anywhere from 10 to 100 weeks in training (i.e. 10-100 XP), again at the discretion of the GM. Likewise, selecting a Negative Quirk could give the character a bonus of from 5 to 25 XP. Acquiring Quirks during gameplay should always be accompanied by a plausible reason and be supported by roleplay.

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POSITIVE QUIRKS

ACTING!

The character is an acting prodigy and can use their natural talents in the stage of everyday life. The character receives a +2 bonus to all Deception, Disguise and Perform (acting) Omni Table rolls.

ACUTE SENSE

One of the character's senses is sharper than usual. Add 2 points to PER when making rolls using that sense only.

AQUATIC COMBAT

This Quirk allows the character to fight while in or under water. Characters with the aquatic combat feat may use their Brawling skill without penalty while submerged in water.

ALCOHOL TOLERANCE

The character receives a +2 bonus to CON for the purposes of resisting the effects of alcohol.

AMBIDEXTROUS

The character can use either hand with equal proficiency and does not suffer a penalty for attempting anything with her off-hand. This does not mean she can fight with two weapons without penalty.

ANIMAL EMPATHY

The character receives a +2 bonus to CHA when making reaction rolls involving animals. This Quirk only affects those creatures with an INT between -11 and -6.

ATTRACTIVE

The character is a good-looking member of his race. They receive a +1 bonus to CHA when making a good first impression on those likely to find the character attractive, and a +1 bonus to any attempts to charm or seduce such individuals.

ATHLETIC

The character has always been interested in sports and excels in most athletic activities. They receive a +2 bonus on all Balance, Climb and Swim Omni Table rolls.

BENEFACTOR

A powerful individual or notable organization has taken an interest in the character's continued well-being for some reason, and the benefactor often provides the character with aid, be it the provision of information, equipment, rescue, or monetary funds. The character may not necessarily know who her benefactor is.

BURST FIRE

Through training or experience during the Proxima War, the character is better equipped to handle firearms in full automatic mode. They



may fire at up to two separate targets in one round using an automatic firearm without suffering the multiple action penalty. Both targets must be within 10 feet of each other and in the same general direction from the character.

CAMOUFLAGE

The most striking ability Alphans have is to change the color and patterning of their skin. Alphan skin constantly and naturally changes color and pattern depending on such factors as ambient color, emotional state, sexual arousal, the amount of sunlight striking the skin, general health, etc. All Alphans can also exercise some degree of control over their skin to create splotches, spots, ripples, swirls, or stripes in order to break up their outlines for camouflage purposes, or simply for aesthetic effect. The range of colors and patterns an Alphan can replicate or create depends largely on racial subtype, and to a lesser extent on personal heredity and practice. All Alphans, however, share the same mechanism for effecting change. The outermost layer of Alphan skin is a transparent, protective layer. The next layer contains red and yellow pigment clusters. The next layer is semi-refractive and adds blues to the mix. The innermost layer contains melanin and regulates how light or dark the top color appears. As a result, Alphans can generally replicate a wide variety of colors and hues. Central Alphans tend to have the widest range of possible colors and also boast the finest control over their patterning ability. They are best at making intricate outline-breaking patterns like bold, contrasting stripes and spots. Highland Alphans have a lesser range of hues that tend toward forest colors and softer, rougher patterning. Southern Alphans are mostly limited to earth tones and shades of gray (though they can turn almost entirely white or sky blue) and are best able to reproduce abstract, random, splotchy patterns, matching the rocky coastal terrain where they evolved. Usually, color changes can be achieved in a matter of a second or two. Patterns take a few more seconds, with time increasing as the complexity of the pattern increases. GMs must use careful judgment in cases where camouflage ability is being used as a means to escape detection. First, the Alphan PC must either be wearing an Alphan camo suit or be completely naked. Even then, it must be remembered that eyes, hair, and body outline will give them away in certain environments. Second, conditions such as ambient light, other cover, and alertness of the opponent must be considered. An Alphan “hiding” in plain sight on a brightly lit day from soldiers that are actively looking for him or her at a range of ten feet obviously has no shot. An Alphan adopting a zebra-like pattern crouching in tall grass with the enemy searching for them from a vehicle traveling at 50 km / hr will easily succeed. Even in cases where the GM determines the PC is

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likely to be discovered, they may be awarded some element of surprise, perhaps a free action, if they take pains to minimize their visibility, since the observers' eye might just skip over them at first...

Restrictions: Alphan characters only.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Be it during the Proxima War or through some experience in the mining industry, the character has received specialized training in the proper use of explosives. They receive a +2 bonus on all Demolitions Omni Table rolls. Additionally, they may re-roll (one time only) any Failure roll when using the Demolition skill. If a second Failure is rolled, they must live with the results (or not if the result is bad enough!)

COMMANDING VOICE

The character's voice is powerful and authoritative. The character receives a +1 bonus to CHA or Command when making vocal attempts to command or inspire others.

COMMENDATION

The character served with distinction in the Proxima War and was awarded a medal of honor for acts of bravery. If the character is human or Alphan, they receive a +3 bonus to REN when dealing with other Alphans or Terrans but take a -2 penalty to REN when dealing with PROximans. If the character is Proximan, they receive a +3 bonus to REN when dealing with other Proximans but a -2 penalty when dealing with Terrans or Alphans.

CYBER BOOST

Due to an injury suffered during the Proxima War, the character has been equipped with advanced cybernetic technologies. The character receives a +1 bonus to either STR, DEX or PER (player's choice) but suffers a -1 penalty to CHA due to your visible mechanical parts (cybernetic arm, leg or eye, etc.).

DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY

The character is employed or otherwise affiliated with an agency of their world's government. When confronted with an infraction of the law by authorities, they may invoke their diplomatic immunity to attempt to get out of trouble. An Omni Table roll is required which is modified by the character's Diplomacy skill and the degree of Difficulty which is at the GMs discretion and will vary according to the nature of the trouble (public intoxication might be no penalty while murder would be extreme (-10 or more)).

DISEASE IMMUNITY

The character is resistant to one specific disease, such as Influenza or Spinning Sickness. The character receives a +2 bonus to CON for all rolls to resist that disease.





EIDETIC MEMORY

The character has a near photographic memory. They receive a +6 bonus to INT rolls when attempting to recall something they have previously seen or heard.

ENGINEERING GENIUS

The character is a genius when it comes to machines and they can make them do things that most people didn't even realize was possible. The players should select a specific Engineering sub-skill. Their character receives a +4 bonus to all Omni Table rolls with this sub-skill. Additionally, the character can halve the normal time required to construct or repair items using this sub-skill.

FAME

The character has achieved a measure of fame. The majority of individuals are far more willing to aid, employ, trust, or associate with famous characters. Famous characters may find it difficult to avoid attention, favorable or otherwise. Famous characters receive a +2 increase to REN.

FAT STORES

As a result of evolving in conditions where food sources would wax and wane unexpectedly, Proximans have developed slow, efficient metabolisms and large fat stores that can be broken down to supply water and food in lean times. A well-fed Proximan female can survive up to fourteen days without water (assuming temperate conditions) and up to three standard months without food. For Potentials, reduce these figures by one third.

Restrictions: Proximan characters only

FEARLESS

Although not totally immune to fear, the character is very stout-hearted. Add a +2 bonus to WIL when resisting the effects of fear, magical or otherwise.

FLIGHT OVER FIGHT

Alphans are naturally skittish (as humans might have been had T-Rexes been chasing them around in ancient days). It's not that Alphans are cowardly in combat or under fire; their reactions are set to flight and overcoming such deeply-ingrained instincts is difficult. However, Alphan characters always gain initiative in surprise situations. If an opponent would normally be granted a free attack because of surprise, the Alphan character may only move, they may not attack or defend.

Restrictions: Alphan characters only

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FIRST CONTACT SPECIALIST

While still highly theoretical, first contact protocol has now undergone a couple of real-life tests and is quickly becoming a codified and respected science. The character has been specially trained to respond to first contact type situations and their knowledge covers a broad sampling of disciplines; anthropology, social sciences, symbology, linguistics, even a bit of yoga and martial arts (for posture and body positioning). A first contact specialist is trained at observing body language and sensory data and forming them into a quick gestalt... with the result that she can hopefully understand that alien baring its teeth and growling at them is doing so out of respect rather than hostility. Note that First Contact Specialist works only with sentient species; figuring out alien animal behavior is the province of the xenbiologist. . The character receives a +4 bonus to both Diplomacy and Deduce Motive skill rolls when dealing with a new sentient species.

FORMATION FIGHTING

The character is experienced in military tactics from service during the Proxima War. For each ally (who also possesses this Quirk) adjacent to you, opponents receive a -1 to hit you due to your overlapping defensive style. Example: If you have three allies (all possessing this Quirk) in formation with you, opponents have -3 to hit you.

GOOD BALANCE

The character has an excellent sense of balance. They receive a +1 bonus to DEX when making any roll to remain standing.

HEAVY WORLD EXPERIENCE

The character has spent a considerable amount of time on heavy worlds and has grown accustomed to heavy gravity. The character suffers only a -2 penalty on all physical Omni Table rolls when on heavy gravity worlds. *Heavy* is defined as gravity 20% greater than that found on the character's home world

HIGHBORN

The character is a member of an influential or powerful family or lineage, specific to a single area. She can command respect and wield influence when her standing is known. Being Highborn does not guarantee wealth; some Highborn families and individuals are actually poor. Highborn characters receive a +1 bonus on all reaction rolls.

LIGHT SLEEPER

The character awakens with even the slightest disturbance. The character receives a +2 bonus to PER when making rolls to see if she notices anything in her sleep, and awakens as a result.

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LIGHT WORLD EXPERIENCE

The character has spent a considerable amount of time on light gravity worlds and has grown accustomed to heavy gravity. The character suffers only a -2 penalty on all physical Omni Table rolls when on light gravity worlds. *Light* is defined as gravity 20% lower than that found on the character's home world

MEDICAL SPECIALIST

The character specialized in one specific area of medicine. The player should select one medical specialty (cardiology, neurology, virology, orthopedics, pediatrics, etc.). The character receives a +4 bonus to all Medicine and First Aid Omni Table rolls when they relate to that specialty.

MULTITASKING

The character is adept at doing two things at once with little difficulty and may use a non-combat related skill while engaged in combat in the same round without suffering a multiple action penalty.

NIMBLE FINGERS

The character has an exceptional manual dexterity and receives a +2 bonus to DEX as it pertains to manual manipulation of objects (such as electronics repair, picking pockets, or playing musical instruments.)

PET

The character has a loyal and devoted pet. This could be any type of common domestic animal native to the character's home planet.

PAIN TOLERANCE

The character can resist pain better than most. The character receives a +2 bonus to WIL when resisting pain and torture.

PATIENCE

In ancient days, and occasionally still in modern times, Proximans may have found themselves curled up in the mud under their shields, waiting out a solar flare for hours or even days. As a result, Proximans developed the ability to play inside their own minds. Unlike humans and Alphans who are subject to boredom when confronted with lack of stimulation, Proximans will use the time to relax, to turn over ideas and conundrums in their minds, and revisit their memories. As a result, Proximans are stable in conditions that would be stressful or mentally debilitating to the other species- marooned on an island, subjected to solitary confinement, exploring distant locations alone, awaiting rescue in a lifepod, etc. This also applies to group dynamics- a group of six Proximans marooned together are very unlikely to fight amongst them-

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selves, instead passing the time happily in conversation and using their combined wits to get them out of the situation.

Restrictions: Proximan characters only.

PITCH AND YAW

The character has superior reflexes and incredible reaction time when piloting small spacecraft or aircraft. The character may double their DEX as a modifier to all Pilot Omni Table rolls.

POISON IMMUNITY

The character has acquired limited immunity to a single toxin, such as serin toxin or rattlesnake venom. They receive a +2 bonus to CON for all rolls to resist that poison, and treat doses of that toxin as only being half as effective.

POLITICAL INFLUENCE

The character has friendly relations with someone with political power. This could be a TerraFed Senator, an Alphan official in the World Government Ring or other similar individual. Once per game month, they may call upon their connection to perform some type of favor. This could be used to acquire an otherwise restricted item, accelerate an application to travel, alleviate some legal troubles, etc.

QUICK REFLEXES

The character reacts to stimuli and unexpected situations far more quickly than usual. Add 1 to SPD when calculating reactions and Initiative.

REDLINE

The character knows how to push their vehicle to its shuddering, rivets-falling-out, groaning limits. They may push a vehicle to exceed its normal SPD limits by up to +10 (+3 for spacecraft). A Drive or Pilot Omni Table roll is required to maintain control of the vehicle for every round after the first that it is pushed. Each round after the fifth, this roll suffers a penalty of -1 per point of SPD in excess of the vehicle's normal maximum.

RICH

The character receives 1,000,000 credits. Only 250,000 of this wealth is in the form of a credstick, the remainder consisting of investments, property, a business venture or the like. The player should work with the GM to determine the exact source of wealth.

SENSUAL VOICE

The character has a sexy voice, affecting those attracted to the character's race and gender. They receive a +1 bonus to CHA on attempts to charm and seduce those who might be affected by the character's voice.



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SHARP TONGUE

The character has a quick mind and excellent understanding of their native language and may use witty repartee during combat to their advantage. The character may attempt to stun, shock or taunt an opponent during combat. Victims must make a successful WIL roll with the character's CHA score as a negative modifier or suffers a -2 penalty to all actions during the next round. This action does not count as a multiple action (talking is essentially a free action). For this Quirk to function, the victim of the Sharp Tongue must fully understand the native language of the sharp-tongued character.

SHELL

Originating as they do on a planet exposed to close-range solar flares and other natural sources of radiation, Proximans have developed amazing natural resistance to radiation. They can absorb doses from any angle that would quickly sicken and disable an alphan or human. In addition, a Proximan's back is covered with a thick set of articulated platelets called the shield. When exposed to intense radiation, a proximan will lie on her stomach, curl her limbs under, and scrunch up rather like a Terran armadillo. Curled up under their shields, Proximans can weather doses for days that would kill a member of the other two species. Proximan characters triple their CON rating when resisting the effects of radiation. When ensconced in their shells, Proximan characters receive an additional +10 on their resistance Omni Table roll.

Restrictions: Proximan characters only.

SINGLE MINDED

The character has the ability to ignore most distractions. Halve any penalties the character might suffer due to distractions.

SLIPPERY

The character is particularly talented at wriggling out of tight situations. The character may substitute DEX for STR when attempting to break a grappling hold.

STEALTHY

The character naturally moves noiselessly. Individuals receive a +5 bonus to their Stealth skill if perfectly still, or +3 if moving.

STRONG WILLED

The character has an unusual amount of mental toughness. They receive a +2 bonus to WIL when resisting mind-influencing Psi Powers.

STUNNING

The character is a stunningly attractive member of his race. They receive a +2 bonus to CHA when making a good first impression on those

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likely to find the character attractive, and add 2 to any attempts to charm or seduce such individuals. Note that what is considered attractive for one race or culture may be viewed entirely differently in another.

SWIFT

The character is exceptionally fast. The character receives a +1 bonus SPD when calculating how fast she can run, swim, or fly.

TERRAIN FAMILIARITY

The character is particularly adept at moving in one specific terrain type. The player should select one of the following terrain types: mountains, desert, forest, jungle, swamp, tundra. The character may travel in the relevant terrain at one category better than the actual conditions. That is, Very Rugged terrain become Rugged; Rugged terrain becomes Open and Open terrain becomes Road. This Quirk only functions while on foot or mounted on an appropriate mount for the terrain type.

THICK SKIN

The character's skin is especially tough and thick and provides a PR 1 protection against physical damage.

Restrictions: Proximan characters only.

TIRELESS

The character may exert himself for protracted periods. They receive a +1 bonus to CON when making an Action Table roll to resist fatigue or exhaustion.

TOUGH

The character is unusually resistant to damage. Increase HP by 20 percent (round up).

VOMIT AT WILL

Due to the method of feeding their infants, both male and female Alphans have complete control over their "gag reflex" and can void the contents of their stomachs at the drop of a hat, without having to induce vomiting through, say, a finger down the throat. While this might seem like an incidental (and unpleasant) bit of trivia, it can come in handy at times as a last-ditch defensive maneuver, a distraction, or even a close-in fighting tactic. Besides the obviously disgusting aspects of being attacked thus, getting hit in the eyes with gouts of stomach acid is exceptionally painful and potentially disabling. Effective range is one meter or less.

Restrictions: Alphan characters only

WEALTHY

The character receives 5,000,000 gold lumens. Only 750,000 of this wealth is in the form of a credstick, the remainder consisting of investments, property, business ventures or the like. The player should work with the GM to determine the exact source of wealth. As the existence of



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wealthy characters *could* destabilize a game, this Quirk should be considered optional and used only at the GM's discretion.

WINDFALL

The character receives 5000 credits; 1000 in the form of a credstick with the remainder as equipment or other property.

XENO-FLEXIBLE

The character is intrigued by other sentient races and attempts to understand them at all times. They take no penalty to reaction rolls when dealing with other sentient races.

ZERO-G TRAINING

The character has undergone specialized training to work in zero-g environments. They suffer no penalties when operating in zero-g environments.

NEGATIVE QUIRKS

ADDICTION

The character is addicted to some form of drug. Once per day the character must succeed on a WIL roll with a -3 penalty to resist their addiction. Failure results in a -1 cumulative penalty to DEX, STR, WIL and CHA until such time as the character indulges or overcomes their addiction.

ALBINO

The character has a complete lack of pigmentation, making bright light uncomfortable (subtract 1 from all their visual PER rolls under such light conditions).

ALCOHOL INTOLERANCE

The character gets drunk relatively easily. The character receives a -2 penalty to CON rolls to resist the effects of alcohol.

ALL THUMBS

The character has poor coordination. The character receives a -1 penalty DEX for purposes of manual tasks, such as picking pockets, engineering, or playing an instrument.

ANIMAL ANTIPATHY

The character receives a -2 penalty to CHA when determining how well animals react to him. This Benefit only affects those creatures with an INT between -11 and -6.

ANOSMIA

The character has no sense of smell or taste whatsoever.

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BLIND

The character cannot see at all. All actions involving vision are performed as if in total darkness (-10 action penalty). PER rolls involving vision are impossible, as is ranged combat.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The character has a detailed and extensive code which dominates her behavior. The player must work with the GM to outline her character's particular code in detail and then adhere to it. Breaking the code for any but the most extreme of reasons means that the character receives no experience points for role playing that session.

COMPULSION

The character has an overpowering drive to do or take something as often as possible. She must make a WIL roll to avoid following her drive when the opportunity arises.

DEAF

The character cannot hear anything and must rely on Sign, Lip Reading, writing/reading, or some other means of communication. The character automatically fails any hearing-based PER rolls.

DEEP SLEEPER

The character is all but oblivious to the world when she is asleep. The character receives a -2 penalty PER when she must make a roll to notice something while asleep.

DEPENDENT

An individual relies on the character to look after him, occupying a great deal of the character's time and effort. Any Dependent should be created in cooperation with the GM. "Normal" Alphans all have this quirk, as members of a Ring; "Solo" Alphans do not.

DERANGEMENT

The character is insane in some way. This insanity cannot be suppressed and must be role played, as it dominates the way the character thinks and acts. Those aware of the character's insanity will often be ill-at-ease around him.

DESTITUTE

The character has no starting wealth and begins play with a RES -5 (possibly modified by other Quirks and subsequent Path selections). In addition, most of her Equipment is of poor quality.

DRIVING GOAL

The character is obsessed with achieving a particular goal; everything else is a distraction at best. The goal should be far-reaching and extremely difficult, if not nigh-impossible.



EMOTIONAL DISPLAY

In Alphans, strong emotions—anger, fear, sadness, lust, and others—all produce a general set of skin color and pattern responses that vary slightly from individual to individual but are all exceptionally obvious. Other Alphans and those foreigners who know them quite well can also detect lesser emotional shifts. This obvious correlation between emotional state and visual representation served the alphans well back in ancient days as a form of nonverbal communication. However, in modern times, these signals often put alphans at a disadvantage. Alphan characters suffer a -4 penalty to oppose Deduce Motive Omni Table rolls.

ENEMY

An individual or organization is actively hostile to the character. Enemies should be created in cooperation with the GM and at his full discretion.

FEAR

The character is afflicted with a mild phobia. The character suffers a -1 penalty on all her actions when faced with the subject of her phobia. The focus of the fear must be something the character has a reasonable chance of encountering, such as heights or darkness.

FLASHBACKS

In moments of great stress, the character has a 1-in-20 chance of suffering flashbacks to some traumatic event of her past, lasting 1–10 rounds. A WIL roll may be made each round to escape the flashbacks. While experiencing flashbacks, the character is incapable of action.

FRAGILE

The character has a brittle and fragile physical structure, and takes double damage from attacks with blunt weapons.

FRAIL

The character is more susceptible to damage than most members of his race. Reduce HP by 20 percent (round up).

ILLITERATE

The character never learned to read and write.

INDEBTED

The character owes a powerful individual or organization something significant. The character begins play owing a contact 5000 credits.

INFAMY

The character has achieved a measure of infamy. The majority of individuals are far less willing to aid, employ, trust, or associate with infamous characters. Famous characters may find it difficult to avoid attention, favorable or otherwise. Infamous characters receive a -2 penalty

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on all reaction rolls with all but the seediest of contacts. (All “Solo” Alphans have this quirk.)

INSOMNIAC

The character has a hard time falling and staying asleep. The character requires and 10 full hours of sleep to recover from mental fatigue and to heal wounds (instead of the usual 8).

LIMP

The character’s locomotion is impaired. The character receives a -2 penalty to SPD when calculating rate of movement.

MUTE

The character is incapable of speech.

NIGHTMARES

The character suffers from night terrors whenever he sleeps. He cries out and struggles, disturbs others, often wakes feeling exhausted, and often tries to avoid sleep. The character regains only half their normal spellcasting ability and regains only half the normal number of Hit Points with 7 hours of sleep.

NOCTURNAL

The character’s is accustomed to activity at night. The character suffers a -1 penalty to PER when in daylight.

OBESE

The character is extremely overweight. Reduce SPD by 2 when calculating movement and halve her encumbrance limit. Finding new garments or armor that fits will be difficult and costly.

ONE EYE

The character only has the use of one eye. Subtract 1 from PER when making vision-based rolls. A GM may also consider that the character has a potential blind side.

OUTCAST

The character has been outcast from the place or group she called home, never to return on pain of death or imprisonment.

PHOBIA

The character is afraid of something, beyond any fear it might be expected to provoke. The character must make a WIL roll to even stay in the vicinity of whatever he is terrified of, let alone do anything nearby it, save panic. The focus of the phobia must be something the character has a reasonable chance of encountering, such as heights or darkness.

POOR

The character’s begins play with only 1/4 of their normal starting allowance in credits and the quality of their weapons and equipment is poor as well (-1 to DR or skill checks using equipment)



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POOR SENSE

One of the character's senses is less effective than usual. Subtract 1 from PER when making rolls using that sense only.

SPEECH IMPEDIMENT

The character has a pronounced stutter, lisp or stammer, when speaking and suffers a -1 penalty to reaction rolls when speaking is involved.

SUNBLIND

The character's eyes are extremely sensitive to bright light. The character suffers a -3 penalty to PER when in daylight.

THREATENING VOICE

The character's voice is unnerving. Individuals hearing the character talk will consider him eerie or threatening. Subtract 2 from the character's CHA for the purposes of vocal attempts to charm, impress, or seduce, but add 1 to his CHA for vocal attempts to intimidate.

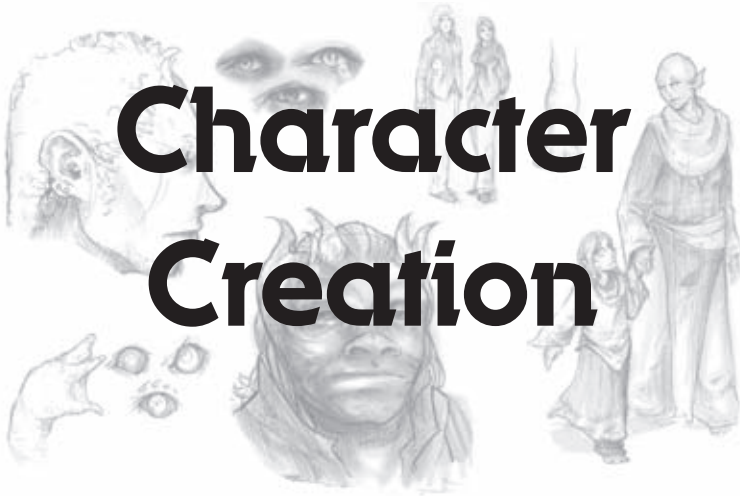
UGLY

The character is a decidedly repugnant member of her race. Subtract 2 from CHA for the purposes of rolls to charm, seduce, or determine initial reaction of individuals likely to find the character repellent.

UNATTRACTIVE

The character is less attractive than is normal for his race but is not truly ugly. Subtract 1 from CHA for the purposes of rolls to charm, seduce, or determine initial reaction of individuals likely to find the character unattractive.





Character Creation

The following outline provides a general overview of the procedure for character creation. More specific information can be found in the corresponding sections, as indicated (Paths, Skills, Quirks, etc.).

1. Select a Race

There are three playable races in the default TTA universe; Terrans, Alphans and Proximans. Players should familiarize themselves with the races available for play along with the *TTA Universe* section of this book before selecting the race they wish to play.

A player's choice of race will determine the character's general outlook on life. Additionally, each Race will have a list of base attribute ratings, default skill ranks and special abilities open to characters of the race. These serve to differentiate the races and cultures from each other. The skills gained from Race selection are always considered Preferred Skills (see *Paths for more information on Preferred Skills*).

Each race also has a list of possible Paths open to characters of that race. Players should record all of this information on their character sheet.



2. Modify Attributes

Players may now increase any Attribute by +2 total (i.e. +1 on two attributes or +2 to one attribute). They must also reduce other Attributes by the same amount (i.e. reduce two attributes by -1 or one attribute by -2).

3. Select a Path or Paths

Players should now review the section on *Paths*. During character creation, characters begin with a blank slate. After selecting your character's race, it is assumed they are just entering adulthood and thus begin with only rudimentary skills. By selecting different Paths open to the character's race, the character acquires new skills and quirks. How many Paths may be selected is determined by the type of campaign the GM wishes to run. Typically, two to three Path campaigns are about average. Single Path games can also be fun but players should be prepared to face tough obstacles as they are still quite young and inexperienced in the ways of the galaxy. For heroic or epic campaigns, GMs may permit 3, 4 or even more paths to starting characters. Such games can also prove fun but GMs will need to be careful to fill their campaigns with tough foes to properly challenge the characters.

Players should consult with the GM to determine how many Paths the player is allowed to select for his or her character.

Players should now record all relevant Path information on their character sheet such as skill ranks, special abilities, attribute bonuses or penalties, default Quirks, starting equipment, etc.

4. Determine Other Characteristics

Review the section on Attributes in Chapter One, and follow the guidelines to determine your character's Hit Points (HP), Movement, and Encumbrance ratings.

5. Personalize Your Character

Finally players should personalize their characters by giving them a name, background and interesting personality traits. Some helpful hints on creating interesting player characters can be found on the following pages.



ALPHANS

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Alphans are elegant and graceful beings, tall but slightly built, quick in reflexes and intelligence. In form and manner they bear a striking resemblance to humans, and in fact it has become clear that humans, Alphans, and Proximans all share common genetic roots.

Alphans exhibit sexual dimorphism, with functionally separate male and female sexes. However, the distinctions, both physical and social, between male and female Alphans are less pronounced than in humans. Male Alphans are not significantly taller or stronger than females, nor is either sex measurably more intelligent or intuitive. Also, Alphan society has far fewer gender distinctions in personal appearance, traditional roles, and career choices than Terran society, as will be discussed later.

When studying Alphan physiology, explored in detail below, it becomes obvious that they were built for quickness and stealth. Paleontologists, aided by some of the earliest Alphan historical records, have determined that Alpha III once had an extraordinary array of predatory megafauna, and hiding in plain sight or escaping quickly was a very necessary survival skill. This also gave rise to social adaptations, the most striking of which is the Ring arrangement of families, which is served by the Call (both described in detail below), theorized to be a method to ensure group cohesion while still allowing genes to circulate among the entire population. The megafauna, incidentally, no longer exist, as Alphans wiped out the last of the large predators on their planet around the time they began to settle in larger cities. Fossils and skeletons of these astounding predators exist in museums, and there are movements afoot to recreate these creatures from DNA samples.

A curious fact that has come to light is that Alphans bear only partial genetic and physiological resemblance to the other life forms on their planet. This fact was explained in various ways by Alphan scientists, but with the arrival of Terrans and the naked truth of their extremely close genetic and physiological resemblance to Alphans has thrown these theories into disarray. It is now believed that this dissimilarity supports the theory that Alphans, Proximans, and Terrans are subjects of a larger seeding experiment by unknown parties.

STRUCTURE AND SENSES

Male and female Alphans are nearly equal in height and build, the average specimen measuring in the range of 165 to 190 centimeters in height and 50 to 75 kilograms in weight. Alphans have lean, muscular bodies with long, graceful limbs. Though they might appear somewhat frail, Alphans are tough and wiry and are almost equal in strength to an equivalently-sized human male. Male and female Alphans tend to be equally broad in the shoulders and chest. Alphans have five long fingers on each hand, capable of great gripping power. Alphan feet are long and have large, strong toes. While five-toed like humans, the second and third / fourth and fifth toe pairs are partially fused together, creating, in effect, three large toes. One of the first things you will notice upon seeing an Alphan is that they usually stand on their toes, adding to their apparent height. Alphans can just as easily support their weight on the toes and balls of their feet as on their entire foot. This adaptation gives their strides more leverage and power, resulting in a long, loping gait and allowing them to be surprisingly swift runners. Only when completely relaxed in a comfortable situation will the Alphan “come down” and stand on their whole foot. In fact, doing so before a superior or a guest is a sign of disrespect. One of the signs that you’ve gained an Alphan’s trust and are on casual terms is if he or she relaxes thus in front of you.

Alphan facial features are striking and are seen by most Terrans as highly desirable. They are fine-boned and delicate (females generally more so than males), with narrow faces, high cheekbones, pointed chins, and large, deeply-set, thickly-lashed eyes with large, vertically-slitted pupils. The Alphan nose is small and either pointed or pug-shaped. Head shape is slightly elongated front to back and the top of the skull comes up into a low, bony ridge. Ears are large and vary greatly in shape from individual to individual and region to region, from open, fanlike structures to closed-tipped, leaf-like shapes. Alphan ears are under full muscular control and can be independently moved to best gather sound, or pulled in to rest flat against the head.

Alphans have no body hair, and the males grow no facial hair. Head hair is coarse to fine in texture and tends to be light in color. All Alphans, male and female, begin to lose this head hair sometime in late middle age, leaving them completely bald during their later years. Alphans joke that this is due to the fact that the brain, crammed full of knowledge from a long life, expands and pushes the hair out by the roots. There seems to be no gender-based distinction in hairstyle, with both males and females

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wearing their hair long, short, braided, shorn, or tied back as their personal taste dictates.

Alphans are quick of reflex and display excellent balance and fine motor control. They are naturally stealthy in their movements and have the ability to remain perfectly still for long periods of time... a skill that has won them many rounds of what Terrans call the “staring contest”.

Alphan skin tone varies widely, depending on the climate and relative sun strength of the continent of origin, which is further discussed below. However, the most striking thing is that this is only a “base color”, as Alphans have chameleon-like abilities. Alphans can vary the size of the pigment cells in their skin, changing hues and even producing stripes, speckles, and other abstract patterns that match predominant surrounding colors and patterns. Besides camouflage, Alphans also may change color depending on the amount of sunlight falling on them (for temperature regulation), their mood, or other factors. The overdeveloped skin cells give Alphan skin a slightly pebbly texture and a slight but noticeable moiré pattern. While the ability can be brought under conscious control in order to produce specific colors and patterns, shifting occurs constantly depending on environmental conditions and emotional states. For example, a frightened Alphan tends to automatically change to match his or her surroundings, while an upset or angry individual will display individually unique patterns, making it easy to read their emotions.

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Alphans have very keen eyesight, with especially acute distance vision and a slightly wider coverage arc in front (190 degrees) than humans. They also have excellent night vision. Hearing is also more sensitive, with an extended range in the high end of the spectrum. The sense of smell is not as developed as in humans. Alphans also do not have much scent themselves. They exude no pheromones, and there is a substance in their sweat that is very effective at inhibiting bacterial growth, negating most body odor.



This was another adaptation to counter the keen noses of the primary predators on Alpha I. Alphan taste buds are also not as sensitive as the other races, which may explain why Alphan cooking is often described by Terran visitors as overpowering... the level of spice and salt needed to evoke a particular effect in an Alphan can absolutely floor an unsuspecting Terran gourmet. This also comes into play with Alphan dishes like kout, a bottom-feeding river animal... challengingly pungent to Alphans, the stench of cooked kout can induce vomiting in the average Terran at twenty-five paces.

Alphans are omnivorous, with a noticeably higher percentage of protein than in the Terran diet. Alphans love meat, but can get their protein through a wide variety of plant forms as well. Vegetarianism is unknown among them and they regard the concept as incredibly bizarre.

Alphans, due to their light builds, are somewhat delicate. They suffer greatly under heavier gravity conditions, for example. While they have great endurance, their bodies cannot absorb very much punishment. An Alphan can be mortally wounded by

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an accident or injury that would merely sideline a human for a few days. On the other hand, Alphans seem to be less susceptible to infection and diseases, as well as having some immunity to naturally-occurring toxins.

REPRODUCTION, AND LIFE CYCLE

Alphans have notable secondary sex characteristics that are nonetheless somewhat less obvious than in humans. Female Alphans have wider pelvises than males and slightly flared hips shaped by subcutaneous fat deposits, but they are not nearly as pronounced as on humans. Females also have a small pair of what might first be assumed to be mammary glands that vary in size and shape by individual... but these are actually vestigial structures that no longer function for milk production, for Alphan females do not nurse their young (see below). Instead, they are small stores of fat, which along with the hip deposits are reserves in case of lean times. They also function as a sexual signaling tool (see below).

Male Alphans have a penis that is nearly identical in appearance and function to humans, but do not have the dangling (and vulnerable) human-like scrotum; the testes are housed almost entirely inside the body cavity, with only the suggestion of a bump showing their location. Even though average Alphan body temperature is 39 degrees Celsius- two degrees higher than in humans- this does not seem to affect sperm production. Female genitalia, with slight variations, are essentially



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identical in form and function to humans. While Alphans have no pubic hair, individuals exhibit a distinct darkening (or lightening, in the case of dark-skinned individuals) of the skin and intensification of the moiré pattern in the area around the genitals, forming an inverted triangle with the tip ending at the navel. This pattern, a visual rather than scent-based sexual signaling tool, appears at puberty (around age 15 for both sexes) and fades with age as the Alphan becomes infertile. It darkens or lightens further during sexual arousal, along with areas of the arms (fading from wrist to elbow), legs (ankles to knees), upper chest (neck to mid-chest), eyes (around the sockets, giving an aroused Alphan a “raccoon mask” look) and, on females, the breasts (radiating outward from the vestigial nipples).

The Alphan gestation period is only six Terran months long. At birth, Alphan babies are quite small, making for easy and uncomplicated natural births, as well as active pregnancies; most Alphan females do not stop working until the day they deliver. At birth, Alphan infants are somewhat less developed than humans, not opening their eyes for the first week. After the first few months, they are equivalent to human children of the same age. Alphan infants and toddlers are eerily quiet, never crying and rarely making noise, yet another evolutionary adaptation.

As mentioned before, Alphan women do not nurse their young. Alphan babies are cared for from day one by the elders, and nourished on food provided by them; in the first few months, the food must be partially digested and then regurgitated. Soon, the child can handle food that has merely been chewed. After the teeth grow in, the child can eat on its own.

In their later years, Alphans suffer little from the effects of aging. While they do slow down and become less agile, Alphans rarely suffer from debilitating conditions, such as joint deterioration, sensory disabilities, or cardiovascular problems. The only major change in their lifestyle is a complete loss of interest in sex, which occurs when fertility fades late in middle age. However, there is a price for this fitness: a phenomenon called “the crash”, which is the penultimate step to dying. When it is an Alphan’s time to go, he or she simply “stops”, entering a semi-comatose state that lingers for a few days before death occurs. The crash always happens without warning, without any predictable symptoms or indicators. While many Terrans envy this sort of easy death, preceded by an unimpaired old age, it can be quite traumatic as well; there is rarely a chance to say goodbye. While the Alphans have, of necessity, become philosophical about this, there are many moral fables dealing with the consequences of unresolved quarrels. Alphans live about as long as

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Terrans, 120 years on average.

ETHNIC GROUPS

As mentioned above, Alphans exhibit a range of individual skin, hair, and eye colors, as well as body features. Common combinations of these features have enabled researchers to identify three main ethnic groups within the Alphan population. Like all such attempts at defining ethnic or “racial” characteristics”, there are exceptions, sub-categories, and mixtures that ultimately thwart attempts to derive significance and lead to a merely interesting and minimally useful exercise in minutia.



Variable Alphan Skin Patterns

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Alphans from the lower latitudes of both hemispheres and equatorial regions comprise the largest group, representing 42% of the planetary population. Dubbed “Centrals”, they are natives of the vast central deserts, grasslands, and forested mountain foothills. This group has golden brown, bronze, or deep brown skin, extremely fine hair that ranges in hue from blonde to deep gold to reddish brown to sandy brown, and striking eyes of deep red, orange, amber, or yellow with deep blue or gray scleras. This group tends to be the tallest and most graceful of the Alphans and usually display pointed noses and larger, fan-shaped ears as well. Living as they had in a widely varying landscape of tall grasses, plains, plateaus, and even deserts, this group has the widest range of coloration and most adept innate pattern mimicking ability of the Alphan population, being able, for example, to replicate the color and texture of red-veined rock, create pattern-breaking stripes (much like the extinct Terran mammal known as the zebra), or turn as golden as a patch of open sand. This largest group was also the most heavily-hit in the war. The cradle of Alphan civilization, the equatorial region is home to most major Alphan cities and industrial centers, as well as spaceports (equatorial regions being, of course, prime launch areas, and Alphan equatorial regions being blessed with large, flat areas on which to site them).

“Upland” or “Highland” Alphans (Abbreviated as “Highs”) come from the middle and higher latitudes of the main continent and trend toward a dusky gray or golden brown skin coloration. Their hair is fine in texture and ranges in color from gray to blonde to dark blonde and even light brown. Iris color in this group ranges from dark gray to violet to deep red to dark orange, with light blue or gray scleras. This group tends to be the most robustly-built (by Alphan standards) and has comparatively shorter limbs. This group lives in areas that are predominantly higher elevation, hilly or mountainous with extensive forest, and have a wider range of camouflage coloration and pattern than their lighter-skinned cousins. This group comprises some 37% of the population. While culturally very similar to the Centrals, Highs are generally regarded as being more gregarious and openly emotional. Some Highs speak a dialect of standard Alphan, with dialectic features growing stronger the further from the central areas the population is. This dialect is not supported by most institutions, which has led to some amount of quarreling in academic and social circles. Most Highs can switch to standard Alphan with ease, though their accent is noticeable. There is an intense, but usually good-natured debate between the Highs and the Centrals about which group actually represents the “typical” Alphan. Highs and Centrals mix very freely in the cities, where group distinctions are slowly disappearing.

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Alphans from the isolated southern continent and coastal higher latitudes of the main continent, known as “Southerns”, tend to have light gray or yellowish-gray skin and coarse-textured, often wavy or curly hair that is very light in color, ranging from blonde to white to silver or bluish-silver. Iris color in these individuals tends to be dark blue, green, gray, or violet with light blue scleras. This group tends to be the shortest and lightest of the Alphan peoples, have notably smaller, leaf-shaped ears, and also tend to acquire the pug-shaped noses. This group is the least numerous of the three, comprising 21% of the planetary population. The predominant land type in this area is rocky and mountainous, with wind-scoured coasts. These individuals are best able to produce lighter shades and abstract, random, speckled patterns with their camouflage ability, matching the predominantly rocky and scrubby environment. This population is the least connected with the mainstream of Alphan society and was also the least affected by the war, as few large cities or important industrial centers are located in the latitudes they come from. This group of Alphans is also unique for retaining use of their own languages, speaking them among themselves in addition to their heavily accented and dialectic standard Alphan. Culturally the most dissimilar of the groups, proud of their distinctiveness and for the most part happy with their isolation, the Southerns are seen as exotic and perhaps a bit scary by the majority of Alphans.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

THE FAMILY STRUCTURE: RINGS AND CALLS

Any discussion of Alphan society must necessarily begin with an explanation of the family structure and marriage, which for Alphans is one and the same. It is the most striking thing about Alphan culture, and is often misunderstood, as there are no close analogs in Terran or Proximan society. An Alphan family is composed of a varying number of individuals and is referred to as a Ring (always capitalized to distinguish it from the social and work rings described later). Alphan Rings can number anywhere from two to fifty individuals, with the average number being around fifteen. However, these individuals are not necessarily related by blood. Joining or leaving an Alphan Ring is based not upon genetic ties or even overt desire, but relies on a mysterious process by which an individual becomes attuned to, or detuned from, a group. This process is known as the Call.

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Once Called into or away from a group, a bond is established between all of the members of the Ring, or broken and let go without remorse, as the case may be. Thus, the number of individuals in a Ring changes constantly as members join or move on. The length of time an individual stays within a Ring varies widely, from a month or two to an entire lifetime. The bonds formed by the Call process constitute a real and instantaneous emotional connection. An individual who was a stranger the day before might be truly and deeply beloved the next day, just as lifelong companions might find themselves mere acquaintances a week later... while attachments and friendships may remain between Alphans who were once Ring-mates, they are only that- friendships- and the new Ring always comes first.

It must be stressed that Rings are indeed true families, not merely a free living arrangement or commune structure, as some might suppose. To Terrans and Proximans, for whom the forming or breaking of love attachments is a long, slow process, the Alphan way is almost unfathomable, and in fact often inspires feelings of mistrust. Cynics have opined that the Alphans are loveless, that all of their attachments must be matters of lust or convenience, but careful studies have shown that this is nothing more than ethnocentric bias: Alphans feel love just as deeply as the other races. The speed at which it grows (or fades away) is simply much greater. There is plenty of easily observable evidence for this: While there are certainly periodic clashes and bitter arguments, like in any family, Rings are never broken because of them. The addition of a new member or the leaving of an old one rarely causes any long-term problems within a family group- if it does, then additional Calls eventually restore the equilibrium. Also, Alphans are just as fierce and selfless in defense of their Ring as any Terran or Proximan would be, whether they have been a member for one week or fifty years.

The Call starts at puberty, with the beginning of sexual maturity and exploration, and ceases when the Alphan loses fertility in late middle age. The cessation of the Call locks elder Alphans into their current Ring, where they take on their new role: child-rearing. The elders of the Ring spend most of their time with the children, feeding and cleaning them, comforting and talking to them, protecting and educating them. Children are very much a part of the community and are never excluded from public or private events. Alphan children can be found in restaurants, at theaters, and at other events where Terran children would not be allowed. While most elder Alphans retire from working as they enter their child-rearing years, some continue with their professional lives and

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take their children to work. There were more than a few delicate moments during the Proxima War, when Terran generals found themselves at top secret strategy meetings, sitting across from members of the Alphan war council, some with infants and toddlers in tow, peering out of backpacks or from laps at the brightly whirling tactical displays.

The family structure thus ensures support and meaning for the entire Ring: it allows Alphan children the stability of constant caregivers, since neither they nor the elders are ever Called out of the Ring. The elders have a useful function to perform, and the fact that they are the primary caregivers for the children ensures that their experiences and education are passed onto the younger generation. Even the crash has a purpose; it ensures that the elders have energy enough to care for the children until the very end of their lives. Meanwhile, the lack of parental responsibilities for the younger, sexually active Alphans allows them to freely work, play, and provide (as in ancient times it allowed them to hunt, gather, and defend the Ring) without being burdened with child care.

The exact method by which the Call occurs is not known, even to the Alphans. It is certainly instinctual and imbedded, rather than emotional in nature. The suggestion that it caused by a form of empathy or telepathy is usually brought up in different ways, though hard evidence is utterly lacking. Although the exact workings of the Call are debated, scientists and sociologists have discovered some general patterns.

Despite the recurrence of the theme in popular Alphan dramas, the Call that comes from continents (or even planets) away seems to be little more than a romantic myth. The Call is triggered by a face-to-face meeting with another Alphan, though rarely there might be a delay between meeting and Call of up to several hours.

Whether it is triggered during a meeting with an entire Ring or with only a single individual who subsequently brings the new family member home seems to make no difference in the strength of the bond thus formed. The individual being Called experiences the sensation in different ways. Some report an overt longing and giddiness, while others report a calm and sudden understanding. The Alphan who triggered the Call also experiences similar emotions. Once they realize what is happening, the individuals spend the next several minutes to several hours with one another, mostly in silence, letting the bond take root and flower. After this period, the Alphans are Ring-mates. The new Ring, if not yet introduced to the new member, can sense the “attunement” and may



spend similar amounts of time with the newcomer, forming their own bonds. The members of the previous Ring, on the other hand, can sense the “de-tuning” of their old family member. Depending on personal style and the amount and intimacy of previous interactions, friendships may be maintained between former Ring-mates, or the bond may be cleanly broken.

The average Alphan, in an approximately six decade span of fertility, gets “called” six to eight times. Rings tend to associate with other Rings in their area most often, and Ring-to-Ring friendships and associations thus result in the most Calls. For Alphan travelers, even those who travel



extensively, the chance of the Call occurring on a business or pleasure trip (among a group of relative strangers) is quite small. This helps to explain why there are still distinct “racial” patterns among Alphans, even though the Call does not distinguish between individual appearances or make allowances for personal preferences in appearance.

Worldwide communication, however, is indeed bringing more far-flung Rings into contact than ever before, as like-minded Rings outside of local areas find one another and travel greater distances to meet one another. Holidays on Alpha are increasingly seen as an opportunity to travel far and wide and interact with other Rings, gathering names and

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sharing experiences. These occasions may also result in the Call causing an exchange of a member or two, which is seen as a good omen for future relations. While friendships between neighboring Rings are the basis of town life, as the cost of pleasure trips to other continents and planets continues to fall, chance decrees that more and more mixing... and Calls... between distant groups will certainly occur.

While individual members come and go, successful Rings can last a long time. The Proxima War was devastating to some of Alpha's greatest Rings—since they tended to settle in the most populous cities, and these cities were the ones targeted in the first strike, many Rings ended that day, including one that had endured for just short of two thousand years.

While the ideal of Alphan society is the free mixing of individuals to freely create Rings, some Rings, especially those of high status, practice a form of social engineering in which they limit contacts between their members to members of other “desirable” Rings only, a practice looked upon with distaste by the majority of Alphans. It's also true that talents of a particular sort seem to accrete in Rings, since, for example, a Ring member who is an engineer will seek out friendships with other engineers, which may eventually result in a Call. Thus, over time, specific Rings will take on specific groupings of talent, which then tend to be sustained through association with like-minded Rings. Thus, many Alphan firms are actually little more than Rings that have hung out a shingle.

It must again be stressed that for the Alphan, “family” and “marriage” are amorphous concepts. Alphans have words that translate to “female Ring-mate” and “male Ring-mate”, but no words that convey the concepts of siblinghood, parenthood, husband, or wife. Other words, often translated erroneously as “aunt” and “uncle” actually apply strictly to elders from other, friendly Rings.

Sexual access in an Alphan family group is completely open. Individuals may decide to couple or abstain from each other, to participate as pairs or in one big group (or several, if Rings decide to meet for this purpose), but there is very rarely jealousy within the Ring. Individuals are also free to seek personal sexual experiences outside of the Ring, and often do so with great vigor. As a result, the paternity of children in an Alphan family is never known. To the Alphans, of course, this makes no difference, as a child born into a Ring is a member of the Ring. A bit of thought on this subject reveals the aspect of Alphan sexual relations

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that is most mortifying to Terrans: If members of a Ring include some of those born into the Ring, and if all members theoretically have sexual access to each other, then the obvious conclusion is that at times incestuous relationships must occur. This doesn't bother the Alphans a bit, as they have no analog in their language for the concept of incest. While the Westermarck Effect seems to have evolved in humans to encourage the seeking of mates outside of the family, it serves no purpose for Alphans; since the Call does the work of bringing together individuals from vastly different bloodlines, and since Alphans freely couple outside of their Rings, any genetic effects are minimized.

RINGSICKNESS

Alphans in a Ring have deep psychological and physiological dependence on their Ring-mates. Adult Alphans isolated from their Rings or totally alone eventually develop ringsickness, which manifests itself as depression, followed by physical wasting as lack of sleep and food intake takes its toll. Ringsick Alphans in contact with other Alphans either are often Called into new Rings, indicating a sort of defense mechanism. Ringsickness was avoided during the war as adult volunteers and conscripts were grouped together with no outside contact, forcing them to form new Rings which were then assigned to ships.

SOLOS

A minority of Alphans (one to three percent, depending on the data source) are unable to experience the Call and bond into Rings. These individuals are known as "solos" and in past times were discriminated against, exiled, or killed. Today, they are tolerated in society, but they are still often treated with mistrust and suspicion. Perhaps the biggest reason that solos face prejudice is that the concept of alone-ness is the most frightening thing the ordinary Alphan can conceive of. Even death is not as great a terror, because at least the Ring will live on.

Solos were found to be very useful to the Alphan military during the war, taking on the missions that ordinary Alphans could not (such as operating totally alone for extended periods of time). Crews of solos (often posing as Rings for PR purposes) have sometimes run surveying ships and worked on exploration teams. The Alphan ambassadors on Earth during the Proxima War, Eklihan and Chaazhosa, posed as a Ring with their staff, but after the war admitted that while their staff members were indeed a Ring, they were both solos. Their competence during hostilities did a lot to open dialogue about solos among the Alphan people.

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While Solos do not have the ties, responsibilities, and drawbacks associated with Rings, they also lack the support network that Rings create... not to mention still being met with prejudice in many Alphan circles.

CULTURAL STRUCTURES: RINGS WITHIN RINGS

Just as the Alphan family structure is a ring, so too are the other relationships- professional, spiritual, and leisure- that the Alphan counts on and contributes to in his or her everyday life. Alphan cultural structure is in fact best described as a series of overlapping rings. These other rings, called “social rings” to distinguish them from the (capitalized) family Ring, are purpose- or activity-based, such as work rings, civic group rings, philosophical / religious rings, rings composed of fellow enthusiasts of a profession or leisure activity, etc. Relationships within these social rings are built in the same way that Terran and Proximan friendships are: mutual interest, respect, and personal compatibility. The parallel existence of this more mundane form of attachment is another reason the other races find the Call so difficult to fathom, but for Alphans, of course, they are two separate and totally normal modes of relation.

Throughout the day, an Alphan may pass through several rings that he or she is a member of. Depending on the task at hand, the rings may overlap, stack up, or disperse. The rings may open to admit new members or allow old ones to move on. But there are always rings; even an Alphan in Solo mode will still have work rings, hobby rings, and social rings to succor them during the transition. Totally lone Alphans are unknown, outside of cases of severe mental illness, incredible tragedy, or legend. One of the most effective torments an Alphan can be subjected to (as the Proximans ably demonstrated with prisoners during the war) is to isolate him or her from their rings; not just physical distance, but communication and interaction as well... in short, solitary confinement. The Alphan is a social being to the core.

THE ALPHAN MIND

Alphans think of themselves as part of a collective. This is not to say that Alphans do not value the individual, but rather the focus of the individual should be on the group: the family, the community, and ultimately the race. This is illustrated by a common Alphan proverb, the nuances of which are somewhat difficult to convey in most Terran tongues: Selves must be selfless.

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It is often said by Terrans that *“There are no Alphans... just Alpha.”* This view, though highly accurate in many regards, does not reflect the whole truth. While the group is paramount, the individual is valued. In fact, Alphans will point out, the whole point of collective living is to ensure that each individual gets their due, and none is left out of the process. The average Alphan will indeed defer to group decisions and put the good of the group above their own self-interest... but in doing so, he or she recognizes that they make a contribution to the group, and are confident that their opinion is heard, considered, and valued. Those Terrans who figure Alphans to be collectivist pushovers with no will of their own have often found themselves on the losing end of vigorous debates or business deals, as Alphans are just as assertive as any sentient being. It is only their focus that is different. Indeed, most Alphan folklore and moral fables revolve around the individual sacrificing for their family, or a family sacrificing for their community. It is the group that is served, but it is the individual units who make the decisions to do so.

Alphans are a pragmatic people, in the sense that they seem to have little use for sentiment that does not have a specific purpose. Terran xeno-archaeologists, eager to begin surveys of ancient Alphan buildings, found to their dismay that there were very few old buildings of any kind on Alpha I. Rather than preserving historic edifices, the Alphans tear them down to recycle the building materials (not an unwise practice on a resource-poor planet). Alphans find the Terran custom of naming ships and referring to them as “she” to be nothing short of bizarre (all Alphan ships are merely assigned numbers to designate type and individual unit; famous designations like “Stingray” and “Starblade” are of Terran coinage).

Alphans feel little attachment to personal property; a visitor who is admiring of an art object or bauble in an Alphan household may find it presented as a gift. (Visitors to Alpha, especially those operating in an official capacity, are encouraged not to take advantage of this fact.) With all of the tales of Alphan pragmatism and anti-sentimentality in the media, many visitors come to the system expecting Alphans to be cold, logical, and lifeless, and are surprised to find them playful, friendly and energetic. This is because Alphan pragmatism doesn’t apply to personal relations... just the necessities of life. To put it simply, objects, numbers, and abstract concepts are not people and shouldn’t be treated as such. Just as the individual is best served when he or she puts the good of the group first in mind, so too are personal relations best served when the mind is uncluttered with attaching sentiment or value to merely functional objects or meaningless distinctions.

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Generally speaking, Alphans take great comfort in orderliness and regularity. Most are happier to cite group accomplishments than individual ones, gaining status as much as by being a good team member as what was actually accomplished. Nonconformity tends to make Alphans uncomfortable, and while individual quirks are tolerated, breaches of larger social norms will usually bring great amounts of social pressure against the offender. However, it must be noted that Alphan eccentrics might be the most eccentric of all; when they break from the established norm, it is often with gusto.

Alphans have a much looser sense of privacy than Terrans. Rooms in Alphan houses flow into one another and rarely have solid doors. Terran visitors may find themselves being casually visited in the bedroom or bath by Alphan friends not used to Terran privacy customs, and Alphans often report feelings of paranoia and depression when visiting Terra because of all of the closed doors and locks. “Alone time” is rarely desirable for Alphans and is usually regarded as a grueling necessity.

Alphans do not have the same concept of “age” as Terrans or Proximans, nor is any special status attached to chronological age. While birthdays are duly kept track of, to the Alphan there are really only three “ages”, referred to as phases: Pre-fertile (before puberty), Fertile (between puberty and cessation of fertility) and Post-fertile (the elder years). Each phase has its own set of responsibilities, but within them no one is “senior” to anyone else simply because of their chronological age. A twenty- and a forty year-old Alphan in the same Ring (or social ring) are both in the “Fertile” phase and are therefore regarded by Alphans to be the same age.

Individuals in Alphan society are generally judged on their accomplishments through life and their level of practical knowledge, no matter the number of years they have seen. Alphans have no compunctions about tossing aside the opinions of their seniors if they feel that their input is not useful or properly informed. This practice ensures that the best information and opinions are acted upon; the drawback is that experience-based “hunches” that arise from intuition rather than hard data are often discounted, sometimes to the detriment of all involved. Alphans as a whole are generally distrusting of intuition, and are amazed at the reverence paid to “gut feelings” in Terran literature.

Alphans are often described as haughty or as having superiority complexes about certain things, especially the subjective merits of their social

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structure, religion, and scientific achievements. Alphans sometimes find it hard to see (or accept) new ideas from outside sources. Even though pragmatism often eventually wins out, a change in ways is often slow to come. Alphans like to lecture and expound upon their societal glories to other races, and the audience often finds their tone to be condescending. This is partly due to a sincere (though often overplayed) Alphan desire to educate others and partly due to the fact that few Alphans have ventured off their planet (the dynamics and responsibilities of Rings make a lot of Alphans into homebodies) and their knowledge of conditions on other planets is often colored by exaggerated secondhand accounts and their own somewhat provincial media.

GENDER ROLES

Alphans, as noted in previous sections, have fewer physical distinctions between the sexes than Terrans do. The fact that both sexes are roughly the same size and strength may be the basis for the social equality that Alpha has had back into the early days of its recorded history. Males and females work the same sorts of jobs, take the same responsibility for child-rearing later in life, wear gender-neutral clothing and pursue similar part-time interests. The fact that pregnancy hardly slows Alphan females and that there are always the elder members of the Ring waiting to take care of the offspring has meant that Alphan females have never had a “separate sphere” as was (and in some instances still is) the case in Terran society. Alphans do, however, recognize the fact that biological differences exist, even as they hold the opposite sex as moral, legal, and intellectual equals. Alphans recognize these differences to honor their gender’s uniqueness and contribution to the continuation of the species, rather than to divide and determine what sorts of activities should or should not be performed by the respective sexes.

GOVERNMENT

The Alphans achieved world government very early in their history by Terran standards. Alphans had united themselves on a continental basis by the time they went through their industrial revolution, and as soon as a worldwide communication system was feasible, they organized into a world collective. The Southerners held out of the collective for about a century before recognizing the benefits of joining, and have been active and enthusiastic participants since then.



Alphan government is a representative democracy in form and socialist by common consensus. Each adult Alphan votes on issues which are then raised at the next governmental level by an appointed Ring or ring of governmental volunteers. Thus, local, district, continental, and world issues are brought forth by Rings or rings that represent increasingly larger constituencies. At the top is a ring representing twenty districts of the planet (in typical pragmatic Alphan fashion, it is referred to as "The ring of Twenty"), who are voted in or out by their constituencies based upon their perceived wisdom and performance. Issues with The ring of Twenty can be raised by other groups representing special interests, such as corporate, environmental, artistic, or aid groups. The Alphan government can be said to be a success due to its leaders being elevated not by power plays or greed but by consensus from the very base units of the society. On the other hand, Alphan government is excruciatingly slow and notoriously unresponsive to individual needs, either personal or Ring, as any missive or motion must make its way up (and back down) through the concentric rings of government. On Alpha, the wheels of change turn slowly, but the fact that the needs of the whole of Alpha are usually put before individual motions means that those changes are well-considered, civilized, and refined.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

Alphan corporation is actually a misnomer from the Terran viewpoint. All Alphan business ventures are actually collectives. Alphan corporations are formed by social rings of collaborative interest that bring their skill sets to solve a problem or make money. If additional skills are needed, other rings are sought and linked up with, with individual members contributing what they know, leadership types assigning tasks, and everyone being paid according to their contribution. Some Alphan work rings are enormous, like the government astronautics and ship-building yards (composed of over 250,000 workers from over 14,000 technical rings) that holds an absolute monopoly, supplying all civil and military spacecraft, while some are very small (local specialized crafts rings might consist of two or three individuals). The differing Alphan and Terran business philosophy actually was the largest cause of friction and distrust between the two sides in the years after first contact (and remain so to this day).

Negotiating with the Alphas, the TTA has found, is a slow and laborious process, as each proposal must make its way through levels of government plus the rings associated with the product or service in ques-

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tion, each with its own input to be considered and the needs and benefits of each member to be considered. On the other hand, an Alphan ring approaching a Terran company might take their prospective partner's quick response to mean that either the deal was not carefully considered or that a scam is in progress to quickly fleece them of their capital. In the Terran view, the Alphan system seems overly laborious and wasteful, as well as unrewarding to the entrepreneurial spirit. From the Alphan viewpoint, the Terran model seems shockingly greedy and exploitative of its workers, whose labor makes the enterprise possible but who seem to receive little in return. Both sides, however, seem willing to look past these faults, as the rewards to both are significant.

RELIGION

Alphans are, generally speaking, agnostic or atheist in practice, believing in the truth of reason and scientific inquiry. A large minority, however, profess religious belief of some sort. Alpha is home to two major religions and several minor ones. In the past, disagreements between the two major religions could occasionally turn violent, but in modern times they are merely sources of vigorous debate. Both of these religions hold that the universe was created through reason by an "infinite intelligence", which some Terran theologians misinterpret as "god". Actually, the existence of a personified creator is left up to the individual Alphan, as their religion does not concern itself with this question. God, in any case, is a distant and impartial observer, not a personal intercessor. The larger of the two sects, known as Kek, holds that each individual holds their own divinity within them, and that by sharing with others, divinity grows. This divinity finds expression through good acts, which are usually defined as those that help society. After death, the soul comes back and inhabits another body in an endless cycle of reincarnation. There is no release from this cycle, except at the end of the universe, when all souls will merge once more with the infinite intelligence and a new moment of creation starts the cycle over. The other sect, called Boun, is a form of mass Deism, in which the believer seeks to understand and approach the universal intelligence through group-based contemplation of the intricacies of creation (nature) and the performance of selfless acts for Ring and society. It is a common sight in Alphan parks at sunrise and sunset to see Boun groups, linked arm in arm, engaged in group meditation.

What should be noted is that neither of these religions rest on revealed truth... there are no Alphan religious prophets ... nor do either



of them promise paradise for a life well-lived. Personal responsibility to family and society results in paradise in the here and now, and thus is its own reward.

Some Terran missionaries have gained small numbers of converts to their respective faiths, but these are isolated pockets. With the Call switching around families, though, the missionaries count on the information being carried, germ-like, throughout Alphan culture.

ART

We have already discussed Alphans as a “pragmatic” people. This in mind, the observer might be astonished to see the vigor with which Alphans express themselves in artistic pursuits. Of course, to the Alphans, art is just as pragmatic an exercise as science or mathematics... art is food for the soul, and as such is a necessity of civilized life.

The Alphans are very active in the visual arts. The range and variety of sculpture and painting are far beyond the scope of this introduction and could easily fill thousands of volumes. (Incidentally, many Terran scholars are horrified by the very pragmatic actions of some Alphan artists; after photographing or holographing their work, they paint over the canvases or dismantle the sculpture to be used for other pieces.) There is, however, an art form unique to the Alphan people: the discipline translated as simply “skin painting”. Terrans are, of course, familiar with the arts of tattooing and body painting. Alphan skin painting, however, is accomplished by using only their innate camouflage ability and exceptional concentration. All Alphans have some conscious ability to mimic patterns, but it takes years of practice, fine control, and endurance to produce complex works of art. Most skin paintings take the form of fractal patterns or mandala-like structures, painstakingly formed over minutes or hours. Maintaining the patterns is as difficult as forming them, requiring both physical effort and a zen-like ability to clear the mind of everything but the pattern. The discipline requires not only skill and training but some degree of natural giftedness as well; the darker-skinned Alphans that tend to populate the equatorial regions have the best natural control over the ability as well as the ability to produce a wider range of colors and a very fine level of detail. Ability in this art form is also partly hereditary. There are Rings of great skin-painters who have passed their genetics and trade secrets down through the years, producing some very fine artists in the process.

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Skin painter street performers are a common sight at most Alphan festivals, eyes closed or staring in concentration, foreheads and bodies beaded with sweat, their body their canvas, paints, and brush. Best of all to the pragmatic Alphans, the canvas can be utilized again and again.

Most skin painters produce works on sections of their body (the chest and back make excellent natural canvases), but the best of these artists can produce incredibly intricate works in a multitude of subtle hues over their entire bodies. Like all great artists, they practice their craft constantly and can easily exhaust themselves with obsessive, single-minded devotion.



NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

THE BEGINNINGS OF TERRAN XENO-ANTHROPOLOGY

The Alphans were the first sentient race encountered by Terra. The fact of their extreme physiological and psychological similarity to humanity made many aspects of first contact far easier. It also made some aspects far more difficult. Today, looking back on the many years of alliance with the Alphans and the strong bond that developed between our societies through the terrible years of the Proxima Wars, it may be difficult to understand the delicate and paradoxical nature of the situation which existed in the first years after contact. By far the best account of those exciting and heady times can be gathered by studying the collected notes and memoirs of Drs. Stefan Abelev and Arkani Miedro, the brilliant anthropologist / linguists who were first invited to stay on Alpha Centauri and observe the culture firsthand starting in 2137. It was Abelev and Miedro who helped to break the language barrier, who became the spokespersons for Terra in the early years of negotiating trade agreements, and who first learned of the severity of the Alphans' conflict with the Proximans. In the process, Abelev and Miedro found themselves not only acting as ambassadors but as the founders of a new, previously theoretical scientific field: Xeno-anthropology.

*While living among the Alphans, Dr. Abelev coined the term *camouflaged culture*. He applied this descriptive not to Alphan society itself but rather to the Terran guests' perception of the culture. As first contact protocol had until then been purely a speculative field, all sorts of scenarios had been concocted to test possible encounters. Alien beings who had evolved under environmental conditions wildly different from Terra, cultures with diametrically opposed values, and language systems based on colors or mathematical principles rather than sonic output were just some of the situations Abelev and Miedro had been exposed to. When they found that the Alphans were not so strange to human senses, relaxation set in. Afterwards, so did the homesickness and culture shock, something that neither of them had encountered before.*

After discussing it with one another, Abelev, who was also trained as a psychologist, was able to formulate an explanation. The Alphan culture was, in fact, quite alien. The surface similarities were nothing more than a deceptive veneer. If the Alphans or their culture had looked "more alien" on the surface, their training would have shielded them, but the surface similarities had acted to disarm their objectivity and wall of rational isolation. By assuming that Alphan reactions to social inter-

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actions would be roughly similar to Terran reactions, and by describing Alphan characteristics in general terms that were loaded with personal and cultural meaning, the researchers had been doing a disservice to both themselves and their hosts. The researchers were forced to admit that, as well-trained as they were, they were not adequately prepared for the psychological toll of being among an alien species on a completely different planet, a psychically draining experience totally new to humanity. As Dr. Miedro noted in a journal entry from around that time, it wasn't just a matter of different food or culture. The quality of sunlight was different, the air smelled different, the water and food tasted different, the ambient sounds were alien, the day was slightly longer and the familiar sight of Luna was nowhere to be found. Singly, none of these were a problem; in totality, it wore down even the best and brightest of Terra.

As an antidote, Dr. Abelev recommended an immediate change in philosophy: from now on, they would immerse themselves in the culture instead of venturing forth from their ship / laboratory. They would go native, and attempt to merely observe and learn instead of interpret and report. They made a pact to not see any other human, including each other, for a period of two years. Reporting their findings would only occur when the two of them were suitably steeped in the culture to understand what they were really seeing. In order not to totally interrupt the flow of data and anger their Terran sponsors, they agreed to feed reports one-way to their team members, who would tabulate, sort, and file the information for later study. Drs. Abelev and Miedro withstood withering criticism for this unusual move, for wasn't the point of anthropology supposed to be the human factor? It was, they replied, unless the human factor was the pollutant in a pristine alien environment.

*Abelev and Miedro went their separate ways, not even revealing to each other their exact destinations, to cut down any urge to communicate with each other. Dr. Abelev would travel from place to place, documenting wider societal patterns, while Dr. Miedro would experience life inside a Ring. With the help of the Alphan government, Dr. Miedro found a Ring willing to take in an alien for two years. Dr. Miedro's journal, published under the title *Among Friends*, is still the most comprehensive and intimate look at life inside an Alphan Ring. Miedro's experiences would also be the acid test of her and Abelev's ideas.*

Dr. Miedro was taken in by Ring Hloumekra, an average-size family of twenty-two living on the west coast of the main continent. Greeted with warmth and curiosity, she found herself a functioning member of the

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group in remarkably short order. She worked around the Ring's estate, she ate their food, took part in their festivals and functions, and slept with the other adults in a big tangle in the center of the main room. She recalls that the hardest part was overcoming her religious background and personal sexual proclivities when invited to participate in that aspect of Ring life. In return, the Ring had a difficult time understanding the human need for "down time", privacy, and occasional isolation. Eventually, both sides settled into a happy medium.

Dr. Miedro was keenly interested in the workings of the Call, and attempted to learn its nuances. She observed members of her home Ring, as well as neighboring Rings. She was lucky enough to personally observe three instances of the Call, including one where a neighbor was Called while attending a function at Ring Hloumerka's home. She didn't judge. She merely noted behaviors and wrote them down and thought about them in the context of every Alphan she had met. But there was something deeply troubling. How could an attraction like the Call always be a reciprocal phenomenon? Not just among two Alphas... but among the one being Called and every single member of the Calling Ring? There seemed to be no such thing as unrequited attraction on Alpha. There was also no such thing as family disapproval- every member of the Ring welcomed the newcomer, who after a few hours was not a newcomer at all- the reactions appeared identical to member who had spent most of their lives in the Ring. It was hard enough accepting that love could bloom so fast, but that it could bloom among all concerned was flabbergasting.

Dr. Miedro writes: "One aspect of studying the Call was a bit of jealousy that I could not myself experience it. Understand that I was treated with the utmost care and affection by my host family... but I was never bonded to them the way Ringmates were bonded to each other. I was sitting outside alone on my favorite hill, mulling that over and feeling a touch lonely, when I heard footsteps behind me. It was Fřoopote, one of the elders, and he was carrying little Zhö, who had been born just a couple of weeks earlier. Fřoopote hesitated, but I indicated that I was open to company and he sat next to me and put Zhö in my arms. He stirred, woke up, and silently tipped his head back and opened his mouth wide. At that moment, the answer struck like lightning. Much as a human infant will instinctively turn toward the breast of the person holding them, so too this Alphan child was displaying an innate behavior in the desire to be fed. What if the Call was not a feeling at all? What if it wasn't really like what humans call love? What if the Call was not trig-

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gered by what humans would call attraction or desire? What if it were deeper, simpler... another sort of survival instinct?"

It was a major breakthrough that not only helped humans to understand Alphans, but similarly helped Alphan scientists to decipher human social behavior. This understanding is often credited by sociologists as the key to the Alphan-Terran treaties that possibly saved both species during the Proxima War.

Dr. Miedro played down this aspect, but comments in her memoirs: "Much as I had tried to disassociate myself from subjectivity, and much as I felt I had 'gone native', I was still, of course, human... and still approaching problems from a human perspective. That epiphany was the finest moment of my professional and personal life; not only had I serendipitously found one of the keys to Alphan behavior, but I had also gained a lot of insight into my own humanity."

Drs. Abelev and Miedro reunited after two years and began publishing their findings. They continued their studies and worked as consultants to various Terran governments, as well as being frequent and popular lecturers all across Alpha and Terra. Sadly, while their work was among the most valuable ever done for humanity, their personal stories did not end well. Dr. Abelev died when the city of Thumano was vaporized in the Proximan first strike of 2147. Dr. Miedro was spared, as she was back on Terra for a lecture tour at the time. Dr. Miedro served during the early years of the war in ambassadorial and representative functions, until finally able to convince the authorities that she could better serve on Alpha. She arrived to find her adopted home devastated, and many of her colleagues and friends either dead or scattered. After the war ended, Dr. Miedro retired to Alpha I and withdrew from public view, spending her remaining years writing and compiling her and Dr. Abelev's extensive notes, which became the basis of most of the texts available on Alphan culture today. It was a sad irony that on a planet of collective families, in a society that valued group inclusion above all else, that Dr. Miedro chose to spend her last days in a uniquely Terran fashion- as a hermit.

ALPHAN LANGUAGE

Standard Alphan had been the lingua franca of trade and diplomacy for the Alphans for hundreds of years before the first world government was formed, with the exception of the southern continent. There are

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several dialects of standard Alphan, none of them different enough to cause problems to those with more than a passing familiarity with the language, with the possible exception of “*High Alphan*”, spoken in the upper latitudes of the main continent.

The southern continent has adopted the use of standard Alphan as the official first language in the past century. However, individuals generally speak one of several other languages at home and in their communities. Two of these are creoles of local languages and old standard Alphan. Others are closely related to one another and are somewhat mutually

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intelligible, while one remains a linguistic mystery. Spoken by less than 5,000 Alphans living in communities deep in the central mountains of the southern continent, it bears no apparent relation to other Alphan languages. Researchers are studying this language intently, as the number of speakers continues to decline as the population is assimilated into the wider culture. Generally speaking, all of the Southern languages are in decline, hastened by the fact that the Southerners have had to take a wider role in Alphan government and mainstream cultural affairs since the war damaged so many cities and institutions in the central regions. Southern continent Alphans are known for speaking their standard Alphan with a distinct accent and a smoother rhythmic quality.

Linguistically, Alphan is classified as an analytical or isolating language. Each morpheme, or sound, is its own distinct word. There are no plurals, tenses, definite or indefinite articles, pronouns, genders, or irregular forms in the Alphan language. It thus relies heavily on syntax, context and pragmatics for its meaning. Special words can be added to appropriate places in the sentence to clarify intent, time, result, etc. In addition, tones are utilized to indicate question, imperative, and other forms, as well as being a major component of Alphan sarcasm, possibly the toughest aspect for non-native speakers to get a handle on. Basic sentence form is Verb-Object-Subject. “Go park Joe.” can be translated as “Joe goes to the park (s)”, “Joe went to the park(s)”, or even “Joe will go to the park(s)”. The tense can be suggested by context (if both parties are familiar with Joe’s activities) or clarified by the addition of special words that indicate completion, intent, or an ongoing action.

Modifiers (adjectives and adverbs) and compounds (nouns and verbs that modify others) are always added after the word they modify, and are “chunked” together in groups of up to three morphemes. The “space” between words or word + modifier groups is indicated by glottal stops. Alphan prosody is thus “chunky”. Terrans sarcastically refer to Alphan as “Rat-a-tat” or “Tik-a-tak” for this reason.

Alphan has a wide variety of basic consonants and eight vowel sounds. They are formed into words in the following four patterns: V, CV, CVC, and rarely V’V (the apostrophe represents a labiodental flap) and VC (only three initial vowels are used in this case). As Alphans are morphologically nearly similar to humans and Proximans, the sounds they produce are present in their various languages, with two exceptions. Alphans utilize a pair of whistles as initial consonants. The first of these is classified as the “low” whistle, produced by pressing the sides

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of the tongue against the midway point of the hard palate and making the mouth into a somewhat relaxed “o”. While Terrans can approximate this sound, the Alphan palate shape is slightly different and is optimized for producing this sound in a crisp manner. Proximans find this sound impossible to produce. The “high” whistle is produced by clamping the mouth down further and placing the tongue forward and behind the teeth. Terrans and Proximans can both approximate this sound, but like the “low” whistle it often comes out sounding too breathy and not as sharp as necessary.

These whistles are forms that have evolved from the Alphan signaling whistles, which today are largely used symbolically. Notes below are for those sounds that do not appear in Terran standard.

Alphan initial consonants:

b	ch
d	dl
f	fl
fr	fr ²
g	gr
h	hl
hr	h ¹
k	kl
kr	kr ²
l	m
m ¹	n
n̄	p
r	r ³
s	sl
sr	sh
t	tl
t ²	th (Ṭ)
y	zh

▲ (high front whistle)

▼ (low back whistle)

End consonants:

l	m
n	s
sh	t

Vowel sounds:

a (as in father)
aa (as in race)
e (as in end)
ee (as in deep)
ö
o (as in hobo)
oo (as in moon)
ou (as in out)

Initial Vowels in VC combinations:
only e, o and oo.

1. *voiceless pharyngeal fricative*
2. *trilled*
3. *alveolar trill*

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ALPHAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Appearance: 1.65 to 1.9 meters; 50 to 75 kgs. Skin tones vary by ethnic origin.

Base Attributes:

INT +1	PER +0
WIL +0	CHA +1
STR -1	DEX +2
CON -1	SPD +3

Attribute Adjustments: None

Hit Points: 18

Skills: Computers (personal) +1, Lore (Alpha Centauri System) +4, Lore (Home Planet) +6, Etiquette (Alphan) +6, Speak Language (Alphan - native), Speak Language (Terran Language or Proximan - Basic).

Quirks: Acute Sense (vision), Acute Sense (hearing), Camouflage, Emotional Display, Flight Over Fight, Poor Sense (scent), Tireless, Vomit At Will.





PROXIMANS

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

GENERAL

Proximans are short and thickly-built bipedal humanoids, slow-moving, thoughtful, philosophical and generally tenacious. They bear a striking resemblance to Terrans and Alphans, and in fact it has become clear that humans, Alphans, and Proximans all share common genetic roots, evolving from a shared common stock. Proximans have two sexes, referred to as “female” and “potential”. Potentials are female by default, but can change to male and back again depending on environmental conditions and the needs of the population. The male role is thus filled on an “as needed” basis only, a fact that many Terrans (especially males) find disquieting (Alphans less so, because of their relative level of gender and sexual similarity).



“What does the typical Proximan look like?” might seem a simple question, but it is in fact difficult to give a definitive answer. Because of their culture of genetic engineering, advanced surgical techniques and penchant for self-modification in the name of improvement, there are literally dozens of different Proximan forms with thousands of individual variations... some unique, with slight enhancements for personal vanity, and some radical forms engineered for different environments.

The first thing that strikes many Terrans upon seeing a Proximan is her uncanny resemblance to early humans; this is due to a combination of facial features which evolved to fit the environment combined with familiar “echoes” of similar ancestry. Some argue that this perception of “primitiveness”, especially when presented in a negative light, is also due to lingering resentment over the war. First impressions, of course, are subjective and

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vary from individual to individual. Dr. Abram Hodyl-Advani, one of the first Terran researchers to study the Proximans (using captured and dead subjects from the war) declared them to be “the most magnificent creatures I’ve ever seen”, a statement that threw his credentials into serious doubt with the Alphan scientists he was working with.

The second feature may not be immediately obvious under clothing, but has allowed Proximans to survive the effects of solar flares on their planet. Covering the entire back, from the back of the skull down over the buttocks and upper legs, the shield is such a specialized structure, and the solar flares on Proxima so intense, that scientists of all races have concluded that it must have been purpose-engineered into the original Proximan stock; it is highly unlikely that any early Proximans would have survived under their planetary conditions for long enough to evolve it naturally. This, plus the lack of any terrestrial animals on Proxima larger than insects, clearly indicates that the race was seeded there. For much of the Proximan masses, these facts are seen as proof of their creator-deity, even as scientists are working as closely as possible with Terran and Alphan colleagues on the seeder theory.

The structure of the shield is also an obvious inspiration for the Proximan development of their excellent and incredibly tough spacecraft armor, which utilized either finely-interlocking platelets, layers of differing composition, or both.

STRUCTURE AND SENSES

Females are larger, bulkier, and generally stronger than potentials. Females stand between 150 and 170 centimeters tall and weigh between 70 and 95 kilograms. Potentials stand between 125 and 145 centimeters tall and weigh between 45 and 70 kilograms. Both are stocky and thick of build, with thick necks and solid, muscular limbs, and are strong for their height. Proximans are covered with a thick skin that varies in color from individual to individual, and in fact changes color based upon the mineral content of the diet.



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The most usual skin color is a slate or iron gray, with reddish or greenish tints. The skin has rolls and folds of fat, intended to guard against the long months of privation that were common on ancient Proxima. Individuals can appear puffy at one time, wrinkled and emaciated at others. Whether a modern Proximan appears bulky or lean is more a function of hormonal cycles and personal choice than food supply, though a previously well-prepared Proximan cut off from society could survive very well indeed for months on end utilizing only her fat stores.

Proximans have coarse features, including large jaws with wide mouths and grinding, peg-like teeth. The nose is generally flat with wide nostrils. The eyes are larger in proportion to the skull than humans, larger even than Alphans, and have pupils that can range in size from a pinpoint to almost completely covering the orb; this adaptation serves the Proximan through the widely varying light levels encountered on their world, from near-total darkness to the brightness of a solar flare. Scleras are black, while iris color covers a wide range, from yellow to amber to reddish-gray, or can be speckled with multiple shades of earth tone and green. Proximans have a third eyelid that is actually a tinted membrane, giving them additional protection against sudden increases in brightness.

As the light of their primary is shifted heavily toward the red end of the spectrum, Proximans have vision into infrared, allowing them to see in the dark by the heat signatures of various objects. On the other hand, violet and the shorter wavelengths of blue are invisible to Proximans, appearing as black. Proximans are somewhat myopic, having excellent near vision but undeveloped distance vision. Their sense of smell is highly developed. Their ears are small and their hearing is not as keen as humans; on the other hand, Proximans can hear sounds at lower ranges, down to about 3 Hz.

The skull is high and domed, giving the head a somewhat conical profile. Proximans grow a thick mane of coarse-textured hair on their heads, which is worn in a variety of ways. Upper-stratum Proximans usually prefer to wear it long and braided or ornamented, while middle- and lower-strata individuals tend to keep it trimmed shorter, but this is more for utility and convenience than a requirement of custom.

Proximans have five-fingered hands. The short little finger and side of the hand have evolved hard ridges of keratin that are useful in scraping up the lichen- and fungus-like plant life of Proxima, which was (and

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still is) the primary component of the diet. The middle three fingers and thumb are proportionally longer than in humans and are capable of fine manipulation. Proximans have short, thick legs and broad feet with rough pads that ensure a firm grip on many surfaces and also keep the individual from sinking into loose sand or mud.

The ventral side of the Proximan is covered with a fine coat of downy hairs. The back, including the backs of the legs, neck, back of the skull, and up onto the shoulders, is covered by the Proximan's most striking feature: the shield, a finely articulated natural covering that acts as a radiation shield during Proxima's frequent solar flares. The shield is actually not stiff and inflexible as the name implies. It is composed of hundreds of small, finely interlocking platelets of soft keratin, constantly replenished from within, that are impregnated with heavy minerals, including iron and lead, picked up both in the Proximan's natural food sources as well as ingested directly. Proximan systems appear to be unaffected by heavy metals that Terrans and Alphans would find poisonous; instead, the metals and minerals pass into the follicles and are deposited into new layers of shield, as well as into tiny "pockets" in the epidermal skin on the ventral side to provide lesser protection in the front. At the same time, the outer edges of the shield are constantly flaking off. Where the open ends of the shield contact the air, oxidation occurs, giving Proximans a "rusty" appearance.

If caught out in the open when a flare erupts, or when exposed to any directional radiation source, the Proximan lays on the ground (preferably in mud), tucks in her elbows and knees, and curls up rather like a Terran pillbug or armadillo to wait it out. A Proximan can keep this up for hours or even days as necessary, something that their metabolism and temperament are well-suited for. Curled up under their shields, Proximans can survive the effects of the intense x-ray and gamma ray bombardment from their primary. Radiation in general does not affect Proximans as severely as Alphans or Terrans, and they are able to absorb doses that would be damaging or even lethal to either of these races. While this immunity has allowed them to survive nicely on their home planet, it also means that Proximans are somewhat cavalier about the building and usage of devices that emit radiation. Proxima utilized thermonuclear weapons freely during the war, counting on their destructive potential; the fact that radiation seemed to affect the other races far more than themselves was seen as a stroke of luck (or a sign of divine favor). While many Proximan ships were captured during the war, many lacked radiation shielding suitable for their new crews, while others were sim-



ply contaminated to the point that they had to be either towed away and destroyed or subjected to expensive clean-up efforts. Part of the rebuilding process after the war involves decontaminating areas of Proxima... not for the Proximans themselves, but for the safety of off-world workers and officials.

While Proximans are omnivorous, their planet has no large terrestrial animal forms and so their diet is primarily plant-based. Several varieties of low-level photosynthesis plant grow on the Proximan surface. Lichen-like plants and several varieties of fungus provide the staple of the Proximan diet, supplemented with insects and small sea creatures.

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Today, Proximans engineer around 80% of their food supply, grown in giant hydroponic farms or raised on “ranches”, all of it genetically tweaked for maximum nutrition and flavor.

SEX CHARACTERISTICS, REPRODUCTION & LIFE CYCLE

The most obvious difference between females and potentials is size, with females being both taller and heavier. Proximans have wide, fleshy hips and a pair of sizable mammary glands that are used to nurse their young. The genitalia are very similar in appearance and functionally identical to humans. Proximans have large patches of pubic hair which, as on humans, is designed as a scent trap. Females tend to have larger breasts, hips, and buttocks in proportion to their size than potentials; females also secrete more pheromones than potentials, ensuring that available male-cycle potentials will be inclined to mate with them first. Should any jealousy arise among the female and the female-cycle potentials, the female has the size and strength to demonstrate her superiority.

The ratio of females to potentials is about 1:4. Females are always fertile; potentials are not unless they are “activated” hormonally. Potentials, in addition to their female genitalia, are also equipped with a penis and testicles. They are carried in a fold just above the female genitals; as hormonal changes activate them, they grow in size until the fold opens and they emerge. If conditions dictate that the potential is to be female, a different cascade of hormones is triggered that brings about ovulation. Except in very rare cases, only one or the other set of gonads is functioning; a Proximan cannot generally impregnate itself. Potentials can't predict which sex they will become at each mating opportunity, but there is some indication that individuals “lean” one way or another; thus, if an individual is female the first time, she will tend to be female the next. Environmental pressure, of course, can override this. In modern times, Proximans can exercise full control over both their fertility and the status of the potentials through drug and hormone therapy.

Proxima lacks large moons, tides, and seasons. There is not even day or night, so the process by which the fertility cycle times itself must be based on other factors. The biggest of these factors seems to be food supply. When and if a Proximan reaches a certain percentage of body fat, and if there are other Proximans around, pheromones secreted by the group can trigger fertility. It is also guessed that an instinctual estima-



tion of population size based upon the number of individuals encountered since the last round of mating may be involved, but this is difficult to test accurately. Fertility in either male or female form lasts for a few days, perhaps longer if favorable conditions last.

Pregnancy lasts from nine to twelve Terran months, depending on the favorability of conditions. The child is born at about the same level of development as a human baby and is nursed by the mother. The Proximan child nurses for several years, gradually replacing its mother's milk with solid foods. In the early years, the shield is underdeveloped and does not provide full protection; as the Proximan youth continues to acquire and retain minerals from its food the shield gains its protective properties until it is fully functional by age six or so.

Puberty comes late for Proximans, around twenty Terran years or so. A Proximan remains fertile for her entire life. In their later years, Proximans slow down even more. Their hair grows white and joints begin to creak under their weight. Elder Proximans become much more sedentary; some continue to put on weight until they are all but immobile. Proximan females live longer than Terrans or Alphans on average, around 140 Terran years or so. Potentials, for whatever reason, tend to have shorter lives, topping out at about 110 Terran years.

MODIFIED / ENGINEERED FORMS

The ceaseless migrations, restricted range, and low population figures of the early Proximan tribes helped to ensure that any racial characteristics (it must be noted that in this section, "race" and "racial" are used in the older sense of the word, as they were before the rise of the concept of "planetary race", where physical characteristics were used to distinguish closely-related groups of the same planetary population from one another) quickly disappeared. While individual features such as nose shape, jaw size, height, skin tone, etc. have a wide range of variations, there is no solid "grouping" of these characteristics that could be used to identify sub-groups as is evident on Alpha and Terra. The Proximans, however, do exhibit a bewildering array of forms, due to their prowess in plastic surgery, growing and grafting artificial body structures, and genetic engineering.

The reasons for these augmentations are many and varied and the philosophies behind them are discussed in the following sections. Some are merely ornamental and are used to identify families, strata, or profes-

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sions. Others are designed to allow the Proximans to live more comfortably in different temperature zones that cover the dayside of their home planet. The most radical forms allow Proximans to live in entirely different or hostile environments- in the freezing night of their planet's dark side, or in the oceans. The Proximans are also hard at work developing techniques for engineering forms to live on eventual colony worlds- beings suited to lighter or heavier gravity conditions, able to breathe different atmospheres, or subsist on different diets. The Proximans are also reportedly developing a form that could survive on the airless surface of an asteroid with minimal support, allowing colonies to be founded or low-cost mining operations to be undertaken. Rumors also persist that during the war Proximan scientists, perhaps utilizing DNA from Alphan and Terran dead, made attempts to either engineer Proximans to resemble those races, or grew modified clones that could be indoctrinated for use in espionage operations. The Proximan governments still deny these rumors, but accounts from Terran and Alphan sources insist that encounters with these beings did occur. Modern visitors to Proxima sometimes report seeing Alphans or Terrans in odd places, who do not wear identification, do not respond when called to, and disappear when approached. Stories like these, while of limited credibility, make it unlikely that these rumors will go away unless somehow evidence is found to completely refute them...

A short description on some of the major forms follows. These descriptions are by no means exhaustive but should serve to give the curious traveler some idea of what to expect when traveling to Proxima.

NON-ENGINEERED SURGICAL MODIFICATIONS:

These are essentially the Proximan base form with various "flourishes" grafted on or grown from specially modified cell structures. Most of these modifications are strictly ornamental and are either done for personal fashion or to identify members of a family, profession, or sub-strata. As such, non-genetic modifications like this are usually found only on the upper stratas. A few examples of the literally thousands of variations include custom eye coloration, colored or tusk-like teeth, horns, ridges, or combs on the skull, extra or elongated fingers, patterned and colored skin or hair, ridges or plates built up from the spinal bones, and many others.

There are also modifications designed for specific functions. Terran officials on a tour of rebuilding projects soon after the war ended were treated to the astonishing spectacle of a company of Proximan entertain-



ers performing stirring selections from Mozart’s “Cosi fan tutte”, as well as “Swinging On a Star” and selections from the great Noh play “Aoi no Uye”, each of them with a voice surgically tweaked to the task of these very different Terran operas. Mina Reyes-Sakamoto, leader of the delegation, described the experience as “Excellent... but a bit unsettling.”

SOME SAMPLE ENGINEERED FORMS:

Ocean Kin: These are actually the most numerous of the engineered Proximans, but are rarely encountered as their habitat is deep in the oceans. They are therefore somewhat “invisible” to the visitor. Like

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their land-dwelling cousins, they tend to build their cities near geothermal vents for the ready source of energy they provide. Not to be confused with the Proximans who work the shores and have merely been modified with webbings between their fingers, the aquatic Proximans never surface- they have been modified with gills, a streamlined form, and finned limbs that make them at home in the water. Since deep water is an excellent radiation shield, the aquatic Proximans have shed the shield on their backs to save weight and allow for further streamlining. Most aquatic Proximans work at underwater mining, setting up power stations to tap the deep water geothermal vents, or in undersea farming operations. Scientists are hard at work modifying the aquatic form

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further with large fat stores and sonar in order to allow them to colonize the vast, cold, and lightless oceans beneath the ice cap on the planet's dark side.

Night Side Kin: This form is still fairly rare, but is well-proven in its utility. Like the ocean kin, they are also rarely encountered, as few visitors have occasion to visit the chilly wastes of the night side of Proxima. Size and fat storage has been greatly increased (night side kin stand over 1.8 meters tall on average) and metabolism further slowed. The “shield” has been shed and replaced with an exceptionally dense and insulating all-over coat of fur. Eyes finely-tuned for night vision are sealed in their sockets by organic shields to combat driving snow and to help retain body heat. The night side kin live near the geothermal vents and generally work in setting up power stations, mining, surveying, and collecting scientific data.

Star Kin: These are Proximans modified to live and work in a weightless environment. These Proximans are sometimes encountered by travelers in the older orbital transfer stations that link passenger ships and short-range shuttles. Star kin can be an amazing sight, zipping quickly and expertly about, even when handling bulky loads of cargo. Star kin are smaller even than potentials, having an average height of only about one meter. They have lighter bodies, having shed most of the typical Proximan fat store, and longer limbs with a second pair of “hands” on the ends of their legs. The radiation-absorbing shield has been lightened and spread around the entire body, giving good radiation protection from all directions. The star kin must still work in pressurized environments, of course. Star kin have become somewhat superfluous in recent years. After gravity generators became common and fairly inexpensive pieces of equipment, the need for specialized workers for weightless environments decreased. The star kin have pooled their resources and purchased some older orbital facilities that they live in and operate, barely able to make a living. They are eagerly offering their genetic material to the scientists who are working on a much more radical form of star kin (noted above) that might one day be able to work in total vacuum.

“True” Male : After millions of years of evolution gave the Proximans the female and potential sexes, the dedicated male form has been re-introduced. Engineered males are a different breed from potentials that have been identified as having desirable genetics and “fixed” as male by a combination of drugs and hormone treatments. The engineered males are created in vitro, are born and live their entire lives as

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male. Males are still exceptionally rare and are created mostly by scientists interested in breeding experiments. Some males have also been born into the upper strata as a vanguard of carefully-chosen genetic traits that families want preserved and distributed to their offspring.

SOCIETY / CULTURE

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Proximans have a wide variety of family structures, some of them determined by strata or profession, some of them by personal choice. At the most basic level, the mother of a given child has the legal right to determine the family structure that surrounds that child. The most common arrangement, especially among potential-female partners, or in cases where the individual is employed in jobs that are solitary in nature (such as research or art), is single motherhood, where the mate has only limited interaction and support responsibilities. Monogamous partnerships are also common, especially among potential-potential, middle-strata Proximans. These arrangements can be but are usually not lifelong, as one or the other partner decides to move on. In some upper-strata families, the old tribal structure of Proxima is a common arrangement, with a dominant female or two holding sway (and determining breeding decisions) for a group of selected potentials.

Proximans love their children, and even the most solitary of single mother families allows the male-potential partner to interact and have a hand in the child-rearing duties. This may also grow to include the parents of the male-potential, forming an extended family network that remains long after the original partnership has ended.

CULTURE

In days long past, the Proximans lived in a tribal structure, with a female generally leading a group of potentials. Over many years, this early dominance by the larger and stronger females has led to a religiously-mandated social hierarchy known as the Strata System, with an elite group of females and their genetically-modified consorts at the top, and a complex hierarchy of lesser females and potentials filling in the lower ranks.

The strata system's origins were not originally rooted in religious dogma or physical prowess. Rather, they were based around leadership

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capacity and decision-making accuracy. Proximans were wanderers in ancient days, following roughly circular migration patterns along lines of temperature and climate.

Those Proximans who made good decisions about locating food and shelter attracted more followers, which led to the first large-scale agriculture and settlements on Proxima. After this period, an era of power consolidation by the leaders and the judicious application of religious dogma cemented the power of the upper strata.

The strata system has been resisted by various nations at various times throughout Proximan history. Generally, the various lower strata



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of a nation would rise up and overthrow the ruling stratum and attempt to set up a society built on equality. Some lasted for longer than others, a few marking their success in centuries. What would generally occur, however, was that the supposedly egalitarian government would begin acting like the old ruling stratum, and the cycle would repeat itself. More recently, as power became more and more concentrated into fewer nation-states, such upstart political rivals were simply invaded and crushed, under pretense of religious purity or imminent threat. Proximan governments learned their lessons from these incidents, however, and are certain to try and keep their lower strata happy enough, and give opportunities for advancement enough, that any discontent does not boil over into full-scale uprisings.

Strata are now organized by heredity and function, and have three loose divisions of upper, middle, and lower. Generally speaking, the less intelligence or skill it takes to do a job (this is of course somewhat subjective), the lower the resulting strata of that job classification. In Proximan society, scientists (especially in biology and physics) are at the top, skilled workers next, laborers (including farmers) in the middle, and unskilled workers on the bottom. Traditionally, jobs are passed from mother to child, and individuals of a particular strata may only take that job or another of equal prestige. Oddly enough by Terran standards, bankers and other financial professions rank near the bottom. The rationale for this is that money-making is merely a function of simple mathematics and doesn't require deep thought, nor does it require hands-on labor. With the booming commercial markets opening up after the war, however, this position is being re-thought as foreign money flows into Proximan coffers. Similarly, the stratum composed of theologians of the main Proximan religion suffered a huge drop in status after the war, as they promised glory but delivered ruin. These situations illustrate that strata are not necessarily constant; one can move up or down as favor or need for the skill increases or decreases.

Another way to move up is to produce offspring of excellent genetic quality. Most Proximans are voluntarily tested at birth for genetic make-up. Any interesting or outstanding traits are noted and the individual's genetic pattern is catalogued and patched into databases for analysis. These databases are part of a ubiquitous matchmaking system; mating and partnership invitations are received from all over the planet, alliances are proposed and formed between bloodlines, and persons born into lower strata always try and move up, hoping their child might be the ticket. The ultimate honor, receiving a breeding invitation from one of

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the upper strata, a proposal to sample the child's DNA for inclusion in new experiments, or weaving a certain trait into the upper strata breeding stock is the dream of every Proximan. Breeding generally must be cleared through government petition, though in many cases this is nothing more than a rubber stamp; it is in the government's best interests to keep large portions of the population randomly mixing in order to continually produce new and interesting traits.

Those of the lower strata are often thought of as oppressed by Terrans and Alphans. While they do lack some social mobility and income potential, they also have the chance to move up the ladder as described above. Individuals may also invent new job descriptions, which may then rise if the skill or service or of societal use. They may also be the recipients of specific genetic modifications designed to simplify or increase the efficiency of their jobs. Webbed fingers and toes for those who work the seas, enhanced reflexes and eyesight for soldiers, and greater endurance for those who physically labor are all examples. While this does increase efficiency, it also helps to ensure the permanency of the strata system, since those born with a gift for a particular line of work will naturally be more disposed to doing that sort of work.

Proximans point to and revere three major persons in their recorded history for making Proxima what it is today. The first was the prodigy alternately known as Saaicha or Shaacha, a Da Vinci-like genius of multiple disciplines. Saaicha showed her people how to tap the vast quantity of geothermal power available on Proxima. Saaicha also gave Proxima a reliable timekeeping system, not an easy task on a planet without a day-night cycle or seasons. She also developed advanced concepts for alloying metals, streamlined the Proximan writing system, designed a number of useful machines and was the first to openly suggest the existence of other stars and planets, and wondered about the possibility of powered flight. For these last ideas she was executed by a religiously conservative faction; in the resulting schism the current religious hierarchy took over and Saaicha was made a saint. The second was Yahrii, who developed methods of cataloguing genetic traits and set up rigorous experiments in eugenics. Her contributions form the basis of modern Proximan genetic engineering. The last was Juqall, responsible for the capture of the first Alphan ship to visit Proxima and the resulting inquiry that gleaned its secrets, launching Proxima to the stars. After the war, the Alphan contingent of the provisional government tried to ban Juqall's holiday and introduce an education program denouncing the Proximan "theft" of its ship. The Terrans quickly intervened and violence was

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spared, but resentment lingers on both sides to this day; “Discussing Juqall in mixed company” is a new Terran phrase describing an incredible social gaffe.

THE PROXIMAN MIND

Proximans are naturally slow-moving, and this has led to a prejudicial perception of them as slow-witted as well. This first impression may be reinforced by the fact that Proximans are not overly talkative, and their speech seems to be slow and laboring. But anyone who has studied Proximan scientific papers, visited their scrupulously well-planned cities, seen their vast industrial factories, or spoken to any individual at length must be forced to come to the opposite conclusion.

Evolving under conditions where they might be forced to spend days curled up under their shields, riding out a solar flare, Proximans are deep and patient thinkers, perfectly content with their own company. Proximans seemingly never grow bored, as there are always conundrums or philosophical questions to be turned over and examined from every angle. Proximan ship crews are at an advantage in long deployments, for they need not waste much space or weight for entertainments, nor do they require them, being happy with a few words from their crewmates and the endless landscape of the mind. Proximans do not always recognize this difference in Alphans and Terrans and see both races, Alphans especially, as somewhat skittish and unfocused. One of the first Proxima-based passenger services after the war suffered through some very bad early press due to the fact that their ships started out on a two week passage, carrying nothing that the mostly Terran passengers would call “recreation facilities”. The thought of the Proximan cabin crew contentedly staring at the walls, lost in their own thoughts, while Terran passengers suffered cabin fever are amusing today, but at the time the results were so bad... several passengers suffered nervous breakdowns and had to be sedated, and a near-mutinous atmosphere developed... that it almost killed the fledgling Proximan passenger service. The Proximans quickly studied and rectified the situation, and this quick action along with a judicious marketing campaign saved the company.

Besides being deep and careful thinkers, Proximans are also hard and tenacious workers. They attack any problem they encounter with what one unnamed Alphan official called, in a moment of grudging admiration, “Slow-burn scattershot ferocity.” Rather than approaching a problem in a linear, ordered fashion, the average Proximan tries many different experimental angles, banging away until something works.

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While this means that the route from point A to point B is often circuitous, it also means that many discoveries are made along the way, often with more important applications than the original solution.

While being family-oriented, and intensely interested in their people as a whole, Proximans tend to have a keen self-interest. This feeling has a rational base, as Proximans feel they can best serve others by serving themselves. Much of their self-reflection is based on the idea of improving their own cognitive and emotional functioning in order to maximize individual potential; by doing so, they become better family members, better professionals, and better citizens, raising the bar for their peers and for everyone.

Proximans are deeply emotional beings, another assertion that may surprise many distant observers who see only a careful stoicism. Living within their culture, however, members of the other races proclaim Proximans to be steadfast in their love and diabolical in their hate. Proximans can be deeply sentimental; a trait that tends to put themselves at great odds with Alphans while simultaneously endearing themselves to Terrans. Like other facets of their personality, emotions build slowly and are not likely to surface immediately. Several TTA business deals have ended in warm handshakes, only to have the businesspeople return to Terra to find that the deal is suddenly off. An unintentional insult left unresolved during the ensuing travel time is usually the cause. On the other hand, Proximans tend not to hold grudges. A sincerely tendered apology in the above case is usually enough to get the wheels of commerce turning again. Alphans and Terrans, perhaps worried about continuing resentment over the war, are often loathe to go to Proxima for this reason, but they usually find that there are few lingering bad feelings. Why dwell on the past, after all, when there is so much work to be done for the future?

Proximans tend to be very conscious of the image they project to others, both in their own society and to foreign visitors. Among their own kind, this consciousness tends to be reflected in careful choices of clothing, ornamentation, face painting, etc. Each stratum has prescribed norms to follow in the type and extravagance of clothing and ornamentation allowed. Some Proximans like to bend these rules as much as possible. Among equals, one-upmanship is often the name of the game, with individual looking for an edge that will make them stand out. Others maintain a studied traditionalism, striving to appear “professional”, or readily identifiable in trade and / or stratum, to others. Among the

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upper strata, more extreme variations including surgical and genetic enhancement of features is common. To foreigners, this image-consciousness takes many forms, from trying to cover up the effects of the war on industry to a genuine helpfulness and looking after every aspect of a guest's comfort. Proximans are well-aware of the negative light in which many Alphans and Terrans view them. Their desire to reverse this trend stems not only from the practical concerns of attracting capital to their shattered economy but from a heartfelt desire to be seen as "equals" to the other races. While stung by their negative reputation, most Proximans are candid enough to admit that they are at least partly responsible for it.

Self-improvement is the Proximan watchword. Education and gaining new skills are important to them, and in fact constitute what many Proximans would call a good time. Education is not only a means of serving oneself and the people, but a way to escape one's strata. Proximans extend this concept of self-improvement not to just the mind but the body as well. Most Terrans and Alphans are fairly horrified by the casualness with which a Proximan will submit herself to radical structural or genetic surgery, especially on an experimental basis. Besides the hope that one will become a vanguard, a new and upwardly mobile commodity, a genetic goldmine, Proximans enjoy the philosophical implications of changing themselves, reveling in the resulting discussion about the connections between form and mind.

GENDER ROLES

On modern Proxima, females are still expected to be the leaders, family heads that are emulated by the female-cycle potentials. Potentials, whichever part of the cycle they are on, are usually portrayed as the limbs and organs of the female brain, locking them into a permanent subservient role. This sense of submission permeates all strata of Proximan life, with the potentials of the highest strata expected to fulfill the whims of the family's females, just as the middle strata's potentials are expected to serve theirs. This pattern is reflected in the society as a whole as well; as noted above, the overall ratio of potentials to females is 4:1. Divided by strata, there is a 1:1 ratio at the top, a 4:1 ratio in the middle and a 10:1 ratio at the bottom. Thus, the lower strata serve the upper strata's females as well as their own.

It is a great point of pride among most Proximans to be born "female of female", greater still to claim "female of female of female" pedigree, and so on. Genealogical records of dubious authenticity are often ban-



died about in support of these claims; one prominent Proximan politician recently resigned in disgrace when checks revealed that her great-grandmother was actually a potential; she had previously claimed “female of female” status back ten generations.

In the aftermath of the war, gender roles are being questioned. With the upheaval in social order and leadership, and with the decline of the religious strata that kept these gender role ideals in place, potentials see the opportunity to push for more equality.

GOVERNMENT

The Proximan homeworld is divided into nation-states, each with its own governmental structure. The most common arrangement is best described as syndicalist. The social strata, as noted above, are arranged by relative worth, and within these strata different families, often in traditionally-held professions, gather into power blocs. Government is generally run by a coalition of hereditary upper-strata families that constantly vie for position, or by a family group or individual elected by peers. Middle- and lower-strata groups rarely have a say in their representatives, and instead try to move up the social ladder; having a voice in government affairs is one of the perks of being in the upper strata.

In the years leading up to the war, Proxima was dominated by a single nation that held a monopoly on space technology. A world coalition was formed that essentially had this superpower milking personnel and resources for the purpose of expanding the space fleet against the Alphan and Terran “threat”. Spurred on by the church and scientists, and assured of the strategic and spiritual rightness of the cause, Proxima went to war. In the ruinous aftermath of the conflict, the superpower fell hard from grace. This left a power vacuum at the top which was temporarily filled by the Terran / Alphan provisional government. Once power was returned to the Proximans, however, chaos ensued.

The religious group, who had given upper-strata families their mandate through the force of spiritual truth, fell from grace and went sliding down the social ladder, leaving the scientists and other traditional ruling groups grasping for answers in the face of an angry majority. Middle- and lower-strata Proximans had crises of faith, and began to question the very nature of their social structure. In this new political environment, nations have shifted their borders and governments, power has been redistributed, and new forms of social order are being experimentally explored. Traditionalists, meanwhile, are trying to hold onto the old ways.

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Some traditionalists and other breakaway groups have formed guerilla units. In addition, there are a number of Proximan military ground force personnel that have not been accounted for; as some of these turn up among the dead in the aftermath of hit-and-run attacks, it is feared that several units of Proximan infantry are still active in the field and are continuing to fight the war, assisting or being assisted by the guerillas. What is most worrisome is that various live weapons left over from the invasion of Proxima, as well as hidden and forgotten caches of weapons, are undoubtedly still out in the field. While heroic joint efforts by Proximan, Terran, and Alphan military units to sniff out these pockets of resistance continue, it will no doubt be some time before all of them are rendered harmless...

Like all things they put their mind to, however, the Proximans are determined to go through their options and find a government that works, and Alphan and Terran officials maintain a strict policy of advising without interference. The Alphans and Terrans have recently helped the Proximans to set up a world trade authority to help regulate planetary commerce and it is hoped that this can be a successful model for the future.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

Proximan corporate structure is one that, on the surface, most Terrans would find very familiar. Proximan companies are based on strict hierarchies, an offshoot of the strata system. Strong leaders supervise underlings' work, who can slowly move up the ranks as they gain further knowledge and experience. However, the biggest difficulty faced by Proximan corporations is that they are often over-specialized. Corporations tend to be composed of members of the same strata, and often of a single job type. While this makes for an excellent pool of talent to draw from, the fact is that corporations need to draw from multiple disciplines: researchers, market analysts, accountants, engineers, laborers, and many others. Proximan corporations are thus more like guilds or unions. Thus, they must form partnerships with others that have the skill sets they require for a project, but the resulting entanglement of contractual red tape, conflicting legal responsibilities, and questions over ownership of intellectual property often bogs the process down.

In the wake of the war and resulting social upheaval, some Proximans are attempting to form Terran-style corporations or Alphan-style collectives. While the viability of these organizations have yet to be assessed in the long-term, it can be seen that new ideas are bringing a new era of



innovation to Proxima. On the other hand, these new-style companies often find themselves the target of harassment or even violence from traditionalist groups.

RELIGION

There are many religions on Proxima, but one in particular has had a major hand in shaping Proxima's destiny and will be discussed here. Known as Iwégeq, this religion has its origins in ancient antiquity and rose to power in the schism caused by the execution of Saaicha. Iwégeq's recognition of Saaicha as a saint cemented their power and allowed their rise to the upper strata. It is estimated that over 50% of Proximans are followers of Iwégeq.

Iwégeq holds that there is a creator-deity, a mother-figure called Geqa who gave birth to the Proximan people. Traditionally, Geqa lives in the earth below the Proximans, and her enemies come from the skies. The Proximan primary was considered to be the root of all evil, raining death (the solar flares) upon the people, to which Geqa responded by giving the Proximans their shield (some researchers point to this as a race memory of early genetic engineering by the seeder civilization). Geqa reveals her truth through her prophets, who can be almost anyone. With proper contemplation, prayer, and self-examination, any Proximan can become a channel for revealed truth, and it is paramount that other Proximans listen for these truths. When all truths are at last recognized and recorded, then the instructions for creating paradise will be clear. Iwégeq's holy book is a collection of proverbs and sayings, quotes and collected wisdom, some of which seems to contradict others. As further bits of revealed truth are collected, the book is expanded. Iwégeq religious gatherings are spent in perusal of the revealed wisdom, discussions led by church elders, and long periods of contemplation. Upon death, the faithful reunite with Geqa, under the earth, to live in paradise.

Iwégeq reached the zenith of its power just before the war. They urged the leaders and the populace to war against the Alphans and Terrans, and after the final, bitter defeat they have fallen hard, into the middle strata. There were enough faithful still to keep them from falling all the way or vanishing, but resentment and distrust among the disillusioned makes the future of the church look doubtful.

Iwégeq's followers are encouraged to undertake a spiritual journey at least twice in their lifetime; once upon reaching adulthood and once again sometime in old age. Known simply as the Journey, it is an oppor-

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tunity for the believer to ask the question that they hold deepest in their soul and seek an answer to it. Before a Journey, the seeker consults with an Iwégeq priest to try and determine the nature of the question. The question is never revealed to anyone, is always highly personal, and never has a simple, straightforward answer. Questions about an individual's true calling or their purpose in life are typical examples. The seeker sets out, taking nothing but what they can carry, and walks into the wilderness. They follow the old migration routes of the ancient Proximans, finding their food, relying on their wits, and always keeping their question in mind. After three or four weeks of walking, praying, and contemplating, the seeker might find the answer to their question... or might not. Either way, it is a link to the past and a way for the Proximan to reconnect with her primal roots.

ART

Proximans are active in a number of artistic pursuits, most notably sculpture. The Proximan sculptor Heoshdo especially has become well-known for her emotionally wrenching impressionistic portrayals of war atrocities (on all sides), utilizing scrap material from junked ships and ground vehicles melted and shaped with an industrial laser. The most unique art form practiced by the Proximans, however, goes back to their love of genetic engineering. Using engineered strains of the native fungi, Proximan artists grow and shape towering living sculptures, highlighted with subtly chosen colors, patterns, and bioluminescence. Proximans also hold public contests for surgeons and genetic designers to show off their most beautiful and useful body modifications. Part scientific trade show, part beauty contest and part design symposium, these exhibitions were at first attended by Terrans and Alphans out of morbid curiosity, but they have recently been attracting more serious attention from both scientists and artists. For the Proximans, of course, the line between science and art has always been hard to define.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD:

THE FACE OF PROXIMA

Unlike their first contact with the Alphans, the first meeting between the Terrans and Proximans ended in tragedy and sparked a destructive, two decades-long war. After the final cease fire, during the chaotic early days of rebuilding under the provisional government, it was clearly seen that the road back to Proximan self-sufficiency would be through trade and commerce. The problem was attracting investors. There was still plenty of resentment over the war. Information on conditions on Proxima

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was sketchy at best, and often colored by the stories of returning veterans describing the widespread destruction. The Proximans most widely portrayed on the news services were either war dead or huddled and miserable survivors, or victims of the post-war political upheavals. In addition, the propagandistic negative portrayals of them during the war didn't help most people's perceptions. Getting funding from major development corporations wasn't the problem... it was convincing smaller businesses to invest, and, more difficult still, convincing tourists and researchers to spend their valuable time there. News and propaganda had served their purpose... now it was time to put a face on the average Proximan, to get a different perspective on the situation.

To this end, the public relations arm of the TTA sent a correspondent, Peng Meiling. She was young, only seven years old when the war broke out, and had only been with the TTA for a few years. In addition, her father, a civilian contractor, had been killed during the battle for Mars when a stray Proximan missile struck his support ship. Placing a young and inexperienced correspondent on this job, one who had every reason to hold a grudge, was a real risk... but it speaks volumes of the confidence her superiors had in both her ability and objectivity.

Peng was one of the first Terran civilians not directly involved in the rebuilding effort to go to Proxima. She traveled in the spartan bunk of a military logistics support vessel rather than with the TTA consultants on an Interstellar Queen in order to keep as low a profile as possible. Her primary concern was to avoid any attempts by the government to control her itinerary or who she spoke to.

*Peng found herself placed with a TTA work crew. She went out daily on fake surveying missions, taking every opportunity to talk to the locals. She wrote their stories, holoed and photographed those willing, and sent her data back to Terra. While all of her accounts from this period are collected in her classic book, *Faces of Proxima*, Peng felt that there was still something missing. She had not found the "face of Proxima" yet... that one special story that really encapsulated the Proximan's character and spirit as a whole.*

It happened one day when Peng was nearing the end of her time on Proxima. The last few days had found her wandering away from the city, into the surrounding country, where she found a small road that led up a hill, with a low building perched atop the summit. She was halfway up when a piercing alarm sounded. It was the one she had drilled into her mind from the informationals during the voyage- the alarm for an impending solar flare.

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She had only minutes. Caught in the open and lacking the natural protection of the Proximans, she would be dead very soon. Her only hope was to reach the building. As she ran up the hill, struggling under the heavier gravity, the light from the primary grew notably brighter. She crested the hill and ran for the door... just as she got inside, there was a sudden bang and everything went dark. In recounting the incident, Peng notes "I didn't know what had happened at first... then, in some very dim light ahead of me, I made out three pairs of large, rather surprised eyes, orange and softly glowing..."

The building's doors and windows had automatically slammed shut against the building flare. The emergency lights kicked in, and Peng found herself in a small factory, being stared at by three very astonished Proximans. Two were young, one old, all of them apparently potentials. Peng stammered out an apology for intruding. The eldest stood up, approached, and stamped her feet hard on the ground, one after another, in the traditional Proximan greeting. Peng replied in kind, and then was astonished to find herself being addressed in broken but acceptable Terran standard. The elder introduced herself as Noona, mother to one of the younger ones and father to the other, whose mother was dead in the war.

Peng answered in practiced Proximan, introducing herself, thanking them for shelter, and finally explaining her mission. Noona looked back at her children, one of whom nodded to her. Peng notes, "Noona had the most marvelous voice... powerful, yet fragile. She told me that she had heard of me from the neighbors, that she had been thinking of seeking me out herself. Perhaps divine intervention had brought me to her, instead. Now, they were but a family of three lower-stratum craftspersons manufacturing decorations for religious festivals... but Noona herself had fought in the war, and had an interesting story to tell."

A few minutes into her tale, Peng knew that she had found the face of Proxima. Here is Noona's story, in her own words, as translated by Peng:

"For the longest time, I avoided getting involved. I didn't agree with the war, and I only wanted to keep working. I kept hoping the war would end, but it dragged on and on... we have always taken pride in our tenaciousness, and now it seemed destined to destroy us. Finally, my luck, my appeals, and my betters (those higher in strata) were all used up. I was conscripted, trained for several weeks, and assigned to a K4 Interceptor. By that time, of course, the K4 was outclassed, but they were

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having trouble keeping anything flying... at the beginning, they operated in packs of twenty ships. By the time I came in, my squadron could only muster seven.

I found, to my surprise, that I enjoyed the military. I met new people and learned new skills. I also listened to the propaganda, and started to believe that what we were doing was best for Proxima. I began to believe we could turn the tide of war. I even started to hate the enemy. I should have been old enough to know better. But it's hard, when you're being forced into something you know is wrong. You look for excuses, for rationalizations, for ways to save face... not for others, but for yourself, for the person you thought you were.

I was trained as a communications officer. We were deployed at a forward base, about halfway to Alpha... one of the few of our forward posts to survive so long, though we didn't know that, of course. Being in space wasn't so bad. My job was easy, and there was a lot of down time to think and plan for better days. Then we got our orders. There was a fleet headed for the homeworld... we were to intercept them and deal whatever damage we could. I was excited... actually excited. What a fool I was.

After awhile, we sighted the enemy. Then, all of my illusions were shattered. I'll never forget being at the communications panel as our other ships fell silent, one by one. We made an attack run. I have no idea if we hit anything. We were rocked by enemy fire. Then, there was one big hit, so big that I knew we must surely be reduced to atoms. Everything went black...

I woke up because I was cold... very cold. The light was very dim. The gravity generator had failed, and I was floating about. I tried to reach the bridge, and realized that the emergency airlock had slammed down. I looked through the airlock window, into the bridge... and saw stars. The whole front end of the ship had been breached... the others, all dead.

I pulled on a pressure suit to stay warm. I wondered why I had been spared, wondered if I would have been better off dying quickly... but after feeling sorry for myself for awhile, and having a good think, I went to work. I discovered that the engines were undamaged, and I still had good hull integrity, at least in the aft section. There were only two prob-

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lems; there were no controls, and even if there had been, I had no idea how to pilot the ship. I tried sending a few quick pulses to our base, but received nothing back... I found out later it had been destroyed.

There was plenty of food, water, and air... the stores had been meant to sustain six for an extended deployment, so I had the time... if I could figure out what to do. I found copies of all of the training manuals in the computer... engineering, piloting, everything I needed. To make a long story short, I floated around out there for four months. I studied and prayed. I learned everything I could about operating the ship. The K-4 was pretty low-tech, so it wasn't really that difficult. I connected the severed control lines to my workstation aft. Finally, I fired up the engines and started to head slowly home. It was touch and go, but I knew I was making progress. Finally, after weeks, I picked up some ships on the scan. I was so ecstatic at my success, so selfishly eager to tell my story, that it never occurred to me that they could be anything other than Proximans... but the voices coming back at me were ugly, foreign. Once again, I expected to die... but there was just a bump, and the airlock cycling, and some Terrans came aboard...

I was questioned for a long, long time... I don't know how many days. The hard part was being asked the same things over and over. They couldn't believe my story, they said... but when they inspected my ship, surely they must have seen I was telling the truth. Then they turned me over to the Alphans. They were much harsher, and used strong drugs that made me forget who I was. They also hit me, a lot I think, but I was so drugged that I can't remember clearly... just their faces, and the shouting, and being thrown into my cell at the end of each day. Finally, another group of Terrans came and took me away. These were nicer... not military. They spoke good Proximan. They mostly asked personal questions... about my family, what I did as a profession. They were finally convinced, I think, that I was just a harmless old potential who really had been shot up on her first mission, floated around, then patched up her ship and came home. They sent me to a facility on one of the moons... where I got to see other Proximans again. But these were sad, and wounded, and broken people... and I finally understood what all this foolishness had cost. Then, the war ended, and they let me go home. I still don't know what happened to my ship. I would have liked to see her, one more time... when I got back, I found everything in ruins. These two (gesturing to her children) are all that's left of my family... we relocated here and have been working ever since. I don't care so much for the past... I just hope to make a better future now. Can you tell your



people that? That we're done with the fighting, and we just want to... start over?"

Peng recalls, "It had everything... their tenaciousness, patience, work ethic, undying spirit... as well as demonstrating that not all Proximans were the bloodthirsty monsters they had been painted to be."

The Terran public seemed to agree. Faces of Proxima became a phenomenal bestseller, and Noona's image became inseparably associated with it. Peng had achieved her mission, as investments from all sectors began to rise. Peng recalls her pleasure upon seeing an advertisement for the newly-formed Trans-Galactic Spacelines, utilizing her book cover, with the slogan "Come see Noona's home".

Noona, for her part, has been interested only in working her craft in peace. One of the side effects of the book's success is that it has made Noona and the others Peng interviewed into potential targets for traditionalist guerillas... so far, however, things have been peaceful. Peng has scrupulously guarded the secret of Noona's exact whereabouts, working with the Proximan government to ensure that she gets a well-deserved... and financially and physically secure... retirement.

PROXIMAN LANGUAGE

Like Terrans, the Proximans speak a great many languages on their planet. In addition to the standard languages, there are many distinct sociolects, or dialects spoken by different social classes.

Yanqaholl, the language spoken by the dominant pre-war nation state, had become the de facto language of everyday Proximan interaction in the years leading up to the war. Spoken as a first language by almost 40% of the Proximan population and as a second language by another 35%, it was the language of cross-border commerce and science. During and after the war, Proximan linguists worked hard to refine the language and "fix" some of its inconsistencies with a view towards making it more acceptable in an eventual (victorious) post-war world. What has resulted, however, is confusion. Attempts to standardize streamlined, or "new" Yanqaholl, by forcing its use in publications has created much resistance and resentment among the majority, who like "old" Yanqaholl just fine. As it currently stands, both are official world languages, and publications may be found in either language. However, new Yanqaholl uses a completely different, scientifically-designed writing system

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that has been criticized as being ugly and lifeless and in any case has been very slow to catch on; older Proximans have thus been rendered functionally illiterate in several disciplines that use new Yanqaholl. In response, some publications have tried experiments like printing new Yanqaholl using the old writing system with annotations, and vice versa, which has for the most part only compounded the problem further. In response to this linguistic mess, some Proximan groups who still use other languages have curtailed or banned the use of any Yanqaholl variant in their districts and are now educating their young in their traditional tongues.

Yanqaholl is one of the things that has become sharply politicized on post-war Proxima, with reformists generally favoring new Yanqaholl and traditionalists favoring the old language. The problem is that while political affiliation can be predicted by which version people use, there are many exceptions. Many Proximans are loathe to use either in unfamiliar places because they don't want to be perceived as belonging to one side or the other, in case local authorities are not sympathetic to their views. Another complication is that Terran and Alphan diplomats and other officials are being taught new Yanqaholl, which lessens their credibility when speaking to traditionalist factions, who see them as tools of the provisional reformist government. Forward-thinking Proximans are thus learning Terran and Alphan standard, and foreign visitors are taking crash courses in "converting" new Yanqaholl to old, but the fact remains that the language situation will be muddled for some time to come.

Yanqaholl is classified as a synthetic, or agglutinative language. Basic structure is S-V-O. Root words are modified for tense but not gender or plurality, except in polite forms of the language. New Yanqaholl eliminates irregular verb forms, gives adjectives, adverbs, and verbs uniform ending sounds, and in most cases calls for only the infinitive form of the verb to be used. Old Yanqaholl uses a symbolic writing system, with root symbols modified with extra strokes denoting case, tense, etc., while new Yanqaholl uses an alphabetic system of 29 characters.

Yanqaholl words are based upon a bilateral, trilateral or quadrilateral grouping of consonant sounds that convey a base meaning. Adding different vowel sounds and various modifiers derived from "full" bi-, tri-, or quadrilateral sets gives specific meanings to the grouping. For example, the combination s-k-l denotes the concept of "animal". "Sak-lou" is a specific name for a type of small burrowing insect found on Proxima, while "eesikal" is a general term for "animal protein". Adding

the modifier “at” indicates “water” (the modifier “at”’s “t” is derived from t-k-y, conveying broader water-related vocabulary) and “hill”, a derivation from h-ll-g-ll, indicating danger, gives the word “sklathill”, literally “dangerous water creature”, a term used by Proximans during the war to refer to the Terran Hornet.

Both old and new Yanqaholl have very specific “formality levels”, featuring special word endings and salutations that are used when addressing those on a similar societal stratum, those below and those above you.

Yanqaholl features several consonant sounds absent from Terran and Alphan standard, though represented in other languages on those planets, as well as one unique to Proxima: a “lip smack” that is formed by “popping” the lips apart while inhaling sharply. Terrans and Alphans can approximate this sound but need much practice to get it as smooth, crisp, and loud as native speakers. The notes in the sections below are for those sounds that do not occur in standard Terran.

Yanqaholl consonant sounds:

b	β ¹
ch	d
g	h
j	k
l	ll ²
m	m ³
n	p
q ⁴ r	Ř ⁵
s	t
w	w̃ ⁶
y	• (lip smack / pop)

Vowel sounds:

a (father)	aa (cave)
aaɪ (may-in)	e (net)
ee (keep)	i (fish)
ii (tile)	o (oh)
oo (tool)	u (tub)

Vowel sounds can all be freely combined.

Notes:

1. bilabial trill

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2. voiceless alveolar lateral fricative
3. labiodental nasal
4. like k, tongue further back and mouth wider
5. uvular trill
6. velar approximant

PROXIMAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Appearance: 1.65 to 1.9 meters; 50 to 75 kgs. Skin tones vary by ethnic origin. **Potentials:** 1.25 to 1.45 meters; 45 to 70 kgs. Both have stocky builds with muscular limbs and an overall “chubby” appearance with slate gray skin.

Base Attributes:

INT +0	PER -1
WIL +1	CHA +0
STR +1	DEX -1
CON +2	SPD -1

Attribute Adjustments: None

Hit Points: 24

Skills: Computers (personal) +1, Lore (Proxima Centauri System) +4, Lore (Proxima Prime) +6, Etiquette (Proximan) +6, Science (genetics) +1, Speak Language (Proximan - native), Speak Language (Terran Language or Proximan - Basic).

Quirks: Acute Sense (Hearing), Acute Sense (Smell), Eidetic Memory, Fat Stores, Patience, Poor Sense (vision), Shell, Sunblind.



TERRANS

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

GENERAL

Terrans are bipedal humanoids of varying size, shape, and body feature. They exhibit strong sexual dimorphism and have functionally distinct male and female sexes. Humans, as both Alphans and Proximans suggest, lie “halfway” between these two races in terms of size and features. Genetic evidence reveals that all three races are somehow related, and the mystery of the “seeders” that theoretically launched life in one or more of the three planetary systems is being feverishly explored by scientists from all three races. What is most interesting is that humans show exceptional structural and genetic similarity to other Earth fauna, sharing up to 99% of their genetic structure. Alphans do not have this same level of similarity with fauna on their world, and Proxima lacks other large terrestrial forms of any kind. The implications of this data are being carefully studied, and Earth has become a popular destination for Alphan and Proximan scientists doing field research.

Ancient Terrans, while certainly surviving under difficult circumstances, did not face the extreme environmental pressures placed on the Proximans, nor was the range of dangerous fauna on Earth anywhere near that faced by the Alphans. Ancient humans instead found each other to be their most dangerous enemies. Wars were fought among humans as far back into history as their records recall, and probably for as long as they have existed. While not intellectually or physically superior to the other races, Terrans are flexible and adaptable to a wide range of circumstances, climates, and pressures. Terrans have a deep-rooted sense of competitiveness and will to survive, which makes them resilient and powerful allies... or adversaries.

STRUCTURE AND SENSES

Terrans come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. Males are taller and physically stronger on average than females. Females, on the other hand, have a greater resistance to adverse environmental conditions and are more adaptable in general. Males typically range between 165 and 185 centimeters in height and weigh between 50 and 85 kilograms. Human females typically attain heights of 155 to 175 centimeters and weigh

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in the range of 45 to 65 kilograms. Humans have five-fingered hands with opposable thumbs capable of fine manipulation and five-toed feet. The toes are used for balance only and cannot grasp. Humans usually stand with their weight on the balls and heel of the feet, as Proximans do. As doing so is sometimes a sign of disrespect on Alpha, this unintended faux pas led to some uncomfortable moments during first contact; luckily, the Alphans were quick-witted enough not to take offense, and the humans quick-witted enough to (somewhat awkwardly) imitate their hosts during the next encounter.

Terrans have oval skulls, with smaller eyes than Alphans or Proximans. Despite this, they can see very well. Scleras of the eyes are always white, and iris color is typically brown, though gray, blue, green, and other shades are possible as recessive traits. Humans have external ears shaped something like a ragged cone. Noses vary widely in shape, from large and pointed to small and flat. The jaw is larger than an Alpha's and smaller than a Proximan's, with a set of teeth adapted to an omnivorous diet. Humans grow a thick coat of hair on the tops of their heads, widely ranging in color from black to blonde, and in texture from straight and fine to wavy and course to curly or woolly. Humans also grow hair in varying amounts over their bodies, with males typically growing much more than females. This hair coat is strictly vestigial and no longer serves to retain body heat. Most males can also grow considerable amounts of hair on their faces and necks, which they may trim into a variety of ornamental configurations or remove altogether. Human skin color runs a wide range from pale whitish-pink to deep brown. Humans, like Alphans, exhibit a range of "racial" characteristics denoted by skin color, hair texture, and other body features, as will be discussed below. Human skin is not very thick or tough and is easily broken, burned, or torn; however, it heals quickly and only very serious injuries usually leave any noticeable scarring.

Humans can visually perceive a range of electromagnetic wavelengths between Alphans and Proximans, from about 400 to 700 nm. Similarly, their senses of hearing and smell are in between the two races in acuity.

Human voices are notable for two reasons. While the other races have some voice differentiation between the sexes, in humans the difference between the male and female voice is remarkably distinct. The human female's voice is pitched a full half-octave higher, on average, than the male's, which by itself is not unique. Males, however, have voice



boxes around twice the volume of females. This gives their voices a series of low harmonics, unique to the three races, that result in a strange resonance the Proximans term “shudder”. The human female’s voice lacks these low harmonics and so sounds very much more “pure” and “natural” to Alphan and Proximan listeners. Humans also have, in addition to their normal vocal range, the unique ability to produce a controllable falsetto. As a result, humans can produce a bewildering range of sounds and voices, which has made them the life of many a party on the other worlds. Human singers, especially males, are proving very popular entertainers among the other races, both for their skill and, for now, their shock value.



REPRODUCTION, AND LIFE CYCLE

Humans exhibit significant sexual dimorphism, and it is usually easy to tell males from females at first glance. Females, besides being typically shorter, have narrower shoulders and less muscle mass. Human females have a pair of mammary glands that vary widely in size and shape between individuals. Like Proximans, Terran mothers nurse their young. They also have significantly wider pelvic bones and accompanying subcutaneous fat deposits that give them a distinct flaring shape. Males are taller, wider-shouldered, narrower-hipped, and have more muscle mass, which they are further typically able to develop to a greater degree.

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Males are equipped with a penis of widely varying individual shape and size. Unlike Alphans, the testicles are exposed and dangle somewhat precariously in front of the thighs and behind the penis. While this exposes them to harm, it keeps them at a cooler temperature suitable for sperm production. Female humans, like the females of other races, carry their reproductive organs internally. External female genitalia consist of two sets of gate-like folds around the entrance to the vagina, as well as the clitoris, an organ that transmits sexual pleasure. Both males and females grow patches of pubic hair which, as on the Proximans, serves as a scent-based sexual signaling tool. For the most part, however, human sexual attraction is no longer based on pheromones, and since they tend to bathe with obsessive frequency, any scent link is now largely artificial. Humans may shave or trim their pubic hair into patterns pleasing to themselves or others, a practice that mystifies Proximans. Alphans, of course, typically find the whole idea of hair growing around the genitals to be either funny or disgusting.

The human gestation period is nine months long. Babies are born somewhat developed, with all senses functioning. As with the other races, human infants require care for several years before they begin to function independently. Male and female humans are very similar morphologically until puberty, when the secondary sex characteristics emerge. Humans enter puberty early as compared to the other races, typically around twelve years for females and a year or so later for males.

In later life, Terrans experience a slow decline in physical functioning. Females typically become infertile in late middle age. Males remain fertile for longer, typically well into their later years, though the libido tends to wane. Muscle tone, flexibility, and energy level are gradually lost as well, though mental faculties, if properly trained, can remain sharp for a lifetime. Terrans live an average of 120 years.

RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS

“Race”, in this case defined as the set of common characteristics that are used to differentiate members of the same species that live in different geographic areas, rather than as the signifier for planetary race, was (and sometimes still is) a source of major problems on Terra. Throughout history, humanity has exploited its own kind in the form of slavery or colonialism, and these conditions have often been linked to race. Groups were still struggling for racial equality under the laws in various Earth nations until as recently as one hundred years ago.

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Several things have happened during that time to begin the slow elimination of both physical racial differences and the geographic distinctions that go with them. The first was the development of global markets and travel. As people moved freely between previously remote locations and business, rather than nationalism, became the watchword, people of widely divergent cultures began to mix. This period, beginning in earnest only two hundred years ago, was followed by first contact with Alpha Centauri. For the first time, humanity confronted alien beings, and in so doing gained a new perspective on the universe.

The concept of “human race”, once considered a fanciful, idealistic dream, became much more tangible. If anything, it was easier to grasp than the old concept of race; any human, after all, could mate with any other human and produce viable offspring. Humans and Alphans, on the other hand, cannot interbreed. The obvious conclusion would seem to be that all humans everywhere, regardless of individual appearance, are the same species, and thus one people, but this realization was slow in coming for some groups who still insisted on quaint ideas of “racial purity” (these groups also tended to be anti-Alphan, so at least there was consistency).

The biggest change was yet to come, however. The Proximan War succeeded in uniting humanity as a single race in ways that first contact with the Alphans could not. The idea of “human race” was now neither a fanciful dream nor a tangible goal, but the very means of survival. Humans of all descriptions were forced to band together and pool resources to achieve victory... not for a single nation-state over another but for the entire planet against a threat that could conceivably kill them all, regardless of their appearances.

With the foundation of the Terran Federation just a few years ago, this trend seems to be continuing. Now, on a theoretically united world, national borders are more a matter of tradition and allocation of representation rather than inviolable lines bodily separating human from human. In a similar way, an individual’s unique set of features is now largely looked upon as part of their personal uniqueness, as well as an honorable badge of national or ethnic identity. As a result, more and more racial mixing among humans is taking place, and the children of these unions are becoming “standard” Terrans. There are still plenty of relatively isolated populations on the planet, and the many thousands of years of separation that produced racial distinctiveness will ensure that humans do not become “homogenized” for a long time to come.



One factor also limiting homogenization is the startling array of languages and dialects that humans speak. The situation is similar to that on Proxima with its many regional languages and sociolects, but Terra's catalog of tongues is greater still. While there is a Terran standard language, many local languages are still used either primarily or secondarily in small-scale business and social dealings. Most of these minor languages are facing extinction, however, and researchers are rushing to study and record their unique lexicons before they disappear.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

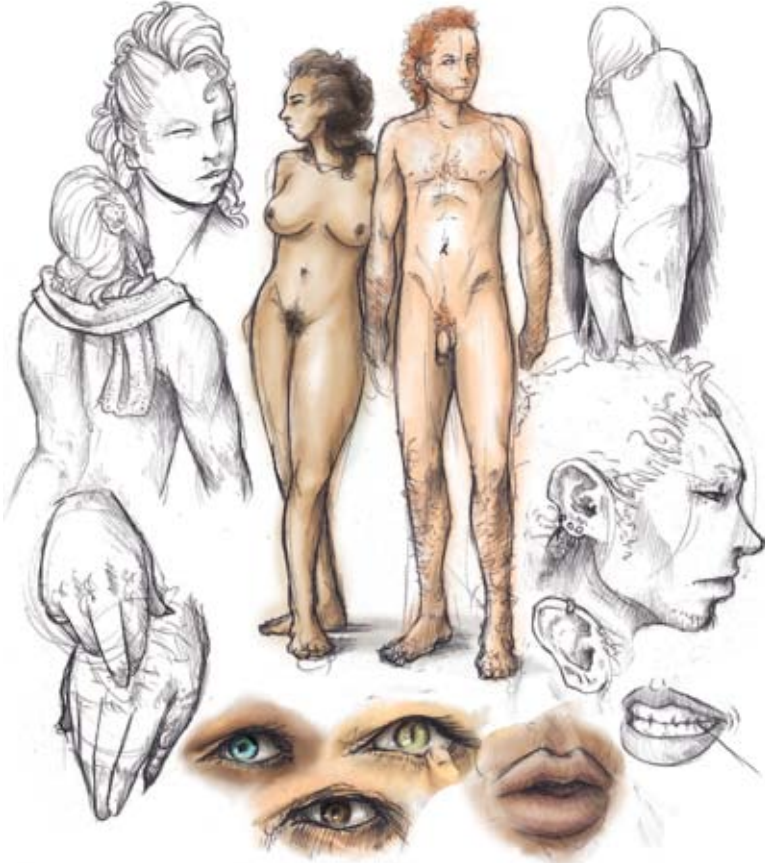
FAMILY STRUCTURE

Despite the huge range of cultural practices, Terran family structures retain remarkable consistency throughout Earth and its colonies. This axiom also holds true for the other races as well, indicating that family structure is a deeply instinctual undertaking that tends to override other cultural differences.

The most common Terran family structure is what has been dubbed the “nuclear family”, though in the wake of the tragic effects of thermonuclear devices during the war, this descriptive is falling out of favor. Terrans typically enter into monogamous relationships with a single partner, cementing the union with a religious ceremony. The couple raise any children born into the union, which is ideally supposed to last for life. Terran marriages of this sort also typically cement the male and female partners' families together, creating an extended family that acts as a social support structure and financial resource. There are many variations on this theme. In some human cultures, the extended family is quite important, while in others the concentration is simply upon the couple and their children.

While the lifelong, monogamous, legally sanctioned heterosexual union that produces offspring is held up as an ideal, many humans live varying lives. Individuals may remain single for life, or form sanctioned or unsanctioned homosexual partnerships. Individuals and couples may choose to remain childless. Couples may choose to have children together without forming a union, or females may decide to conceive and raise a child on their own. Unions may also be dissolved, one partner or another marrying time and again and having multiple children with different partners. “Serial monogamy” of this kind, with or without legal marriage, is often more common in actual practice than the idealized

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family form. Depending on the sub-culture, some of these arrangements are approved of and some are frowned upon.

Terrans tend to revere the elders in their families, holding them in esteem even if their contributions to society begin to wane. Elders, while usually not engaged directly in child-rearing, do have a major influence on the education of their young, and are often looked to as dispensers of wisdom. While many Terrans continue to work until the day they pass on, many others retire from active life and spend their remaining years in “retirement”, pursuing highly personal interests. Like Proximans, though, the elderly do not have a culturally-assigned role and many find themselves marginalized and pushed aside. In the Terran model, however, it is up to the individual to remain useful and engaged, whatever age they are.



CULTURAL STRUCTURE

Ancient Terrans began as hunter-gatherers, organizing into cities as agriculture was discovered. Over thousands of years, Terrans have struggled against their innate individualistic nature to form larger and more complex social structures that are increasingly democratic and egalitarian.

The majority of Terran culture is built upon the idea of independent individuals entering into collaborations to achieve mutual goals. While Terrans are innately competitive, they are also strangely social beings, who form partnerships not just for personal gain but because there is an underlying instinct to form communities.

For the Alphans, who are group-oriented by nature and form egalitarian rings, and Proximans, who are individualistic but stratify themselves by tradition and function, the typical Terran system of individuals entirely in charge of their own destiny seems a haphazard and dangerous way to live. Indeed, for many Terrans there is very little in the way of a social safety net. Terra has huge divisions between rich and poor, between technologically savvy and ignorant, between those with access to resources and those without. Unlike the Proximan strata system, there is often little responsibility taken by those on similar socioeconomic levels to support their fellows. Basically, Terran society repeats itself on many levels: a set number of individuals competing for a limited amount of resources, whether this means two townspeople fighting over access to a well or two TTA members fighting over access to interplanetary mineral wealth.

As a result, Terra is an anthropologist's dream- there are still places on Earth where people live (or are forced by circumstance to live) much as their ancestors have for thousands of years. Only a few kilometers away, there might be a completely modern city whose residents enjoy all that science and technology have to offer. It should be pointed out that there are technically no barriers to prevent anyone in modern Terran society from moving up the ladder, and in fact the most revered and respected Terrans are those who were born into humble circumstance and, to use the Terran phrase, "pulled themselves up by their boot straps". How likely it is that one born into low circumstances will be able to maneuver their way out without the support of others remains up for debate. Those concluding that Terra must be a cold-hearted and terrible place must be reminded that individual acts of kindness and charity abound,

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and efforts, scattered though they may be, to help the Terran underclass are ongoing.

It must also be noted that this system has allowed Terra to avoid the pitfalls that exist in systems with group identification and dependence, allowing individuals with brilliant ideas to have a freer hand at trying them, leading to breakthroughs. The results speak for themselves; while Terra was far behind Alpha, chronologically, in achieving spaceflight capability, by the time they made first contact with Alpha they were not only equal with the Alphans in terms of basic technology but had developed systems, most famously the defense shield, that Alpha had not yet discovered. It also allowed them to recover from Proxima's initial forays and rush new ideas into production. By the time the war ended, the Terrans had the best ships flying of any of the races.

THE TERRAN MIND

The natural competitiveness and aggression that allowed humans to survive against the elements and each other served them well in their primitive history, but once civilization was achieved it was sometimes channeled into destructive pathways. While all the races have fought wars among their own kind, Terrans made a special art out of it, even going so far as to use chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons against one another. The most recent and destructive of these wars actually directly delayed their achievement of regular commercial spaceflight by more than half a century. On the other hand, Terrans have proven that they can learn from their mistakes; technology developed as a weapon in an earlier worldwide conflict was adapted to allow them to achieve orbital flight for the first time.

The reasons for this internalized aggressiveness are difficult to pin down, but scientists from other races speculate that the relative bounty and safety of ancient Terra might have had something to do with it. On Alpha, the ancient peoples were forced to work together to keep ahead of the megafauna that hunted them. On Proxima, energy and food supplies were erratic. In short, ancient Alphans and Proximans could not afford to expend much energy or population in large-scale fights with one another, as their survival as a species often hung by a thread. Ancient Terrans, on the other hand, soon found themselves unquestioned masters of their environment, on top of the food chain, and unconcerned with sudden environmental disasters and climactic changes. Resources could thus be diverted into warfare with their own kind, which offered, as one Proximan researcher has wryly put it, "the best sport". Even in an

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age of plague, famine, and primitive medicine, Terra could afford to lose tens of thousands in population without threatening the survival of the species. While this has led some to mutter about the Terran urge to make themselves extinct, they obviously have a finely-honed survival instinct just as any other race does. After nuclear weapons were developed, they were only used in a very limited fashion, even though enough existed at various times to potentially sterilize their entire planet.

While their strong individualist streak does mean that most Terrans tend to put their own interests ahead of everything else, it also means that there is a great sense of personal responsibility and self-motivation inherent in their characters.

One of the more interesting observations, especially among Alphans, is that Terran males and females seem to have distinctly differing thought patterns. Although females and males on Terra are socially and legally equals, there are large patterns of behavior that seem to be favored by one sex or another. The distribution of certain kinds of work in Terran society is often pointed to, and broad sex-specific reactions to certain sets of hypothetical problems are often cited. Terrans tend to agree with these assessments, but whether they occur because there truly are innate male-female preference patterns or because of subtle gender-role cues still buried in the societal fabric remains a matter of hot debate.

As may be gathered by the accounts of inter-species warfare above, Terrans are a highly emotional people. Unlike the Proximans, who are slow to build up and slow to let go of their feelings, and Alphans, who tend to broadcast their feelings through their shifting skin patterns, Terrans can experience a quick, sometimes explosive, onset of feelings with little warning. While this sometimes makes them difficult to deal with in a rational manner, it also makes them interesting company, as Terrans can easily run through phases of happiness, sadness, anger, and melancholy in the space of a few moments, especially when under the influence of mind-altering substances. It also means that, for better or worse, Terrans can be emotionally spurred to quick action. Some Terrans, additionally, perform best when so driven. During the war this quality saved many lives. Unfortunately, the other side of the coin is rashness and rushing into a situation before fully assessing the consequences.

Terrans are also capable of great feats of intellectual prowess, and in general hold intelligence in high esteem. Terrans also appreciate physical ability and are very fond of sports, both on an individual basis and as

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part of a team. Even those Terrans not skilled at sports enjoy watching others participate, and can develop deep-seated attachment to teams representing their places of origin.

GENDER ROLES

Gender roles for Terrans have changed markedly over the last few hundred years. As noted above, Terrans exhibit fairly extreme sexual dimorphism, with females being significantly smaller than males. In ancient times, when strength was an asset in hunting and protecting the family, males became the dominant sex, in much the same way that Proximan females were able to exercise sway over potentials. The traditional “sphere” for males was thus providing, while that of females became child-rearing and taking care of the home. The large relative size of the human infant at birth means that pregnancy is a serious, and under primitive conditions, highly dangerous undertaking for the Terran female and involves a fair degree of physical limitation, especially in the latter stages. In the past, this biological fact had helped serve to handicap Terran females in their pursuit of careers, especially active or risky jobs.

Another factor was the fact that in pre-industrial Terran societies, as with all the races, the home was a center of production. Families manufactured needed items, prepared and preserved food, and completed other tasks essential to everyone’s survival. Much of this vital work was part of the female sphere. However, as industrialization and later computerization transformed Terran society from one dependent on tasks that require strength into one where intellectual prowess was key, and at the same time made available multiple products that transformed the home from a center of production to one of consumption, the traditional male and female roles began to dissolve. Telecommuting reduced the need to physically travel to a workplace, allowing female Terrans to rear children and continue their careers. Finally, economic realities meant that both males and females were expected to work, and similarly both were expected to take a hand in child-rearing. Today, Terran society officially considers males and females to be equals under the law.

Another factor was the fact that in pre-industrial Terran societies, as with all the races, the home was a center of production. Families manufactured needed items, prepared and preserved food, and completed other tasks essential to everyone’s survival. In early Terran society, with its distinct labor divisions, much of this vital work was part of the female sphere. However, as industrialization and later computerization trans-

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formed Terran society from one dependent on tasks that require strength into one where intellectual prowess was key, and at the same time made available multiple products that transformed the home from a center of production to one of consumption, the traditional male and female roles began to dissolve. Telecommuting reduced the need to physically travel to a workplace, allowing female Terrans to rear children and continue their careers. Finally, economic realities meant that both males and females were expected to work, and similarly both were expected to take a hand in child-rearing.

However, there remains a distinct gap in Terran society in the types of work the sexes pursue. Most Terrans themselves have no problem with the idea of dissimilarity between male and female thought patterns, or even chosen lines of work. The main concerns are ensuring that the law treats males and females equally, that there are no artificial barriers imposed on anyone's individual progress, and that society as a whole recognizes the sexes as moral and intellectual equals.

GOVERNMENT

Terrans have finally achieved worldwide government with the creation of the Terra Federation (TerraFed or T-fed in informal nomenclature). The Terra Federation is a representative system. It currently features a bicameral legislature, with all of the nations of Earth electing delegates to represent their interests, one from each nation in the Senate and a number derived from population in the House. An executive council, comprised of eleven members elected by the citizens from planetary districts, acts as the executive branch, with one member of the council appointed by his or her peers as spokesperson and de facto president. The long-term vision is to transform TerraFed into a parliamentary-style system, with individual citizens voting for parties that represent platforms rather than electing representatives for distinct nationalities or religions, but this option is still being studied and, in any event, it will certainly take time for Earth's peoples to get used to the idea.

The first task of the member nations is trying to standardize the election procedures for TerraFed representatives, as there have been endless alleged cases of ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, disenfranchisement of rival political or ethnic groups, and outright vote tally manipulation. While cases like this certainly taint the legitimacy of the government thus formed, TerraFed has only stepped in directly to overturn one election so far, as nations are still very protective of their election processes, which they see as one of the final vestiges of their old sovereignty.

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Earth had experimented with world government before, but early versions were often little more than weak confederations or advisory bodies that could advise and coordinate economic efforts but had no authority to enforce its provisions. The first contact with aliens, followed by the outbreak of the Proxima War, gave humanity its first real sense of being a united race (see above), and the necessities of a single powerful body to coordinate defenses and resource allocation during wartime overcame the individualistic suspicions of the vocal minority who still deeply mistrust the idea of a worldwide government. The fact that access to space is allocated exclusively by the Terran Trade Authority only adds to their ire. Officially, TerraFed insists that this is only a temporary measure, made necessary by the need to ascertain minimum operational standards for what is still a very new frontier; critics claim that the TTA is, in effect, a fascist economic system that distributes favor to the privileged, and that the massive profits reaped by those in the loop will not be easily given away.

The current Terran government faces three major problems in these tumultuous post-war years, and their success at addressing these problems will go a long way to determining the long-term success or failure of the great experiment. The first problem is that of bureaucracy. In forming TerraFed, streamlining was seen as essential; the biggest argument that the dissenters held was that big government means big bureaucracy and slowed response times to individual members' concerns. While the basic system of TerraFed is bare bones, the reality of addressing member nations' needs and demands has saddled the government with a lot of unforeseen baggage.

For example, the need to ensure security for member nations necessitated the formation of a large semi-military body for the resolution of disputes. This was planned for, but the further necessity of an oversight bureau to watch over the security force and guard against favoritism, traditional preferences, the presence of political vendettas, etc. was not. Several brewing rebellions in response to grievances with the security force's procedures were quelled only after TerraFed agreed to this oversight committee... the formation of which caused other member nations to complain about "bureaucratic waste". Stress over this situation caused one representative to resign and a senator to be censured for throwing his shoe during a subcommittee meeting.

The second problem is wryly described by one unnamed official as "honoring diversity while overcoming it". What they mean is that

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TerraFed wishes to be as inclusive and respectful of old national custom and religious belief as is possible; the wholesale elimination of cultural identity and national heritage is not the goal. At the same time, the whole point of world government involves some degree of compromise and homogenization, which some members are (sometimes violently) resisting. The “*Three-Day Coup*” in Australia, with military forces loyal to deposed former prime minister Preston attempting to launch an airstrike on a TerraFed spaceport in Indonesia, is the most famous example of this. In addition to the demands of the member nations, TerraFed finds itself faced with hundreds of domestic terrorist groups, motivated by thousands of different ideals. Juggling its new responsibilities while keeping an ear to the ground has not, to say the least, been an easy task for the fledgling government. The other races watch with curiosity and trepidation, for without Terran stability the road back will be a far longer and harder journey.

The third problem is the greatest: trying to integrate people and nations of wildly different economic levels into the Terran family. With first contact, Terra had found itself giddy with excitement. Economic expansion due to inter-system trade with Alpha was touted by many at the time as the elixir that might finally be able to eliminate poverty and want on Earth. Instead, Terra and Alpha soon found themselves embroiled in a disastrously expensive and destructive war with Proxima. Earth must now take care of itself, as well as help to rebuild Proxima and assist Alpha in getting back to its feet.

In the process, the economic fortunes of the poorest citizens, and the conditions under which they lived, actually regressed further. The economic future of Terra depends on having an educated, healthy, and skilled populace. Even with massive spending on remedial education and technical programs, however, a disturbing percentage of Terra’s population is so far behind the curve that they stand no realistic chance of ever being able to contribute to expanding the economy. As Representative Jorge Medeiros (6th District, Brasil) puts it, “We have a treasure trove that we can see but cannot reach.” TerraFed has admitted as much, laying out as its long-term goal the maximization of the next generation’s potential. With the staggering costs of the war and the ongoing cost of rebuilding and rehabilitation, however, it remains to be seen if these well-intended promises can be kept. Economic experts insist that they must be, for the continued health and expansion of Terran influence in space depends on having the personnel trained and willing to do so.

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Despite these problems, there have been relatively few instances of outright rebellion or refusal to join. Given the choice of sending representatives or being excluded from access to the markets opened up by the Terran Trade Authority, most nations have thrown in their lot with TerraFed, albeit with a lot of grumbling. Whether the grand experiment will succeed in ushering in a new era of prosperity or collapse into anarchy and nationalist bickering remains to be seen.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

Terran corporations come in many forms, but the primary structure, adopted by the TTA, is that of a collaborative hierarchy that forms a pyramid. At the top is an executive or an executive board, who report to stockholders if the company is publicly traded. Below are various ranks of managers in smaller and smaller divisions, leading to larger and larger numbers of low-level workers. In the ideal corporate structure that is often popularly touted, lower-rank employees, through gaining skills and favor, might move up the ranks. In practice, companies often trade top executives and generally do not promote from within. Also, many specialists, technically of middle rank, may actually be of far greater importance to the operation of the company than the topmost executives.

The modern Terran corporation, while maintaining this centuries-old chain of command, rarely keep centralized physical offices except for specific functions, like entertaining customers or warehousing supplies. Most employees work remotely, patching into the company's secure network from wherever they live. If their function mandates that they keep an office, they may rent one in whatever space is available rather than cluster together in a single building.

Most Terran corporations are privately-owned. Government-owned corporations and collectives gained a horrible reputation on Terra starting about 200 years ago, mostly through association with a number of oppressive centrally-controlled governments that existed at the time. (This is, incidentally, why Terrans have such a seemingly irrational irritation at Alphan governmental structure.) This is also what puts the TTA in such a delicate position. Corporate views on the TTA's enforced monopoly are as mixed as individual peoples' opinions. In addition, public relations statements may or may not reflect the real corporate opinion. Many companies fully realize that they only exist because the TTA is holding their bigger cousins in check. Many others see the TTA as their only roadblock to real profits.



RELIGION

Terrans practice a wide variety of faiths, although Alphan and Proximan researchers note that many of these faiths are very similar in structure and teachings. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Mormonism, for example, all rely upon the same basic set of revealed scripture for their base. The fact that they have so much in common has not stopped members of these faiths from killing each other over the years.

In fact, many of the earlier wars in Terran history were directly precipitated by disagreements over faith. In their histories, Alphans and Proximans have had deadly fights among their own kind over religious beliefs, killing thousands in the process... but Terrans took this sort of warfare to a new level, in some cases even resorting to attempted genocide, with a toll of millions.

That being said, religious conflict on Terra has, like other sorts of inter-species conflict, taken a back seat to the cooperation needed for the war effort and rebuilding process. Another factor in this “mellowing” process has been the rise of open agnosticism and atheism, as well as the relegating of religion to the status of a comforting custom, rather than as a direct means of self-betterment.

The discovery of other life and the recognition of other faiths has seemed to have an eye-opening effect on most believers; many say that even though they retain their faith, they see that there is more to the universe than what dogma and scripture alone can teach. For many Terrans, though, faith is still an all-important facet of life. Terran missionaries have been active in the rebuilding process as well, dispensing charity and proselytizing to their new alien audiences in the process.

ART

Terrans are as active in the visual arts as the other two races, and have produced comparable masterworks throughout their long history. If one Terran art form can be said to stand out for its range of expression and wide variety of forms, it must be music. Terrans are sometimes even known colloquially among Alphans as “the musical people”. While Proxima and Alpha have, of course, developed musical forms of their own, the Terrans have taken the art to new levels, developing a dizzying number of styles and variations, produced on an incredible variety of instruments, some of which the uninformed alien listener might have trouble identifying as musical at all.

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Terrans' love for music is so deeply ingrained that most individuals know several songs by heart. While music is taught in Alphan and Proximan education systems, Terrans go a step further and utilize music as a medium for transmitting information about other disciplines as well. A Terran child might be encouraged to learn her multiplication tables or historical dates through embedding the information in a ditty, for instance. Similarly, Terrans integrate music in seemingly everything; their theater, official ceremonies, product advertisements, and many other places and situations the other races sometimes find odd. TTA data shows that music has been the number one cultural export product to Alpha for four years running, with the numbers expected to keep rising as more and more Terran media is traded with Alpha and Proxima.

TERRAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Appearance: 1.65 to 2 meters; 45 to 85 kgs. Skin tones vary by ethnic origin.

Base Attributes:

INT +0	PER +0
WIL +0	CHA +0
STR +0	DEX +0
CON +0	SPD +0

Attribute Adjustments: Terran characters may increase one or more Attributes up to a total of +3 (each of 3 Attributes by +1 or one Attribute by +3, etc.). They must also reduce one Attribute by -1.

Hit Points: 20

Skills: Computers (personal) +1, Lore (Sol System) +4, Lore (Native planet) +6, Etiquette (Terran) +6, Speak Language (Terran Language - native), Speak Language (Any - Basic).

Quirks: One positive Quirk of choice.





PATHS

In the *Terran Trade Authority Roleplaying Game*, beginning characters have had lives prior to the start of the game. They all had childhoods, likely spirited and confused adolescent years and possibly even some form of career, job or profession prior to the game's start. In some circumstances, the characters may have been combatants in the Proxima War. Even if they didn't actually fight in the War, they were, no doubt, affected by it greatly.

All characters, no matter their age and race, have some measure of skill and talent to fall back on and use in day-to-day life. In the game, this is represented by Paths; the collections of skills, talents and traits unique to your character.

Paths are not simply careers that a character is bound within. The Paths your character has is the sum total of your character's life experience to date, and based on several factors such as region of birth, family background, careers and the character's own personality.

In selecting one or more Paths for your character, in effect, you build a unique character class that applies to your character, constructed from the game mechanics most suited to his past, rather than simply selecting a single Archetype or template that is applied to all characters of the same Race.

HOW MANY PATHS?

The number of Paths a player may select for her character is limited by the GM. Normal campaigns typically find characters having two or three Paths. Grim and gritty campaigns might find characters restricted to only one Path or perhaps receiving only half the normal Build Points per Path selected. More heroic games could find characters with four or even more paths under their belt.

It should be noted that players are under no obligation to select more than one Path. It is a perfectly valid option to select a Path you like and stick with it. In such a situation, the player simply receives more skill ranks to allocate in that single Path.

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For example, Alison is building a new character and her GM has informed her that the campaign is limited to three Paths. She selects her background Path (Urban) which takes up one spot and has two Paths left. She finds she really likes the idea of her character (a Terran criminal from Australia) remaining true to his city slicker roots and selects the Street Gang Path as her second choice. After allocating her skill ranks among the Street Gang preferred skill list, Alison decides she likes this Path and elects to select it for a second time meaning she receives another allotment of skill ranks that she is free to spend on the Street Gang Path preferred skills.

Some Paths, however, may only be selected once while others have pre-requisites for entry. Players should familiarize themselves with the Path requirements of any Paths they believe relevant for their character.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A PATH?

Paths are essentially a collection of skills, special abilities, quirks and attribute adjustments available to the character. Each Path has a set number of skill ranks available to the character. Players are free to allocate these ranks among the skills available to their Path.

ATTRIBUTE ADJUSTMENTS

Many Paths will alter a character's base Attribute ratings in some manner. This could be a bonus or penalty to a primary or secondary Attribute.

The first time a Path is followed, the character receives the first Attribute Adjustment listed. The second time the Path is followed the character receives the second adjustment listed and so on. If a single Path is selected more than 3 times, the Attribute adjustments for the fourth and subsequent selections are ignored.

ASSIGNING SKILL RANKS

Each Path comes complete with a list of Preferred Skills available to characters of the Path along with a set number of skill ranks that the player may spread among any and all Skills on that Path's preferred list.

In addition, players may purchase ranks in skills not found on their Path's preferred list but at a much increased cost. Players may allocate 3 of their allotted skill ranks to purchase a +1 rank in a skill not found on their Path's preferred list.

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Players may not allocate more than 3 ranks on any single Weapon (including Brawling) or Mode skill and no more than 4 ranks on any other single skill. If the character has one Path, that means no single (non-Mode or Weapon) skill can be increased above Rank +4. Characters with two Paths cannot have a single skill above rank +8 and so on.

QUIRKS

Each Path also has a list of Quirks commonly encountered in characters from the chosen Path. Players may select a Quirk for their characters from this list by forfeiting 2 skill ranks from those gained from the Path. In other words, if the Path has 12 skill ranks available, a player may opt to take only 10 skill ranks but also gain a Quirk. This skill rank cost can be eliminated if the player also selects a negative Quirk. When selecting a negative Quirk, the player may opt for any negative Quirk for which they meet all pre-requisites (i.e. appropriate race, etc.).

STARTING GEAR

Finally, each Path has a list of gear, equipment, magical trinkets, wealth and other property. The character starts with all relevant equipment as listed on each Path he possesses. This should be recorded on the player's character sheet. Equipment is only received the first time a Path is followed while any credits received from Path selection can be multiplied by the number of times the Path is followed.

Note: Gamemaster's are encouraged to design new Paths as suits the needs of their individual campaigns using the Paths presented here as examples. New Paths will also be presented in future game supplements.



Roleplaying Game



BACKGROUND PATHS

All characters are familiar with certain basic skills relating to their respective childhoods and upbringing. Each player should read the description of his character's home system and planet in the *TTA Universe* section along with the racial details found under Race, to familiarize himself with the specific characteristics of the society and culture in which the character was raised.

All characters *must* select a Background Path. This is the absolute minimum a character must have to play the game. Although each playable race is quite distinct, there are certain general categories into which most backgrounds can be placed, as follows:

RURAL

Individuals of this Path were raised in a small village or other relatively undeveloped settlement. They will have knowledge of the customs of their native people, including familiarity with local laws, traditions, and the village's main source or sources of livelihood (agriculture, fishing, mining, warfare, etc.). More specific knowledge includes the ability to approach the proper individuals for shelter, aid, and guidance and to follow proper manners of speech and action. Outsiders tend to stand out in close-knit communities of this sort, where, for the most part, everyone knows each other.

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: STR +1 or CON +1

Skill Ranks: 6

Preferred Skills: Animal Handling, Drive (civilian), Handicraft (artisan), Literacy, Lore (agriculture), Profession, Ride, Survival (select one), Swim.

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Alcohol tolerance, Animal Empathy, Athletic, Attractive, Pet, Single Minded, Stealthy, Strong Willed, Swift, Terrain Familiarity (select one), Tough.

Starting Gear: Garments (casual), work boots; Backpack or rucksack; bedroll; 250 credits.

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URBAN

Individuals of this Path were raised in a city or other relatively large and civilized settlement. They will have knowledge of the customs, laws, and mores of their particular city, and will understand the concepts of division of labor, monetary exchange, and taxation. More specific knowledge includes the ability to navigate city streets, identify figures of authority, find or avoid shadier parts of town, and follow public ordinances. Individuals who do not hail from this background can become lost or disoriented in any large or unfamiliar city. Conversely, city-dwellers are often woefully unsuited to survival in uncivilized locales.

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 or WIL +1

Skill Ranks: 6

Preferred Skills: Appraise, Computers (personal), Drive (civilian), Etiquette, Handicraft (fine arts), Literacy, Lore (city or region), Lore (history), Lore (law), Lore (streetwise), Navigate, Profession, Survival (Urban).

Special Features: None

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Alcohol Tolerance, Athletic, Benefactor, Highborn, Pet, Rich, Windfall.

Starting Gear: Garments (casual) or Garments (business); shoes; 500 credits.

OFFWORLD

Individuals of this Path were raised in either an orbiting space station or one of the many mining or manufacturing stations scattered throughout the three systems and beyond. They will have knowledge of the customs of their native people, including familiarity with local (possibly unofficial) laws and traditions of the outpost or station. They also tend to gain some skill in the primary purpose of the station (mining for instance). Offworld characters are often viewed as rough and lawless by those who live planetside.

Prerequisites: Terran only

Attribute Adjustments: CON +1 or WIL +1

Skill Ranks: 6

Preferred Skills: Administration, Balance, Computers (personal), Etiquette, First Aid, Gambling, Handicraft (artificer), Literacy, Lore (station), Lore (mining), Lore (star system), Pilot (small spacecraft), Profession.

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Available Quirks: Alcohol Tolerance, Engineering Genius, Good Balance, Multitasking, Strong Willed, Tough, Zero0G Training.

Starting Gear: Garments (casual); work boots; berth or apartment aboard station or installation; rucksack; bedroll; 250 credits.

OUTCAST

Individuals of this Path will have either fled or been driven from their native planet as outcasts, or refugees, or will have decided to emigrate and travel in order to find employment, adventure, and so forth. They generally have some knowledge of their native society and other backgrounds, depending on their particular situation. More specific knowledge includes the ability to remain fairly inconspicuous when entering a new area, identify potential sources of temporary work or financial opportunities, and avoid conflicts with unfamiliar laws and customs. Individuals of this background are often treated with mistrust and suspicion.

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: PER +1 or WIL +1

Skill Ranks: 6

Preferred Skills: Brawling, Computers (personal), Deception, Disguise, Drive (civilian), Literacy, Lore (city), Lore streetwise), Survival (urban), Swim.

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Alcohol Tolerance, Light Sleeper, Tough.

Starting Gear: Garments (casual); shoes; rucksack or backpack; sleeping bag; 100 credits.





ADVANCED PATHS

ASTEROID MINER

Out on the new frontier, there's plenty of hard work to do. You do some of the hardest- feeding the insatiable fires of industry, one floating space rock at a time. You prospect, you mine... sometimes with high technology equipment and robots, other times with your own hands. You have to be cool- one mistake could be your last. There are wildcatters, pirates, and the competition to worry about. But you're freer out here than cooped up in some office. The quiet vastness beckons... and you sure can't beat the views.

Prerequisites: Terran or Proximan only

Attribute Adjustments: STR +1 / CON +1 / STR +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Climb, Computers (personal), Demolitions, Engineering (mechanical), Engineering (structural), First Aid, Gambling, Handicraft (artificer), Handicraft (artisan), Lore (station), Lore (mining), Profession (miner), Science (metallurgy), Science (geology), Search.

Available Quirks: Alcohol Tolerance, Good Balance, Heavy World Experience, Multitasking, Tireless, Tough, Windfall, Zero-G Training.

Starting Gear: Berth aboard mining station or installation; Garment (casual); work boots; mining tools; canteen; first aid kit; portable glow lamp, respirator mask & tank; 500 credits.

COLONIST

You've always yearned for a better life, a chance to start over. Maybe you want to escape the overcrowded cities of home. Maybe you long for new horizons and a simpler lifestyle. Or maybe you want to be a part of creating a new, better society. So you left your old life behind and went to the stars. But taming a new planet can be a dangerous and unpredictable affair. New flora, fauna, weather patterns, and other, greater mysteries await you on your new home. Not to mention the problems posed by your fellow colonists...

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: WIL +1 / CON +1 / STR +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Roleplaying Game

Preferred Skills: Administration, Animal Handling, Climb, Computers (personal), Cook, Drive (civilian), Drive (watercraft), Engineering (any), First Aid, Handicraft (any), Literacy, Lore (agriculture), Lore (nature), Lore (planet), Lore (star system), Profession, Survival (select one), Swim, Theology, Tracking, Weapon (rifles).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Animal Empathy, Attractive, Athletic, Disease immunity, Heavy World Experience, Light World Experience, Pet, Strong Willed, Terrain Familiarity, Tireless, Tough.

Starting Gear: hiking boots; backpack; sleeping bag; tent; one of: atmospheric analyzer, soil analyzer or survival suit; canteen (built in filtration); first aid kit; small cottage on colony world; self-heating rations (7 days); 375 credits.

CRIMINAL

You also see the challenges of the new frontier... but through accident or design, you operate on the other side of the law. There is a lot of money to be made, and you frankly don't care how you make it. Suckering colonists with fake goods, pilfering personal treasures from passengers on pleasure cruises, or robbing financial institutions with brute force- all lead to the same results- profit from the weak, foolish, and undeserving. Criminal characters might be burglars, con men, prostitutes, pick pockets, hackers or any other nefarious type who cares little for the ways of law and order.

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: DEX +1 / PER +1 / DEX +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Appraise, Balance, Brawling, Climb, Computers (personal), Computers (mainframe), Cryptography, Deception, Disable Mechanism, Drive (civilian), Evade, Forgery, Gambling, Intimidate, Lore (streetwise), Search, Seduction, Slight of Hand, Stealth, Survival (urban), Weapon (pistols), Weapon (small blades).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Ambidextrous, Attractive, Good Balance, Nimble Fingers, Quick Reflexes, Sensual Voice, Slippery, Stealthy, Stunning, Swift, Windfall.

Starting Gear: crowbar; hackcard; lockpick set or lockpick set (electronic); nightvision goggles; personal communicator; knife; civilian pistol of choice; small apartment; 200 credits.

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DIPLOMATIC CORP OFFICER

You too serve the government and people of your home planet... but you are the mirror opposite of the soldier. Armed with an extensive knowledge of protocol and alien etiquette, you are there to broker deals, smooth over troubles, initiate new programs and keep the peace using only your wits, charm, and guile. Sometimes it's a thankless job ... but you know that you're the one greasing the wheels of interplanetary trade and cooperation and that no one could get along without you.

Prerequisites: CHA +0

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 / PER +1 / INT +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills:

Available Quirks: Acting, Attractive, Benefactor, Commanding Voice, Diplomatic immunity, Fame, First Contact Specialist, Highborn, Political Influence.

Starting Gear: Garments (formal); shoes (formal); nice apartment in major metropolitan area; civilian ground vehicle of choice; recaller; personal communicator, databuddy; personal computer; heads-up display; non-linear junction detector; nanobeacon; 2500 credits.

FLEA AGENT

Space is a dangerous and unforgiving place... and that's without the lawlessness that often crops up on a new frontier. Your job, on paper, seems impossible- monitor and watch the trackless depths, keep tabs of the hundreds of merchants, military, and pleasure craft that flit through the void, and inspect the thousands of cargoes that pass through the ports. That doesn't include trying to track fugitives, find missing persons, or mount rescue operations out there. It's a tough job, but you and your colleagues are ready to do it.

Prerequisites: Terran only

Attribute Adjustments: PER +1 / RC +1 / RC +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Brawling, Command, Computers (personal), Concentration, Deduce Motive, Defensive Martial Arts, Diplomacy, Drive (civilian), Etiquette (FLEA), Evade, First Aid, Intimidate, Investigate, Literacy, Lore (city), Lore (star system), Lore (streetwise), Pilot (medium spacecraft), Weapon (pistols),

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Weapon (rifles), Weapon (hafted).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Athletic, Commanding Voice, Fearless, Formation Fighting, Quick Reflexes, Single Minded, Strong Willed, Tough.

Starting Gear: FLEA uniform (light combat armor); personal communicator; binocular (electronic); handcuffs(x2); Head-up display; databuddy; personal cimmunicator; recaller; pistol of choice; stun baton; small apartment in city or space station; access to AAF171 Panther or SSF21D Cutlass spacecraft (owned by FLEA); 850 credits.

FREE TRADER

When you look to the stars, you see more than questions to be answered or worlds to explore... You see new markets! Trade between Earth, Alpha, and Proxima is booming in the post-war exchange of culture. There are the colonies that need equipment and comforts from back home, while back home needs the raw materials and products from the colonies. There are perils- space hazards, pirates, and worse... but you press on, serving your customers and ever seeking new ones.

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 / CHA +1 / PER +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Administration, Appraise, Computers (personal), Deception, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Drive (civilian), Etiquette, Handicraft (any), Literacy, Lore (city), Lore (planet), Lore (star system), Lore (streetwise), Profession, Speak Language (any), Weapn (pistols).

Available Quirks: Acting!, Athletic, Benefactor, Heavy World Experience, Light World Experience, Tireless, Windfall, Xeno-Tolerant.

Starting Gear: Databuddy; rundown SCF28 Freighter or equivalent (use Skymaster stats with -1 to all rolls); 10,000 credits in trade goods; 1000 credits



GRIZZLED VETERAN

The military life taught you a lot... but after awhile you realized that it was time to move beyond that and see what other adventures could be found, and what sort of life could be had following your own orders instead of others'. Your military training has taught you a lot. How you parley it into a career is up to you. Will it be mercenary work? Consulting? Flying your own ship? The possibilities are endless...

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: RC +1 / RC +1 / CR +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Artillerist; Brawling; Climb, Command, Concentration, Defensive Martial Arts, Demolitions, Disable Mechanism, Drive (military), Etiquette (military), Evade, First Aid, Lore (tactics), Lore (planet), Offensive Martial Arts, Survival (select one), Swim, Weapon (any 4).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Athletic, Burst Fire, Commendation, Cyber Boost, Fame, Fearless, Formation Fighting, Light Sleeper, Pain Tolerance, Quick Reflexes, Terrain Familiarity (select one).

Starting Gear: light combat armor; rucksack; canteen (filtered); goggles (UV); heads up display; first aid kit; nightvision goggles; rations (MREs) x7; boots (hiking); race appropriate rifle; combat knife; 1000 credits.

HOTSHOT PILOT

You're faster than a diving hawk, quicker than a cat, and crazy like a fox. Fast flights and impossible maneuvers are your meat and drink. When you strap yourself into the cockpit, you become one with your machine. Whether you're a private operator on a racing circuit or piloting one of the newest military fighters, you know you're among the elite... and always on the prowl for the next adrenaline rush.

Prerequisites: DEX +1

Attribute Adjustments: DEX +1 / PER +1 / DEX +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Astrogation, Balance, Commad, Computers (tactical), Concentration, Defensive Martial Arts, Drive (civilian), Etiquette (military), First Aid, Litercay, Lore (tactics), Lore (star system), Pilot (any two), Swim, Weapon (pistols).

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Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Athletic, Benefactor, Commendation, Cyber Boost, Fame, Fearless, Formation Fighting (space combat only), Multitasking, Pitch and Yaw, Quick Reflexes, Redline, Zero-G Training.

Starting Gear: race appropriate pistol; flight suit & helmet; rucksack; boots (hiking); light spacesuit; Avery Frost Orion or equivalent; 1500 credits.

INTERSTELLAR COURIER

In a society with faster-than-light travel, some cargoes need to be faster still. Precious medical supplies, small and ridiculously valuable items that need the personal touch, important documents that may avert a crisis- this is where you step in. Working for a company or government or as an independent operative, you make sure that whatever you carry gets into the right hands in a timely manner... or else!

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: SPD +1 / DEX +1 / PER +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Administration, Astrogation, Computers (personal), Concentration, Cryptography, Deduce motive, Diplomacy, Drive 9civilian), Etiquette, Literacy, Lore (city), Lore (planet), Lore (law), Navigate, Pilot (small spacecraft), Profession, Speak Language.

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Benefactor, Eidetic Memory, Pitch and Yaw, Redline, Single Minded, Swift, Tireless, Windfall, Xeno-Tolerant.

Starting Gear: Databuddy; recaller; personal computer; GalPOS; Light spacesuit; personal communicator; Errand Mek; BE28 Sky-master or equivalent; 1000 credits.

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OFFICER

You are a graduate of one of the great military academies, heir to a tradition of excellence. You're going to need every bit of that training, too... warfare has become a lot more complicated, and the dangers ever greater. The hazards of alien worlds must be accounted for, and the yawning vacuum of space waits to snatch away the unwary... not to mention that the face of the enemy is not always human anymore. You must keep your crew / troops in fighting trim. You are responsible for keeping morale high and for making the tough and necessary decisions. But you feel you're up to the challenge- you are a leader. Time to prove it.

Prerequisites: WIL +1

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 / RC +1 / WIL +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Artillerist, Astrogation, Command, Computers (any), Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Drive (any), Etiquette (military), Evade, First Aid, Intimidate, Literacy, Lore (tactics), Survival (any one), Swim, Weapon (pistols), Weapon (rifles).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Athletic, Benefactor, Burst Fire, Commanding Voice, Commendation, Cyber Boost, Fame, Fearless, Formation Fighting, Highborn, Political Influence, Single Minded, Strong Willed.

Starting Gear: officer's uniform (light combat armor or flightsuit); race appropriate pistol; databuddy; personal communicator; 1500 credits.

PHYSICIAN

Outer space is exciting... but so is inner space. The body is a marvelous machine... but exceptionally delicate. In space, there are many hazards to face. Maybe you're the only one on your tramp freighter's crew keeping everyone patched up, treating everything from minor scrapes to decompression accidents. Perhaps you work for the TTA, a crack medical researcher gathering evidence and racing against time to find out if those colonists are suffering from colds... or an alien parasite. Maybe you're an expert in the new field of xenomedicine. Whatever your specialty, whether you are researching in a state-of-the art laboratory or performing triage in the muck of a remote crash site, you are ready to risk all to aid the sick and the suffering.

Roleplaying Game

Prerequisites: INT +1

Attribute Adjustments: INT +1 / PER +1 / INT +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Computers (personal), Concentration, Drive (civilian), Etiquette, First Aid, Investigate, Literacy, Medicine, Profession, Reserach, Science, Social Science, Search.

Available Quirks: Acute Sense (vision or touch), Ambidextrous, Benefactor, Disease immunity, Fame, Highborn, Medical Specialist, Multitasking, Political Influence, Rich, Tireless, Windfall.

Starting Gear: civilian groundcar (luxury); first aid kit; medical field kit; medical scanner; garment (formal); townhouse or apartment in major metro area; 5000 credits.

PIRATE

Your profession is an old one... only the technology is new. You may be a Robin Hood... or the scourge of the spacelanes. Either way, you're hunted every day of your life. But your bases are well-hidden, your ship is fast, and you know how to avoid the law at ports of call. Maybe one day you will retire, or save enough to afford your own ship. But the law is ever at your heels, and each day may be your last...

Prerequisites: None

Attribute Adjustments: RC +1 / CR +1 / CR +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Appraise, Astrogation, Balance, Brawling, Climb, Computers (any), Deception, Disable Mechanism, Intimidate, Lore (star system), Pilot (medium spacecraft), Search, Torture, Weapon (any three).

Available Quirks: Alcohol Tolerance, Burst Fire, Fearless, Redline, Tough, Windfall.

Starting Gear: Weapon of choice; gravity anchor; flash seal; light spacesuit; K4 Toad (or equivalent at GMs discretion); 500 credits.

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POLITICIAN

You serve your people as a duly elected representative... or perhaps you inherited your station, or seized power in a coup. You know how to play the media for that perfect photo op or talking point. You can sway others, defeat your enemies, and forge new alliances using the sheer force of your personality. There's always someone looking to defame you or unseat you, but you're up to the challenge. After all, there's the good of the people... or the lure of power... to be considered.

Prerequisites: CHA +0

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 / CHA +1 / WIL +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Administration, Computers (personal), Deception, Deduce Motive, Diplomacy, Drive (civilian), Etiquette, Intimidate, Literacy, Lore (any), Perform (oratory), Social Science (psychology), Speak Language, Theology.

Available Quirks: Acting!; Attractive; Benefactor; Commanding Voice; Diplomatic immunity; Fame; Highborn; Political Influence; Rich; Wealthy; Xeno-Flexible.

Starting Gear: garments (formal); recaller, personal communicator; luxury civilian groundcar; databuddy; townhouse or apartment in major metro area; 3500 credits.

SCIENTIST

You were never satisfied with not knowing, never comfortable with unanswered questions. Now, armed with modern technology and an inquisitive mind, you seek knowledge, understanding, and the answers to conundrums that the great thinkers of every race dare to ask. You might be a tenured professor at a prestigious university, a member of a corporate research team, or perhaps a lonely maverick whom everyone else calls "quack". But you are confident that your latest research will bear your ideas out.

Prerequisites: INT +0

Attribute Adjustments: INT +1 / INT +1 / INT +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Computers (personal or mainframe), Cryptography, Literacy, Research, Science (any), Social Science (any), Speak Language.

Roleplaying Game

Available Quirks: Acute Senses, Benefactor, Eidetic memory, Fame, Highborn, Multitasking, Nimble Fingers, Political Influence, Rich, Single Minded, Strong Willed, Windfall.

Starting Gear: Personal computer; databuddy; personal communicator; LaborMek; mid-range civilian groundcar; townhouse; 3000 credits.

SPACECRAFT ENGINEER

You've always been good at fixing things... better than good. At five you took apart your dad's databuddy to see how it worked. At eight it was the family car. At university you worked with the most advanced spacecraft... or perhaps you learned your trade through an apprenticeship on an unregistered merchant vessel. Today, maybe you're a specialist keeping that most mysterious of engines, the warp generator, purring like a kitten. Or maybe you're a one-person show on a smaller craft, responsible for everything from weapons to plumbing. Either way, you're doing work that only a handful can understand- and even fewer can do.

Prerequisites: INT +1

Attribute Adjustments: INT +1 / DEX +1 / PER +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Computers (personal), Computers (ship's systems), Concentration, Disable mechanism, Engineering (any), Handicraft (weaponsmith), Literacy, Profession, Science (chemistry, mathematics, metallurgy or physics).

Available Quirks: Ambidextrous; Engineering Genius; Good Balance; Multitasking; nimble Fingers; Redline; Single Minded; Tireless; Zero-g Training.

Starting Gear: Garments (coveralls); boots (work); engineering toolkit; flash seal x10; berth aboard spacecraft or station; 1000 credits.

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TDA MARINE

The few, the proud... the mint-perfect fighting machine, heir to a centuries-long military tradition, you are ready to join the fight on a moment's notice anytime, anywhere... on planet or off, in any sorts of conditions, with whatever is available. But it's not just about fighting the enemy- it's about protecting civilians, serving your planet and being a visible reminder of her strength.

Prerequisites: CON +1, STR +0

Attribute Adjustments: RC +1 / RC +1 / CR +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Artillerist, Brawling, Climb, Computers (tactical systems), Demolitions, Disable Mechanism, Drive (military), Etiquette (military), Evade, First Aid, Lore (tactics), Navigate, Offensive Martial Arts, Pilot (helicopters), Stealth, Survival (any two), Swim, Weapon (pistols), Weapon (rifles), Weapon (heavy weapons), Weapon (vehicle weapons).

Available Quirks: Acute Sense, Aquatic Combat, Athletic, Burst Fire, Commendation, Fearless, Formation Fighting, Light Sleeper, Pain Tolerance, Quick Reflexes, Terrain Familiarity (select two).

Starting Gear: Medium combat armor; Terran rifle of choice; Terran pistol of choice; rucksack; canteen; heads-up display; first aid kit; nanobeacon; 1000 credits

TTA COLONIZATION SCOUT

You are a rare individual- one that combines a need for adventure with the higher purpose of serving others and leaving a lasting legacy. In order to grow and thrive, your people need new territory to expand into and new places to live. It's up to you to find those places, to determine their suitability, to explore and discover their dangers... so others won't have to. It's a tough job, but being the first of your kind on a new planet instills a special sort of pride... and carries a special thrill.

Prerequisites: PER +0

Attribute Adjustments: PER +1 / CON +1 / PER +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Appraise (natural resources), Astrogation, Climb, Computers (ship's systems), Cook, Drive (civilian), First Aid, Investigate, Literacy, Lore (mining), Lore (planet), Lore (star system), Navigate, Pilot (medium spacecraft), Science (botany, geology), Search, Survival (any three), Swim, Weapon (pistols).

Roleplaying Game

Available Quirks: Acute Sense; First Contact Specialist; Heavy World Experience; Light World Experience; Quick Reflexes; Terrain Familiarity (any one); Tough; Xeno-Flexible.

Starting Gear: Backpack; compass; electronic compass; atmospheric analyzer; soil analyzer; binoculars; canteen (filtered); databuddy; first aid kit; GalPOS unit; portable environment generator; portable glow lamp; portable heater/cooler; rations (MRE) x10; sleeping bag; tent; survival suit; 500 credits.

TTA INFORMATION OFFICER

The known galaxy gets bigger every day. Issues become more complex, and information ever more important. You are dedicated to bringing the facts to the people, wherever they may be. Every day, you walk a fine line. To the colonists cut off from news sources, to the families awaiting news of their loved ones in a trouble spot, to the constituents of corrupt politicians brought down by your camera and pen, you are a hero. To those you expose, you are a bitter enemy. Tread carefully!

Prerequisites: CHA +0

Attribute Adjustments: CHA +1 / INT +1 / CHA +1

Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Computers (personal), Deduce motive, Diplomacy, Drive (civilian), Etiquette (any two), Investigate, Literacy, Lore (streetwise), Lore (city), Lore (planet), Perform (oratory), Profession, Reserach, Seduction, Speak Language,

Available Quirks: Acting!; Attractive; Benefactor; Eidetic memory; Fame; Political Influence; Sensual Voice; Strong Willed; Windfall.

Starting Gear: Garments (formal); Garments (fashionable); databuddy; personal computer; hackcard; personal communicator; recaller; small aptment; 1000 credits.



XENOBIOLIST

You've always enjoyed hitting the books, and now you are the vanguard of a totally new science, studying the biology of alien life-forms. Your specialty could be the largest and most dangerous mega-fauna, the tiniest microorganisms, the lush vegetation of an alien landscape, or perhaps that which lives under alien oceans. Armed with your equipment, your reference library, and most of all your mind, you dive into mysteries unimagined only a century before... with entire new planets as your laboratory.

Prerequisites: INT +0

Attribute Adjustments: INT +1 / PER +1 / INT +1

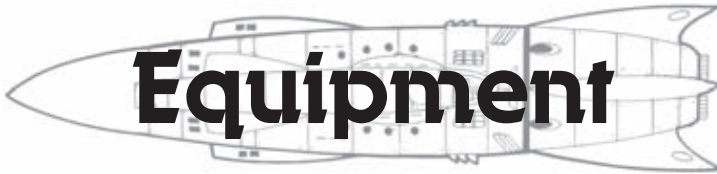
Skill Ranks: 12

Preferred Skills: Animal Handling, Computers (personal), Lore (nature), Medicine (veterinary), Research, Science (biology, botany, zoology), Stealth, Survival (any two), Swim, Tracking.

Available Quirks: Acute Sense; Animal Empathy; fearless; Heavy World Experience; Light World Experience; Medical Specialist (veterinary); Pet; Stealthy; Terrain Familiarity.

Starting Gear: work boots; garments (coveralls); backpack; tent; sleeping bag; binoculars; camo suit; canteen; databuddy; first aid kit; medical scanner; night vision goggles; portable glow lamp; puritizer; 1200 credits.





COIN OF THE REALM

There are several types of currency in use across the three inhabited star systems. The terran Credit is, by far, the most universally accepted currency but players should note that in some areas they may need to convert their credits into Alphan Shilars, Tanaaikol Prasks, etc.

To make the economics of the TTA universe easier for the GM, all prices of goods and services are given in a Terran Credits (cr). Credits are typically stored electronically in a device known as a credstick.

BUYING & SELLING GOODS

In general, a character can sell something for half its listed price. Trade goods are the exception to the half-price rule. A trade good, in this sense, is a valuable good that can be easily exchanged almost as if it were cash itself.

EXCEPTIONAL WORKMANSHIP

All equipment listed in this chapter represents average workmanship and components. For superior manufacture or workmanship, the GM may attribute a bonus of +1 to +5 to either Attack roll, Damage roll or other checks on the Omni Table, as appropriate.

RESTRICTED ITEMS

Most weapons and some armors require licenses to own or operate, or are restricted in use to qualifying organizations or individuals. In such cases, a character must purchase a license or pay a fee to legally own the object. A license or fee is a separate item, purchased in addition to (and usually before) the object to which it applies. Weapon and armor licenses cost one-quarter the purchase price of the item being licensed.



As a general rule, a character must obtain the appropriate license before buying a restricted object. Legitimate dealers will not sell restricted objects to a character who does not have the necessary license. However, a character may be able to turn to the black market (see below) to obtain restricted objects without a license.

THE BLACK MARKET

Sometimes a character wants to obtain an object without going through the hassle of getting a license first. Almost anything is available on the black market. Lore (streetwise) checks can be used to locate a black market merchant. The the Degree of Difficulty is based on the location in question: Tricky to find a black market merchant in a big city, or possibly Very Difficult or harder in small towns and rural areas.

Objects purchased on the black market are more expensive than those purchased legally. Black market purchases should be at least double the listed prices in this chapter (higher at GMs discretion).

WEAPONS

ALPHAN WEAPONS

Most Alphan military small arms are laser-based. The Alphans, being highly centralized, developed a rigid standard that is obeyed by all military weapons manufacturers; thus, all makes of Alphan weaponry are interchangeable and use identical power cells. While this makes supplying replacement parts and power cells easy, it makes the Alphans a bit one-dimensional in their capabilities. The Proximan adoption of refractive body armor, and the troubles this caused the Alphan military during the ground conflict phase of the Proxima War, are well-documented. All Alphan weaponry is lightweight and ergonomically designed to reduce fatigue in carrying and firing positions. Alphan small arms are reliable, but perhaps a tad outdated.

Alphan laser weapons all have a focusing ring that adjusts the output and effect of the weapon. They can be adjusted to spread a wider, low-power beam that temporarily blinds the target, a more focused, destructive beam for close to medium range, or a tightly-focused beam suitable for armor-piercing applications. Rifles also have a setting that optimizes the beam for long-range sharp-shooting. Alphan weapons have two beam emitters; a targeting laser that projects a visible dot on the target,

Roleplaying Game

and the weapon emitter itself (the beam is nearly invisible). Resting the finger on the trigger turns on the targeting laser, while squeezing the trigger fires the weapon beam. The targeting beam can also be turned off and manual sights utilized in situations where the targeting laser might betray the shooter's presence.

ALPHAN AL-1

The L1 is a handheld laser weapon. It uses a high-capacity power cell good for between 4 and 20 shots, depending on the setting. In an emergency, the L1 can also load a standard power cell, of the kind used for powering sundry



electronics; these give between one and five shots. The typical setting does DR8E and uses one charge. Each higher setting does an additional DR1 and draws another charge from the powercell. There are 5 settings in all. *For example, an AN1 on the 4th setting does DR11E and uses 4 charges from the powercell.*

ALPHAN AL-2

The L2 is designed for a two-handed grip, but is still portable and compact. It is also more ruggedly built and holds two high-capacity cells, giving it 8 to 40 shots, or two standard cells, good for two to ten shots.

ALPHAN AL-9

The L9 is a laser rifle. It can be set for sharp-shooting / sniping. It can hold two high-capacity power cells (12 to 60 shots). An add-on "clip" designed for extended deployments holds four more cells for a total of six. Like the pistols, it can also use standard power cells in an emergency. The AN9 does DR10E on its primary setting (like the AN1, it has 5 settings)

ALPHAN ACL-1

The CL1 is a civilian version of the L1. Its power level is lower than the military model and it has only 3 settings. The default setting does DR6E and it can only load standard power cells, which give it between two and six shots.





ALPHAN ACL-9

The CL9 is a civilian version of the L9 rifle, optimized for hunting at long range. It also operates at half-power and uses standard cells. The ANC1 does DR8E and has only 3 settings.

OTHER WEAPONS

ACM300 MASS CANNON

The ACM300 is the largest projectile weapon in the Alphan arsenal. It fires a massive 180mm explosive round that does extensive damage. The ACM300 is typically found on HovTanks but stand-alone units are also used as artillery.

ACM447 CHAIN GUN

Adapted from terran technology, the ACM447 is an externally powered, chain driven, single-barrel heavy weapon which may be fired in semi-automatic or automatic modes. It is fed by a metallic link belt and has dual-feed capability. The term “chain gun” derives from the use of a roller chain that drives the bolt back and forth. This weapon may only be used when mounted in or on a vehicle.

ALPHAN ANP15

The ANP15 is an air-powered projectile weapon designed for use onboard starships and in other environments where stray laser shots could be exceptionally dangerous. It fires miniature needles that are usually coated with soporifics, essentially making this a “tranquilizer gun”. The needles are useless against hard armor but will penetrate clothing, even spacesuits if it hits them squarely.

The ANP15 does only DR2T but victims must also make a CON roll with a -5 penalty or fall to the ground asleep for 1d20 rounds. (*other poisons and drigs may also be used*)

ALPHAN ANBX

The ANBX is essentially a miniature hand-held crossbow. Its plastisteel string can be wound to incredible tensions and can fire bolts at up to 200 m/s. Deadly at all ranges, but more effective at short and medium. This weapon is a variation of a common hunting weapon used both ritually and for sport in Alphan society. Certain parties came to realize its usefulness in cases where energy cells in laser weapons might be detected. While not commonly issued to the rank-and-file troops, it is a popular weapon among Alphan officers, especially traditionalists.

Roleplaying Game

GRAVITY SNARE

The gravity snare resembles a laser rifle but with two metal prongs where the muzzle should be. When fired, the prongs generate a strip of luminescent white energy that leaps from the end of the rifle toward the target. When the strip of energy strikes a target, the energy bolt bends and creates a ring of gravity around the target.

A creature hit by the gravity ring must make an Evade roll with a -5 degree of difficulty to avoid its effects. On a failure, the target is held fast and unable to move for 1d20 rounds, until the gravity ring dissipates. An entangled creature can escape the gravity ring with a successful STR Omni Table roll with a -10 penalty.

GRENADE, GRAVITIC

When this grenade detonates, it releases incredible gravitational forces. All creatures within a 10-foot-radius burst are struck for DR10B damage. A successful Evade roll halves the damage suffered.

RAIL GUN

Developed at the very end of the Proxima War, the Alphan rail gun uses gravity pulses, not magnets, to propel a projectile at high velocities. Metal shards are accelerated along the rail gun's length, leaving the barrel at an extremely high velocity. The design was recently licensed to the Koch Corporation of Terra and a limited number of civilian models are now available on the open market. It is a high-powered but cumbersome weapon. The projectiles do DR10 damage and ignore 3 points of PR.

PROXIMAN WEAPONS

Proximan weapons are projectile or sonic-based. Projectile weapons are wildly unstandardized but usually modular. Guns of any sort were extremely rare on Proxima as recently as three centuries ago, before the age of large-scale national warfare, and consisted mainly of hunting weapons used against the larger sea fauna of Proxima II.

When international warfare demanded a solution deadlier than the various formalized wrestling and shoving matches, Proximans put their talents towards finding one... Each nation on Proxima had its own standard caliber; when Tannaikol gained dominance, it moved to standardize weaponry for the Proximan military, but many individual nations refused





to give up using their arms. This created something of a logistical nightmare as only 40% of Proximan projectile weapons in the field could be assumed to be “standardized”.

During the ground war, many Proximan units ran out of ammunition and could not be resupplied efficiently. Despite this, the design of most Proximan projectile weapons is remarkably similar- guns come in “kits” and pistols can be converted into rifles and vice versa by attaching and swapping out stocks and barrels.

Projectile weapons in use during the Proxima War utilized ammunition in the range of 4 wegm (about 5.5 mm) to 12 wegm (just over 16.5 mm). Tannaikol standardized weapons use either a 5 wegm (just under 7 mm) or 8 wegm (a hair over 11mm) round. Standardized ammunition is a hardened ceramic finned dart fitted with a spindle sabot. Proximan weapons are very highly accurate in good conditions, but bad weather and soft cover decrease the accuracy of these rounds considerably (as the dart is easily destabilized by striking anything in its flight path). These rounds also penetrate armor very well but don’t do as much tissue damage as Terran bullet rounds.

Proximan sonic weapons are unique to the three races. Handheld versions consisted of a single or double grip attached to a sonic emitter and battery pack. These weapons, of which there were also many national variants, have widely adjustable outputs, making them fairly flexible. Some common ones are described below.

SONIC WEAPONS

Proximan sonic weapons are marvels of design and engineering. All of them are short-range and use a lot of power. The howler and pulser, described below, also utilize highly specialized components (mostly in the sound emitting apparatus) that are both expensive and difficult to manufacture. As a result, after the war, these weapons began to disappear as existing models were confiscated and destroyed and the insurgency finds that projectile weapons are easier and cheaper to make. However, there are still plenty of working models in the field.

DISRUPTOR

This weapon, about the size of a backpack, consists of an audio output device and an exceptionally powerful battery. When switched on (remotely), it broadcasts infrasonic sound waves that are self-tuning;

Roleplaying Game

when resonance is achieved with the surrounding materials it increases in power, shaking the surroundings apart. Wood, glass, concrete and even metal structures can be thus shaken to pieces. It can also be pre-tuned to operate against people, in which case the waves cause intense pain and headaches, leading quickly to internal hemorrhaging. The blast doesn't last long- about twenty seconds until the battery is drained- but great damage can be inflicted in that time. These terrible weapons are unfortunately small, man-portable, and easy to copy or cobble together from spare parts and so have become an all-too-common terrorist device used by the Proximan insurgency.

A sonic Disruptor does variable damage. The operator can set a Disruptor to do between DR2 and DR20 with each DR1 using a single battery charge. A fully charged backpack battery has 48 charges. The damage done by a Disruptor ignores all PR.

HOWLER

The howler is a short-range weapon much dreaded by the allies throughout the duration of the ground war on Proxima. It fires a cone of intense sound that can be tuned to specific frequencies and volumes. This has varying effects; howlers can be tuned to cause discomfort or intense, disabling pain. They can stun or sicken an opponent, temporarily deafen, or cause the eardrums to burst. At very close ranges they can shatter bones, burst organs and flay the skin from the body.

Despite its horrifying destructiveness, the howler is a somewhat limited weapon. It is only effective in a narrow 15 degree arc in front of the weapon out to a maximum range of about 20 meters. Beyond this range, damage drops rapidly. Troops armed with howlers must have effective ear protection, usually consisting of earplugs attuned to the weapon that cancel out any emitted frequencies in the damaging range. The howler uses a great deal of energy and has a relatively small number of "shots" before the battery must be replaced. Also, the focusing cones on the emitters wear out rapidly under the strain of use and must be replaced frequently.



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Howlers do variable damage. At the lowest setting, they do no damage but victims who fail a CON roll with a -6 penalty.

Critical Success: No effect

Full Success: No effect

Partial Success: Victim feels sickened for 3 rounds (-2 penalty to all Omni Table rolls for duration)

Failure: Victim is stunned for 1d20 rounds minus the victims CON rating (minimum 1 round).

Mishap: The victim is stunned for 2 d20 rounds.

The lowest setting setting uses a single charge from the battery pack. Upper settings do from DR1 to DR 16 at the users discretion and use 2 charges per DR1. A fully charged battery can store up to 32 charges.

PULSER

Not widely used in the war, this is a (technically) non-lethal weapon used by police and security forces, especially to control riot situations. It works on the same principle as the howler but with a wider area of effect and on a restricted frequency range. It emits a wide-angle, low-frequency blast of sound that stuns the opponent. It is very short-range, having an effective stun range of under 10 meters. At ranges inside of five meters, there is a good chance that the pulse will also knock the target off its feet. While not designed to be lethal, point-blank shots (with the emitter cone pressed against the skin) can cause internal damage and possibly death.

For game purposes, a Pulsar operates as a Howler on the lowest setting. A Pulsar battery can hold up to 48 charges with each “shot” using a single charge.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

PROXIMAN 5-WEGM “STINGER”

This is the most common proximan handgun in circulation. It is still the standard-issue sidearm for military troops and has become a common weapon among civilian police forces as well. The stinger fires a Tannaikol-standardized 6.89mm ceramic dart round. Magazines are either box-shaped (holding 11 rounds) or circular (holding 22). Both are highly reliable. The gun is sturdily constructed but uncomfortably heavy in the hands of a Terran or Alphan. A longer barrel and stock can be quickly attached to turn the stinger into a rifle (giving it a longer range).

Roleplaying Game



PROXIMAN 8-WEGM “FANG”

This weapon can be configured as an assault rifle, a sniper rifle, or a very large SMG by adding or removing attachments. It fires a large (11 mm) ceramic dart round. The large magazine holds 38 rounds. The Fang can fire single shots, four-round bursts, or go full auto. Some variations of the fang use gyrojet ammunition.

PROXIMAN 10-WEGM “CLAW”

Designed by an upper-strata scientist for her patron family, and primarily issued to security forces of important landmarks and VIPs, this massive handgun (almost 14mm) fires soft metal bullets much like Terran weapons, rather than the typical Proximan dart ammunition. It is designed for short-range combat in crowded conditions; even a glancing hit will stop most assailants without through penetration, keeping innocents reasonably safe. It can also be loaded with harder ammunition and used to stop vehicles; it is even (as some allied troops unfortunately found out) capable of penetrating body armor in some cases. A standard clip holds 12 rounds.

PROXIMAN “CRAPPIE”

This is a very cheap handgun made of molded plastic; easy to produce, easy to conceal, fairly inaccurate and generally unreliable. However, a good shot will kill just as surely as any other firearm, and it is easy to produce in huge numbers... thus it is a favorite way for the insurgents to arm a local population. The “crappie” is manufactured in a wide variety of calibers. A standard clip holds 6 rounds.

PROXIMAN “SHREDDER”

The shredder is known colloquially as the “Proxie shotgun”, an anti-personnel weapon that is especially effective against groups of unarmed opponents. The weapon is normally held with two hands (though it can be fired with only one). Its ammunition is simply a block of hard,



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brittle plastic which is fitted into the top of the weapon. A motor-driven, serrated wheel spins at thousands of rpm and tears off shards of plastic, flinging them out of the wide barrel at high subsonic speeds (250 m/s, enough to drive a plastic shard the size of a toothpick through 1.5 cm thick plywood).

The weapon has a simple slide “choke” that allows the projectiles to spray into a wider or tighter pattern (DR6T to single targets or DR3 to targets in a 10 foot spread). While unable to penetrate body armor or ballistic cloth, shredder projectiles have a nasty habit of finding their way into every unarmored crevice. An overturned table, vehicle door, etc. will stop the projectiles.

PROXIMAN 11.5-WEGM GYROJET

This huge pistol (almost 16mm) can be fitted with a shoulder stock. It fires gyrojet (rocket-propelled) ammunition. Like all such weapons, it is useless at short range but exceptionally accurate at medium and long ranges. It is also exceptionally vulnerable to dirt and moisture, making it unpopular among the troops in the field.

OTHER WEAPONS

GRENADE, SONIC PULSE

Victims of a sonic pulse grenade must make a successful CON Omni Table roll with a -8 penalty (MekTeks and other nonliving creatures are not affected.) Failure indicates the victim is incapacitated for 6 rounds. A Mishap indicates the victim’s eardrums have been permanently damaged and they thereafter suffer a -1 penalty to PER (and PER modified skills).

TERRAN WEAPONS

Terran weaponry is projectile- and laser-based. As on Proxima, slug-throwers are available in a bewildering array of calibers. Military weapons underwent quick standardization at the beginning of the Proxima War. The initial designs, done by committee, were adequate but laden with small design flaws. Mid-way through the war, with the idea of a possible ground conflict (either in defense of Terra or in an endgame on Proxima) in military planners’ minds, the Terran military sponsored design competitions. The winners were all excellent weapons, at the pinnacle of the gunmaking art, and are still standard issue for Terran forces today. Terran military hand-held projectile weapons fire either 9mm or

Roleplaying Game



TERRAN 10mm



TERRAN 9mm



TERRAN 9mm RIFLE
(not to scale)

10mm rounds.

Terran laser weaponry had always carried the label of “experimental” until first contact with the Alphans, whose refined laser technology was part of early trade agreements between the two worlds. After extensive study several laser hand weapons were introduced into the Terran military arsenal. Even redesigned for Terran aesthetics (including adding some unnecessary but psychologically-pleasing “heft”), these weapons at first failed to win widespread enthusiastic approval from the troops. However, their ruggedness, ease of use and great damage potential won them many converts during the hectic first weeks of the Proxima campaign, and they remain an integral part of the Terran military’s personal weapons arsenal.

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

TERRAN 9MM PISTOL

The most common back-up armament for terran troops and a common police and security forces sidearm, the 9mm pistol has changed very little in form or function in the centuries since it was introduced. Magazine holds 18 rounds.

TERRAN 10MM PISTOL

A heavier (and deadlier) weapon, the 10mm is commonly issued to

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special agents and others who rely on pistols as their primary armament. Magazine holds 12 or 14 rounds.

TERRAN 9MM SMG

The 9mm version of the SMG fires the same ammo used in the standard 9mm pistol. A standard clip holds 24 rounds.

TERRAN 10MM SMG

The 10mm version of the SMG fires the same ammo used in the 10mm pistol. A standard clip holds 24 rounds.

TERRAN 9MM RIFLE

The most common projectile-based assault rifle in the Terran arsenal. Accurate, rugged, and reliable. A standard clip holds 12 rounds.

TERRAN 10MM RIFLE

While it has more power, it is also harder to keep on target during bursts. Stabilized in a prone shooting position or by unfolding the collapsible bipod, it is hard to beat for hard-hitting firepower. A short-barreled version was produced, designed especially for urban combat. A standard clip holds 12 rounds.

TERRAN ASSAULT SHOTGUN

Fires 10-gauge shot or solid slug ammunition. A standard clip holds 8 rounds.

HKSM "SECURITY BLANKET"

A common, cheap, generally reliable civilian model marketed as a home protection device. Most were chambered to fire military 9mm rounds, but some were made for older calibers no longer in common use (.38, .40, .22 long rifle, and a "kids special" made to fire .22 short.) It is mentioned here because the military purchased thousands of these and issued them to volunteers during the hysteria preceding the Battle for Mars. What use they would have been against armored Proximan troops on the ground remains a matter of speculation. A standard clip holds 9 rounds.

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M90 MACHINE GUN

This heavy-duty .50-caliber machine gun has been in service since before the Proxima Wars, and remains a very common vehicle-mounted military weapon on Terra and her possessions. It fires only in full-auto mode and is belt fed (100 round belts).

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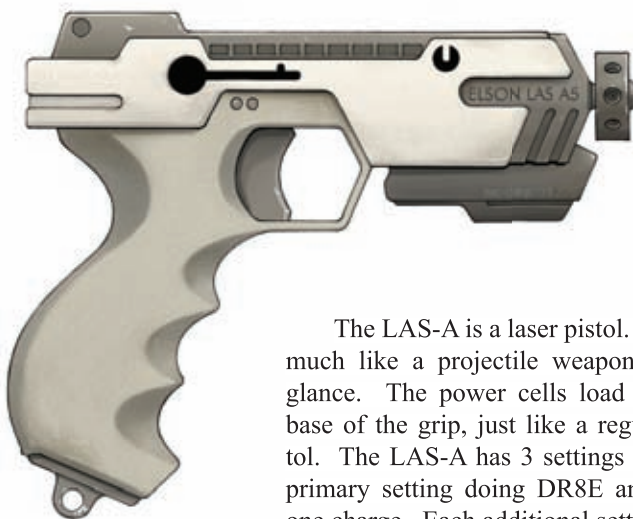


TACMIL SNIPER RIFLE

The TACMIL is the sniper rifle equivalent of the standard 10mm rifle. The rifle itself fires a standard 10mm round and sports a rangefinding scope (reduce range modifier by one increment). Additionally, the TacMil sniper rifle features a flash suppressor as well as an effective sound suppressor, ensuring maximum stealth (no penalty to Stealth rolls when in use). A standard clip holds 6 rounds.

LASER WEAPONS

LAS-A



The LAS-A is a laser pistol. It looks much like a projectile weapon at first glance. The power cells load into the base of the grip, just like a regular pistol. The LAS-A has 3 settings with the primary setting doing DR8E and using one charge. Each additional setting does an extra DR2 and uses an extra charge.

While more rugged than the Alphan equivalent, its power cells hold slightly less charge. A fully charged powercell contains 16 charges.

LAS-R

The LAS-R is a laser rifle. It looks like a somewhat exotic slug-thrower, and like its smaller counterpart is almost unbreakable. The LAS-R holds three power cells, giving it 16 to 48 shots depending on setting.



OTHER WEAPONS

GRENADE, SHRAPNEL

Similar in concept to the standard fragmentation grenade, the shrapnel grenade propels dangerous shards of metal outward at high velocity when it explodes. Unlike the fragmentation grenade, the shrapnel grenade incorporates aerodynamic metal shards and directional tubes to ensure that each shard is propelled at lethal velocity along a set path. The result is a calculated field of flying shrapnel that is far more effective than the simple pop-and-spray chaos of a fragmentation grenade.



GRENADE, CONCUSSION

Federation Law Enforcement Authority officers often use concussion grenades to knock out threatening targets. Living creatures within the concussion grenade's 10-foot burst radius must make a successful CON Omni Table roll with a -8 penalty or become incapacitated for 1d20 rounds. Concussion grenades do not affect Mektteks or other nonliving objects.

MORRIGAN ARMAMENTS NETGUN

Manufactured by the largest armaments firm associated with the TTA, the netgun is commonly used by FLEA officers as well as biologists and zoologists looking to capture alien fauna.



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OPA-19 PARTICLE ACCELERATOR

The OPA-19 is a man-portable version of the spacecraft-mounted OPA-8 particle accelerator. The weapon is shoulder-fired and fires a stream of accelerated particles moving at near the speed of light. These particles are carrying tremendous kinetic energy which they transfer to their target on a successful hit.

Because the particle beam is in fact millions of tiny projectiles, it transmits its kinetic energy to the atomic structure of the target making it difficult to protect a target from it. This obviously makes the weapon very destructive, and highly lethal to anyone it hits. Particle accelerators ignore all PR from physical armor but PR from defense screens or shield functions normally.

STUN BATON

The stun baton is a long rod that is often carried by FLEA officers. On one end of the baton is a metal cap that emits a pulse of stunning energy when it strikes a target. Any creature hit by a stun baton takes DR3B and must make a successful CON Omni Table roll with a -4 penalty or become incapacitated for 4 rounds.

ARMOR

LIGHT COMBAT ARMOR

Light combat armor is standard issue amongst both the Terran and Proxima ground forces and it is also in wide use amongst corporate security and in the FLEA. Most light combat armors consist of a reinforced blast vest, shoulder and upper arm pads, thigh and abdomen pads, kneepads and a helmet.



MEDIUM COMBAT ARMOR

Designed for heavy warfare and dangerous situations, medium combat armor covers the user almost head to toe in armor plating. Medium combat armor comes with a helmet that fits snugly on the head and does not interfere with the soldier's field of vision.

PROJECTILE DEFLECTOR

An Alphan technology developed during the latter years of the Proxima War, the projectile deflector generates a field of gravity-altering energy around its user. Often worn as a belt or other piece of jewelry, the device actually bends the path of incoming high-speed projectiles, making the target harder to hit. The projectile deflector grants a +4 bonus to Defense against ranged attacks. Melee attacks are unaffected by this device.

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REFRACTIVE BODY ARMOR

Unveiled by the Proximan military during the early days of the ground offensive, this modified light body armor incorporated light bending technologies that all but nullified the effectiveness of Alphan and Terran laser weaponry. Refractive body armor provides the same protection from physical attack as standard light body armor but against laser weapons, it provides PR10 protection. This armor was only made in limited quantities and is very difficult to obtain.

SILENT SUIT

The silent suit uses cutting-edge sonic dampening technology to increase the stealth of the user. Silent suits look like form-fitting bodysuits with padding on the shoulders, elbows, and knees. Sonic dampening field generators are built into the suit, reducing to a minimum the noise made by movement. A character wearing a silent suit gains a +6 bonus on all Stealth Omni Table rolls.

SPACE COMBAT ARMOR

Space combat armor is the first true powered armor to reach common use. Space combat armor consists of heavy body armor with an environmental seal and built-in communications gear. Additionally, space combat armor boasts a jetpack specifically designed to function in space, allowing the user to maneuver in zero-g conditions. Space combat armor can be difficult and unwieldy, but makes even individual soldiers a threat in ship-to-ship combat.

TECHNOLOGY

CAMO SUIT

Races: Human, Proximan

The camo suit is an optical camouflage device that uses embedded cameras to sample the wearer's surroundings and replicate it on the surface of the suit, rendering the wearer nearly invisible under optimal (low-light) conditions and partially camouflaged even in bright light. A facemask, gloves, and boot covers must be worn for maximum effect.

Note: During the ground phase of the Proxima War, these suits were largely ineffective because of the Proximan ability to see into the infrared spectrum. Later models incorporated insulation to minimize this problem.





CAMO SUIT (ALPHAN)

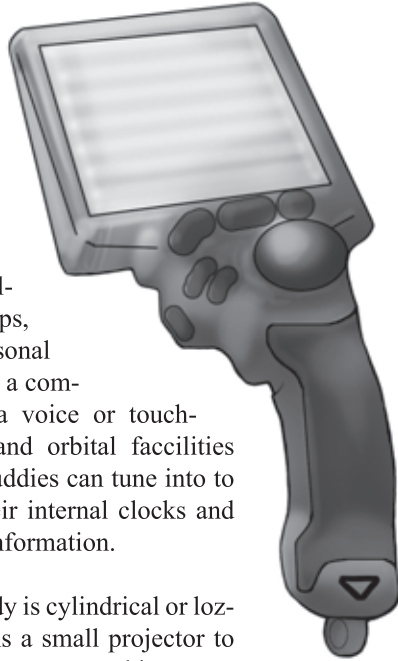
Races: Alphan

In addition to operating as typical optical camouflage of the type utilized by human and Proximan troops, alphan camo can also be set to sample inward (either visually or through neural taps) and replicate the skin pattern of its wearer on its surface. Civilian clothing is also available that does this.

DATABUDDY

Races: All

Basically a PDA, the databuddy is a catch-all device containing calendars, schedules, maps, contact info, and personal data. It also functions as a communicator. Input is via voice or touch-screen. Most planets and orbital facilities have beacons that databuddies can tune into to automatically update their internal clocks and receive maps and local information.



The typical databuddy is cylindrical or lozenge-shaped and contains a small projector to create a holographic datascreen. This screen can also be projected onto a wall or other flat surface. Output can also be sent to a pair of HUD lenses. Databuddies are keyed to one specific user (requiring retinal, fingerprint, DNA sampling, or other such confirmation before operating). Databuddy casings tend to be made of durable materials like plastisteel, though some upper-crust users prefer rare woods or precious metal electroplating.

FLASH-SEAL

Races: Alphan, Terran

Flash-seal looks like a block of metal roughly the size of a thin brick. It attaches to any door frame. When activated, chemical compounds inside the block of metal burn fast and hot enough to melt the metal into

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a liquid form. Almost instantaneously, a second chemical compound freezes the molten metal back into its solid state. The result is that the metal melts, sinks into the space between the door and its frame, and then solidifies again, essentially welding the door shut. A door that has been flash-sealed may not be opened by normal means and must be destroyed or cut through as though it were a wall.

FLOAT PLATE

Races: Alphan, Terran

A float plate is essentially a mini gravity resist generator and directional control units attached to a sturdy platform. They come in various sizes, the smallest is about nine square meters in area, the largest about 100 square meters. Float plates are used to move large and bulky cargoes in three dimensions. Ramps can be attached to move cargoes up onto their surfaces or the 'plate can be sunk flush into floor receptacles for easier access. Float plates are used for loading and unloading freighters on planetary surfaces, in high-rise construction projects, and any other application where their fairly high cost of operation can be justified. Because an active float plate has mass but not weight, controlling it is a tricky business and is best left to professionals, and even they rely heavily on the float plate's computers. Direction and speed are usually controlled through directional jets firing bursts of compressed air or gas. While float plates are essentially built from the same components that allow ships to land and take off safely from planetary surfaces, float plates are restricted by safety locks from going over a certain altitude, generally a couple of hundred feet. Precise loading and unloading sequences are also necessary to avoid balance issues.

Due to provisions in the treaties signed at the end of the war, Proxima is forbidden from building or utilizing gravity-resist equipment for a period of twenty years. Thus, float plates in use on Proxima are leased and crewed by Alphan or Terran specialists.

GALPOS UNIT

Races: Terran

The GalPos device is the interstellar equivalent of the GPS system of the modern era. Equipped with star charts and a link to the galactic satellite network, the GalPos device (known also as a GPD) triangulates its own position based on distance between satellite relays and its knowledge of stellar cartography. If the GalPos is taken to a region of space where it cannot contact the galactic satellite network, or to a region of space not included in its star charts, it does not function. Otherwise, the GPD can be used to indicate what planet the is on, or what star system she is in (if not on a planet).





GRAVITY ANCHOR

Races: Alphan

With space combat almost as common as ground combat in the TTA universe, armor manufacturers seek to make their armor more useful in both space and atmospheric combat. One such enhancement is the gravity anchor gadget, which generates a field of artificial gravity around the armor's wearer. In low gravity and zero gravity conditions, the gravity anchor can be activated to give the wearer the benefits of full gravity in any situation. Characters with this gadget are unaffected by low gravity and zero-g conditions.

HACKCARD

Races: Terran

A marvel of computer technology, the hackcard is a disposable, one-use item designed to allow those who are not computer savvy to bypass technological and computer barriers or perform computer-related tasks. Each hackcard is an individual data-carrying card roughly the size of a credit card with a hole in its center and a magnetic strip on one side. Each hackcard carries a single program designed for a single purpose; this may be to open doors, bypass security restrictions, crash a computer, or even to modify information. Almost any task that can be performed by using the Computer skill can be encoded into a hackcard. Hackcards can be swiped in magnetic keycard readers and can be inserted into disc drives on computers with the same ease.

When a character uses a hackcard for its designated purpose, the hackcard's skill rating of Computer +15 is used in the place of the character's. After a single use, the card triggers small fibers of combustible material and the hackcard self-destructs, leaving behind no trace of tampering.

HEADS-UP DISPLAY (HUD)

Races: Alphan, Terran

One of the most valuable innovations in portable information technology is the personal heads-up display (HUD). A HUD is composed of optical sensors for taking in data and a display device that projects an overlay in the user's field of vision. A HUD also typically incorporates some sort of communications link or data link to allow another person or computer to see what the wearer sees and transmit valuable information back to the HUD.



A HUD display device typically consists of glasses or other visor worn over the eyes (eye).

The standard HUD can be used to highlight the outline of a person or object on voice command, granting a +2 bonus on PER checks when pursuing a specific target. Additionally, a person with a link to the HUD can freely send data and images to the wearer at any time. Individual software packages can further augment the abilities of a HUD.

NANOBEACON

Races: Terran

An invaluable device used in tracking and search and rescue, the nanobeacon is a small microchip that is placed on a target's body (or on an object). It sends out a pulse every second that can be detected by sensors attuned to the beacon's frequency. The nanobeacon projects its pulse at up to a 500 mile radius, each nanobeacon with its own unique identification code. Nanobeacons are often used to coordinate combat squads, track wanted criminals, and even to help recover kidnapped or lost children. A beacon can be placed on any character or object by making a simple touch attack against the target.

NON-LINEAR JUNCTION DETECTOR

Races: All

This device consists of a handheld detection wand and a portable computer / readout unit. This device detects all unshielded electronic devices, whether active or inactive, on or off, through walls and other obstacles. It is usually used to detect bugging and recording equipment, though it will detect any electronics. The computer can be set to filter out false signals, though a four-week training period is needed to use this device at full effectiveness.

PORTABLE ENVIRONMENT GENERATOR

Races: Proximan

As an important piece of survival gear that can be taken on almost any expedition, the portable environment generator is an all-in-one device coveted by explorers and outdoors enthusiasts alike. Resembling a tall cylinder roughly two feet in height, the portable environment generator can project a 30-foot sphere of custom environment under any conditions. In cold weather areas, the generator produces heat. In arid deserts, the generator produces both cool air and moisture.

At night, the generator acts as a glow lamp and provides the area with light. Thanks to a special energy bubble produced by the generator, any atmospheric changes stay within the 30 foot radius and do not escape until the device is deactivated. Essentially, the portable environment generator can produce a sphere inside which a group of people can be relatively comfortable despite extremely harsh conditions outside the generator's influence.

PORTABLE GLOW LAMP

Races: All

The portable glow lamp is the most efficient and beneficial form of lighting equipment known to man. It can function as a directional lighting device (like a flashlight) or as an area-covering lantern. Glowlamps have long-lasting power cells and bulbs that never need to be replaced, and can be adjusted to provide light in any radius up 50 feet.

POWER BACKPACK

Races: All

The power backpack is essentially a portable generator. While worn, the power backpack can replace the power packs used by laser and particle weapons, granting an infinite supply of ammunition while attached.

Roleplaying Game

Additionally, the power backpack can provide energy to almost any device requiring electrical power.

PURITIZER

Races: All

The puritizer is a small, semitransparent cylinder roughly one foot tall that removes impurities from water food. The puritizer's onboard computer recognizes chemicals that can be harmful to the human body and separates them from the food and drink.

PORTABLE ECM / ECCM UNIT

Races: All

This device can either jam transmissions on selected frequencies, attempt to jam any jammers in range, or provide a clear beacon or signal-path to friendly forces being jammed by the enemy. It runs on standard power cells, consuming varying amounts of energy depending on its application; at a minimum, at top output, the batteries will last an hour. More passive applications can be maintained for up to 12 hours.

PORTABLE EMP GENERATOR

Races: All

Also about the size of a backpack, this device generates a powerful electromagnetic pulse similar to that released in a thermonuclear blast, though of course far less powerful. The device will disable unshielded electronic devices within its effective radius of about 50 meters. Note that this weapon does not discriminate between friendly and enemy devices. It is usually activated remotely.

RECALLER

Races: All

The recaller is a useful and nearly ubiquitous tool used by any professional whose job involves interacting with people. It consists a pair of microphones (which usually attach inside the ears), a pair of cameras (built into contact lenses riding in the eyes), and a recording device (usually a databuddy). The recaller records all that the wearer sees and hears during the course of the day. It is useful for remembering names and faces or recalling the exact details of a conversation. Recallers can be blocked by devices placed on a person or in a place for security purposes. An error message flashed on the lenses will let the wearer know they are being blocked.





RF DETECTOR

Races: All

This handheld device shows the strength and direction of radio signals. Any active device that uses radio frequencies to transmit information (some kinds of cameras, bugging equipment, radio transmitters (of course), etc.) can thus be detected. It can also be tuned to look for a specific range of signal.

ROSETTA DEVICE

The Rosetta Device is a highly advanced and still fairly rare piece of equipment, but is an invaluable tool for first contact situations where a specialist is not available. The Rosetta Device is designed to formulate communications between two races that have not yet deciphered each others' languages. It has outputs that are designed to fit over the subject's ocular and auditory members, a small atomizer connected to a mini chemical factory (for olfactory input), a microphone, electrodes designed to be attached to the subject to read their brain waves, and a computer. The whole package fits in a backpack. The Rosetta Device sends images, sounds, and smells to the subject and records the resulting vocalizations and brainwave patterns. In this way, a general picture of behaviors, responses, and feelings can be quickly determined, and the data so gathered can then be analyzed. While not allowing language to be interpreted, once the gestalt is formulated, the device allows for rudimentary communications, as simple messages (such as "We come in peace") to be entered or spoken and then "translated" into appropriate images, sounds, smells, etc. Mental activity and vocalizations are similarly translated into simple words and phrases in the examiner's own language. At best, intent and desire can be gleaned or communicated through this device, not complex messages either way.

The obvious drawback of the Rosetta Device is obvious- if you have an alien subject who you cannot communicate with, how do you convince them to don the apparatus short of sedating or restraining them? Trained first contact specialists fear such incidents and have long railed against this device, saying it will surely cause more harm than good; nonetheless, every TTA survey ship and quite a few military vessels carry Rosetta Devices in their stores.

Roleplaying Game



SURVIVAL SUIT

Races: Terran

The survival suit is the natural evolution of wilderness survival gear popularized in the last century on Terra. Thanks to the continued miniaturization of technology along with advancements in chemical engineering, the survival suit allows its wearer to function for days or even weeks on end without a source of water or rations. The basic premise of the survival suit is that in order to continue living in harsh environments the human body must conserve and recycle resources. As a result, the survival suit, which looks much like a wetsuit covered with matte-black pads, is able to control the intake and waste of the human body in an efficient manner.

Water is stored in small pouches all over the survival suit and can be drawn through a small tube that protrudes from the collar; the suit recycles sweat and urine (which it chemically purifies) and then refills those pouches as needed. The outside of the survival suit bears a number of partially reflective black pads, which absorb solar energy and heat and store that energy in tiny heat cells throughout the suit. If the temperature begins to drop, these heat cells can release energy and sustain a comfortable temperature for the human body for up to 8 hours without needing to recharge. If these cells are empty, the suit also has chemical pouches that can be activated one time for another 8 hours of heat. A tiny intravenous feeding system provides nourishment when rations and food run out for up to six days. Tiny fans and vents built into the suit cool the body in temperatures of extreme heat without losing any body moisture.

THERMOSCANNER

The thermoscanner, as its name suggests, detects heat sources. It can be set to scan in a forward direction in search mode, for example to find a wounded comrade in the woods, or placed in a central area and set to watch mode, where it will scan a 360 degree arc. This latter is useful for watching around a camp for approaching predators, for example. The thermoscanner can send its data to an external viewscreen, a databuddy, HUD, or other display. Large, extremely sensitive thermoscanners are often mounted on rescue aircraft for search-and-rescue missions.



GENERAL PURPOSE

DURACABLE

Races: All

Strong as steel, flexible as rubber, and almost as light as normal rope, duracable replaces most cables and ropes as the standard device for lifting, pulling, and support. Duracable is made of lightweight and durable wiring wrapped hundreds of times in a swirl that reinforces itself as more stress is placed on the coil. Duracable is able to support up to 10 metric tons of weight.

FOOD & MEDICINE

AWAKE

Races: Terran (Alphan and Proximan versions in development)

Awake is an orally-administered drug that keeps one refreshed and alert for 72 + CON hours per dose. After this time period, the user becomes extremely lethargic and must sleep for 10 - CON hours or suffer penalties of -3 on all actions. Re-administering the drug at this point is dangerous (it can induce heart palpitations) and will give no added benefit. Awake is widely-used in the military for extended missions and was intended for that use only, but the chemical formula was easy enough to discern and soon underground labs were producing illegal civilian versions. After a multi-year fight, the government gave up and legalized it for all. It is now a common item for the busy and upwardly mobile and is available under dozens of different brand names. "Awake Parties" are increasingly popular as well. While the drug officially has no side effects, some users report hallucinations and other mental disturbances with habitual use. These claims are being investigated.

CAMO BLOCKER

Races: Alphan

Camo blocker is a drug that can be administered orally or via injection. It opens and paralyzes the red / yellow pigment clusters in an alphan's skin, turning them a distinct shade of orange (southern alphans turn bright yellow). This is used on criminals or other dangerous individuals (usually combined with a soporific) when transporting them; any escapees can be clearly identified. It has also been used in political battles to mark and shame an opponent (slipping the drug into food or drink), though such use is illegal. The pill form wears off in 48 hours; the injected form is essentially permanent until de-activated by an antidote. Overuse of the drug can cause permanent damage to the pigment cells and thus to camouflage ability. The drug has no effect on Proximans or Humans.

Roleplaying Game

GREA'E

Races: Alphan

The dried and finely diced water-holding root of an Alphan desert plant, grea'e is usually chewed into a wet pulp and then held under the tongue. It produces a feeling of lethargic calm and inner stillness. It is especially popular among artists and skin painters, who claim it allows them to better realize the gestalt of patterns or visions. Not normally addictive, frequent users develop a slight greenish tint to their hair. Terran scientists are studying this effect as a way to make better dyes. Proxima is very interested in studying it for its claimed mental effects. So far, however, the Alphan government has not allowed exports of the plant or the refined product.

HEAVY METALS SUPPLEMENT

Races: Proximan

HMS is a once-per-day nutritional supplement required by Proximans when away from Proxima II or otherwise eating non-native foods for extended periods. It contains minerals needed to maintain the shield and general radiation resistance (the metals in the supplement are deposited in the skin / shield layers). A proximan without this supplement will, in about a month, begin to suffer loose and bleeding shield segments and will slowly begin to pale in color, as well as losing radiation resistance. Eventually, the shield segments may fall out and infection and even death can set in. HMS can be compounded by any pharmacist or chemist without trouble, as long as the formula is known. Note that HMS is toxic to humans and alphans in large doses.

HRAM / HRAUM

Races: Alphan

An alphan aphrodisiac. Hram (Hraum in Southern Alphan dialect) increases sex drive for several hours. Usually administered in small doses in drinks, it is commonly used as an icebreaker at multiple-Ring gatherings. It does not agree with human or proximan body chemistries; in humans, it seems to induce feelings of paranoia (Dr. Arkanni Miedro writes about its effects in her famous book of her years on Alpha I, *Among Friends*). In proximans, it seems to have no effect; however, anecdotal evidence indicates that it may induce seizures in higher doses.

SYNTHAHOL

Races: All

Synthahol is, as its name suggests, a synthetic alcoholic beverage analog that delivers the good times (feelings of warm and fuzzy eupho-





ria) without the negative side effects (drunkenness, slowed reaction time, hangovers, health problems). Synthahol can be formulated in various flavors to simulate various drinks. Connoisseurs sniff at synthahol concoctions and their slightly off-flavor, but it remains a popular choice for those who want a buzz without the guilt (or consequences). On Alphan worlds it is usually the only game in town (since Alphans lack the enzyme to process real alcohol).

TEĀPOOM

Races: Proximan

TeĀpoom is a liquid infusion derived from the dried and crushed carcasses of a worm-like animal native to Proxima II. TeĀpoom is moderately addictive and produces feelings of well-being and confidence in its users. It is usually administered with a dropper, placed on any mucous membrane (though most users utilize the nose); the effects and duration depend on the strength of the “brew”, one hour being normal. TeĀpoom addiction is fairly common among the upper strata and is recognized as something of a problem by the government. The habit has never caught on widely with either Terrans or Alphans, mainly due to the rarity of ingredients off-world and cultural aversion to the source of the infusion.

TOBACCO

Races: Terran

Tobacco is still grown and made into various smoking products on Terra. New versions are engineered to remove most of the addictive and carcinogenic properties of the leaf (though illegally-farmed varieties are “uncut”, as enthusiasts like to say). The habit enjoys a small but devoted following on Earth, especially among history aficionados; it has also begun to catch on among higher-strata proximans who can afford the astronomical import prices. Alphans have mostly ignored it so far.

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

ARMORED SPACESUIT

This is very similar to a standard spacesuit, except that armored spacesuits add another layer of radiation resistance (+5) and have ceramic or plastisteel trauma plating covering the vital organs and upper thighs.

Roleplaying Game



INSTASKIN

Races: All

Instaskin is a spray-on wound dressing that contains a disinfectant, painkiller, clotting agent and polymer chains that seal and protect surface wounds and burns. It is next to useless on deeper wounds that go below the innermost layer of skin. Each race has its own formulation; generally speaking, they are interchangeable in an emergency.

LIGHT SPACESUIT

Light spacesuits are for civilian emergency use. They are standard (and mandatory) on all spaceliners, tourist shuttles and orbital transfer stations that serve civilians. Before going on a flight, the individual undergoes a body scan and they are issued a plastic polymer suit “printed” to their body measurements. The suit comes “distended” and loose, mak-





ing it easy to don- once placed on the body and activated, it tightens into a form-fitting shape. Combined with an emergency helmet and a snap-on environment pack, a light spacesuit can sustain its wearer for three hours. It provides moderate protection from radiation (+3 to CON rolls) and debris, but is not designed for the rigors of working in a vacuum- a standard spacesuit is necessary for that.

MEDICAL FIELD KIT

Races: All

This first-aid kit fits into a slim backpack and is lightweight. It contains a diagnostic computer (with settings for each known race) that displays temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, and other vital signs, as well as hooking into other portable diagnostic equipment. In addition, the kit contains disinfectant, instaskin, gauze, bandages, tourniquets, slings, splints and wrappings for making casts, painkillers, sleep pills, scalpels (both blade and laser), and various sundry items. Kits used in war zones also contain drugs designed to put the recipient into a coma; this is used as a last-ditch effort to stabilize bad cases until an evacuation can be arranged.

MED SUIT

Races: Terran

A Med Suit is usually supplied to military units that must operate without support for long periods of time or are going into action where evacuation might be difficult. It is made of a thick, slick-feeling fabric that clings to the body and can be worn easily under conventional fatigues, body armor, or flight gear. The Med suit can raise or lower its temperature and moisture retaining or evaporating characteristics to keep the wearer dry and at a comfortable temperature. It has a VS pack (see below) built into it and constantly monitors the wearer's vital signs. It is also equipped with a drug pack that can inject various stimulants or relaxers into the bloodstream upon request. The Med Suit's higher functions come into play in the case of catastrophic injuries. The 'suit has constricting cuffs above the wrist, elbow, knee, and ankle, and at the shoulder and hip. If the suit detects a catastrophic drop in blood pressure (caused by the kind of injury that, for example, severs the hand at the wrist), the constricting cuff nearest above the injury will clamp down, slowing or stopping blood loss, while the suit simultaneously injects drugs that alternately keep the victim alert or calms them or puts them into a rest state (the VS Pack will monitor brain activity in order to make the correct decision- a pilot flying a craft will be kept alert, while a soldier on the ground might be relaxed). If the patient doesn't

Roleplaying Game

stabilize, drugs may be administered to put the casualty into a coma state until they can be picked up by an evac crew. The med suit is obviously no substitute for medical care, but can save the wearer from otherwise certain death.

ORBITAL GUARD SENSORS

These devices are about the size of a small groundcar. They can be placed in orbit around a planet or other object (six being suitable for earth-size planets). They are equipped with sophisticated detection and communications gear. OGSs are designed to detect and report intrusions at quarantined, hazardous, or other off-limits sites. They can detect any ships warping into a system, as well as ships approaching from in-system under conventional power. They can be set to broadcast a warning message to approaching vessels. If their pre-set perimeter distance is breached, they can be programmed to alert the appropriate authorities, including specifics about the size and number of vessels approaching. While this is technically military hardware, many private companies operate their own (slightly less powerful) versions to protect mining claims or other valuable assets.

STANDARD SPACESUIT

Races: All

Standard spacesuits are issued to permanent crews stationed in space, either in stations or aboard ship. They are also sized for the individual wearer. Standard spacesuits are very tough, consisting of ballistic fabrics impregnated with miniature glue packets. If breached by small pieces of debris or sharp objects, the glue packets break and seal the puncture. Larger breaches (over about 3" long) require emergency patches (the inside surfaces of which are similarly studded with glue packets). Standard spacesuits are radiation-resistant, adding +5 to CON resistance rolls. Life support packs good for six hours can be attached to the suit.

VS PACK

Races: All

A VS (Vital Signs) Pack is usually worn by soldiers going into combat. It monitors the wearer's heart rate, blood pressure, electrolyte levels, brain activity, and a host of other information. Readouts on the front give basic information, and there is a jack for field medics to plug their diagnostics computers into to get a quick picture of the patient's condition. The 'pack may also be set to transmit its information and to





act as a homing device for rescuers. VS packs are standard integrated equipment on spacesuits and most types of field armor, but can be worn over or under most types of clothing, on the wrist, or wherever else may be comfortable.

MEKTEKS

Mektteks are the most common robots of the TTA universe. Robots in the TTA universe are highly-specialized and non-anthropomorphic. Mektteks are also partially self-directing, which is what sets them apart from robots, which are nothing more than mindless automatons. The legal, social, and moral underpinnings of these design limitations are well-known to citizens of Terra (and may be expanded by the GM as needed), and the laws keeping MekTeks “in their place” are strictly enforced. Proxima and Alpha have their own versions of mektteks and both races utilize them in much the same ways, though on Proxima robotics are more ubiquitous and on Alpha they are rarer. All Mektteks can be assumed to follow Asimov’s Three Laws, with slight variations, thus: Mektteks are deeply conditioned never to harm an organic being. Any



MAJESTIC 2006

Roleplaying Game

Mektek that works in a public place is also programmed to obey reasonable orders given to them by people, as long as that order is connected with their business. All Mekteks will attempt to contact the authorities if they are able to determine that a person is in distress, or if requested to in any case (false alarms that take a MekTek from its function and thus cause the operator financial loss are a crime punishable with fines plus restitution). Finally, a Mektek will do its best to execute its functions and protect itself unless the need to protect a person is greater.

Some examples of common types of MekTeks are given below, and many other classes and sub-configurations are possible.

MekDok

A MekDok (also known colloquially as a “Sawbones”) is essentially a self-contained automated operating table. It consists of a 2.5 meter-long, 1 meter-wide table surface sitting on a short pedestal containing a computer, power source, and life-support equipment. A bubble dome seals over the top to create a sterile environment and to quarantine anyone inside. Various robotic arms emerge from the sides of the table surface and can be remotely-controlled. A MekDok may also have a pair of fold-out seats for their operators. A MekDok can be installed in a fixed location like a ship or vehicle or fitted with a set of wheels, tracks, or hover units. MekDoks also have internal gyroscopic stabilizers and shock absorbers that keep the table and attached seats level and mostly vibration-free.

The MekDok’s computer is loaded with advanced and detailed medical data and is designed to assist an organic user in performing lifesaving intervention on a patient, though in a pinch the MekDok can work by itself. A MekDok can turn an average person with no medical training into a decent surgeon. Working with a doctor, a MekDok is a whole operating room full of competent assistants in one package. A MekDok can automatically dose patients, rotate them in bed, change wound dressings, and perform other such tasks on a precise schedule.

MekDoks may also have several “orderlies”, robots under the MekDok’s control that can see to the care of multiple patients in their own beds or cabins. This may be as simple as bringing a passenger on a starliner some sleeping pills, or as involved as taking temperature readings, blood samples, and running diagnostic tests.





SHIP MEKANIK

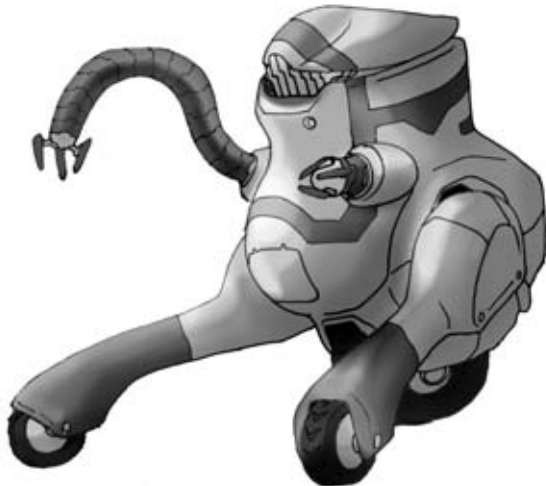
Ship Mekaniks come in many shapes and sizes, from small units designed to scamper along the outer hull to find and seal breaches, to units that man the machine shops on warships, to the 'Mekanik that comes to unstop the plumbing in the suites of luxury liners. Generally speaking, larger ships and military ships will have a host of highly-specialized units while smaller ships will get by with one or two that have wider general knowledge of ship systems. Ship Mekaniks can perform work on their own or act as helpers / advisers to the crew, and most are programmed with detailed information on troubleshooting and configuring ship systems.

INDUSTRIMEK

Industrial Mekteks are more than just assembly-line workers; they are usually multi-function machines with limited problem-solving capacity. Outfitted with a variety of tools, they can work in hostile or toxic environments and never need a break. They often oversee the work of assembly robots and can order materials and parts as needed.

LABORMEK

Labor Mekteks also come in a great variety of configurations, but most are large machines designed for heavy, dangerous work; mining, tunneling, transporting toxic cargoes, working inside of nuclear facilities, etc.



Roleplaying Game

LINGUAMEK

The LinguaMek is an alternative to personal translation devices or databuddies, giving a more “natural” feel to proceedings and also able to act as valet, messenger, secretary, and etiquette advisor to officials and businesspeople. Some are very elaborately decorated by their owners; most are designed to be unobtrusive and elegant in design.

ERRANDMEK

Also known informally as “ScutMeks”, the ErrandMek is a common sight in major cities, zipping around on various missions. ErrandMeks are usually equipped with a variety of hands and cargo baskets and usually move on wheels or legs. They are most commonly used to purchase and deliver needed items, as in-city couriers, or for any other application where an individual cannot or does not wish to appear in person. ErrandMeks are usually housed at a central depot; a person wishing to rent their services dials in with the details of the job, receives a price quote, and if accepted, an ErrandMek is programmed with its task and sent off. ErrandMeks with their “off duty” indicators lit may also be hailed on the street and hired on the spot.

They are also a common sight around stores, ready to carry packages; some upscale establishments assign them to customers to carry purchases and find sizes. Corporations may own several, and these are usually emblazoned with corporate logos and advertisements. ErrandMeks have become something of an issue in crowded city environments in the last few years, as they take up space on walkways and public transportation, clogging traffic and creating delays. Legislation is being debated in some municipalities to limit their hours of operation. Meanwhile, sabotage and damage to ErrandMeks (usually caused by frustrated kicks) is increasing. In the corporate world, the word “ScutMek” has entered the lexicon as a term used to describe an individual who hinders progress on a project. However, ErrandMeks are essential to the smooth operation of commerce in cities, and thus will probably not be eliminated anytime soon.



VEHICLES

ACC34 HovCYCLE

The Alphan HovCycle can travel as high as 15,000 feet, and that limit is set due to the rider's inability to breathe at higher altitudes without an oxygen mask. When driven on the ground, the hoverbike's top speed is over 150 mph.

ACC 87 HovCAR

The latest model in Alphan HovCars, the "87" is capable of flying up to 30,000 feet when the cabin is sealed. When driven on the ground, the hovercar's top speed is over 200 mph but this is normally reduced to remain within posted speed limits in urban areas.

MUSSELMANN HM8

Known as the "Muscleman," the HM8 is a popular recreational off-road motorcycle that also happens to enjoy wide use by military recon units.

YNGWE VALKYRIE

Yngwe Incorporated's version of the street bike upholds the Norwegian motor company's reputation for high performance and luxury. Constructed on the "chopper" frame, the Valkyrie has a triple-wide rear tire and a center of gravity set slightly further back than normal street cycles, enabling it to get up on the rear wheel for impressive displays of motorcycle riding.

KIRSCHNER MOTORS SOLARSAIL

The SolarSail is a solar-electrical economy coupe and its performance is abysmal in comparison to other cars. Nevertheless, it is, by far, the most numerous model on Terran motorways.

ZAIBATSU OMEGA '73

The 2173 model of the Omega from Zaibatsu MotorCorp is a mid-size family wagon with a hatchback rear door and plenty of cargo space. It uses the popular hybrid hydrogen fuel cell engine.

BMW TERRAN SPIRIT

The Bavarian Motor Works "Terran Spirit" is a comfortable, four-door, midsize sedan with a powerful minireactor engine.

SEGA METROPOLITAN

The Metropolitan is the ultimate in chauffeured luxury. Powered by a particle reactor, it is loaded with every available luxury feature. A partition divides the driver's seat from the rest of the vehicle. The solid construction lends the Metropolitan a slightly higher PR than other civilian vehicles, and armored versions with even greater PR are available.

Roleplaying Game

ZHANG MOTORS XRL

The XRL is designed to operate using a less expensive particle reactor, rather than the slightly more stable fusion minireactor found in other high end and luxury vehicles.. This gamble ultimately paid off when an XRL won the Australian Rally Challenge. The XRL comes only in a two-door style.

ACC66 HovBOARD

A popular means of transportation in most Alphan cites, the ACC66 is a 3-foot-long board held aloft by a tiny but powerful gravity resist generator. *The operative skill to control a HovBoard is Balance.*

WGM WYOMING

The Wallace General Mechanics Wyoming is essentially a four-wheeled dirt bike powered by a minireactor.

SIEMENS GYROCOPTER

Near the start of the Proxima War Siemens Inc. was contracted by the TTA to develop its one-seat helicopter for the military, but many now exist in the law enforcement roles and in the corporate sector.

MERCO SUR ARMAMENTS MENDEZ APC

The Mendez armored personnel carrier is fusion-powered and fully enclosed. The crew consists of a driver and two gunners. The vehicle has three topside hatches, located directly above each crew position, with a large door/ramp in the back for infantry troops to board or disembark. Entering or disembarking through a top hatch takes one round.

TTA IFRIT

The Ifrit APC is faster, more durable, and carries more troops than the Mendez APC. The Ifrit is crewed by a commander, a driver, and two gunners, each of whom has a topside hatch located directly above them. Entering or disembarking through a top hatch requires a full-round. The rear door is not built for fast deployment, requiring a full round to open or close. The Ifrit has a mounted twin M-90 machine guns.

ACM48 HovTANK

The Alphan Military standard HovTank is powered by a particle reactor and crewed by a pilot, gunner, gun loader, and commander. It comes equipped with a fully turreted ACM300 mass cannon as its main gun and a ACM447 chaingun in a separate turret located above the commander's hatch. Each crew position has a topside hatch located directly above it. Entering or disembarking through a top hatch requires a full-round and starting the Hovtank requires another full round.





WEAPONS

WEAPONS

Pistols

	Class	DR	RoF	Wt.	Attribute	Cost	Effective Range
Alphan AL-1	Pistol	8E+	1	2	RCR	2500	160
Alphan AL-2	Pistol	8E+	1	2	RCR	4500	160
Alphan ACL-1	Pistol	6E+	1	2	RCR	1850	160
Alphan ANP15	Pistol	2T	1	2	RCR	1600	40
Alphan ANBX	Pistol	4T	1	3	RCR	950	80
Proximan Pulser	Pistol	NA*	1	5	RCR	1850	30
Proximan Stinger	Pistol	6T	2	2	RCR	1500	80
Proximan Claw	Pistol	8T	2	5	RCR	3650	100
Proximan Crappie	Pistol	6T	2	2	RCR	855	50
Proximan Shredder	Pistol	6T*	1	3	RCR	3100	50
Proximan Gyrojet	Pistol	10T	1	6	RCR	4400	400
Terran 9mm Pistol	Pistol	7T	1	2	RCR	1575	80
Terran 10mm Pistol	Pistol	8T	1	3	RCR	2250	80
Terran LAS-A	Pistol	8E	1	3	RCR	2400	140



Rifles

Alphan AL-9	Rifle	10E+	1	10	RCR	3500	240
Alphan ACL-9	Rifle	8E+	1	10	RCR	5250	240
Proximan Howler	Rifle	1-16E	1	20	RCR	3250	50
Proximan Fang	Rifle	10T	1/4/9	11	RCR	5300	140
Terran 9mm SMG	Rifle	8T	3	6	RCR	6750	100
Terran 10mm SMG	Rifle	10T	3	8	RCR	3500	100
Terran 9mm Rifle	Rifle	8T	1	9	RCR	4750	140
Terran 10mm Rifle	Rifle	10T	1	10	RCR	5100	140
Terran Assault Shotgun	Rifle	12T	2	9	RCR	1575	50
Terran HKSM	Rifle	10T	1	6	RCR	7500	100
Terran TACMIL	Rifle	14T	1	7	RCR	5250	300
Terran LAS-R	Rifle	10E	1	10	RCR		200

Heavy Weapons

Alphan Mass Canon	HW	32T	1		RCR	500,000	2400
Alphan Chain Gun	HW	16T	10		RCR	103,500	160
Alphan Gravity Snare	HW	NA*	1		RCR	18,500	60
Alphan Rail Gun	HW	10T*	1		RCR	11,000	280
Proximan Disrupter	HW	2E+*	1		RCR	12,550	240

Terran M90 Machinegun	HW	16T	10	13	RCR	14,500	160
Terran Netgun	HW	NA*	1	16	RCR	3800	40
Terran OPA-19	HW	20E	1	28	RCR	25,550	80

Other Weapons

Grenade, Sonic Pulse	Thrown	NA*	1	0.5	DEX	200	thrown
Grenade, Shrapnel	Thrown	14T	1	0.5	DEX	100	thrown
Grenade, Concussion	Thrown	NA*	1	0.5	DEX	100	thrown
Stun Baton	Hafted	2B*	n/a	4	CR	550	thrown

Spacecraft Weapons (Physical)

Air-to-Air Missile, Terran		4			Comp. (tact)		Short
Mk II Nuclear Missile		10			Comp. (tact)		Medium
Mk IV Nuclear Missile		14			Comp. (tact)		Long
Mark V Nuclear Missile		16			Comp. (tact)		Extreme
Nuclear Pellet Gun		8			Comp. (tact)		Point Blank

Spacecraft Weapons (Energy)

Laser Canon		6			Comp. (tact)		Short
Laserlance		8			Comp. (tact)		Short
Laserlance, Hardbeam		10			Comp. (tact)		Short



OPA-8 particle Accelerator	16	Comp. (tact)	Short
Sonic Accelerator	20	Comp. (tact)	Point Blank

* See items description for more info

DEFENSE SHIELDS, SCREENS AND FIELDS

PR

Armor System	P	E	Strength
Energy Absorbent Field Generator (Alphan)	0	4	40, 60 or 80
TTA CNIL AM4S Defense Shield	0	1	20
TTA CNIL AM6Y Defense screen	0	2	20
WCRC type 17D Deflector Shield	0	2	20
WCRC type MM22 Shield	0	6	20
WCRC type MM26C Shield	0	5	40
WCRC type MM26D Shield	0	4	60

A shield's strength is the number of HP in damage it can absorb before ceasing to function.



ARMOR

	PR				WT	STR	Cost
	B	S	T	E			
Light Combat Armor	+1	+2	+4	+0	18	+0	600 cr
Medium Combat Armor	+3	+5	+6	+1	28	+2	2400 cr
Projectile Defector	+0	+0	+4	+0	2	-3	9000 cr
Refractive Body Armor	+1	+2	+2	+8	20	+1	12000 cr
Silent Suit	+1	+2	+2	+0	8	-2	1200 cr
Space Combat Armor	+8	+12	+10	+10	50	+2	7500 cr

GENERAL EQUIPMENT

	Weight	Cost
Atmospheric Analyzer	2.5 lbs.	520 cr
Backpack / Rucksack	1 lb	5 cr
Bedroll / Sleeping Bag	1 lb	2 cr
Binoculars, electronic	2 lbs	150 cr
Biological Scanner	2.5 lbs.	1500 cr
Camo Suit	5 lbs	750 cr
Camo Suit (Alphan)	3 lbs	1250 cr
Canteen or waterskin	1 lb	1 cr
Canteen (built in filtration)	1 lb	500 cr
Canvas (per square meter)	1 lb.	1 cr
Chain (per meter)	1 lb.	1 cr
Compass (electronic)	.25 lbs	5 cr
Computer, personal	10 lbs.	500+ cr
Crowbar	5 lbs.	5 cr
Databuddy	1 lb	250+ cr
Duracable	1 lb/10ft	1 cr/ft
First Aid Kit	1 lb	10 cr
Flash Seal	5 lbs.	50 cr
Flightsuit & Helmet	5 lbs.	250 cr
Float Plate	varies	10,000 cr +
GalPOS Unit	1 lb	500 cr
Goggles (UV protection)	.25 lbs	10 cr
Grapple	5 lbs.	10 cr

Roleplaying Game



Grapnel Gun	10 lbs.	250 cr
Gravity Anchor	6 lbs.	8500 cr
Hackcard	.25 lbs	varies
Handcuffs	.25 lbs.	25 cr
Heads-Up Display	1 lb	650 cr
Lockpick set	1 lb	100 cr
Lockpick, electronic	2 lbs	1500 cr
Medical Scanner	3 lbs	5000 cr
Nanobeacon	.25 lbs	425 cr
Nightvision Goggles	2 lbs	1000 cr
Non-Linear Junction Detector	8 lbs	1000 cr
Personal Communicator	.25 lbs	100 cr
Portable Environment Generator	25 lbs	3000 cr
Portable Glow Lamp	2 lbs	50 cr
Power Backpack	30 lbs	4575 cr
Puritizer	2 lbs	75 cr
Portable ECM / ECCM Unit	25 lbs	5750 cr
Portable EMP Generator	30 lbs	10,000 cr
Portable Heater/Cooler	10 lbs.	500 cr
Portable Radar	5 lbs.	3500 cr
Powercell, Alphan	.25 lbs	4 cr
Powercell, Proximan	.25 lbs	6 cr
Powercell, Terran	.25 lbs	5 cr
Pick / Shovel	10 lbs.	10 cr
Rations, MRE (one day's)	.5 lbs	1 cr
Rations, self heating (one day's)	1 lb	5 cr
Recaller	1 lb	500 cr
Respirator mask & tank	10 lbs.	475 cr
RF Detector	5 lbs	300 cr
Rope, nylon	.5 lbs/m	1 cr / m
Rosetta Device	10 lbs.	10,000 cr
Search Light	45 lbs	100 cr
Sleeping Bag	1 lb	10 cr



Soil Analyzer	4 lbs	650 cr
Survival Suit (thermal)	5 lb	250 cr
Tent (2-man)	8 lbs.	80 cr.
Thermal Imager	5 lbs	500 cr

CLOTHING

Boots (cold weather)		25 cr
Boots (hiking)		25 cr
Boots (workboots)		10 cr
Coat		50 cr
Coat (cold weather)		200 cr
Garments (casual)		50 cr
Garments (business)		75 cr
Garments (fashionable)		75 cr
Garments (coveralls)		25 cr
Garments (uniform)		n/a
Shoes		10 cr
Shoes (formal)		25 cr
Suit / Dress (formal)		250 cr

FOOD & MEDICINE

Awake	.1 lb	50 cr
Camo Blocker	.1 lb	100 cr
Grea'E	.1 lb	25 cr
Heavy Metals Supplement	.1 lb	5 cr
Hram / Hraum	.1 lb	100 cr
Synthahol	.1 lb	10 cr
Terpoom	.1 lb	40 cr
Tobacco	.1 lb	25 cr

SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

Armored Spacesuit	85 lbs.	6500 cr
Engineering Toolkit	35 lbs.	2500 cr
Instaskin	1 lb.	25 cr

Roleplaying Game



Light Spacesuit	13 lbs.	1500 cr
Medical Field Kit	12 lbs.	1250 cr
MedSuit	16 lbs.	12,000 cr
Orbital Guard Sensor	5 tons	50,000 cr
Standard Spacesuit	20 lbs.	1900 cr
VS Pack	2.5 lbs	5400 cr

MEKTEKS

	SPD	Cost
MekDok	-1	10,000 cr
Ship Mekanik	+0	6500 cr
IndustriMek	-1	3000 cr
LaborMek	-2	1500 cr
LinguaMek	-1	9000 cr
ErrandMek	+3	2500 cr

VEHICLES

	SPD	Acc	Dec	Cost
ACC34 HovCycle	+30	+8	+4	52,000 cr
ACC87 HovCar	+25	+4	+2	129,500 cr
Musselmann HM8	+14	+2	+4	22,550 cr
Yngwe Valkyrie	+30	+8	+4	30,000 cr
KM Solarsail	+22	+4	+4	35,600 cr
Zaibatsu Omega 73	+20	+3	+4	50,750 cr
BMW Terran Spirit	+24	+4	+4	123,000 cr
Sega Metropolitan	+20	+2	+4	623,500 cr
Zhang Motors XRL	+22	+4	+4	62,750 cr
ACC66 HovBoard	+6	+2	+2	8575 cr
WGM Wyoming	+20	+2	+4	16,500 cr
Siemens GyroCopter	+28	+4	+6	1,000,000 cr
Mercosur Mendez APC	+20	+2	+2	n/a
TTA IFRIT	+22	+2	+2	n/a
ACM48 HovTank	+18	+2	+2	n/a



Spacecraft & Interstellar Travel

A detailed line drawing of a futuristic spacecraft, possibly a probe or a small ship, with various antennas, sensors, and a central body. It is positioned behind the main title text.

SPACE TRAVEL

Although the principles of nuclear drive systems had been put into practice as far back as the late 2080s, the work done by the McKinley Corporation, who now produce the Ion UltraDrive engine, transformed them into highly efficient and economical power sources, and many of today's ships are equipped with engines that are virtually identical to those introduced in 2087.

More important still was the invention of the Warp Generator by Henri DeVass fourteen years later.

THE DEVASS GENERATOR

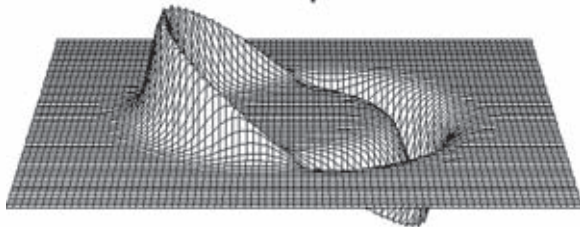
The DeVass Warp Generator is perhaps the most monumental invention in mankind's history. For well over two hundred years, the concept of faster than light travel had been deemed impossible by the best and brightest of Terra's scientific community. Albert Einstein's Theory of Relativity stated that FTL travel would be extremely impractical if not entirely impossible.

New theories about space and time arose over the next century and the quest for FTL travel took on a new life. In the waning years of the 20th century a new theory arose from of Mexican-born physicist Miguel Alcubierre. Alcubierre posited that while traditional thinking on FTL travel might be impossible, the concept of travelling to distant stars could be made possible not by exceeding the speed of light but rather by *bending* space-time.

Roleplaying Game



DeVass Effect on Spacetime



Scientists explored these and other theories until finally French-born scientist, Dr. Henri DeVass perfected his theory and gave the world the DeVass Generator. DeVass perfected the basic theory of Alcubierre and was the first Terran to make FTL theory a reality

The DeVass generator works by *stretching* space in a wave, causing the space ahead of a spacecraft to contract along the axis the spacecraft wishes to travel in and the space behind it to expand. The spacecraft then essentially rides this wave inside a region, known as a “warp bubble”, of flat space. Since the spacecraft is not actually moving within this bubble, but rather being carried along as the region itself moves, conventional relativistic effects do not apply; there is no mass increase or time dilation effect. The on-board spacecraft clock runs at the same speed as the clock of an external observer, and that observer will detect no increase in the mass of the moving ship, even when it travels at effective FTL speeds.

Additionally, when using the DeVass Generator, when the ship is accelerating, it travels on a free-fall geodesic. In other words, a ship using the Generator to accelerate and decelerate is always in free fall, and the crew experiences no accelerational g-forces. Enormous tidal forces are present near the edges of the flat-space volume however, because of the large space curvature there, and so using a DeVass Generator within a planetary system is extremely dangerous.

As a result, the TTA (as well as both Alphan and Proximan authorities) have strongly enforced regulations concerning FTL travel. In the Sol system, no FTL travel is permitted within the orbits of the 10 major planetary bodies or the oort cloud. Interstellar flights must therefore travel just outside the system before activating a DeVass Generator and incoming spacecraft must deactivate their FTL drives before entering the system (a series of skybases and other stations exist at designated coor-



ALPHAN & PROXIMAN FTL TRAVEL

Both Alphans and Proximans both have their own FTL technologies. The Alphan's had FTL capability long before humanity but unlike Terran technology, theirs is based on gravitic energy. The exact functioning of their Mass Drive is a well-guarded secret and was never included in the Terra-Alpha Technology Sharing Agreement. It is thought that Alphan FTL drives use some type of quantum singularity to accelerate their craft to the speed of gravity (which theoretically exceeds the speed of light). In game terms, the travel times required for FTL travel using an Alphan Mass Drive are the same as the Terran DeVass Generator. The big difference between the two is in the warp guidance systems. Alphan spacecraft only have a +/- 1 AU in their guidance systems meaning they are able to exit warp much closer to their intended targets, reducing travel time considerably.

Proximan FTL technology is nearly identical to Terran tech which makes sense as it is widely known that the Proximans only acquired FTL technology from captured Terran spacecraft during the Proxima War.

dinates outside the Sol oort cloud to direct this traffic). Failure to follow these regulations will result in the revocation of the pilots transit license, a 25,000,000 credit fine and up to 10 years in a TerraFed penitentiary.

These laws and regulations are there for good reason. The gravitational tidal forces created by a DeVass Generator are sufficient enough to seriously destabilize the orbit of objects smaller than a planet and additionally, the navigational abilities of a craft while inside a "warp bubble" are nowhere near accurate. Attempting to enter a star system while under and active DeVass (or Alphan Mass Drive) could result in a ship appearing out of warp anywhere up to 6 AU from their intended location. This could easily result in a spacecraft deactivating their DeVass generator only to find themselves dangerously close to a planet or moon or worse, inside the atmosphere or even crust of a planet. Such a relativistic collision would result in the destruction of not only the spacecraft, but likely the planet or moon as well.

Roleplaying Game

Time is required to build up sufficient power to satisfy the enormous energy requirements of the generators prior to a jump and also to replenish reserves afterwards. In addition, ships have to move under conventional power to and from these specified warp zones to avoid the possibility of either drawing other objects into the jump or of collision when emerging.

The actual time spent within a warp bubble is roughly 1 day per light year travelled. Therefore a trip from Terra to Alpha Centauri takes only approximately 4 days not accounting for in system travel and build up. The actual travel time, taking all other factors into account, is more like 10 days meaning clearly 80% of the travel time is spent at stationary building energy requirements or at sub-light speeds.

The current generation of DeVass generators can make a maximum warp jump of about 5 light years using existing fusion reactors for power. After coming out of a warp jump, it takes up to 2 days to replenish the energy reserves of the craft to enable another jump. Replenishing even enough power to engage the traditional propulsion system for in-system travel can take between 2 and 8 hours depending on the type of craft. This makes spacecraft coming out of a warp jump extremely susceptible as they are near defenseless with no energy to run more than life support and other essential systems.

VEHICLE RULES

VEHICLE MOVEMENT RATES

These rules provide an integrated system for resolving the movement and combat of surface vehicles, aircraft and even spacecraft.

SPD SCALES

The vehicle rules in the *TTA Roleplaying Game* are streamlined enough that you will often be able to use them in the narrative flow of your game without using miniatures and map grids. For more complicated vehicle sequences—usually those involving more than two or three vehicles—these items will be very helpful, as they make tracking the positions of vehicles a simple task.





These rules allow you to handle any kind of vehicle. from ground cars to spacecraft however, the capabilities of these vehicles vary so radically that you'll need to use different scales on a map grid to represent their movement.

The default SPD and movement rate used for characters works equally well for most ground vehicles but the scale tends to break down when dealing with aircraft and even more so when dealing with spacecraft as these two classes of vehicles typically travel far beyond the speeds of most ground based traffic. A typical aircraft might be able to move up to 20,000 feet in a single round—that's over SPD +400 if using the character SPD scale and spacecraft can travel much faster than aircraft.

As a result the *TTA Roleplaying Game* uses three separate SPD scales. The Aircraft scale multiplies the regular character movement rate by 10 and the Spacecraft scale multiplies the character scale by 100. In other words, a character traveling at SPD +0 is moving at 50 ft/rd or 6 mph. An aircraft, using the Aircraft scale, traveling at SPD +0 is traveling at 500 ft/rd or 60 mph and a spacecraft, using the Spacecraft scale, traveling at SPD +0 would be moving at 5000 ft/rd or 600 mph.

SPEED

Every vehicle has a top SPD listed (and Spacecraft also have a cruising SPD listed, for more information on Cruising SPD, see *Interplanetary Travel* below). This value is simply the maximum SPD the vehicle is capable of moving in a single round. A vehicle's current speed can range anywhere between -5 and its top speed. Remember that a vehicle's speed is always based on the scale for its vehicle class. An aircraft traveling at SPD +5 is traveling 10 times as fast as a surface vehicle traveling at SPD +5.

For example, an Alphan HovCar has a top speed of +25. A HovCar uses the character SPD scale, so that's 1250 ft/round or 142 miles per hour. The HovCar travel at any speed between -5 (full stop) and +25 (top speed).

SPEED MODIFIERS

The speed at which a vehicle is traveling imposes a modifier on all Drive or Pilot rolls to operate the vehicle. Spacecraft use the same table as surface vehicles as a simple expedience, and we can get away with it for a couple reasons. First, in space, there's no gravity, friction, wind, or other environmental variables to make traveling at high speeds espe-

Roleplaying Game

cially difficult. Spacecraft are able to achieve insanely high speeds with very little risk or danger. Second, we don't have to worry about integrating movement on the spacecraft scale with movement on the surface vehicle or aircraft scale. While some spacecraft are capable of atmospheric flight, their capabilities are severely limited in an atmosphere and we can simply convert all of their statistics directly to the aircraft scale.

For example, a space interceptor with a SPD +40 can move 200,000 feet each round in deep space. If the interceptor enters a planetary atmosphere, it can't even approach that speed. We simply convert its top speed of +40 to the aircraft scale so it can travel 20,000 feet in a round.

On the other hand, we have to be able to integrate surface vehicle and aircraft movement. An aircraft traveling at SPD +1 is traveling just as fast as a surface vehicle traveling at SPD +10. Aircraft are capable of traveling at very high speeds, but they aren't very maneuverable while doing so. Of course, they're also engineered to handle those speeds, so the vehicle itself will give the pilot some help on maneuvers (see Handling below).

CHANGING SPEED

A pilot or driver can change the speed of his vehicle once each round as a free action (i.e without incurring any multiple action penalty). All vehicles have an acceleration and deceleration value. The listed number

Character/Spacecraft Scales

SPD	Omni Table Modifier
+1 to +5	+0
+6 to +10	-2
+11 to +15	-4
+16 to +20	-6
+21 to +30	-8
+31 to +40	-10
+41 to +50	-12

Aircraft Scale

SPD	Omni Table Modifier
+0	+0
+1	-2
+2	-6
+3	-8
+4	-10
+5 to +10	-12
+11 to +20	-14
+21 to +30	-16
+31 to +40	-18
+41 to +50	-20





is the value for moderate acceleration or deceleration—how much a pilot can speed up or slow down at moderate risk of losing control of the vehicle. Low acceleration/deceleration is half the listed number, high acceleration/deceleration is twice the listed number, and extreme acceleration/deceleration is four times the listed number.

Accelerating and decelerating require a Pilot or Drive Omni Table roll. The Degree of Difficulty modifier depends on how fast the pilot/driver is attempting to accelerate or decelerate. The Omni Table roll is also modified by the vehicle's current speed, before applying the effects of acceleration or deceleration. The roll is also modified by the vehicles MAN rating.

Acc/Dec	DoD
Low	+10
Moderate	+0
High	-10
Extreme	-20

For example, an Alphan HovCar has an acceleration of +4 and a deceleration of -2. The driver can increase the vehicle's SPD by +2 at low acceleration, +4 at moderate acceleration, +8 at high acceleration, and +16 at extreme acceleration. The HovCar is at a full stop and the driver decides on extreme acceleration to accelerate the HovCar to SPD +11 in a single round. This results in a -20 Degree of Difficulty penalty being applied to the Omni Table roll. There is no modifier for speed, since the vehicle is at SPD -5 before the effects of acceleration are applied. The car has a MAN +0, so there's no modifier for that either.

INTERPLANETARY TRAVEL

The Top Speed listed under each Spacecraft should be considered the top speed during tactical movement like that required for combat and to perform various maneuvers and stunts. For travel between planetary bodies, a spacecraft travels at Cruising Speed. Since there is no air pressure or other resistance in space, a spacecraft can theoretically achieve incredibly high velocities by simply accelerating indefinitely. Essentially, a craft accelerates until it achieves its desired cruising speed.

Only Spacecraft with an asterix (*) after it's SPD rating are capable of interplanetary travel. To determine actual travel times for interplanetary travel, please consult the table on the following page. When acceler-

Roleplaying Game

	Mercury	Venus	Terra	Mars	Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
Mercury	0	41,046,480	67,086,480	115,446,480	709,158,480	6,986,673,360	134,756,006,314	4,051,518,596,678	159,671,343,233,384
Venus	41,046,480	0	26,040,000	74,400,000	668,112,000	6,945,626,880	134,714,959,834	4,051,477,550,198	159,671,302,186,904
Terra	67,086,480	26,040,000	0	48,360,000	642,072,000	6,919,586,880	134,688,919,834	4,051,451,510,198	159,671,276,146,904
Mars	115,446,480	74,400,000	48,360,000	0	593,712,000	6,871,226,880	134,640,559,834	4,051,403,150,198	159,671,227,786,904
Jupiter	709,158,480	668,112,000	642,072,000	593,712,000	0	6,277,514,880	134,046,847,834	4,050,809,438,198	159,670,634,074,904
Saturn	6,986,673,360	6,945,626,880	6,919,586,880	6,919,586,880	6,277,514,880	0	127,769,332,954	4,044,531,923,318	159,664,356,560,024
Uranus	134,756,006,314	134,714,959,834	134,688,919,834	134,640,559,834	134,046,847,834	127,769,332,954	0	3,916,762,590,364	159,536,587,227,070
Neptune	4,051,518,596,678	4,051,477,550,198	4,051,451,510,198	4,051,403,150,198	4,050,809,438,198	4,044,531,923,318	3,916,762,590,364	0	155,619,824,636,706
Pluto	159,671,343,233,384	159,671,302,186,904	159,671,276,146,904	159,671,227,786,904	159,670,634,074,904	159,664,356,560,024	159,536,587,227,070	155,619,824,636,706	0

INTERPLANETARY DISTANCES

	Alpha 1	Alpha 2	Alpha 3	Alpha B	Alpha B1	Alpha B2	Proxima
Alpha 1	0	67,820,003	933,929,503	2,139,154,003	2,165,067,523	2,179,041,891	1,208,935,054,003
Alpha 2	67,820,003	0	866,109,500	2,071,334,000	2,097,247,520	2,111,221,888	1,208,867,234,000
Alpha 3	933,929,503	866,109,500	0	1,205,224,500	1,231,138,020	1,245,112,388	1,208,001,124,500
Alpha B	2,139,154,003	2,071,334,000	1,205,224,500	0	25,913,520	39,887,888	1,206,795,900,000
Alpha B1	2,165,067,523	2,097,247,520	1,231,138,020	25,913,520	0	13,974,368	1,208,960,112,112
Alpha B2	2,179,041,891	2,111,221,888	1,245,112,388	39,887,888	13,974,368	0	1,208,960,112,112
Proxima Centauri	1,208,935,054,003	1,208,867,234,000	1,208,001,124,500	1,206,795,900,000	1,208,960,112,112	1,208,960,112,112	0

All distances are in miles



The Terran Trade Authority



	Proxima 1	Proxima 2	Proxima 3	Proxima 4	Proxima 5
Proxima 1	0	1860000	65,010,887	77,988,056	118,978,450
Proxima 2	1860000	0	63,150,887	76,128,056	117,118,450
Proxima 3	65,010,887	63,150,887	0	12,977,169	53,967,563
Proxima 4	77,988,056	76,128,056	12,977,169	0	40,990,394
Proxima 5	118,978,450	117,118,450	53,967,563	40,990,394	0

ating to cruising speeds, a spacecraft accelerate its normal Acceleration rating every five minutes rather than every round.

For example, Commander Cowley must travel from his base on Mars for specialized training at FLEA HQ on Terra. Looking at the Interplanetary Distances table tells us that the distance from Mars to Terra is 48,360,000 miles. Although Cowley's Cutlass has a top speed of +38 for tactical movement, he can accelerate past this SPD top cover the great distance between Mars and Terra. The distance to be crossed is 48,360,000 miles. If Cowley accelerates to SPD +400 he should be able to cross this distance in about 8 days and he'll need to accelerate for about 7 hours before he achieves his cruising speed thereby requiring him to decelerate for the same amount of time as he approaches Terran orbit.

The true astro-physics of interplanetary travel are obviously much more complex than presented here but this is, after all, a game and games are designed to be fun, not to tax your mathematical abilities.

GM's are highly advised to use the above a guideline and should fudge the numbers as they see fit to suit the needs of their campaigns.

STUNTS AND MANEUVERS

In addition to changing speeds, pilots (and drivers) can also perform a wide range of maneuvers in their vehicles. In a single round, a pilot or driver can perform one maneuver and one other action (such as an attack) or two maneuvers without incurring any multiple action penalties.

Maneuvers require a Pilot or Drive Omni Table roll, and the modifiers for the vehicle's current speed and handling rating are always applied to the roll. See the table below for a list of maneuvers and their Degree of Difficulty modifiers.

Roleplaying Game



Stunt	DoD
Avoid Hazard	-20 to +5
Bootleg Turn	-6
Climb/Dive	+0
Evasive Maneuvers	variable
Extreme Climb/Dive	-5
Extreme Turn	-10
Immelman Turn	-12
Jump	-5+
Loop	-6
Ram	None (normal Pilot/Drive roll)
Regain Control	-1+
Roll	-3
Soft Turn	+10
Sharp Turn	-5
Takeoff/Land	-4

Maneuvers are typically executed while the vehicle is traveling in a forward direction. Many ground vehicles can travel in reverse and can execute maneuvers while doing so. However, Drive rolls for all maneuvers made while traveling in reverse suffer a -4 penalty.

Turns

If you're using a map grid to track vehicle movement, the grid provides eight simple "compass points" by which to measure turns and direction of travel. Using the compass analogy, we can call these points north, northeast (diagonal), east, southeast (diagonal), south, southwest (diagonal), west, and northwest (diagonal). A "one-point" turn is any turn from one compass point to the next compass point, for example, from "north" to "northeast."

Soft Turn: This is any turn up to a 45° angle. On the map grid, it's a one-point turn.

Sharp Turn: This is any turn between a 45° angle and a 90° angle. On the map grid, it's a two-point turn.

Extreme Turn: This is any turn between a 90° angle and a 135° angle. On the map grid, it's a three-point turn.

Bootleg Turn: This is any turn between a 135° angle and a 180° angle. On the map grid, it's a four-point turn. Your vehicle's speed



is automatically 0 after you complete a bootlegger turn. You have to accelerate to get back up to speed in your new direction of travel.

AVOID HAZARD

A hazard can be anything that the vehicle could possibly hit during the round. This can be another spacecraft, a station, asteroids or other debris. If the vehicle is being operated at less than $\frac{1}{2}$ the vehicle's SPD rating, a -2 penalty is applied as the DoD. Whenever a vehicle is being operated at more than $\frac{1}{2}$ its top SPD, a -4 (or more) penalty is applied to avoid a hazard. The size of a hazard will also play a role. For hazards the same size or smaller than the vehicle, the penalty is -4 while hazards larger than the vehicle incur only a -1 penalty to avoid.

BOOTLEG TURN

By making a bootleg turn, a driver/pilot can radically change direction without turning in a loop. However, in so doing, the vehicle comes to a stop. Before a vehicle can make a bootleg turn, it must move in a straight line for at least 3 rounds. A successful bootleg turn gives the pilot/driver automatic initiative and grants a +4 bonus to hit any pursuing vehicles on the following round.

CLIMB/DIVE

In most vehicle sequences, it's not especially important to track altitude. For example, in a dogfight between two aircraft or spacecraft, you really only need to know the distance between the two vehicles—how much of that distance is vertical isn't likely to be an issue. Altitude can be an issue when an aircraft is engaged with a surface vehicle, because the aircraft can essentially dictate the minimum range between the two. In these cases, the pilot of the flying vehicle should simply announce his altitude at the beginning of the scene then track any changes as it develops. By executing this maneuver, a vehicle can climb or dive at an angle up to 45°. For simplicity, assume the vehicle moves forward half its speed and gains half its speed in altitude (or loses the altitude in the case of a dive). Obviously, surface vehicles cannot perform this maneuver.

EVASIVE MANEUVERS

By taking evasive maneuvers a pilot/driver may make a Pilot/Drive roll with a penalty of their choosing. On a full success or better they receive a bonus to their defense equal to the reverse of the penalty they chose for their evasive maneuver stunt. For example, Maj. Carey Bantancourt (Pilot +4) is in a dogfight with a K13 Shark (Pilot +4), one of Proxima's best interceptors. Carey has initiative and opts to take evasive maneuvers and elects to take a -6 penalty to the attempt. He rolls an 18 on the Omni Table and this is modified by his Pilot skill and elected pen-



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alty for a total of 16 ($18 + 4 - 6 = 16$), giving him a success and therefore a +6 bonus to his defense. In the following round, The Shark then tries to gain position by making an initiative roll against Carey. The Proximan's Pilot skill cancels out Carey's and so it would have been a straight d20 roll had not Carey taken evasive maneuvers. As it stands though, the Proximan must now roll with a -6 penalty to gain position on Carey and act first in the round.

EXTREME CLIMB/DIVE

The vehicle climbs or dives at an angle between 45° and 90° . The pilot may choose how much of the vehicle's speed to expend gaining or losing altitude, but it must be more than half. Surface vehicles cannot perform this maneuver.

IMMELMAN TURN

This difficult maneuver is a half-loop and a half-roll. The vehicle climbs, inverts, and executes a half-roll to return to an upright orientation and reverses its direction of travel. The vehicle ends its move in the same position it started but facing the opposite direction. Only air and spacecraft can execute an Immelman Turn. In fact, this is the only way for aircraft or spacecraft to make a 180° turn—otherwise, they must make consecutive soft, sharp, or extreme turns to reverse their direction of travel.



JUMP

A vehicle may attempt to jump over an obstacle such as another vehicle or culvert. The degree of difficulty is always at the GM's discretion and will involve the length of the jump attempted as well as the SPD and MAN of the vehicle attempting the jump.

LOOP

This stunt causes the spacecraft/aircraft to make a complete loop over the course of the round giving it a +4 bonus on attacks against pursuing spacecraft/aircraft.

RAM

Ramming one's vehicle into another is not a particularly difficult task but can prove suicidal. See Collisions below for information about the results of a Ram.

REGAIN CONTROL

Whenever a character fails a Pilot/Drive skill roll, they have essentially lost control of their vehicle and cannot take any further actions other than to attempt to regain control. To regain control, the Pilot/Driver must make a successful skill check with a degree of difficulty determined by the GM and based on the situation that caused their loss of control in the first place.

ROLL

The vehicle executes a 360° lateral roll, ending up in the same upright orientation as it started.

TAKEOFF/LAND

Part of everyday operation of any aircraft/spacecraft but, nonetheless, one of the more difficult aspects of operating these types of vehicles.

VEHICLE ACTION TABLE ROLLS

When a pilot or driver fails a maneuver, a number of different things can happen. On a Partial Success, the pilot may complete the maneuver anyway but partially lose control of the vehicle thereby requiring another Pilot or Drive roll the following roll to regain control of the vehicle. The following are some examples of the possible effects of a Partial Success on the *Omni Table*:

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Slip: The vehicle slips sidewise, loses traction or swerves slightly. The vehicle completes any Maneuver the pilot was attempting and moves its current speed. However, the pilot suffers a 2 circumstance penalty oil

Roleplaying Game



all Maneuver. until he makes a successful Pilot check to regain control.

Slide: The vehicle almost slides out of control. The vehicle only moves half its current speed and completes any attempted maneuver only halfway. If the pilot or driver attempted an extreme or sharp turn, he only manages a soft turn. If he attempted a loop or roll, he manages only a half-loop or half-roll. If he was steering to avoid an obstacle, he still clips or sideswipes it. Gamemaster's should not that in the case of a Jump maneuver, there are no Partial Successes; either the driver jumps the obstacle or he doesn't.

On a Failure, the attempted maneuver did no succeed and the vehicle may skid or spin out or it may collide with another vehicle or obstacle. The following are examples of results of a Failure roll on the *Omni Table*:

Skid: The vehicle's speed drops by 10 and it skids one to the right or left (GM's discretion). This could potentially bring the vehicle into contact with another vehicle or obstacle. If so, it collides (see Collisions below). If the pilot was attempting a specific maneuver, it fails completely. The vehicle's speed continues to drop by 10 and it skids again each round until either the pilot or driver makes a successful Regain Control roll on the *Omni Table*, the vehicle drops to SPD -5 or it crashes into something. If an aircraft's speed drops below SPD +20 (except on takeoff or landing) it stalls and loses 5,000 feet of altitude each round. The pilot suffers a cumulative -2 penalty per round on all maneuvers until he makes a successful Pilot roll to regain control.

Spin: The vehicle goes into an uncontrolled spin. The vehicle's speed drops by 10 and it moves in a random direction. This continues each round until the pilot makes a successful Pilot roll on the *Omni Table* to regain control, the vehicle's speed reaches -5 or it crashes into something. If an aircraft's speed drops below SPD +20 (except on takeoff or landing) it stalls and loses 5,000 feet of altitude each round. The pilot suffers a cumulative -4 penalty per round on all maneuvers until he makes a successful Pilot roll to regain control.

Collision: The pilot loses control of the vehicle and it crashes into a nearby vehicle or obstacle. If there are multiple targets available, the GM should choose the nearest or select one randomly. If there are no nearby targets—such as in open air or space—the vehicle goes into a spin (see above).



COLLISIONS

If a vehicle crashes into something, it will immediately sustain damage based on its current speed and the size of the object or vehicle it collides with.

The base damage caused by a collision to both the moving vehicle and the object it strikes for ground and water based vehicles is equal to the vehicles SPD +20. In the case of aircraft, the base damage is equal to 10 times the SPD of the vehicle. When dealing with spacecraft collisions, the base damage is equal to 20 times the SPD of the vehicle.

However, if the vehicle crashes into a moving object, such as another vehicle, the Games Master must determine the total speed of the impact and use that as the base damage of the collision instead. If the two vehicles are moving directly towards each other, add their speeds together for the purposes of determining collision damage. If they are moving in the same direction, use the difference of the speeds and if they are moving at angles to one another, use the highest speed.

Passengers in a vehicle that collides or crashes take half the damage actually dealt to the vehicle, after accounting for the vehicle's PR. Passengers who make a successful CON *Omni Table* roll take half of this damage.





VEHICLE COMBAT

Using the *Omni System* rules, vehicular combat is fast and furious. Rather than dealing with all the nitty, gritty minutia, *Omni* instead uses an abstract system not unlike that used for the more common melee and ranged combat experienced by player characters.

Essentially, when engaged in vehicle combat, the vehicle itself can be viewed as a character with attributes like DEX, CON and PER replaced by vehicular attributes like MAN, HUL and SEN.

At its core, the Terran Trade Authority RPG is about the characters. It is not a Vehicle Combat game that focuses on battles between fleets of spacecraft.

That being said, there will undoubtedly be occasions for TTA characters to engage in ship-to-ship combat in space or combat between insurgent tanks and other military vehicles. The following rules are intended to allow those occasions.

Combat between spacecraft and other types of vehicles function almost identically to normal, character vs. character combat. There is an initiative phase, players state the intent of the characters who are piloting the spacecraft, acting as gunnery officers, controlling defenses, etc.. The GM then assigns penalties or bonuses and the combat is resolved by a roll on the *Omni Table*.

ENCOUNTER DISTANCE

Before combat can begin between vehicle, they must first be aware of each other. Use the following guidelines to determine appropriate encounter distances based on the terrain in which the encounter occurs:

Terrain	Distance
Smoke, Heavy Fog	25 ft
Jungle, Dense Forest	50 ft
Light Forest	100 ft
Scrub, Brush	200 ft
Open	400 ft
Sensors	Special



These rules for spotting allow you to establish the encounter distance for visual contact. Spacecraft pilots rarely, if ever, rely on visual contact, instead relying on their sensor readings.

Spacecraft sensors require a mostly unobstructed line of sight to the target to be effective. They cannot detect other spacecraft on the opposite side of a planet or moon, nor can they pierce most nebulas or planetary ring systems. They are not hindered by smoke, fog, clouds, or light foliage, but they are blocked by solid obstructions.

A spacecraft's sensors have an effective range similar to weapons. Sensors have ratings which are used to modify Computer (ship systems) *Omni Table* rolls when dealing with Sensors. The letter after the SEN rating is the effective range of the spacecraft's sensors: **P** for PointBlank; **C** for Close; **M** for Moderate; **L** for Long and **E** for Extreme.

VEHICLE COMBAT INITIATIVE

At the beginning of any Vehicle Combat situation, each combatant in control of a vehicle (i.e. the pilot or driver) makes an *Omni Table* roll using their respective Pilot or Drive skill ratings modified by the MAN rating of their vehicle. The character with the highest Initiative total is allowed to act first, and may choose a Tactic based on the slower opponent's Intent (see #2). The combatant with the next highest total goes next, and so on until all the combatants have taken their turns. In spacecraft combat, only the Pilots of the spacecraft roll for initiative but all characters within their spacecraft act simultaneously.

Unlike character combat where it is optional to roll for initiative each round, in spacecraft combat, this is a requirement. Each round initiative is rolled giving pilots a chance to turn the tables of combat every few seconds.

STATING INTENT

Again, as in regular combat, before rolling for Combat all characters must state his character's Intent. Pilots and Drivers inform the GM how they want to position their spacecraft (move to attack, evasive maneuvers, loop or hard bank, etc.). In spacecraft combats involving smaller craft like interceptors, the Pilot may be the only character engaged in the combat (i.e. they are in control of navigation, defenses and weapons systems). However, when talking about some of the larger spacecraft, several characters may be engaged in combat activities at the same time. This tends to make spacecraft combat a little more complex than nor-

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DETERMINING BONUSES AND PENALTIES

After the player indicates their actions and describes the character's Intent, the Gamemaster determines if any bonus or penalty will be applied before the player rolls on the Omni Table.

The following actions will provide bonuses or penalties to a spacecraft engaged in combat:

PILOTING

Pilots may engage in some fancy flying in an attempt to provide a bonus to attack or defense of their spacecraft. The MAN rating of the spacecraft is used to modify the Pilot skill roll. A Success on a Pilot *Omni Table* roll will provide a +1 bonus to either the spacecraft's Attack or Defense (character's choice). A Critical Success provides a +2 bonus to defense or attack.

SENSORS

A Successful Computer (ship's systems) *Omni Table* roll will provide +1 bonus to the Attack roll of the character in control of the spacecraft's weapon systems. A Critical Success provides a +2 bonus to the attack roll.

ENGINEERING

One of the most important crew members on a spacecraft is the ship's engineer. A Successful Engineering (nuclear) *Omni Table* roll will provide +1 bonus to the Pilot's initiative roll on the next round. Engineers will also be busy during combat repairing damage to spacecraft, etc.

mal combat, but it can be very fun as well, as multiple characters are engaged and not sitting idly by as the pilots have all the fun. Non-pilot characters may participate in spacecraft combat by controlling weapons and defenses, using their engineering skills to coax extra SPD out of the spacecraft, using Computer skills to operate sensor arrays thereby giving the gunnery characters bonuses to attack, etc.

The winner of the Initiative roll can choose to declare Intent first or wait until other combatants have done so, in order to anticipate their opponents' moves and act accordingly. Either way, the individual who has the Initiative rolls first. In all cases, any characters making an Attack roll (i.e. in control of a ship's weapons systems) should act last in the sequence as other characters' actions may provide her with bonuses or penalties to her roll.



THE COMBAT ACTION ROLL

The character in control of a spacecraft's weapons systems is the character that actually makes the Omni Table roll to see if an Attack is successful or not. After totaling up all the bonuses received from the actions of other characters aboard the Weapons Officer's spacecraft, the player makes a Computer (tactical systems) roll on the Omni Table.

JUDGING THE RESULTS

After the player rolls, the GM will interpret the Omni Table result, taking into account the specific circumstances surrounding the action, and other factors. Combat actions intended to cause damage will produce one of the following results:

Mishap: *the attack fails due to a mishap of some sort; the attacker's missile guidance system malfunctions, the laser's optical lens is damaged, the weapon hits an unintended target, etc. (GM's ruling)*

Failure: *the attack misses the intended target.*

Partial Success: *the attacker scores a glancing blow that only does half the attack form's total Damage Rating (rounded-up to the nearest whole number).*

Full Success: *the attack does its full Damage Rating.*

Critical Success: *the attack does full Damage Rating and achieves the attacker's stated Intent. If the Intent was to destroy the opposing spacecraft, the target suffers Heavy Damage, and must make a roll using his spacecraft's Hull Rating to determine how badly the*

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spacecraft is damaged. Subtract the Damage Rating of the attack from this HUL roll. Partial Success means the characters in the spacecraft suffer a penalty of -5 on all further actions until the craft is repaired of the Heavy Damage. Failure or Mishap means the spacecraft is incapacitated until repaired.

HEAVY DAMAGE AND REPAIR

A successful Engineering skill roll will repair 2 Hit Points of damage per round. Spacecraft that have suffered Heavy Damage may require a period of repair and refitting at a Skybase or similar facility. Repair time could range from a day or two to a week, several weeks, or even longer. The amount of time required to make a full repair in such instances is up to the GM to decide, based on the nature and extent of the damage received.

SPACECRAFT DESTRUCTION

Spacecraft Combat can be very dangerous and GMs are advised to play it very carefully. If a character does something stupid in a normal combat they may lose a limb or possibly be killed but a Vehicle Combat that goes horribly wrong could end the lives of the entire group so care must be given to its execution.

Spacecraft reduced to zero or less Hit Points are rendered incapacitated and all systems essentially become non-functioning. Should this happen the Gamemaster must roll on the *Omni Table*, using the spacecraft's Hull Rating and current Hit Points as modifiers. The total will yield one of the following results:

- ◆ **Mishap:** *barring a miracle of some sort, the spacecraft explodes in a ball of fiery death. Time to create new characters.*
- ◆ **Failure:** *things are looking grim. The spacecraft is falling apart around the character(s). The GM will need to make another HUL roll every minute at a cumulative penalty of -1 per minute. A result of failure or worse on any of these subsequent HUL rolls results in the explosion and fiery death as above. A result of partial success or better, and the spacecraft holds together for another minute. At best, the spacecraft will suffer permanent damage of some kind (as per a result of Partial Success). Time to get to those escape pods.*
- ◆ **Partial Success:** *the spacecraft can be repaired, but will suffer some sort of permanent damage. Possibilities include a reduced HUL rating, a penalty to any rolls involving one of more systems (tactical, sensors, engineering, etc.), a reduced SPD rating or some other*

damage appropriate to the circumstances surrounding the spacecraft's "close call" (GM's ruling)

◆ **Full or Critical Success:** *the spacecraft may be repaired completely, at the rate of 2 HP per day and it will suffer no permanent damage.*

These rules should be reserved only for PC-operated spacecrafts or important NPC-operated spacecraft. Any other spacecraft reduced to 0 HP or less can simply be considered destroyed at once.

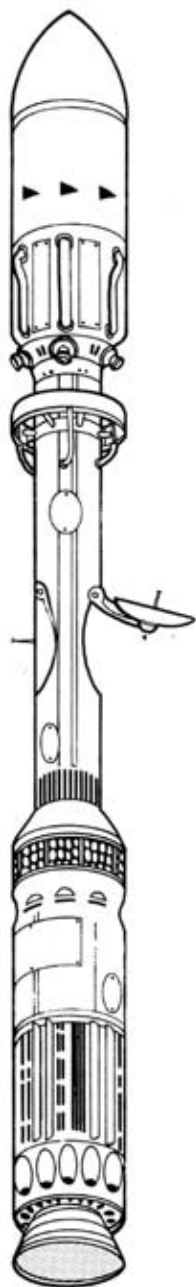
SPACECRAFT WEAPONRY

Like the SPD rating, spacecraft weaponry also uses a different damage scale than that of normal handheld or even heavy weapons. A spacecraft mounted OPA-8 particle accelerator, for example, will cause enough damage to destroy a large building or vaporize a crowd of people and, using the character damage scale, would therefore be somewhere in the range of DR 200 to DR 240. To keep things simple, spacecraft are essentially treated the same as normal characters and creatures and the DR and PR listed for spacecraft and spacecraft weaponry is scaled similarly to how it is scaled for characters. While a Laser cannon is obviously strong enough obliterate a normal man it does damage to another spacecraft on the same scale that a LAS-R pistol does to a human.

PARTICLE ACCELERATORS

Particle accelerators fire a stream of accelerated atomic particles moving at near the speed of light. These particles are carrying tremendous kinetic energy which they transfer to their target on a successful hit.

Because the particle beam is, in fact, millions of tiny projectiles, it transmits its kinetic



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energy to the atomic structure of the target making it difficult to protect a target from it. This obviously makes the weapon very destructive. Particle accelerators ignore all PR from physical armor but PR from defense screens or shield functions normally. It is a relatively short range weapon.

NUCLEAR PELLET GUNS

Nuclear pellet guns are similar to Terran firearms in that they shoot bullet-like projectiles. It is, in fact, a type of gauss gun that uses a series of electromagnets to accelerate a depleted uranium shell to very high velocities. Nuclear pellet guns ignore all PR from defense screens and shields and also ignore 2 points of physical PR from armor.

MISSILES & ROCKETS

Used for centuries now, the rocket (and the more advanced missiles) used in the TTA universe all almost always loaded with a nuclear payload. Rockets have only basic guidance systems and suffer a -4 penalty to hit on Omni Table rolls. Missiles on the other hand, have superior guidance systems and receive a +1 bonus to hit. Both types of weapons ignore all PR from defense screens and shields but are fully affected by physical PR afforded by armor. A full success on a missile or rocket attack roll will cause the occupants of the target spacecraft to have a Mild Exposure to radiation (see Radiation rules - Chapter 7). A Critical Success on an attack will cause a Moderate Radiation exposure to occupants and also result in a breach in the target spacecraft's hull.

Scatterpack rockets work the same way as normal rockets and missiles but consist of several dozen smaller rockets rather than a single large explosive. As such they are harder to avoid and targets of a Scatterpack attack do gain any advantage from MAN to their defense.

LASERS

Laser cannons (and their more powerful cousins, the Laserlance) work on similar principles to handheld models. They are able to ignore up to 2 points of PR from physical armor but are fully affected by defense screens and shields.

SONIC ACCELERATORS

A Proximan invention that also found its way into Terran spacecraft late in the War, the sonic accelerator works on the same principle as handheld sonic technology (see Equipment). It is a close range weapon but ignores all PR from defense screens and shield and is able to over-





come up to 6 points of PR from physical armor. Usable only in an atmosphere, its effect increases and decreases depending upon the thickness of the surrounding air envelope.

VEHICLE COMBAT RANGE

Just as in character vs character ranged combat, all spacecraft weaponry has an effective range (penalties and bonuses apply when using spacecraft weaponry within or above the weapon's effective range as per normal ranged combat). The range categories in spacecraft combat are:

Point Blank: Less than 1 km

Short: 1 km to 10 km

Medium: 11 km to 100 km

Long: 101 km to 1000 km

Extreme: 1000 km +

As in character combat, penalties should be applied to all Computers (tactical) Omni Table rolls because of range as follows;

- ▶ Target is within half effective range: no penalty.
- ▶ Target is beyond half effective range: -5.
- ▶ Target is beyond effective range: -10.
- ▶ Target is beyond 2 times effective range: -20.
- ▶ Target is moving: -3 plus -1 per +10 SPD
- ▶ Target is protected by cover: -1 per 10% cover.
- ▶ Target is of smaller Size category: -2 per category difference

All penalties for range and availability are cumulative. For example, if a target is beyond half effective range and is moving at a SPD of +40, the total penalty is -12 (-5 range + -7 for movement & SPD).

SPACECRAFT DEFENSES

Spacecraft defense comes in two forms in 2173: physical armor and energy shielding.

Physical armor consists of metallic alloys and composite plating that gives the spacecraft protection from physical attacks like those of missiles and nuclear pellet guns.

Defense screens or shields produce energy dampening fields around a spacecraft and protect against energy attacks such as those from lasers and sonic weapons.



VEHICLE ATTRIBUTES

Like normal player characters, all vehicles have a standard set of attributes that represent their strengths and weaknesses. These attributes include:

MANEUVER (MAN)

Similar to DEX for a PC, MAN measures the maneuverability of a spacecraft or vehicle. MAN also affects a vehicles ability to avoid incoming attacks and is used as a modifier to some Pilot skill rolls.

HULL (HUL)

HUL is akin to CON in a normal character. It is a measure of the durability and endurance of a vehicles hull or chassis. Like in normal combat, HUL checks are required when a vehicle is reduced to 0 HP and also when confronted with certain types of weapons (like particle accelerators).

SENSORS (SEN)

Akin to a characters PER attribute SEN is a measure of a vehicles sensor ability, i.e. its ability to “see” other vehicles and hazards. It is used as an additional modifier to Computer (ship’s systems) rolls,

SPEED (SPD)

SPD measures the maximum velocity of a vehicle during combat or other tactical situations. Some Spacecraft may be able to travel at far greater speeds when cruising between planets (see Interplanetary Travel on page 334).

ACCELERATION (ACL)

ACL is a measure of the vehicle’s acceleration ability. While the SPD attribute measures a vehicles top speed, ACL measures the amount a vehicle can accelerate in one round. *For example, a spacecraft with a SPD +40 is currently travelling at SPD +20 and has an ACL +5. That means the character can increase the SPD of this vehicle by +5 per round to a maximum of +40.*

DECELERATION (DCL)

DCL is a measure of the vehicle’s deceleration ability. While the SPD attribute measures a vehicles top speed, DCL measures the amount

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a vehicle can decelerate in one round. *For example, a HovTank traveling at +24 with an DCL of +4 will take 6 rounds to come to a complete stop (SPD 24 -4/rd)*

SIZE

All vehicles have a Size (SIZ) category that can play a part in combat and other maneuvers. The various size categories are as follows:

SIZ	Approx. Length	Example
Tiny	<6 ft	HovBoard
Small	7 to 12 ft	Small Boat
Medium	13-24 ft	Ground Car
Large	25 to 50 ft	AAF225 Cobra
Huge	51 to 200 ft	K4 Toad
Gargantuan	201 to 500 ft	CAM117 Gunship
Colossal	501+ ft	TTA Colonial III

Vehicles within one size category of each other receive no bonuses or penalties to attack or defense based on size. For each category (above the first) a target vehicle is from the attacking vehicle, the attacker receives a +1 bonus to Attack rolls. Similarly, For each category (above the first) a target vehicle is from the attacking vehicle, the defender receives a +1 bonus to defense. This means small spacecraft receive bonuses to both Attack rolls and to defense when in combat vs. larger spacecraft. Likewise, larger capital ships will have a more difficult time hitting small interceptors while they themselves are often easy targets for the smaller (and often faster) spacecraft.

OTHER ATTRIBUTES

Vehicles also have hit point, protective ratings, etc. and these attributes are used identically to the way they are applied to player characters.



SPACECRAFT STATS

CAM216 VULCAN

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Short Range interceptor

Manufacturer: Consolidated Aerospace

Size: Large

HUL +0 SEN +0S

MAN +4 SPD +36

ACL +6 DCL +6

Attacks/Damage: 4 Laser Canons DR 6; 4 Nuclear Pellet Launchers DR 8; 2 OPA-8 Particle Accelerators DR16

Crew: Pilot, Gunner, Astrogator

Hit Points: 38

Armor: PR 2 (Plastisteel Armor)

Comments: All armaments are forward facing.

The Vulcan was originally developed as an atmospheric / low orbit interceptor designed to operate from Earth's surface. Initial designs were on the boards as early as 2120. Prototypes, designated X-215, were flying by 2123, and regular production began the following year. The early model 215 Vulcan bears only partial resemblance to the much more famous version that fought in the Battle for Mars and is depicted here.



SSF21D CUTLASS

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Local Defense Interceptor

Manufacturer: Various (TTA Licensees)

Size: Large

HUL +1 SEN +1S

MAN +2 SPD +38

ACL +6 DCL +5

Attacks/Damage: 4 MkII Nuclear Missiles DR 10; 1 OPA-8 Particle Accelerator DR 16; 2 Laserlances DR 8

Crew: Pilot, Gunner, Astrogator

Hit Points: 54 **Price:** 1,250,000 cr (no weapons included)

Armor: PR 5 (High Density Plastisteel); PR4 (WCRC Type MM 26C Defense Shield)

Comments: All armaments are forward facing.

Possibly the best remembered ship of the war, the Cutlass won its laurels during the fiercely fought Battle for Mars in 2152 when the Proxima battle fleet broke through the Sentinel Line. Although of fairly simple construction it proved itself to be efficient and robust, with a legendary ability to absorb punishment.

BE28 SKYMASTER

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Private Cruiser

Manufacturer: Badger Engineering

Size: Huge

HUL +0 SEN +1M

MAN +1 SPD +34*

ACL +4 DCL +2

** Many have been equipped with DeVass generators and are Warp capable*

Attacks/Damage: None

Crew: Pilot, Co-Pilot, 12 passengers

Hit Points: 47 **Price:** 2,500,000 cr

Armor: PR 2 (TTA CNIL AM6Y Defense screen)

Badger Engineering has earned itself a fine reputation as one of the most inventive and industrious of the many small outfits catering for the ship-building trade. With their considerable experience in this field and the obvious demand for unusual private ships, the next step for them was to produce and market their own. They were able to license the SCF28 Freighter design from Consolidated Aerospace and from it, created the Skymaster model for the private cruiser market.

Roleplaying Game



CAM216 Vulcan



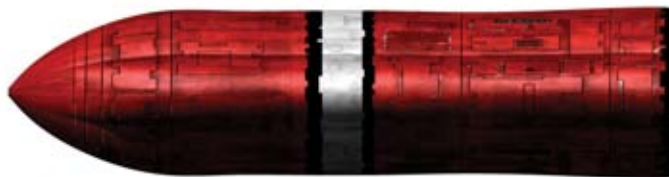
SSF21D Cutlass



Badger Engineering renovated and completely refitted the hulls, with updated engines and their own electronic packs. The interior fittings were then made to the individual customer's specifications, and the Skymaster 28 was an instant success - so much so that Badger received enough orders to justify manufacturing completely new ships from the original plans.



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BE28 Skymaster



Side

AAF171 Panther



Top

TDAI07C Partisan



AAF171 PANTHER

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Local Defense Interceptor

Manufacturer: Avery Astronautics

Size: Huge

HUL +2 SEN +2S

MAN +5 SPD +36

ACL +4 DCL +4

Attacks/Damage: 2 LaserLances DR8; 12 Mk IV Nuclear Missiles
DR 14

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Crew: 4 Crew

Hit Points: 48

Price: 1,850,000 cr (no weapons included)

Armor: PR 3 (High Density Plastisteel Armor)

One of the first spacecraft designed for an offensive role, the Panther was widely acknowledged as the most capable ship of its day. During early testing, it was found to have structural problems, which resulted in the loss of 2 prototypes before the problem was identified in the manufacturing process of engine supports and wing spars. Due to the anticipated high workload, a crew of 4 was deemed necessary, and comprised of pilot, weapons officer, engineer and comm/navigation. Although primarily a spacecraft, it had limited capability when operating in a planetary atmosphere, and could be employed for surface attack. As better weapons and systems became available the Panthers were upgraded, leading to a huge variety of variants.

TDA107C PARTISAN

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Long-Range Scout

Manufacturer: Various (TTA Licensees)

Size: Huge

HUL +2 SEN +8L

MAN +3 SPD +38*

ACL +4 DCL +4

**Warp Capable*

Attacks/Damage: 5 OPA-8 Particle Accelerators DR16 (3 are forward facing while the other 2 are able to fire at ground targets)

Crew: 2 Crew (Pilot & Astrogator)

Hit Points: 34

Armor: PR 6 (WCRC Type MM22 Defense shield)

Comments: The Partisan is equipped with a DeVass Generator;

As the Proxima War dragged on and full fledged fleet-to-fleet battles became less common and fighting revolved around smaller scale attacks and counter attacks. One of the first examples of this new breed of spacecraft was the TDA 107C Partisan, which is still one of the smallest warp-drive ships ever produced. It consisted of little more than a DeVass generator in an unarmored shell with weapons fitted into the gaps, and a light-thrust hydrogen drive unit stuck on the back. To pilot these ships required a special kind of courage as the crew lay in cramped positions surrounded by the fuel storage tanks along each side of the hull and the reactor perched above and behind them; but uncomfortable as they may have been, they proved effective and enjoyed considerable success in bringing the War close to the enemy's home.





AVERY-FROST ORION

- Nationality:** Terran
- Classification:** Private Cruiser
- Manufacturer:** Avery Astronautics / R. Frost Engineering
- Size:** Huge

HUL +0	SEN +1M
MAN +4	SPD +48
ACL +10	DCL +4
- Attacks/Damage:** None
- Crew:** 1-7 (Pilot +6 passengers)
- Hit Points:** 30 **Price:** 2,000,000 cr
- Armor:** PR 1 (TTA CNIL AM4S Defense screen)

Without doubt one of the most popular private craft, the Orion was designed by René Lenain of R. Frost Engineering and produced by Avery Astronautics in the old North African Yards. The main difference between the original racing model and production version is in the method of propulsion, the former being fitted with a liquid bipropellant system using oxygen and hydrogen to generate about 240,000 lbs thrust. Range was drastically cut in favour of maximum speed, and this configuration was obviously unsuitable for private use as the operating costs were prohibitively high. A purchaser of an Orion has a wide range of thrustpack options to choose from, the most popular being the dual system specified here, which represented a good compromise between performance and range.

TTA COLONIAL III

- Nationality:** Terran
- Classification:** High Capacity Freighter
- Manufacturer:** TTA / Avery Astronautics
- Size:** Colossal

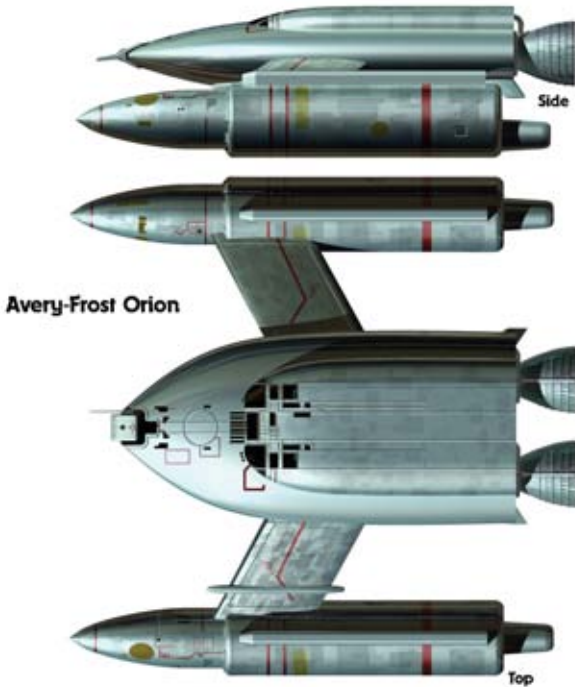
HUL +8	SEN +5
MAN +6	SPD +20*
ACL +2	DCL +1

* *Warp capable*

- Attacks/Damage:** None
- Crew:** 68 Crew
- Hit Points:** 244
- Armor:** PR 2 (WCRC type 17D Deflector Screen)

The Colonial was the first of the high-capacity freighters and in its life has undergone a number of major changes. The early models bore no more than a passing resemblance to the one which is so familiar to us

Roleplaying Game



TTA Colonial III



today. The Colonial I was first built in 2104 and was manufactured in the great TTA yards in North Africa with the specific task of transporting the massive amounts of equipment and materials required for the construction of the Lunar Research Station. Today's third generation models transport equipment and personnel across all three systems and most are equipped with massive Berger gravity resist generators, allowing them to land on planetary surfaces. All Colonial III's are equipped with DeVass Warp generators.



AAF225 COBRA

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Medium range interceptor

Manufacturer: Avery Astronautics

Size: Large

HUL +0	SEN +1S
MAN +5	SPD +30
ACL +4	DCL +4

Attacks/Damage: 2 LaserLances DR 8; 4 MkII Nuclear Missiles DR 10; 4 MkIV Nuclear Missiles DR 14

Crew: 2 (Pilot & Gunner)

Hit Points: 32

Armor: PR 4 (Layered Plastisteel Armor)

Comments: All armaments are forward facing.

The Proxima War lasted longer than even the most conservative projections had foreseen. Ultimately, however, the war entered its final stages and the action shifted from space to the Proximan homeworld. Avery Astronautics foresaw the need for a surface strike craft able to operate in environments ranging from total vacuum to dense atmospheres, and embryonic Cobra designs were leaving Avery's drawing boards as early as 2155. Cobra prototypes were shipped directly to the front lines, where they were first deployed in 2167 and became an instant success. Captured Proximan orbital shipyards were soon turned over to the production of Cobras on-site. Early on, the Cobra at first drew some derisive comments for its asymmetrical design, and its low-cost design philosophy earned it the nickname of "leftovers". However, its performance and ease of maintenance soon trumped any complaints about aesthetics, and "leftovers" became a term of endearment.

AAF212 HORNET

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Long range interceptor

Manufacturer: Avery Astronautics

Size: Huge

HUL +3	SEN +2M
MAN +3	SPD +40
ACL +6	DCL +6

**Warp Capable*

Attacks/Damage: 2 Hardbeam LaserLances DR 10; 6 MkII Nuclear Missiles DR 10; 2 MkV Nuclear Missiles DR 16

Crew: 2 (Pilot & Gunner)

Roleplaying Game



AAF225 Cobra



Side



Top

AAF212 Hornet



Side



Top

Hit Points: 44

Armor: PR 6 (Articulated Plastisteel Armor); PR 4 (WCRC type MM26D Defense shield)

Comments: 2 laserlances are on a turret that can fire forward or backwards. All other armaments are forward facing.

By the time the TDA 107 Partisan was finding itself outclassed by the new generation of enemy interceptors such as the Shark, Avery Astro-

The Terran Trade Authority



navitics were already testing a prototype for a replacement. Although they had not been asked to tender for such a contract they had seen the need coming and had decided to initiate a development programme as early as 2155. Terran Defence Authority representatives were invited to a display a year later and within a week the first order was placed, the Avery Hornet going into full production. The first squadron went into action in mid-2157 against a strong Proxima seek-and-destroy patrol and was an instant success, destroying four enemy ships against the loss of one Hornet. The Hornet was fast and highly maneuverable and, unlike the Partisan, carried a hard-hitting weapon pack. Additionally, the Hornet's armor was not only of a higher quality than that of its predecessors, but also borrowed from the enemy's K4 Toad, the idea of articulated platelets to give flexibility to the hull. Extremely popular with the frontline flight crews, the Hornets did much to boost morale at a time when the enemy seemed to be gaining in technological superiority. The introduction by the Proximans of the new Shark interceptor had dramatically increased their defensive and offensive capability and the appearance of the Hornet came as an unpleasant surprise. Although the enemy ship was certainly the faster of the two, the Hornet's superior armament earned the ship among the enemy crews the nickname *Sklathill*, which roughly translates as dangerous fish or water creature.

CAM992 FERRYMAN

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Private Cruiser

Manufacturer: Consolidated Aerospace

Size: Huge

HUL +0 SEN +1S

MAN +2 SPD +20

ACL +2 DCL +2

Attacks/Damage: None

Crew: 1 (+ various passenger configurations, up to 24)

Hit Points: 35 **Price:** 1,000,000 cr

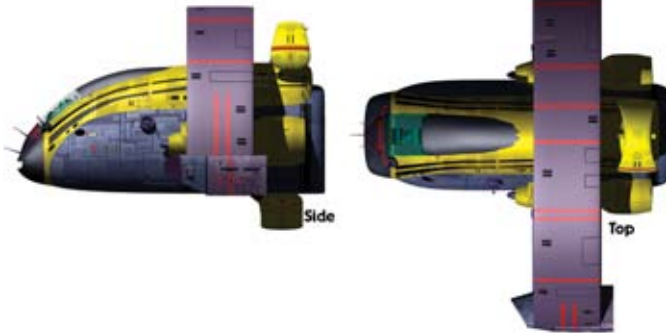
Armor: PR 1 (titanium armor)

As the Proxima War prepared to enter its ground stage, the Terran high command saw the need for a small general-purpose transport craft that could operate in space as well as in a planetary atmosphere. In addition, this ship needed to be quickly adaptable to multiple roles, have a high weight capacity for its size, be able to take off and land in tight spaces, and be simple in design and easy to maintain in the field. Consolidated's design for the Ferryman was based on a rugged commercial transport that had been proposed for operating in remote and wild areas on Earth but had been shelved due to the outbreak of war; this robustness would

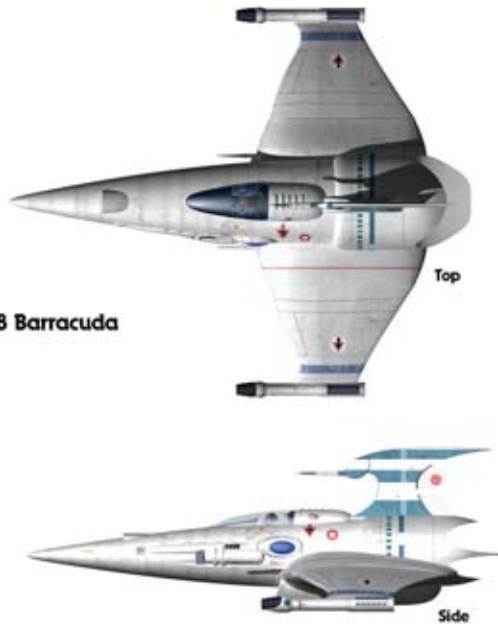
Roleplaying Game



CAI992 Ferryman



TDA278 Barracuda



become its trademark as a modified version entered production in early 2166. The Ferryman soon proved its worth to its crews and the ground troops it supported in a great variety of roles. At first, the Ferryman was utilized to deliver small, critical shipments to forward bases, as a medical evacuation ship, and as a personal transport for military brass. As it proved its utility, ruggedness, nimbleness under fire, and ease of field modification, its role was expanded to include such tasks as forward



scouting, artillery spotting, special forces troop transport, and even as a light gunship. Its boxy profile was a familiar and welcome sight to our front-line troops in need of supplies or evacuation, and its nimbleness and ease of operation made it exceptionally popular with its flight crews.

TDA278 BARRACUDA

Nationality: Terran

Classification: Near-orbit interceptor

Manufacturer: Dixon-Bourne Aerospace

Size: Large

HUL +1	SEN +3S
MAN +4	SPD +24
ACL +3	DCL +2

* +70 at character/atmospheric scale

Attacks/Damage: Two nuclear pellet launchers DR8; 8 air-to-air missiles DR4; 2 MkII Nuclear Missiles DR 10

Crew: 1

Hit Points: 29

Armor: PR 1 (titanium armor)

After the near-disastrous Battle of Mars, the TDA put out a call for high-powered atmospheric interceptors in late 2155. The design competition was won not by any of the large aerospace manufacturers, but by the relatively unknown outfit of Dixon-Bourne, designers of atmospheric race vehicles. The design entered production in 2156 and the first units were flying patrols by December of that year. The Barracuda has proven to be as fast, powerful, and as maneuverable as advertised. Though unarmored, it was heavily-armed, and simulations suggested that it would be superior to the larger and bulkier Piranha in a dogfight. Barracudas are widely deployed on Mars as well as on Terra, and flyovers of strategically important points are a common sight during the war, both as a training exercise and as a reassurance to the population below.

ACM118 MANTA

Nationality: Alphan

Classification: Medium Range Weapons Carrier

Manufacturer: Alphan Collective Manufacturing

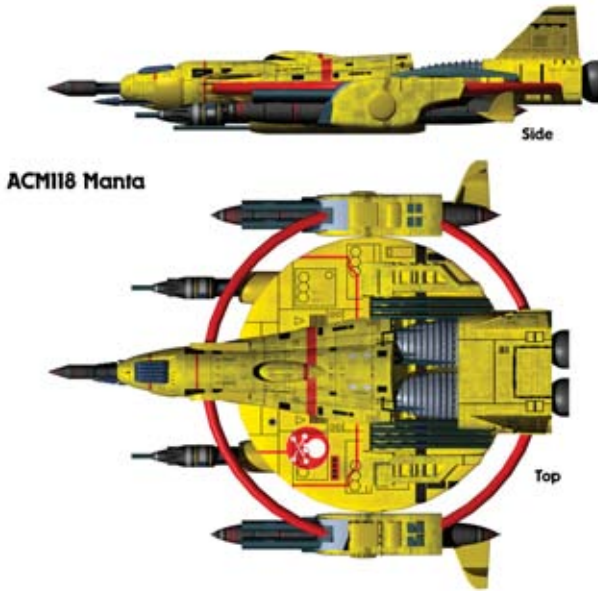
Size: Huge

HUL +4	SEN +4M
MAN +0	SPD +28
ACL +4	DCL +4

**Warp Capable*

Attacks/Damage: 1 Laser canon PR 6; 8 MkII (equivalent) Nuclear Missiles DR 10; 6 MkV (equivalent) Nuclear Missiles DR 16

Roleplaying Game



ACM118 Manta



ACM113 Fatboy

Crew: 6

Hit Points: 42

Armor: PR 4 (Alphan Energy Absorbent Field Generator)

Notes: All weapons are forward firing.

The Manta weapons-carrier, provided the main offensive muscle to Alpha's fleet during the latter half of the War. Its disc-like shape was designed to create sufficient lift to supplement the gravity-resist genera-



tors, allowing the maximum payload to be carried at atmospheric levels. In some models the generators were dispensed with altogether to enable the ship to carry the giant air-to-surface Buster missiles used in the final offensive against Proxima. Only six of these variants were produced, however, as they were unstable and would have been too vulnerable if the Proximans' ability to retaliate had not been exhausted by that time.

ACM113 Fatboy

Nationality: Alphan

Classification: Short Range Interceptor

Manufacturer: Alphan Collective Manufacturing

Size: Huge

HUL +3 SEN +1S

MAN +1 SPD +32

ACL +4 DCL +4

Attacks/Damage: 2 Laser canons PR 6; 6 MkII (equivalent) Nuclear Missiles DR 10

Crew: 6

Hit Points: 38

Armor: PR 4/60 (Alphan Energy Absorbent Field Generator); PR8 (layered plastisteel & honeycomb armor)

Notes: All weapons are forward firing.

Despite its name, the ACM 113, as it was officially titled, was a formidable craft and remained one of Alpha Centauri's standard interceptors throughout the war. Its flight speed was unremarkable even by earlier standards and to our eyes this ship looks a most unlikely vessel, but what it lacked in straight line performance it more than made up for in maneuverability and strength. It was seeing this ship perform in Alpha One's atmosphere that led our first representatives there to realize that their hosts had the technology to produce an antigravity device. Even to this day, having been assisted by the Alphans themselves in developing a similar device, we have been unable to duplicate the performance of the Fatboy.

Roleplaying Game



ACMI28 STINGRAY

Nationality: Alphan

Classification: Long Range Interceptor

Manufacturer: Alphan Collective Manufacturing

Size: Huge

HUL +2 SEN +2M

MAN +5 SPD +38

ACL +4 DCL +4

Attacks/Damage: Nuclear Pellet Gun DR8; 12 MkII (equivalent)
Nuclear Missiles DR 10

Crew: 2 Crew

Hit Points: 48

Armor: PR 3 (synthetic steel armor); PR 4 (Alphan Energy Absorbent Field Generator)

Notes: All weapons are forward firing.

These efficient looking fighting machines represented Alpha's second generation of military interceptors and like many ships of this period were multirole weapons able to carry out a variety of functions. Although they operated extensively in deep space they are perhaps best known for their aggressive performance as atmospheric warships in the fight for the Proxima Homeworld. In deep space they were perhaps no better equipped than other ships of their kind but proved extremely agile and stable in the moderately dense atmospheres. Their large wing surface gave them the ability to operate in a broad speed range and this coupled with their economical use of fuel and maneuverability made them a dangerous adversary. These characteristics and their armament also made them suitable for ground attack, a role they increasingly adopted as the Proximans' control of airspace diminished.

ACMI15 MINNOW

Nationality: Alphan

Classification: Long Range Interceptor/Scout

Manufacturer: Alphan Collective Manufacturing

Size: Huge

HUL +1 SEN +5S

MAN +4 SPD +34

ACL +4 DCL +4

Attacks/Damage: Laser Canon DR6

Crew: 2 Crew

Hit Points: 34

Armor: PR 2 (synthetic steel armor); PR 4 (Alphan Energy Absorbent Field Generator)



ACM128 Stingray



ACM115 Minnow



As was true of most ships operated by Alpha Centauri during the first half of the war, the design of the ACM115 dated from much earlier. The armament with which the Minnow was equipped proved inadequate once the use of defence shields became widespread, and it proved difficult to uprate them significantly. Additionally, the trend towards multirole ships gradually reduced the effectiveness of Alpha's military structure and the Minnow suffered badly in the transition, as it was neither armed nor protected sufficiently to be competitive.

Roleplaying Game



K4 TOAD

Nationality: Proximan

Classification: Local Defense Interceptor

Manufacturer: Various (Proximan Government Licensees)

Size: Huge

HUL +5 SEN +1S

MAN -2 SPD +32

ACL +2 DCL +2

Attacks/Damage: 2 Laser Canons DR6; 10 MkIV (equivalent) Nuclear Missiles DR10; Sonic Accelerator DR 20

Crew: 2 Crew

Hit Points: 48

Armor: PR 9 (flexible synthetic steel armor)

Notes: The Toad's sonic accelerator is used only against ground targets. It can be nullified by even the most basic energy defense shields.

The K4 Interceptor was popularly known as the *Toad* with good reason. Although a squat, brutish vessel with a multitude of bulges befitting its nickname, it proved a dangerous adversary for the first half of the War. During these years the *Toad* was Proxima's primary interceptor ship and was produced in high volume. Although less maneuverable than most of our ships of the same class and even than many larger types, its inferior mobility and speed were compensated for by powerful weaponry and massive protective armor. This was a formula much favoured by the Proxima General Staff and it was the design basis of a variety of craft produced during the war. Particular features of the *Toad's* armor were its flexibility and the density of the material used. There were several reports of 'Toads' surviving close-proximity nuclear blasts, being hurled out into space intact and eventually rejoining the action apparently little the worse for wear. They were designed well before the Proxima research teams succeeded in producing warp generators and could not be adapted to carry them.

**K13 SHARK****Nationality:** Proximan**Classification:** Long Range Interceptor**Manufacturer:** Proximan Military**Size:** Huge

HUL +2 SEN +5L

MAN +5 SPD +42

ACL +6 DCL +4

Warp Capable*Attacks/Damage:** 2 Laser Canons DR6; Nuclear Pellet Gun DR8**Crew:** 2 Crew**Hit Points:** 40**Armor:** PR 2 (SynthSteel armor)**Notes:** All weapons are forward facing

These sleek warships began appearing in considerable numbers from early 2156 onwards and the characteristic flare of light from their plasma drive system became an all too familiar sight to our hard pressed crews. Although the system of accelerating hydrogen plasma through an electro magnetic field was not unusual, the Proximans had obviously found a way of generating considerably more thrust than was thought to be possible with this type of propulsion. The ship itself was extremely light, armor being minimized in favour of performance, which at least made them easy to destroy if they could be hit. The first Sharks (models K10 through K12) suffered from lack of range as their fuel capacity was limited, but this was improved in later versions by the addition of two hydrogen collectors extending backwards from their *wings*. Although these devices could not replace the gas at the same rate as it was consumed, they were able to extend their range by about 30%. The armament carried was effective against our Partisan, but later proved to be inadequate once the Hornet had reached our battle squadrons. The K13's curious array of fins and projections gave rise to their codename (*the Proximan name being Shesh'laan*) and formed part of one of the most sophisticated navigation and direction systems of the Proxima War. Invariably, the Shark was able to take the initiative before being spotted by our crews and it was not until we were able to establish a chain of front-line surveillance stations that this situation was reversed.



K4 Toad



Side

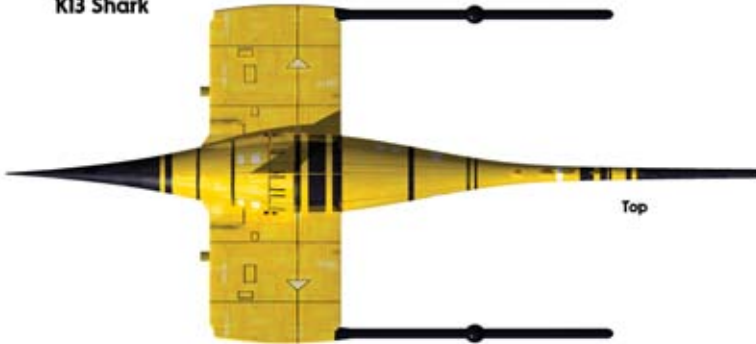


top



Side

K13 Shark



Top



K7 Piranha



C89F Whale

K7 PIRANHA

Nationality: Proximan

Classification: Atmospheric Interceptor

Manufacturer: Proximan Military

Size: Large

HUL +1	SEN +5S
MAN +4	SPD +32*
ACL +6	DCL +3

* *Atmospheric ability only*

Attacks/Damage: Laser Canon DR6 or Nuclear Pellet Gun DR8

Crew: 1

Hit Points: 30 **Price:** 750,000 cr (no weapons included)

Armor: PR 2 (plastic armor)

Notes: All weapons are forward facing

The smallest combat craft of the Proxima War was, without doubt, the one-man atmospheric fighter dubbed the Piranha. Fast and highly maneuverable, it proved an extremely difficult target, the only compensation being that it carried very limited armament. Although conceived as a ground attack weapon, it was later deployed in a variety of roles, being first encountered during the Battle for Mars in 2152. Its small size enabled it to be transported by warp-equipped freighters to the area of operations. There it would operate from the mother ship, but was vulner-

Roleplaying Game

able to attack from better equipped deep-space interceptors until it had reached atmospheric levels. Once there, it was far more effective, and during the Battle for Mars, Piranhas succeeded in tying up a considerable number of our Vulcans which should have been concentrating on the enemy troopships and nuclear weapon carriers. While their extremely small size gave them some advantages, it also meant that they were unable to operate for long before needing to refuel.

C89F WHALE

Nationality: Proximan

Classification: Long Range Freighter

Manufacturer: Kuel'la Aerospace

Size: Gargantuan

HUL +5 SEN +2L

MAN -1 SPD +18*

ACL +2 DCL +1

* *Warp capable*

Attacks/Damage: None

Crew: 46

Hit Points: 140 **Price:** 10,000,000 cr

Armor: PR 2 (Proximan synthsteel armor)

The Whale is Proxima's most widely used freighter and was introduced about midway through the war. It is a medium capacity craft with a very long range potential and was fitted out in a variety of ways. The largest number were freight carriers and were almost identical to those operated commercially by Proxima today. Others were employed as fuellers, troopships or even sensor stations and appeared in most theatres of operation. The distinctive globe was a free hydrogen collector/synthesizer which was added to the later ships as a means of extending their range and appeared only on those non-warp ships intended for local operation.







GMing the TTA Universe

The *Terran Trade Authority Roleplaying Game*[™] uses a simple rule system based on the Omni Table. All actions in the game are resolved by the same procedure: first, compare the character's Skill or Attribute Rating with the Degree of Difficulty. Then take the difference (positive, negative or zero) and add it to a d20 roll. Then, consult the Omni Table for the result.

Players contribute by describing the Intent of their character's actions to the GM before rolling on the Omni Table. The GM combines the character's Intent with the Omni Table die result to interpret the outcome of the attempted action. With a few variations pertaining to the use of Skills, these are the basics of the rule system.

Make sure you have a good grasp of how the rules work before starting to play. Take it slowly at first, and don't be too concerned if you or your players make mistakes at first. Once everyone becomes acquainted with the rules and their respective roles, the game will run much more smoothly.

INTERPRETING OMNI TABLE RESULTS

Here are some tips for interpreting Omni Table results:

- 1 Describe the Action Table result in terms of how close the character came to their stated intent. When the player describes her character's action in the scene, picture what could happen if:
 - ...the character performs extremely well (Critical Success)
 - ...the character performs at their skill level (Full Success)
 - ...the character barely succeeds (Partial Success)
 - ...the character fails in the attempt (Failure)
 - ...or the character bungles the action (Mishap)



- 2 Use the player's intended result as the basis for your description. For example:

Player: "I approach the guard, attempting to capture his attention with my outrageous costume and conspiratorial demeanor. Hopefully, his back will be turned long enough for Xing Na to lift the keys from his belt."

GM: "Okay. Roll on the Omni Table and add your Deception skill rating to the result."

Player: "Hmmm. A 10: partial success."

GM: "The guard is not really fooled by your act, and seems very suspicious. He can't help but look your way, however, giving Xing Na the chance she needs. She'd better be careful with those magic fingers, now that the guard is on the alert."

- 3 If the Omni Table result is associated with a number (such as damage in combat) try to include a bit of description as well, to add color to the scene. For example:

Instead of saying: "You take 6 hit points of damage," try something like: "The Proximan's serrated blade bites into your upper arm, drawing a jagged line of blood across your sleeve."

- 4 Don't forget the environment. Characters don't always fail due to a lack of skill. Sometimes, things just don't go their way. When a Player Character fails at a task that they ordinarily could accomplish (striking an inferior opponent, for example, or scaling a simple wall) you can describe their failure as a result of unforeseen circumstances or unfavorable conditions. For example:

"The Proximan's battle armor does not buckle as you anticipated, but instead deflects your expertly placed blow." or "The brick you were using as a foothold crumbles just as you place your weight on it."

Be careful with this technique, though. Too much of it and the game quickly becomes slapstick comedy.

Roleplaying Game



DETERMINING DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY

Setting the degree of difficulty for a given action is another important GM job. For many actions, the rulebook provides guidelines for selecting difficulty numbers. In combat, for example, the degree of difficulty in hitting a foe is equal to the combat skill rating of the defender. Not all actions are so cut-and-dried, however.

As a tool for the harried GM, a sliding scale of difficulty numbers is provided below. Remember that degree of difficulty is always based on how hard it is for an average “novice” (0-rating) practitioner to accomplish the action.

Difficulty	Modifier
No chance of failure	No need to roll
Any fool could do it	+10
Very Easy	+7
Easy	+5
Simple	+3
Routine	+0
Tricky	-3
Difficult	-5
Very Difficult	-7
Extreme	-10
Beyond extreme	-15 or worse

Armed with these numbers, the ratings of the characters and some common sense, the GM can run an *Omni System*[™] campaign without ever looking in this book for a rule. For any given action, no matter how unusual, ask yourself: “*Would this be Difficult for the average skilled practitioner? Very Difficult? Routine?*” When you have your answer, you have your degree of difficulty and you’re ready to roll. Or not to roll, as the case may be.

TO ROLL OR NOT TO ROLL

There’s no need to call for an Omni Table roll for each and every action. Sometimes simply knowing the character’s trait rating is enough to judge the outcome of an action.

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For example, Jamal the Terran privateer is wandering through an open market while visiting the Alphan city of Rama. Jamal's companion, Saul, is somewhere in the sea of Alphans, frantically searching for the privateer. Frustrated, Saul stands on a alphan car and begins yelling and waving his arms, "JAMAL! OVER HERE!" The GM decides that Jama is quite a distance away, and is entranced by a collection of anciet alphan pottery. Still, there is no need to roll in this case. With his +6 Perception, Jamal is one of the most observant beings on the planet. He hears Saul's vulgar hooting and begins moving in the opposite direction.

Only during stressful or unusual situations is a roll required to accomplish an ordinarily simple task. Just be consistent about what does and does not require a die roll in your game.





PLANNING YOUR TTA™ CAMPAIGN

The best way to create a campaign series that everyone will enjoy is to talk to your players before starting any work, and ask them a few questions about the kind of game they'd like to play. Do they prefer heroic games or a grittier, more “realistic” style of play? Do they like adventures that take place on an epic scale, or smaller-scale stories that have a more personal feel? Do your players want action and combat, or do they prefer mystery and intrigue? Are they into sightseeing and exploration? Would they like to try their hand at trading and commerce?

While a good campaign series will contain a mix of many elements, it's best to find out what your players like most, and balance their input with the sort of game you like to run. The following questions and explanations can help you put together an *TTA*™ campaign that both you and your players will enjoy.

HEROIC GAMES OR GRIM GAMES?

Your campaign can be modified to reflect a variety of gaming styles, from Heroic to Grim and everything in between. In the former, the characters are “larger-than-life” heroes whose sagas have a cinematic quality about them. In the latter case, characters act a bit more “realistically”, knowing that the galaxy they live in is a harsh and unforgiving place. This decision can also have an impact on the rules, which can be adjusted to reflect the style of play your group decides on.

The following sections contain suggestions on how to modify the rules to suit Heroic or Grim campaigns. If you prefer a campaign that strikes a balance between these two styles, you can use the rule system as is, without further modification.

HIT POINTS & GAMING STYLES

Quantity of Hit Points is the first thing that separates Heroic games from Grim ones. The standard HP totals in the *TTA RPG* fall somewhere between the two extremes. These figures allow the average “tough-guy” character to survive two or three serious wounds and continue to fight — not exactly the stuff of legends, but by no means wimpy, either.

For a more Heroic feel to the game, double the starting HP totals for player characters. This makes the characters about as tough as your typical action-movie star, able to fall from extreme heights and get punctured by many sharp implements while still keeping their cool.

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For a Grim game, halve the starting HP to $10 + \text{CON}$ for player characters. This makes the characters about as tough as real-world people. Characters in games like this must avoid a deadly fight at all costs. Combat-heavy games should not use this option, unless you want a very high rate of character turnover.

SKILL SUBSTITUTION

In Heroic games, characters should feel free to attempt almost any outrageous stunt, whether they have the actual abilities or not. An appropriately heroic explanation for how the character managed to succeed is all that is required. The GM should not be very strict about penalties for skill substitution in a cinematic game like this, and may even waive them altogether. This will give the series an “anything is possible” feel.

In a Grim game, the GM should be very strict with skill substitution, imposing stiff penalties for using a skill other than the exact one required. This makes the characters much less versatile, and gives the series a more pessimistic and even fatalistic feel.

PATHS

Characters in Heroic games are often much more skilled than typical members of their profession. To reflect this, the GM can increase the number of Paths a player may select for their character.

Normal games typically have three Paths. Heroic games might find characters with four, five or even more followed Paths.

Grim-style characters can also be quite skilled, but usually not to Legendary levels of ability. The default of three Paths for starting characters is suitable for grim campaigns.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

In Heroic games, the GM should double the number of XP awarded for overcoming threats and may also want to increase the discretionary award of XP to 10 or 20 XP per adventure. Grim games would still use the normal adventure XP awards but may reduce the discretionary XP awards to 1-5 XP.

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EPIC CAMPAIGN OR LOCAL TALE?

Like Heroic or Grim campaigns above, choosing whether your game will be an epic saga or a local tale is also important. Of course, you won't know which one you've played until the series is over, but it's good to have some ideas at the start.

Epic games tend to span the galaxy and involve scenarios on an interstellar level. Wars, plagues, invasions, and (unnatural disasters are all examples of epic sagas. Epic campaigns are usually very cinematic, but are not necessarily so. This sort of game is often suited to groups who have played for a while and have become familiar with the game world as a whole.

Local tales are usually restricted to one planet or region of a planet, and revolve around the immediate problems and opportunities of that area. Local games are recommended for gaming groups new to the game world, since they only need learn about a small portion of the world.

Once your group has decided the style and type of campaign you want to play, you then need only determine is where you want to start.

MAKING THE TTA YOUR OWN

The setting information found in Chapter One attempts to give the GM a starting point from which to expand the setting as he or she sees fit. Even with this considerable amount of information, there's no way to provide you with everything you'll ever need to run your campaign.

What does Alphan furniture look like? How do Proximans say good-bye? How big do the moons appear in the night sky of Proxima III? What does a native of Mars consider insulting?

Details of this sort are not covered in this book, and by necessity must be left to the imaginations of the players and the GM. If you can't find the answer to a question in this or supplemental *TTA* books, don't despair. Our advice is: Make it up. Do whatever you need to make your game interesting, and above all, have fun. Inventing these little touches will help solidify the setting in the minds of the players, and allows you, the GM, to inject your own style into the game world.





DESIGNING ADVENTURES

Every GM has their own personal style when it comes to designing adventures. Several suggestions have been provided in this section, in order to help novice Game Masters learn how to design scenarios. After you've run several games with your group you'll begin to fine-tune how you approach adventure design, to accommodate both your own tastes and the preferences of your group.

A certain style of adventure design that works well can be summed up in the phrase, "*The action is where the PCs are.*" What this means is, the PCs are the *stars* of the series. Wherever they go, and whatever they do, excitement and adventure are sure to be there. It is a common failing of novice GMs to set an adventure in a particular place, at a particular time, with particular villains, and then force the PCs to care about the story and arrive at the locations. In gaming circles, this is known as "railroading" because the adventure seems to be on a set of tracks and cannot be steered.

One way to avoid railroading your players is to keep a lighter hand on the reigns and be ready to adjust your story. If you've planned an epic saga of intrigue and exploration in the outer reaches of known space and your players decide that fighting the alien invasion of that new colony world is too bad for their health, simply relocate your story to wherever the PCs end up. There's no need to create a black hole, block all trade routes, and conscript the PCs into the Terran Defense Force just so your war-story can be told. The players will probably spend the adventure sulking, rather than enjoying the drama of the game. On the other hand, if you let the PCs set the course for the story, you'll often find that all of the scenes and intricacies you had planned can still be used with different names and places. The players will never be the wiser.

Find out the group's agenda as early as you can. It may work to simply ask them if they have any group goals. The players' answers will practically write the adventures for you. If the group doesn't have any particular goals, perhaps they are waiting for you to provide adventures for them. In this case, it's helpful to introduce a patron or organization to hire the characters and provide missions and tangible rewards.

Here are some tips and questions for taking an idea and turning it into a full adventure:

Roleplaying Game



THE ADVENTURE SEED

Most adventure ideas start with a single image: the PCs speeding across an alien world in a hover transport, firing laser blasts as they board an enemy space station; a no-holds-barred bar brawl. The first questions to ask are: *Why are the PCs here? How did they get here? What are they doing? Who is trying to stop them? How?* Depending on how independent your group is, you may only be able to answer a few of these questions yourself. But you may find you've uncovered the seed of a good adventure.

THE NPCs

What characters are the PCs going to meet during the course of this adventure? What kind of people are they and what are their personal agendas? When describing a Non-Player Character to the players, try to limit your description to three key elements.

“The private detective is stoop-shouldered, heavily wrinkled, and is scowling at you morosely through his monocle.”

“Shagan the pirate has probably never bathed in her life and her costume represents the fashions of a great majority of the Proximan nation of Omnooře. She stands out from the rest of her crew due to the fact that she seems to have all of her fingers and both ears.”

“Sergeant Murphy was probably an armadillo in his past life. Unlike most of the raw recruits, he has a chest like a barrel and powerful arms. As you look down on his rather smallish stature you notice that years of wearing a combat helmet have robbed him of the fine white hair that should be on his head.”

You can also give each NPC a particular gesture, phrase, voice, or posture to help your players tell them apart.

THE SETTING

How does this setting affect the PCs? Would any of them be unwelcome here? Is the natural environment dangerous in some way? Is the area beneficial to the PCs? How will the opposition use the environment to its advantage? Should the PCs be in a familiar or unfamiliar place for this adventure to work?



THE THEME

What's the overall idea behind this adventure? Is there literary-style subtext going on, is it just a straightforward episode in the PC's lives? What can the PCs learn from this adventure?

THE REWARDS

What can the characters gain during this adventure? Will they receive payment for their services? Will they acquire valuable goods or property? Are there any technological boons they might find or steal? What about fame, notoriety, and other intangible rewards? Is it all worth the risk?

THE ENVIRONMENT

A GM should always keep the character's environment in mind. The environment can come into play in a number of ways. Is it raining? If so, perhaps a penalty for wet and slippery surfaces should be applied to combat. Is there a considerable amount of noise and confusion? If so, Concentration and other skills like Disable Mechanism may require negative penalties.

EXTREME TEMPERATURES

Most importantly, severe environmental factors like extreme heat or cold could actually cause damage to those not equipped to deal with these extremes.

Players who find their characters in the deep desert may take damage from the extreme heat as well as from possible thirst. Those who are shipwrecked in the arctic without adequate protection will take damage from exposure and hypothermia.

The amount of damage dealt by extreme temperatures is at the discretion of the GM but should generally range from 1 to 10 DR per hour of exposure.

Thirst and hunger will likewise cause characters to take damage. (*see table*)



ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE RATINGS

Burning	DR 4 per round (no armor)
Drowning	DR 4 per round (no armor)
Falling	DR 6 per 10-foot drop (max 60)
Thirst	DR 2 per day
Hunger	DR 1 per day
Exposure	Up to DR 10 per hour in extreme temps

DROWNING

A character can normally hold their breath for up to one minute plus 1 round for each point of CON or minus 1 round for each negative point of CON. Certain Talents may prolong a character's ability to hold their breath.

RADIATION

Radiation can be naturally or artificially produced. All stars produce radiation in some variety, and planets closer to these stars typically suffer more severe effects than worlds farther away. Most spacecraft and other pieces of technology incorporate radioactive parts and fuel cells that can flood an area with harmful radiation when ruptured or exposed. Ancient alien civilizations might leave behind powerful artifacts that emit harmful radiation. Whether the source of the radiation is natural or artificial, any character in an environment rich with radiation may suffer some negative effects for exposure.

When characters are exposed to radiation, they may be afflicted with radiation sickness. Radiation sickness functions exactly like exposure to any other disease, following the normal rules for diseases.

For each minute that a character is exposed to radiation they must make a CON Omni Table roll modified by the severity of the radiation. Radiation exposure has three degrees: mild, moderate and severe.



MILD EXPOSURE

Critical Success: The character need not make another radiation roll for 5 minutes.

Success: The character has resisted the effects of the radiation and may act as normal.

Partial Success: The character has resisted the effects of the radiation and may act as normal.

Failure: The character suffers a temporary -1 CON. This effect last for 24 hours.

Mishap: The character suffers a permanent -1 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

MODERATE EXPOSURE

Critical Success: The character need not make another radiation roll for 2 minutes.

Success: The character has resisted the effects of the radiation and may act as normal.

Partial Success: The character suffers a permanent -1 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

Failure: The character suffers a permanent -2 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

Mishap: The character suffers a permanent -3 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

SEVERE EXPOSURE

Critical Success: The character has resisted the effects of the radiation and may act as normal.

Success: The character suffers a permanent -1 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

Partial Success: The character suffers a permanent -2 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

Failure: The character suffers a permanent -3 CON. A character dies when their CON rating reaches -6.

Mishap: The character is unable to resist the effects of the radiation and must make a normal Death Omni Table roll (see Omni System core book). Even on a critical success, the character still suffers a permanent -4 CON.

TREATING RADIAION SICKNESS

Radiation sickness is considered a treatable disease that can be cured using the Medicine skill providing the proper medicines and equipment are available.

Roleplaying Game



SOLAR FLARES

Solar flares release tremendous amounts of electromagnetic energy (including harmful ultraviolet rays and X-rays), as well as highly charged protons and electrons. Fortunately, while solar flares aren't rare, they are usually predictable.

An unprotected creature exposed to radiation from a solar flare is treated as "severely irradiated" for the purposes of determining the radiation's effects.

INTERSTELLAR HAZARDS

Space travel is nowhere near as easy as books and movies made it seem. Foreign objects are a constant danger; even a micrometeoroid traveling at a high enough velocity can punch a hole through a starship's hull and expose the entire crew to the vacuum of space. Ionizing radiation also poses a serious threat. Finally, characters must adapt to the weightlessness of space or suffer the effects of space sickness.

METEOROIDS

Meteoroids are small rocks that travel through space at a speed of 7 miles per second. They can be as small as a grain of sand or as big as a mountain. Although they generally burn up in a planet's atmosphere before reaching the ground, meteoroids in space aren't likely to suffer such a fate. Instead, they slam into other objects, including spacecraft and space stations, like volleys of rifle or artillery fire.

Unarmored spacecraft and space stations can easily survive impacts from the smaller meteoroids, but larger ones can punch lethal holes in such fragile vessels. Fortunately, large meteoroids are rare and easier to detect before they can get too close to cause any real damage. It is an easy task to detect a meteoroid with most current spacecraft computer systems and the vast majority of TTA craft plying the spacelanes are equipped with meteoroid deflector shields. Spacecraft without shields can take up to DR 8 from a meteoroid strike.

RE-ENTRY

Anything that travels too fast in an atmosphere generates an enormous amount of friction, which produces tremendous heat. (Temperatures of 2,280 degrees Fahrenheit have been recorded.)



Objects trying to enter a planetary atmosphere safely must shed velocity. However, decelerating consumes large amounts of fuel, and many ships simply don't have enough. As an alternative, scientists have developed ways to slow ships in reentry by using the atmospheric friction itself. Ablative shielding or ceramic tiles take care of any excess heat. Even so, entering a planet's atmosphere is a tricky business; the angle of entry is precise, and deviation either way causes the heat to build up too quickly for the heat shields to reflect away from the ship. Worse yet, during the most intense heating, the ship is surrounded by a thin layer of plasma that blocks radio signals, and the crew have no contact with ground control.

Entering planetary atmosphere safely requires a Pilot Omni Table roll with a -6 penalty each round for the 2d20 rounds it takes to slow the ship using friction alone. Any ship equipped with Alphan gravity resist technology are immune to these requirements.

Success or failure on a Re-entry Omni Table roll is determined as follows:

Critical Success: No effect

Success: The spacecraft takes DR1 each round from heat damage

Partial Success: The spacecraft's angle is too low, and it is not shedding velocity fast enough; the ship takes DR6 of fire damage each round until the pilot succeeds at the Pilot check to correct the angle of descent.

Failure: The angle is too steep, and the spacecraft takes DR10 points of fire damage each round until the pilot succeeds at the Pilot check to correct the angle.

Mishap: The angle of descent is radically off and the spacecraft takes DR15 points of fire damage each round until the pilot succeeds at the Pilot check to correct the angle.

DECOMPRESSION

The sudden decompression of a spacecraft, vehicle, or other object can be dangerous to creatures inside. Whenever a sealed environment within a vacuum is breached, all of the air inside rushes out quickly to equalize the air pressure. Creatures within the decompressing environment must make a minimum of a Success on a DEX Omni Table roll with a -5 penalty or be thrust toward the breach (and possibly beyond it) at SPD +3. A GM should use his discretion when it comes to large objects and small-sized breaches, etc.

Roleplaying Game

If the breach is larger than the character or object in question, they pass through the opening and are blown out into the vacuum.

The time it takes for all of the air to evacuate from a compartment depends on the size of the breach and the volume of the decompressing compartment, as shown in the Table below

Once the air has completely rushed out through the breach, the pressure equalizes and the interior environment becomes a vacuum.

Breach Size	Decompression Time
1-inch square	3 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
3-inch square	3 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
6-inch square	2 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
1-foot square	2 rounds per 10-foot cube of air
2 1/2-foot square	1 round per 10-foot cube of air
5-foot square	1 round per 10-foot cube of air
10-foot square	1 round per 20-foot cube of air
15-foot square	1 round per 30-foot cube of air
20-foot square	1 round per 40-foot cube of air

GRAVITY

The force that gravity exerts on a person determines how they develop physically as well as their ability to perform certain actions. In addition, gravity affects the amount of damage a character takes from falling. Gravity conditions may vary considerably from one environment to the next.

For ease of play these rules present four simplified gravity environments: normal gravity (1.0 g), low gravity (<1.0 g), high gravity (>1.0 g), and zero gravity (0 g). The following sections summarize the game effects for each type of environment.

NORMAL GRAVITY

Normal gravity equates to gravity on Terra. Environments with normal gravity impose no special modifiers on a character's attribute or Omni Table rolls. Likewise, normal gravity does not modify carrying capacity, or falling damage





LOW-GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

In a low-gravity environment, the pull of gravity is significantly less than what we experience living on Terra. Although an object's mass doesn't change, it becomes effectively lighter. This means that characters bounce when they walk. It becomes easier to move and lift heavy objects as well as perform STR-related tasks. In addition, normal falling damage is reduced.

SPD: A character's SPD rating is increased by +1 in a low-gravity environment.

Carrying Capacity: A character's normal carrying capacity is doubled in a low-gravity environment.

Omni Table Penalty: Characters gain a +6 bonus on any STR-based Omni Table roll made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object. Conversely, characters take a -4 penalty on attack rolls in a low-gravity environment unless they are native to that environment or have the Light World Experience or Zero-G Training talents.

Damage from Falling: Creatures do not fall as quickly in a low-gravity environment as they do in a normal- or high-gravity environment. Falling damage is halved in low-gravity environments.

Long-Term Effects: Long-term exposure to low-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a low-gravity environment takes a -2 penalty to STR upon returning to normal gravity. This weakened effect lasts for one week.

HIGH-GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

In a high-gravity environment, the pull of gravity is significantly greater than that which we experience living on Terra. Although an object's mass doesn't change, it becomes effectively heavier. It becomes harder to move and carry heavy objects as well as perform STR-related tasks. In addition, creatures take more damage from falling. Even the simple task of walking or lifting one's arms feels more laborious.

SPD: A character's SPD rating is decreased by -2 in a high-gravity environment.

Carrying Capacity: A character's normal carrying capacity is halved in a high-gravity environment. In addition, the creature takes a -6 penalty on any STR check made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object.

Omni Table Penalty: Characters take a -6 penalty on any STR-based Omni Table roll made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object. Additionally, characters take a -6 penalty on attack rolls in a high-gravity environment unless they are native to that environment or have the Heavy World Experience Talent.

Roleplaying Game

Damage from Falling: Creatures fall more quickly in a high-gravity environment than they do in a normal- or low-gravity environment. Falling damage is doubled on heavy worlds.

Long-Term Effects: Long-term exposure to high-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a heavy-gravity environment takes a -2 penalty to DEX upon returning to normal gravity. This effect lasts for one week.

ZERO-GRAVITY ENVIRONMENTS

Creatures in a zero-gravity environment can move enormously heavy objects. Most creatures find zero-gravity environments disorienting, taking penalties on their Omni Table rolls and suffering the effects of Space Sickness (*see sidebar*)

SPD: While in a zero-gravity environment, a character's SPD rating is useless. Instead a character uses his or her STR rating in place of their SPD. Movement is limited to straight lines only; a creature can change course only by pushing away from larger objects (such as bulkheads).

Carrying Capacity: A character's normal carrying capacity increases by 10 times in a zero-gravity environment.

Omni Table Penalty: Characters gain a +12 bonus on any STR-based Omni Table roll made to lift or move a heavy unsecured object. Conversely, characters take a -6 penalty on attack rolls in a zero-gravity environment unless they have the Zero-G Training talent.

SPACE SICKNESS

A creature exposed to weightlessness must make a CON Omni Table roll with a -5 penalty to avoid the effects of space sickness.

Critical Success: No negative effects.

Success: No negative effects.

Partial Success: The character becomes nauseous and suffers a -2 penalty to all subsequent Omni table rolls.

Failure: The character suffers disorientation and nausea and suffers a -4 penalty to all subsequent Omni Table rolls.

Critical Failure: The character is incapacitated and disoriented. The character cannot act and may only make a CON Omni Table (with the -5 penalty) roll once per minute and may only act once a minimum of a Failure is achieved.





Long-Term Effects: Long-term exposure to zero-gravity conditions can cause serious problems when returning to normal gravity. A creature that spends 120 hours or more in a zero-gravity environment takes a -4 penalty to STR upon returning to normal gravity. This weakened effect lasts for one week.

ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS

As with variants in gravity, a change in atmospheric conditions can cause major problems for characters. Unfortunately, not every planet will have the same atmospheric density or chemical composition as Terra, Alpha I or Proxima II, meaning that worlds otherwise hospitable to humanoid life may not be ideal for humans born and raised on Terra.

CORROSIVE ATMOSPHERE

Some atmospheres (breathable or not) contain corrosive chemicals and gases. Corrosive atmospheres slowly eat away at foreign equipment and can cause significant equipment failure. The corrosion can be particularly troublesome in atmospheres that demand special survival gear, as any breach in a protective environmental suit renders it useless. Unprotected equipment exposed to a corrosive atmosphere takes DR 2 per hour of exposure. This damage ignores PR and deals damage directly to the equipment, eating away at it slowly.

Characters not wearing protective gear in a corrosive atmosphere take DR2 damage per round of exposure.

THIN ATMOSPHERE

Planets with thin atmospheres have less oxygen per breath than the standard Terran atmosphere. Many thin atmospheres are the equivalent of being at a high elevation on Terra or Alpha, such as on top of a mountain or in the upper atmosphere. A creature exposed to a thin atmosphere must make a CON Omni Table roll every hour.

Critical Success: No effect.

Success: No effect

Partial Success: The character suffers a -2 penalty on all subsequent Omni Table rolls.

Failure: The character suffers a -4 penalty on all subsequent Omni Table rolls.

Mishap: The character suffers a -6 penalty on all subsequent Omni Table rolls.

Roleplaying Game

Characters must rest for 8 hours in normal atmospheric conditions before any penalties are removed.

THICK ATMOSPHERE

Thick atmospheres are those that contain a more dense concentration of certain elements, like nitrogen, oxygen, or even carbon dioxide, than the standard Terram atmosphere. These dense atmospheres sometimes contain a different balance of elements, while others simply contain a higher number of gas particles in each breath. The effects of exposure to a thick atmosphere are similar to those of a thin atmosphere (*see Thin Atmosphere, above*), except there is an additional -5 penalty to the CON roll.

TOXIC ATMOSPHERE

Some atmospheres (breathable or not) contain toxic gases that are debilitating or lethal to some or all forms of life. The atmosphere is treated as always containing a type of inhaled poison (*poison effects are at the GM's discretion*).

VACUUM

Despite some popular myths, moving into a vacuum does not cause the body to explosively decompress, nor does it cause instant freezing as heat bleeds away from the body. Rather, the primary hazards of surviving in the vacuum of space are the lack of air and exposure to unfiltered ionizing radiation.

On the third round of exposure to vacuum, a character must make a CON Omni Table roll with a -6 penalty. A full success or better is required each round or the character suffers from aeroembolism. A character that fails the roll experiences excruciating pain as small air bubbles form in his or her bloodstream; such a character is incapacitated and may not attempt any other action until returned to normal atmospheric pressure. After the second failure, the character becomes unconscious and a third failure results in death.

Unfiltered radiation bombards any character trapped in the vacuum of space without protective gear. A creature exposed to this ionizing radiation suffers from severe sunburn as well as the effects of radiation exposure; the degree of exposure depends on the nearest star's classification (*see Star Systems in this chapter for more information*).





DISEASES AND AFFLICTIONS

ALPHAN INFLUENZA LEVEL 10

An acute, extremely contagious viral infection of the upper respiratory tract, spread by inhalation or contact with an incubation period of only 1-2 days. Those afflicted suffer a sudden onset of chills and fever, headache, general body pain and overall malaise; weakness, nausea, eye pain, mental confusion. After 1-5 days the respiratory symptoms increase: dry or sore throat, cough, runny nose. Serious complications include bronchitis and bacterial pneumonia. The disease can last a few months, maximum. Afflicted characters take -2 CON for the duration. If pneumonia results, a further -1 CON per week is suffered until death occurs at -5 CON.

Notes: Because influenza is very contagious, it often forms epidemics, generally occurring in the winter or early spring.

ENTERITIS LEVEL 5

An infection caused either by bacteria or amoebas, normally spread through consuming food and water contaminated by infected fecal matter, the Enteritis has an incubation period of 1-6 days. The disease causes diarrhea, fever, cramps and dehydration. After incubation, the character suffers -1 to CON and STR for each week of infection until -5 CON is reached and death occurs.

MALARIA LEVEL: 7

A parasitic disease spread by mosquitoes, Malaria causes shaking chills, then severe fever and headache. After several hours the victim begins sweating profusely whereupon the headache and fever disappear. Attacks recur every two to three days. Also causes weakness and some anemia.

Notes: Malaria is rarely fatal with proper attention to the fever. While under the effects of the disease characters suffer a -2 penalty to all Attributes due to fever and shakes. Normally, the infection runs its course in two to three weeks.

PLAGUE LEVEL 15-25

A bacterial infection transmitted by flea bites (or occasionally by respiration), the disease has several forms.

Bubonic (level 15): After 2-6 days, necrosis of the flea bite and heat and swelling in the nearest lymph nodes (neck, groin, or armpit); buboes can be as large as an orange and extremely painful.

Roleplaying Game

Headache, fever, delirium. Approximately one in five will go on to develop the pneumonic form.

Pneumonic (level 15): less common but more infectious, involves a lung infection, with coughing and sneezing.

Septicemic (level 25): rare, the infection spreads throughout body in the bloodstream; death occurs too fast (within hours) for buboes to form.

In all cases the victim suffers -1 CON per day after symptoms appear until death occurs at -5 CON. Survivors are generally immune for years after.

PROXIMAN PRAXAS LEVEL 7

A mild, highly contagious viral disease transmitted via respiration with an incubation period of 7-14 days. The first signs are cold-like symptoms (runny nose, dry cough, high fever, aching), plus inflamed and sensitive eyes. After three days of initial symptoms, red spots appear in the mouth, followed quickly by a red rash which starts on the face and spreads over the rest of the body. Most symptoms disappear after only a few days. Those afflicted take -1 to CON and -1 INT for duration due to fever.

STAR SYSTEMS

A star system can contain one or more stars. Sentient creatures like Humans, Alphans and Proximans are more likely to find habitable planets in systems with single stars but binary systems also frequently contain habitable planets (like the Alpha Centauri system).

STAR TYPE

Stars are classified using a lettering system that describes the star and gives information about its type. Known as the spectral class of a star, a designation of O, B, A, G, K, or M is given to the star based on its mass and energy output. Class O stars are the hottest, largest, and brightest stars, and class M stars as the smallest and coldest, with a gradual scale between them. Since a star's mass determines how hot it burns (as well as how strong its gravity pull is), the star's classification actually helps extrapolate the kinds of planets that might be in that star's system. Since larger stars burn hotter and smaller stars burn cooler, the mass of a star determines the climate of the worlds that orbit it.

In addition to the standard array of star types, several other types of stars (or what were once stars) might be found at the center of a star system. Most of these stars (called "non-main sequence stars") have





characteristics that make certain planetary conditions impossible, and no type of non-main sequence star is likely to support worlds hospitable to humanoid life. Types of non-main sequence stars include black holes, neutron stars, white dwarf stars, black dwarf stars, brown dwarf stars, and red supergiants.

IONIZING RADIATION

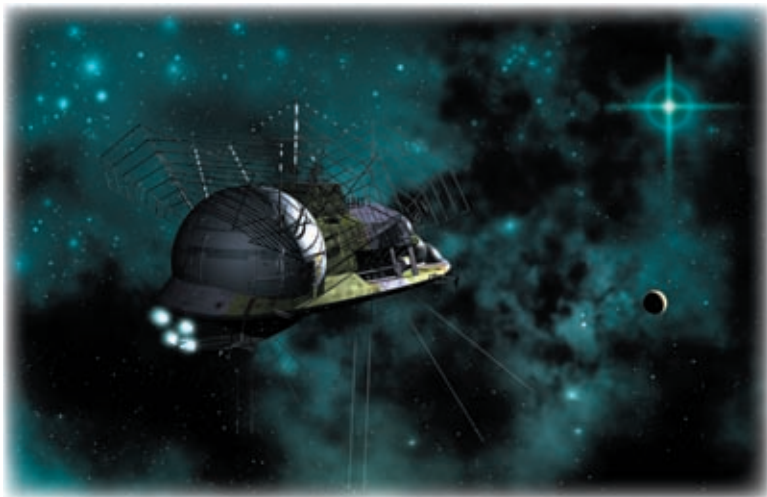
Ionizing radiation—radiation that breaks down atoms within living tissue—is common in space. All stars produce and emit harmful levels of ionizing radiation, and a star system is considered an irradiated area for the purposes of determining radiation exposure, particularly in the vacuum of space. (Planetary atmospheres and protective environment suits can protect a creature from ionizing radiation.) The degree of radiation exposure depends on the nearest star's classification.

Classification	Radiation	# of Planets
Class O (white)	Severe	1-5
Class B (blue-white)	Moderate	2-6
Class A (blue)	Moderate	2-8
Class G (yellow)	Mild	4-16
Class K (orange)	Moderate	5-12
Class M (red)	Severe	2-10
Black Hole	Severe	—
Neutron Star	Severe	—
White Dwarf	Moderate	1-5
Black Dwarf	Mild	2-6
Brown Dwarf	Mild	2-6
Red Supergiant	Severe	1-5

For systems with two or more stars, increase the degree of radiation by one grade (mild becomes moderate, moderate becomes severe)

HOSPITABLE STARS

The chief classifications of hospitable stars are G, and K. These stars produce the right amounts of heat and the right types of radiation to allow human-compatible worlds to exist. Not every world around a Class G, or K star is hospitable; however, even inhospitable worlds within such sys-



tems could be made to support human life with artificial modifications to their ecosystems (a long a painstaking process called “terraforming”).

INHOSPITABLE STARS

Class O, B, A, and M stars are the least likely to support planets capable of hosting human life. The stars toward the hotter end of the spectrum simply produce too much heat to allow living, breathing organisms to thrive. Most class M stars do not give off enough heat to support life at the distance Earth orbits its sun, and these stars are also known to be violently unstable and prone to bursts of stellar activity (the Proxima Centauri star falls into the category but life on Proxima overcame the odds).

BLACK HOLES

Black holes are stars that have expended their fuel sources and exploded in a massive supernova. Few, if any, planetary bodies survive the initial death of such a star. Once the star has exploded, its gravity is so great that it collapses in on itself and warps light, time, and space around it. Black holes drag all nearby matter into its center, collecting rings of cosmic debris called accretion discs that can be seen at great distances. Some planets and asteroids might survive being pulled into a black hole long enough for some adventuring, but they are incredibly dangerous places to explore.



NEUTRON STARS

A neutron star is a large star that has exhausted its fuel source but hasn't collapsed in on itself. Instead, the entire star's remaining matter compresses into a much smaller body mere kilometers in diameter. Within this tightly packed core, the star's density crushes the atoms into an object composed entirely of subatomic particles known as neutrons. Planets orbiting a neutron star are typically cold, lifeless, and severely irradiated. Another type of neutron star is the pulsar, which emits severe levels of radiation at great distances.

WHITE DWARF STARS

A white dwarf star is so much smaller than a neutron star that it does not have the mass to collapse in on itself. Instead, white dwarfs are typically small and dense and surrounded by rings of wreckage that were once planetary bodies in its system. White dwarfs emit little light or energy, and the rings surrounding them are usually cold and dark. However, these rings are not bombarded by as high levels of radiation as in a neutron star and could potentially support life, assuming enough heat could be generated.

BLACK DWARF STARS

Black dwarf stars completely burn out after expending their fuel. Truly the most stable of dead stars, black dwarfs simply consume their fuel supply and then cool into a cinder that emits no light or heat. Any planetary systems that existed around a black dwarf will remain intact; however, they usually become barren and frozen once their heat and light source is gone.

BROWN DWARF STARS

In many ways, the brown dwarf is not even a star. Brown dwarf stars are stellar bodies that almost coalesced into true stars but never managed to form completely. Brown dwarfs are dim and small. They may have planets in their system, but rarely can these worlds support life due to the lack of heat or light.

RED SUPERGIANTS

Most red supergiants begin their lives as average-sized stars. However, they burn hot and expend their hydrogen fuel supplies quickly. When its hydrogen supply is depleted, a red supergiant begins burning other, heavier elements such as helium, causing the star to expand to enormous size. An expanding red supergiant consumes its innermost planets and then burns so hot and bright that it renders all other planets in its system incapable of supporting life naturally.



THE UNKNOWN IN THE TTA UNIVERSE

At the core of the TTA mystique is the overriding presence of the unknown... the knowledge that, while humanity has been able to sally forth confidently into space, the universe has a way of reminding us that we are merely infants in our knowledge of the cosmos. We have only made the barest scratch on the surface of the great sphere of space, and already the mysteries found there will take lifetimes to solve, if they can be deciphered at all.

In the TTA books, Stewart Cowley populated his stories and descriptions with unknown objects, ship graveyards, mysterious planets, and unexplained events. Sometimes the protagonists survived their encounters, and sometimes they didn't. Often, they found evidence of an earlier, ill-fated attempt to seek, to conquer, to understand... and in the process were reminded of their own precarious position. It was a stark contrast to other science fiction universes, where brave and dashing captains and their confident crews zip pell-mell from planet to planet and system to system, encountering problems but remaining masters of all they survey.

Venturing through space in the TTA universe, on the other hand, is much like venturing across a continent was in the days of horse-drawn wagons. While the horses and wagons were sturdy and the people who drove them brave, they were nonetheless fragile conveyances. Undertaking such an expedition was fraught with incredible peril, and no matter how tough you were, you were still at the mercy of the forces of nature. Navigation was often unsure, distances often unknown... and what you would find at the end of your journey was anyone's guess.

While starship designs in the TTA universe have advanced considerably since the early days of spaceflight, leaving the safety of the home-world is still anything but routine. It's true that traveling among the major trade routes is becoming more and more ordinary, but even then there are surprises... derelict hulks of strange vessels have drifted into the spacelanes before... not to mention the slim but ever-present space / time perils inherent in using warp generators. Traveling off the beaten path is a sure recipe for excitement, as well as danger. Success or failure in a mission often hinges on the competence and stability of the crew, the leadership qualities of the captain, and a good, healthy dose of luck.

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The unknown is a powerful tool for shaping a campaign. Humans are curious creatures by nature, and as players this will lead them into dark corners and places to ferret out mysteries. As in real life, however, the best methods of inquiry may solve one riddle, but will lead to an entire host of new questions.

This “springboarding” from question to answer to new set of questions is the key to successful campaigns. The unknown provides more than thrills and mystery- it provides an impetus that carries the storyline from one game to the next. The players may occasionally grab the carrot dangling on a string, but this will lead to them noticing that there are two or three new carrots, just out of reach. This is not to say that information should be withheld, or clever attempts to learn things suppressed; instead, such inquiries will lead to further adventures, with questions of their own. The unknown provides more than thrills and mystery- it provides an impetus that carries the storyline from one game to the next. The players may occasionally grab the carrot dangling on a string, but this will lead to them noticing that there are two or three new carrots, just out of reach...

The unknown can take physical form in the game. A derelict spacecraft of unknown design that needs to be investigated, a new planet that defies those who dare to land there, either overtly or subtly... a mysterious raider that is attacking shipping around vulnerable, remote colonies... an unseen creature on a colony world that seems to be making off with the locals... these were all storylines in the original TTA books. There are endless possibilities. The physical unknown implies that something is there, and something is causing whatever event is occurring... but being tangible is no guarantee that that something will be understandable at first... or perhaps ever.

The unknown can also be psychological. What is unseen is often more terrifying than what is seen. Everyone remembers the first film in which Sigourney Weaver and her crew confront the creature that's gotten aboard their spacecraft. The tension was palpable, because at any moment, around any corner, there it could be, waiting... Using the psychological aspect of the unknown adds great spice to the game.

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If the players are off exploring, the precariousness of their situation should always be in their minds. Find ways to remind them, subtly or overtly, that they are hanging in the unfathomable reaches of space, impossibly far from their home planet, staring the unknown in the face,

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with their survival dependent on the frail skin of the ship they came in on, a ton of equipment made by similarly fallible humans, and their own wits.

On mysterious planets, every sound, every smell, every disquieting change of atmosphere could signal a strange phenomenon... or it could all be in the characters' minds. The derelict spacecraft found decaying on the surface... is it merely an empty shell, forgotten from the war... or something else? What is that strange signal your equipment keeps picking up on the blasted remains of the command deck? And that sighing, coming from the hold... old cargo settling, or something else? Why is your crew having strange nightmares and seeing things out of the corners of their eyes... is it only stress, or something darker?

The most interesting and delicate use of the unknown, however, is the deep unknown of what lies inside the mind of human and alien. An interesting limitation of a lot of science fiction is the "shorthand" approach to alien mentalities. How often have we seen book, graphic novel, and film depictions of aliens as looking, feeling, and acting the same? How often have we heard an action referred to as "the (alien name) way"? In some cases, the intention is certainly allegorical... but in many more, it is the easy way out... especially when humans themselves are not shown in a similarly allegorical fashion. There humanity stands, in all of its racial, ethnic, and opinionated glory, while the poor aliens all voice the same ideas, wear clothing culled from the same wardrobe, and apparently all visit the same barber.

Humans developed in all of our diversity because we come from many different environments, both physical (climate, ecology, presence or absence of enemies) and mental (religion, culture, creed). Humanity has a variety of skin colors, facial and body structures, moral and legal codes, languages, religions, and views on events... why should the aliens in their universe, who presumably developed on planets blessed with many environments, and many perils, have any less? Wouldn't it be more interesting... and more challenging... if an alien's actions could not be predicted merely based upon its species, but upon its own personal history?

Looking at our own people, humans do indeed have certain things in common. Physically, we all look different, but we have the same basic structures (two eyes, one nose, etc.) If we are cut, we all bleed red. If you scare us, we jump. Any human can produce offspring with





any other human of the opposite sex, proving that we are all one species. We even have some values in common, despite our differences; this is why we speak of things like “human rights” and “universal liberties”. Still, people can be found that dispute these concepts and do not agree with them. How strange would it seem, then, to have a human character explain an action or concept to an alien as “the human way”? Which humans? In what situation? The cultural differences even within individual nations and sub-groups are distinctive. Think of white-collar and blue-collar workers, or right-and left-wing political groups. Consider India, which has over 400 languages, or China, home to dozens of ethnic groups. Even ultra-homogenized Japan has its very own aboriginal peoples (the Ainu), as well as both ancient and modern cultures heavily borrowed and adapted from their neighbors.

In short, one does not explain a person’s actions based solely on their ethnic background or religion... not to mention on the mere fact that they are human. The reasons we are like we are, as individuals, is based on many interlocking factors. We jump at loud noises because of instinct. We worship on our chosen holy days because of our religion / culture. We might choose to confront a problem directly rather than diplomatically because of our own personal history. In the long run, is there any definite action or cultural stance we could really consider to be the “human way”, rather than “my way”?

We have a hard time understanding one another, and we all grew up on the same planet... so what about an alien who grew up in an alien culture, on a totally different planet? GMs working with the TTA universe are urged to keep this in mind and avoid making the Alphans, Proximans, and other alien races... and let’s not forget the humans, either... into simple caricatures.

This does not require reams of notes, or in fact any more preparation than normal. It merely calls for keeping in mind the reasons that sentient beings are individuals. Granted, some shortcuts are necessary. We don’t advocate any GM out there giving up his or her day job to figure out a life story for each and every NPC. Plus, of course, there are many cases when hordes of faceless minions are necessary to the story. But if you remember that there can be differences on planets, continents, nations, cities, and homes... within corporations, governments, and political parties... between entire races and between siblings- then your game will be richer, more believable, more challenging, and more fun... not to mention uncovering a goldmine of new sources of conflict, for what are sto-

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ries without conflicts? If the players find that not every Proximan whose mother they insult will try to kill them, not every Alphan they meet must be home for the year-end festival, and not every human official is easy to bribe, then they will approach each encounter as a fresh experience and each NPC as an individual. Players will be able to design better, more rounded characters. GMs find that their games are more memorable, and more fun... which is the whole point of RPGs, right?

Therefore, when designing an alien race, or when playing any character or NPC, keep the following things in mind:

Ω Sentient beings will have an underlying set of instincts designed to direct and / or preserve them in life-or-death situations. These reactions will differ from species to species depending on the conditions under which the organism evolved. Was the species the hunter, the hunted, or somewhere in the middle of the food chain? Was competition for resources (food, shelter, mates) fierce, or was the world a cornucopia? Generally speaking, instinct is common to all members of a species and can be assumed to be fairly constant.

Ω Sentient beings have culture. Culture is a veneer that fits over the underlying instinct, shaping and controlling the primal urges. Culture can be as primitive as caveman diplomacy (a club to the head settles all disputes) or highly advanced and multifaceted. Culture includes things like laws, customs, religions, traditions, gender roles, languages, birth and death rituals, etc. Unlike instinct, culture is a tremendously variable thing. Barring a situation like a hive-mind or other collective consciousness, culture is probably going to vary quite conspicuously over a planetary population, even in cases where world government has been achieved.

Ω Sentient beings have their own personal histories, philosophies, and opinions. These are created, nurtured, and modified by family ties, life experiences, environment, education, personal interests, and many other factors. This final layer, the most variable of all, turns the subject into a true individual. Individual philosophy can override the most pervasive cultural or instinctual influence... or can so deeply confirm it in the individual's heart that nothing, even plain and direct factual contradiction, will allow them to disbelieve it. Using the Omni system's character background tables is a good way to guide you in constructing a personal history.





UNKNOWN OBJECT (TTA FILE 557157)

The beautiful planet of Sirius III with its dense low-lying cloud layer is a source of fascination to scientist and layman alike. It possesses an oxygen-rich atmosphere and a plant ecology which are not so different from our own, but no sign of animal life has yet been detected.

Despite its superficially favorable environment it is, in fact, unsuitable for colonization as it possesses certain extraordinary qualities which have baffled scientific teams since the planet was first investigated.

Its dominant characteristic is that the planet emits sound waves in a range of frequencies. As a result the entire surface is in a state of agitation in sympathy with the various vibrations. Some of the frequencies are within audible range, producing a continuous and unsettling discord. The effect, together with some of the threshold wavelengths, is to make it impossible to tolerate exposure for any significant length of time.

Many attempts have been made to establish bases on the planet but the constantly moving surface has made this impossible. Geological tests and drillings have failed to disclose any stable stratum which might provide an anchorage for constructions of any permanence. A further difficulty is that sound-proofed surface installations would only be habitable for brief periods as the unrelenting resonance has the effect of seriously disturbing mental equilibrium. Absolutely no clue exists to the reason for this phenomenon, nor do we have an explanation for the fact that the planet has nomadic pockets of gravitational variation. One suggestion put forward is that somewhere near the core there exists a large number of very high-density bodies in a state of constant movement.

In 2171 a small research team discovered a complete and apparently undamaged ship of unknown origin suspended above the planet's surface. They had not witnessed its arrival but it would have been within the previous thirty-five hours (the length of a day on Sirius III). After failing to communicate with the craft, they established, by means of their density analysis equipment, that it contained only electronic equipment. It was noted that the volume of sound in the immediate vicinity of the craft was unusually intense and that the gravitational field around it was weaker than any other measured area. The object was, transmitting beamed signals in an organized fashion but these were not decipherable and the team was unable to identify their destination. These signals increased in volume when any team member approached the ship, and subsided when



he moved away. The hull surface was formed of an alloy similar to steel enclosed in a continuous layer of acrylic material. Attempts to cut an access to the interior were unsuccessful as the laser-cutter failed to operate when near the ship.

Within four hours of the first sighting the ship moved rapidly out of sight without the visible use of a propulsion system and has not reappeared. It seems probable that this ship was an unmanned survey vessel of some kind. If so it is possible that our presence deterred it from executing its task as it is unlikely that it could have completed its study in so short a time.



CREATURE ENCOUNTERS

As mentioned in the Rules chapter, creatures in the *TTA RPG* use a simplified system for determining the extent of their abilities. In place of Skill Ratings, creatures are rated according to their overall Ability Level, which is used as an Omni Table modifier for almost every situation. Constitution Ratings have already been added to Hit Point totals, and Strength Ratings have been factored into Damage Ratings.

When portraying animals and other non-humanoids, GMs should take into account the creature's nature and tendencies, as well as the circumstances under which the creature is encountered. Is the creature normally aggressive or passive? Does it hunt by day or night, alone or in packs? Is the creature sick, injured, starving, drowsy, in heat, or fleeing from a larger creature? Even the most placid herbivores may attack if they feel trapped or cornered, or if they think their mate or offspring are being threatened. Conversely, even the most aggressive predator may pose no threat if its stomach is full, or if it's preoccupied with other concerns.

Even given the diverse milieus covered by *Omni System*TM games, there are only so many different kinds of creatures to encounter. By individualizing the encounters in your adventures, you'll make things more interesting for your players and also keep them from getting complacent about their surroundings.



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TYPES OF ENCOUNTERS

In the TTA game, most creature encounters will take one of the following forms:

TRACES

This category of encounters includes tracks, skeletal remains, or other evidence (such as claw marks on trees, spoor, signs of a struggle, etc.) that would indicate that a creature or creatures passed through the area in question. Individuals with the Tracking skill are able to identify most types of traces, and provide an accurate estimate of their age and the conditions under which they were produced. The Gamemaster can use this type of encounter to create suspense by foreshadowing the appearance of a dangerous predator, to mislead, or simply to give the players the idea that they are not alone in the region.

SIGHTING

The creature or creatures in question are spotted from a distance; typically, between 100-600 feet. Sightings should occur far enough away that the observers can choose whether they will attempt to initiate contact with the encountered creature or not. Creatures spotted in their natural habitat will usually be doing what comes naturally for members of their species; i.e., foraging for food, sleeping, hunting, scavenging carcasses, hovering overhead, etc. Less common events such as inter-species rivalries, courtship rituals, or unusual behavior (creature is disoriented, wounded, sick, stuck in mire, caught in a trap, etc.) may also be witnessed. The Gamemaster can use this type of encounter to add some local color, to attempt to direct players towards a desired destination (or away from an undesirable area), or as per Traces encounters.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

Most encounters of this sort occur at distances of less than one hundred feet, requiring the players to take some sort of action: fight, flight, hide, attempt to communicate, etc. The Gamemaster should not overdo this type of encounter, and should vary the nature of close encounters in order to keep things interesting. For example, not all predators will attack in the same manner. Large and powerful beasts may charge at short range, but less imposing creatures might prefer to attack from ambush, or while their chosen victims are asleep. Avians might dive down from the skies, subterranean creatures could burrow upwards from below, while creatures capable of camouflage might seem to appear from out of nowhere.

The Terran Trade Authority

All close encounters need not result in combat. Intelligent creatures should be accorded motives based on their emotional and/or physical state, and the conditions under which they are encountered. Some may act surprised, frightened, suspicious, or confused. Others may rob, intimidate, negotiate, or try to act intimidating. A rare few may even ignore the characters, considering them as beneath their notice. Unless stated otherwise, wild beasts rarely fight to the death unless trying to protect their young, nest, eggs, etc. In fact, unless cornered or faced with no other recourse, most will abandon a fight that is going badly, and reluctantly go off in search of easier prey.

Animal	Ability Lvl	Atk/Dam	Attributes	HP	Comments
Alligator	5	Bite DR 14T	PER +0, STR +7, DEX -3, CON +4, SPD +2*	16	Up to 19' long. Aggressive. Hunted for its fine hide. * <i>while swimming otherwise -3</i>
Baboon	2	Bite DR 3T	PER +2, STR -5, DEX +4, CON +1, SPD +2	4	Live in organized groups, will hunt in packs. Dangerous if provoked.
Bear (Black)	3	Bite DR 5T; Claws DR 3S	PER +2, STR +6, DEX +0, CON +2, SPD +1	17	5 ft. long, 260-550 lbs. Non-aggressive.
Bear (Grizzly)	6	Bite DR 10T; Claws DR 6S	PER +3, STR +8, DEX +0, CON +2, SPD +1	24	7-9 ft. long, 450-1000 lbs. Hunts at night. Extremely vicious.
Black Vulture	2	Beak DR 2T, Talons DR 1S	PER +5, STR -6, DEX +1, CON +3, SPD +7	6	Found in great numbers. Carrion/garbage eaters.
Camel	3	Bite DR 2T; Kick DR 4B	PER +1, STR +7, DEX -1, CON +5, SPD +5	20	Single-humped. Bred for speed.
Cat	1	Bite DR 1T; Claws DR 1S	PER +4, STR -9, DEX +4, CON +0, SPD +3	1	Considered sacred by some religious groups. Valued as pets.
Chimpanzee	2	Bite DR3T	PER +1, STR -1, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +1	7	Quite intelligent. Some use tools, throw sticks and rocks at foes.
Coyote	2	Bite DR 3T	PER +3, STR -2, DEX +0, CON +6, SPD +3	6	Found in pairs or families (not packs). Like wild dogs.
Donkey	2	Kick DR6B	PER +0, STR +3, DEX +0, CON +2, SPD +2	8	Valuable pack animal/mount. Sure-footed, needs little water.
Elephant	5	Tusks DR 10B Trample DR 20B	PER +1, STR +10, DEX -3, CON +6, SPD +2	40	Up to 15,000 lbs. Tusks up to 224 lbs. Bulls can be very dangerous.
Fur Seal	1	Bite DR 2T	PER +2, STR +1, DEX +1, CON +6, SPD +8*	6	Hunted for its pelt. 6-7 ft. long, 400-650 lbs. * <i>swimming</i>
Giraffe	3	Kick DR 7B	PER +4, STR +4, DEX -1, CON +0, SPD +6	19	Can run at speeds of up to 29 mph. Herd animals.

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Animal	Ability Lvl	Atk/Dam	Attributes	HP	Comments
Goat	2	Butt DR 2B	PER +1, STR -6, DEX +5, CON +4, SPD +4	4	Bred for meat, milk. Coat is sometimes shorn (like sheep).
Gorilla	4	Punch DR 7B	PER +3, STR +6, DEX +1, CON +0, SPD +1	27	5-6 ft. tall, 440-590lbs. Immensely strong, non-aggressive.
Great White Shark	9	Bite DR 16T	PER +1, STR +8, DEX -1, CON +6, SPD +3	28	Up to 33 ft. long. Will attack and eat anything.
Grey Kangaroo	3	Kick DR 6B	PER +2, STR +1, DEX +1, CON +1, SPD +8	13	Runs up to 30 mph, leaps up to 33 ft. Can go 2-3 months without water.
Horse (Draft)	2	Kick DR 7B	PER +1, STR +8, DEX +1, CON +2, SPD +5	20	Bred as burden beasts.
Horse (Riding)	2	Kick DR 5B	PER +1, STR +5, DEX +1, CON +1, SPD +6	20	Bred for speed, endurance. Will panic in combat (WIL -5).
Husky	2	Bite DR 3T	PER +3, STR +0, DEX +0, CON +6, SPD +3	5	Fine sled/guard dogs. Easily tamed, very loyal.
Leopard	5	Bite DR 6T Claws DR 6S	PER +3, STR +3, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +5	12	5'/2-6'z ft. long, 90-175 lbs. Very strong, carries prey into trees
Animal	Ability Lvl	Atk/Dam	Attributes	HP	Comments
Lion	5	Bite DR 8T Claws DR 6S	PER +1, STR +6, DEX +3, CON +1, SPD +3	16	Roar can be heard up to 4 miles. Found in prides of 5-30 individuals.
Pig	1	Bite DR 1T	PER +0, STR +0, DEX -2, CON +4, SPD +1	2	Bred for food. Often kept on ocean vessels to feed crew.
Rat (Black)	1	Bite DR 1T	PER +4, STR -10, DEX +2, CON +8, SPD +2	1	Urban dweller. Carriers of disease, plague.
Spider Monkey	1	Bite DR 1T	PER +3, STR -6, DEX +8, CON +1, SPD +3	1	16-25 in. long, 13-17 lbs. Superior climbers, acrobatic agility.
Wolf	4	Bite DR 6T	PER +3, STR +1, DEX +0, CON +6, SPD +4	9	3-5 ft. long, 55-110 lbs. Hunt in packs of 4-24 individuals.

Gamemasters should use these Terran animals as examples when constructing alien fauna for their campaigns.



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