

AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
OUR GK SERIALS
JOURNEY INTO THE BLACK
REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
TABLE OF CONTENTS
VOLUME 9, ISSUE 4

Shades in the Night... <i>Editor's Message</i>	2
About the Authors <i>The Whos and Copyright Information</i>	3
Kraut Patrol <i>Graphic Novel set in Gear Krieg by John Bell</i>	5
Reimagining the Chronicles - Part 3 <i>Alternate Setting and Campaign info for Jovian Chronicles by Christopher Gregory</i>	8
Alfie's Tanners <i>Graphic Novel set in Gear Krieg by John Bell</i>	18
The Journal Part 6: Empty <i>Fiction set in Jovian Chronicles by Aaron Bertrand</i>	21
Submission Guidelines <i>How to Submit Material to Aurora</i>	27
Article Suggestions <i>What Aurora is Looking For</i>	28

I WANT YOU



FOR AURORA

NEAREST SUBMISSION DATE

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

*Where do you go...
...when the bombs start to fall?*

As I write this editorial, there are approximately 59.5 million people displaced throughout the world due to war, conflict, and persecution. That's nearly 1% of the world's population that are either internally displaced, a refugee, or seeking asylum.

That's a lot of people.

It's not a topic that comes up often in our tabletop wargames, does it? I certainly didn't consider it when I used a satellite photo of the neighborhoods around my home as the site of a recent giant mecha battle game. It was amusing to traipse through the gardens and backyards and parked vehicles. But those houses I was tromping through... had this been some real prolonged conflict, what would've happened then?

On Terra Nova, it's probably one of the reasons why the Badlands sees so much of the hostilities. Duking it out in the vast wastes, well, it's vast wastes. It's easier to avoid settlements and to avoid causing massive infrastructure and civilian damage. City states too are, by their nature, more compact (and fortified) and thus help keep the action away. It's not that there isn't displacement, but it can be minimized.

The same holds true yet with a very scary underbelly in the Jovian Chronicles (and, to some extent, in the off-world actions in Heavy Gear). Space is delightfully empty, and in space and on many worlds people live in very discrete enclosed settlements or colonies. There's plenty of room over there for all that weapons fire... yet should the action get close enough to threaten the colony, well, there won't be any displacement. There'll just be bodies and bits floating in harsh vacuum.

Narratively this compartmentalization has an interesting side effect, for given that so much collateral can more readily be avoided, to anti-matter bomb an entire settlement out of existence is a significant event, a defining moment for the moustache twirling villains, and a turning point in a campaign.

The world of Gear Krieg is a bit different, though, being very close to home in World War 2. And the terrors there may not be so contained...

It's true we rarely think of these while playing our games, and why not, they are, after all, games. Like roller coasters and horror films, we can go places disturbing and scary yet be in safety and have some fun. Blaze through the community with wild abandon. And it is also always good to exercise our empathy muscles. There's no saying we can't do both at the same time.

.....

Here we are, the final issue of 2015, and of Volume 9 of Aurora. Next up: Volume X! It delights me to no end that we are entering our tenth year, and I invite you all wholeheartedly to be a part of it. A year of super packed issues would be a fabulous way to celebrate.

And for all the Gear Krieg fans out there, GK miniatures will be available once again from DP9 for the month of October! Jump on in and grab 'em while they're still around!

Welcome to Issue 9.4 of your Silhouette magazine.

Game on,

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor



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AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

John Bell (jakarnilson@magma.ca) -- *Alfie's Tanners, Kraut Patrol*

He gets labeled a "walking-talking encyclopedia." He draws what goes through his mind. He builds what he can't afford. He walks what others would take a lift for. He'd probably trade in his bike for a real, working Ferret; but then again, who wouldn't?

Aaron Bertrand (thisnewjoe@gmail.com) -- *The Journal Part 6: Empty*

While a dabbler in the boardgame and video game realm, few things are quite so enjoyable over a long period as the storytelling adventure created among friends during an RPG campaign. My we all embark on many such glorious adventures!

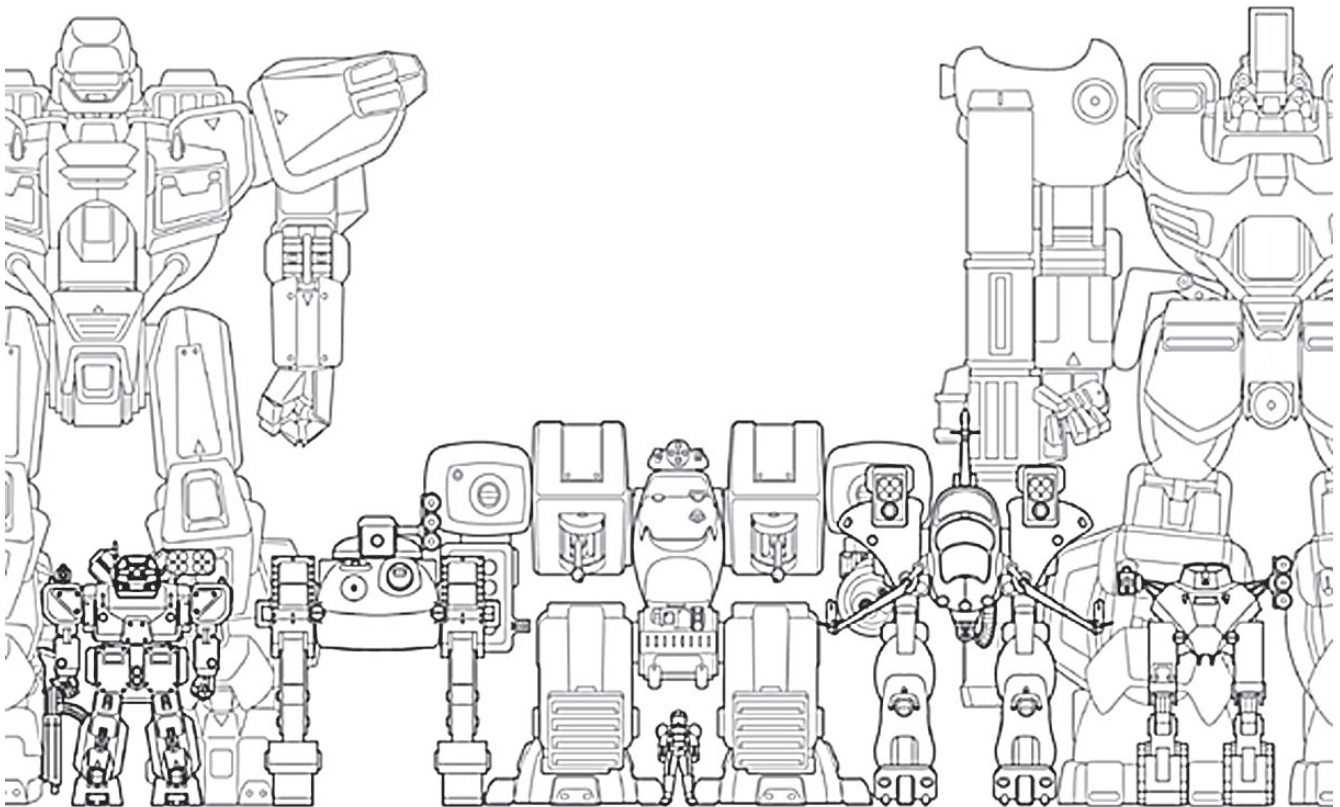
Oliver Bollmann (auroramag@gmail.com) -- *Editor*

It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Since then games have just become a big part of his life. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began his direct involvement with the Pod crew numerous years ago. He also runs a gaming imprint *Kannik Studios at rpgnow:*

http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=291

Christopher Gregory (chrisgregory@hotmail.com) -- *Reimagining The Chronicles - Part 3*

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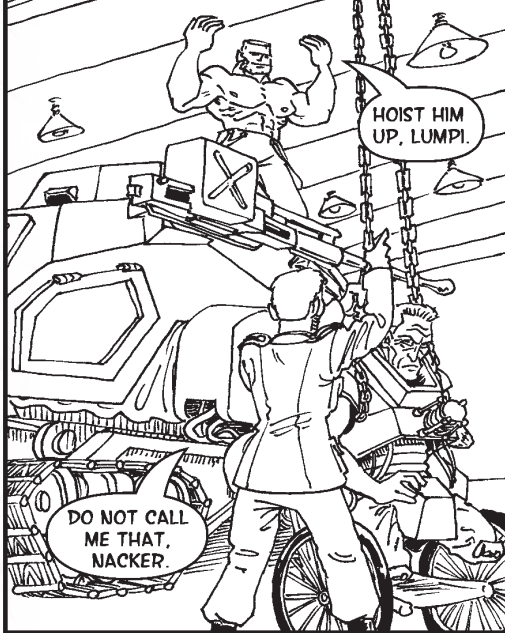
Please visit www.dp9.com and aurora.dp9forum.com for more information.

Aurora Magazine, Volume 9, Issue 4, Published October 1st, 2015

SEPT. 1942, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF STALINGRAD, IN A CAPTURED FACTORY TURNED INTO A MOTOR POOL, OTTO NACKER AND TRAUGOTT HUNDT ARE INSTALLING SS HAUPTSTURMFUHRER SCHRAUBER IN A SPECIAL PzKpf V VALKURIE AT THE BEQUEST OF DR. KRAUSS, LEADER OF THE...

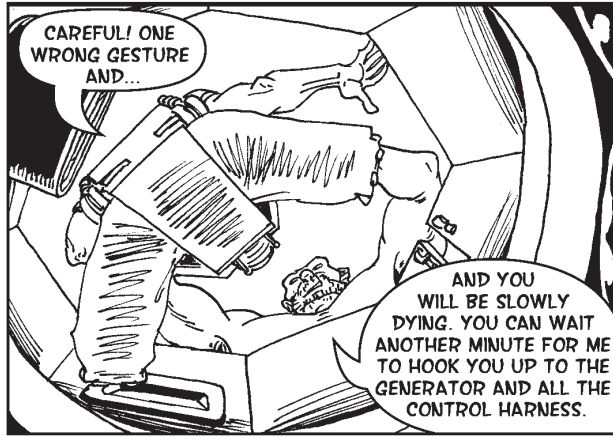
Kraut Patrol

ART & STORY BY JACK BELL



HOIST HIM UP, LUMPI.

DO NOT CALL ME THAT, NACKER.



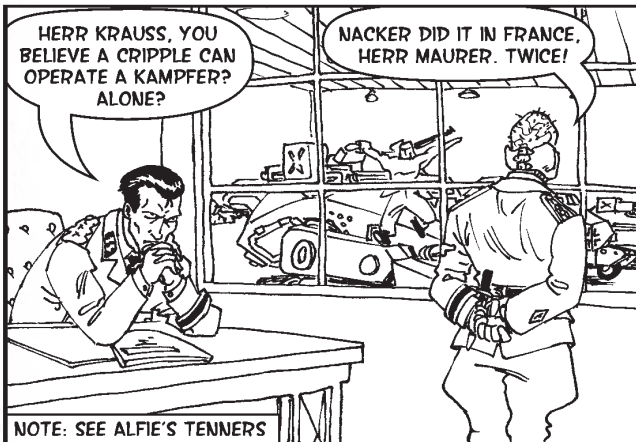
CAREFUL! ONE WRONG GESTURE AND...

AND YOU WILL BE SLOWLY DYING. YOU CAN WAIT ANOTHER MINUTE FOR ME TO HOOK YOU UP TO THE GENERATOR AND ALL THE CONTROL HARNESS.



JUST SOME FINAL ADJUSTMENTS AND YOU WILL BE GOOD TO GO.

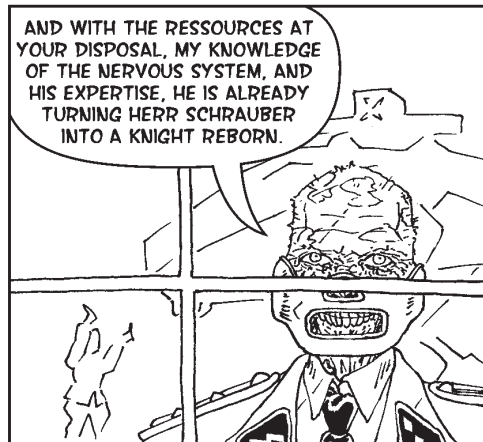
WE DO NOT WANT YOU FLYING AROUND, HERR HAUPTSTURMFURHER.



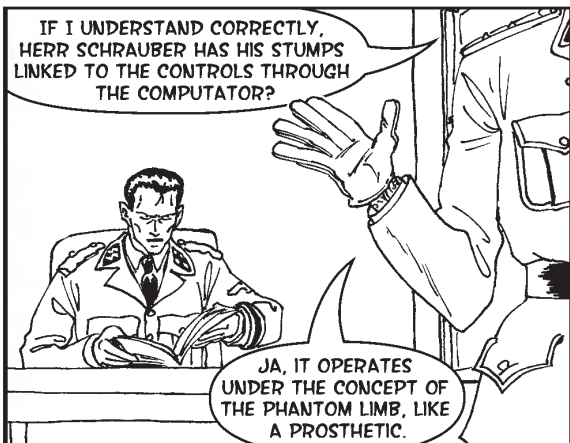
HERR KRAUSS, YOU BELIEVE A CRIPPLE CAN OPERATE A KAMPFER? ALONE?

NACKER DID IT IN FRANCE, HERR MAURER. TWICE!

NOTE: SEE ALFIE'S TENNERS

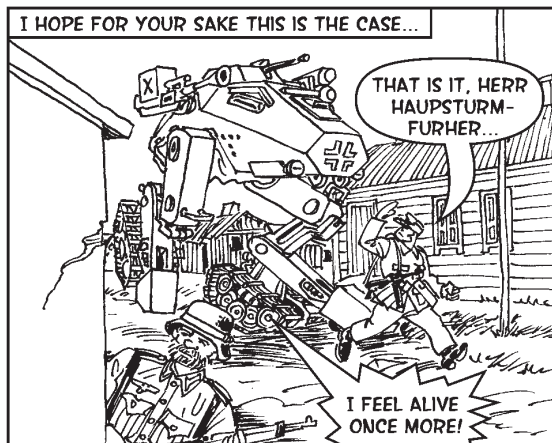


AND WITH THE RESSOURCES AT YOUR DISPOSAL, MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND HIS EXPERTISE, HE IS ALREADY TURNING HERR SCHRAUBER INTO A KNIGHT REBORN.



IF I UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY, HERR SCHRAUBER HAS HIS STUMPS LINKED TO THE CONTROLS THROUGH THE COMPUTATOR?

JA, IT OPERATES UNDER THE CONCEPT OF THE PHANTOM LIMB, LIKE A PROSTHETIC.



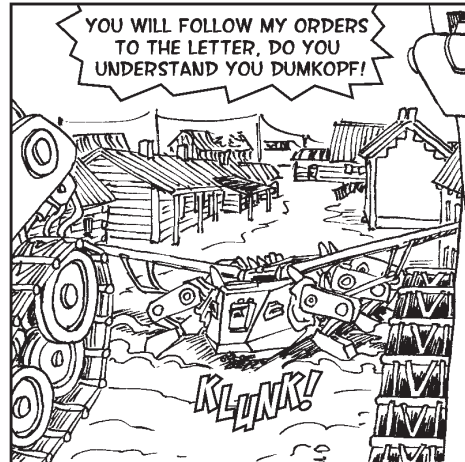
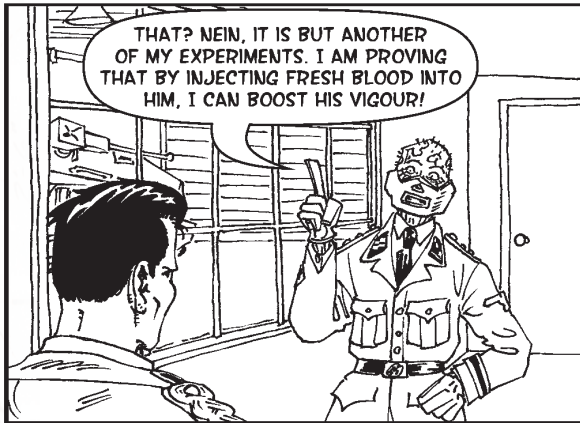
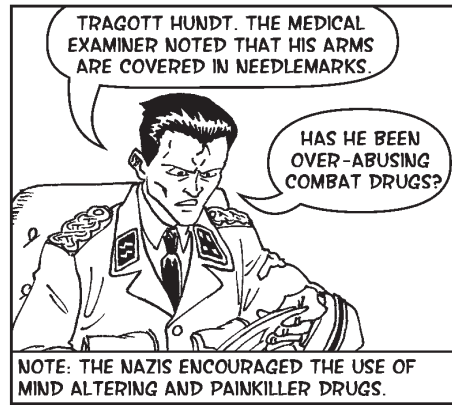
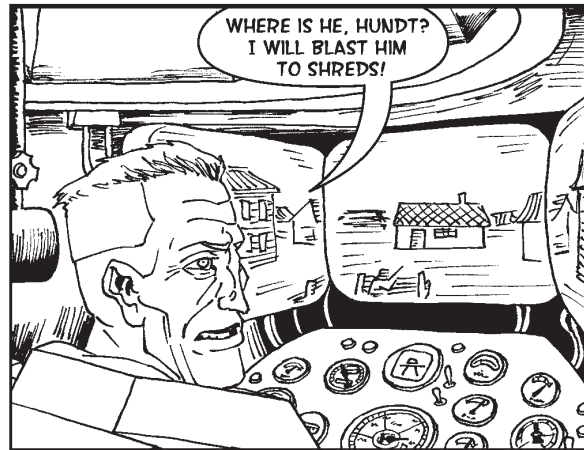
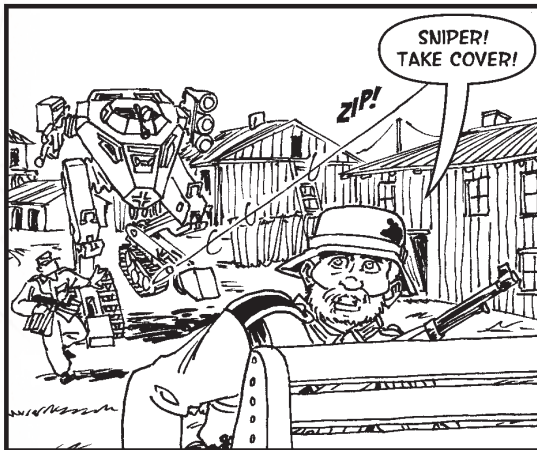
I HOPE FOR YOUR SAKE THIS IS THE CASE...

THAT IS IT, HERR HAUPTSTURMFURHER...

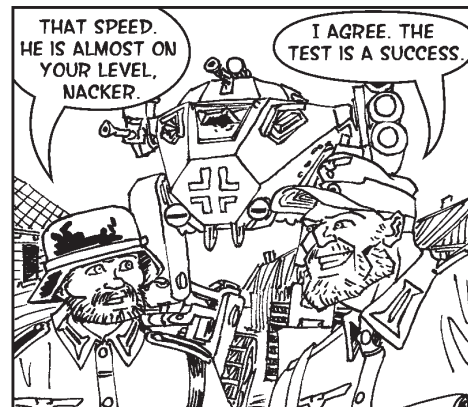
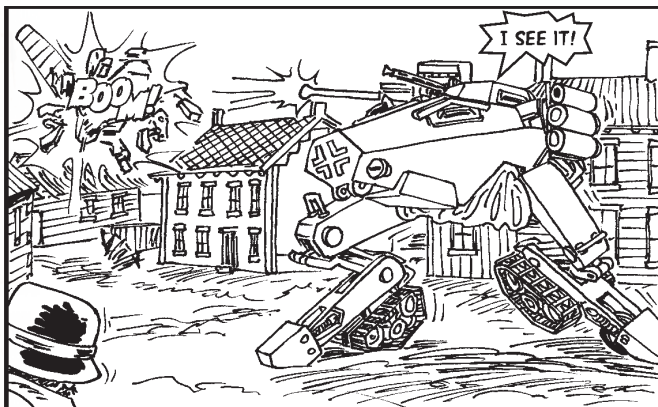
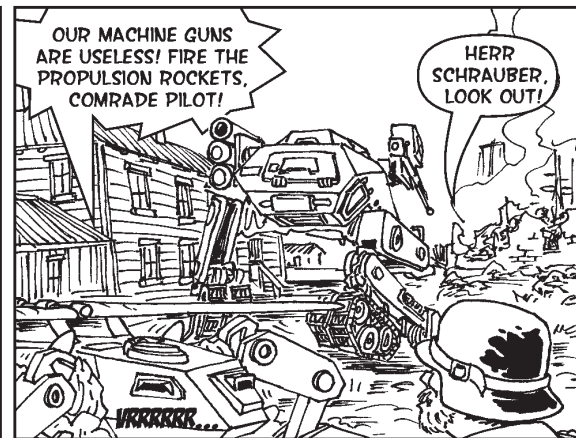
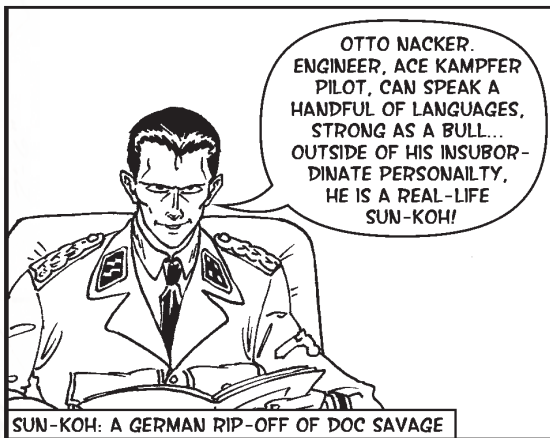
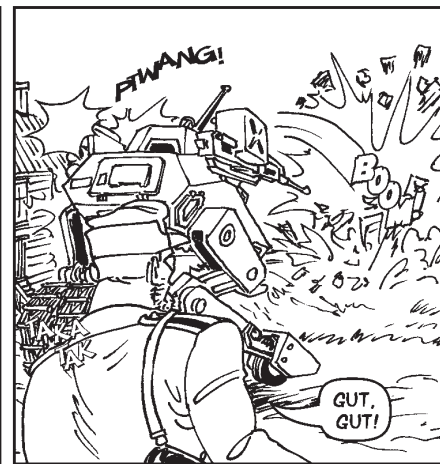
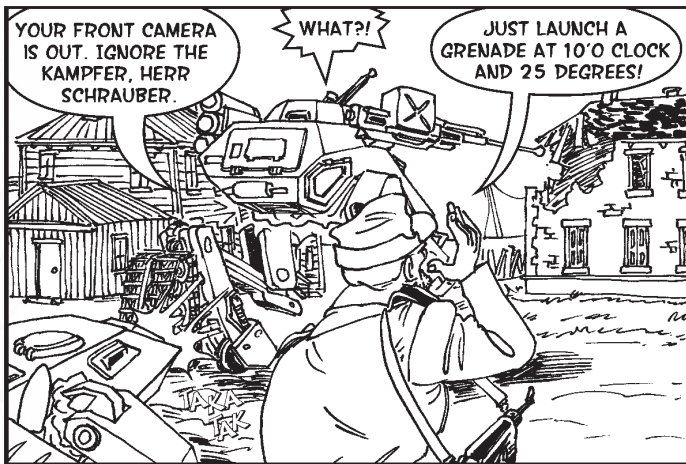
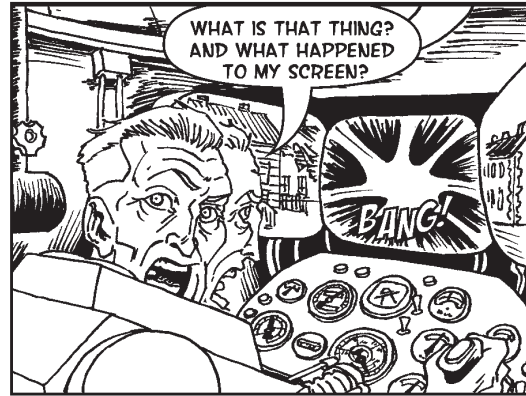
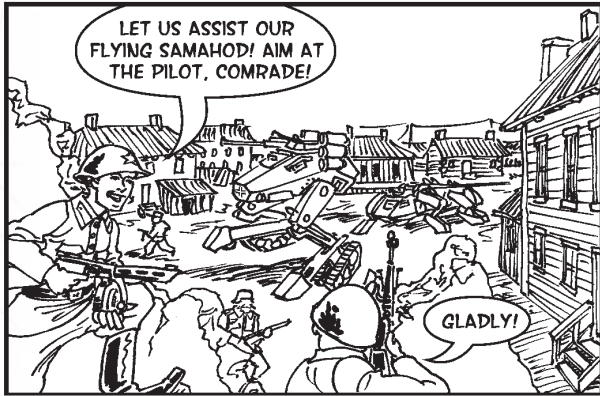
I FEEL ALIVE ONCE MORE!

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

KRAUT PATROL



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
KRAUT PATROL



NEXT: DR. KRAUSS MEETS A RIVAL TO MATCH HIS GENIUS. SCHRAUBER MEETS ONE AS WELL, WITH BATTLE TENDENCIES...

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

provide living space with a modicum of gravity for crew comfort and health reasons. External cargo sections can hold large amounts of cargo, and weapon turrets often define a ship as a combat vessel. Due to both the variety and similarity of ships in JC we'll take a look at a few of the things that define ships in Jovian Chronicles.

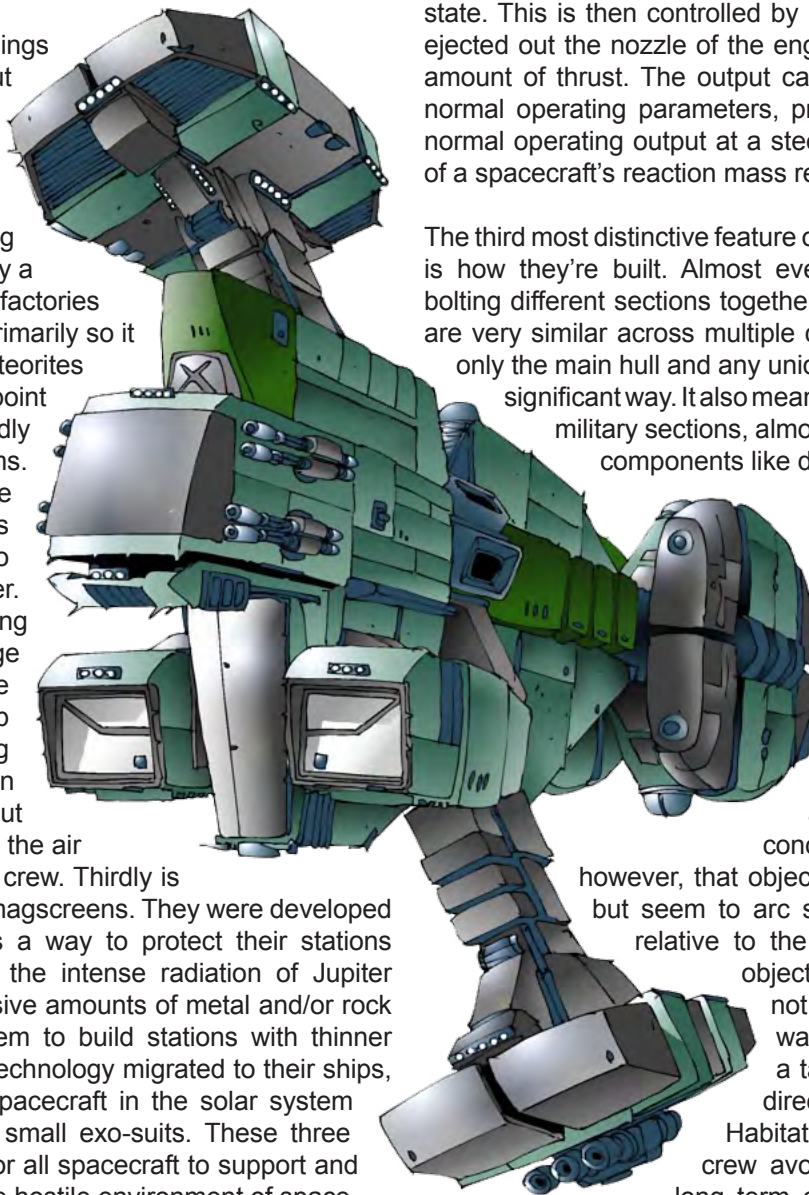
First and foremost is the things few people think about but couldn't live without, the hull of the ship itself. Many ships are built using composite materials capable of withstanding enormous impacts, typically a material produced in zero-g factories called durasheet. This is primarily so it can ward off any micro-meteorites that make it past the point defence systems. Secondly is the life support systems. Unlike modern systems, the ones in Jovian Chronicles are fully self sustaining so long as they have power. They are capable of recycling everything from garbage to human waste. The Life Support systems on a ship are incapable of producing food, unlike the ones on Jovian colony cylinders, but is able to purify and create the air and water required for the crew. Thirdly is the Magnetic Screens, or magscreens. They were developed by the Jovians initially as a way to protect their stations and colony stations from the intense radiation of Jupiter without resorting to excessive amounts of metal and/or rock cladding. This allowed them to build stations with thinner skins, and eventually the technology migrated to their ships, and eventually to every spacecraft in the solar system including even the rather small exo-suits. These three systems combined allow for all spacecraft to support and protect their crews from the hostile environment of space.

Secondly, any vehicle requires a mode of locomotion. In space, unlike on Earth, an object set in motion stays in motion so people are less concerned about a craft's speed as they are it's acceleration. The only time speed is relevant is when two craft are trying to connect with one another, as when a ship docks with a colony cylinder for example, and then

it's the speed in relation to each other. To provide the thrust for acceleration spacecraft had historically used chemical propellants or ejected gasses. By the 23rd century, however, a new kind of propulsion device had come into it's own. The Plasma Combustion Chamber takes any gas or liquid, but typically hydrogen gas, and super heats it into a plasma state. This is then controlled by magnetic fields and rapidly ejected out the nozzle of the engine, providing a very large amount of thrust. The output can also be boosted beyond normal operating parameters, providing almost double the normal operating output at a steep cost in the consumption of a spacecraft's reaction mass reserves.

The third most distinctive feature of ships in Jovian Chronicles is how they're built. Almost every ship is constructed by bolting different sections together. This means that sections are very similar across multiple classes of ships, often with only the main hull and any unique sections differing in any significant way. It also means that, aside from advanced military sections, almost every ship shares similar components like drive sections.

Some ships have what are called habitat modules, crew living areas set in sections which can rotate about the craft imparting a centrifugal force upon the occupants. That force is essentially the same as gravity as far as the human body is concerned. The difference is, however, that objects don't drop or fly straight but seem to arc since everything is moving relative to the trajectory of the airborne object. This means that if one's not careful, they could pour water all over the floor next to a table instead of in the glass directly underneath the pitcher. Habitat modules help a ship's crew avoid the worst symptoms of long term exposure to a zero gravity environment since they are effectively resting and exercising in a gravity environment. Combined with commonly available medication and a proper exercise regime a crew could stay on a ship for years with minimal side effects. Unfortunately due to size constraints most habitats on a ship can only achieve a third of a g in force, meaning that a ship's crew will need to return to a proper



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

gravity environment at some point, and preferably regularly, for health reasons. The habitats can be attached by either an arm or by several cables and a passage tube to a rotating section which houses gyroscopic motors to prevent the rest of the ship from spinning in the opposite direction.

Aside from that, many ships are designed with their decks stacked from front to back, like a sky scraper on it's side. This is because when a ship is under acceleration the force of gravity will be towards the back of the ship, not the bottom. It also prevents passageways from running the length of the ship, which would become pits the depth of the ship's length. The external appearance of many ships is symmetrical, but the internal layouts rarely are. Instead they are designed to balance the mass load centrally on the central point of thrust, the point in the exact middle of all the drive sections accelerating the ship. Ships are also designed to facilitate crew movements and work in both zero gravity conditions and while the ship is under acceleration. Many include moving handrails which the crew can hold onto to facilitate movement through the ship when under zero gravity conditions.

Space Suits

Often undervalued, space suits, often shortened to just suits in JC, are vital to work outside of a pressurized environment. That said, it's not one type fits all. There are several classifications of space suits, and each class typically has several sub types to facilitate the different tasks they'll be called upon to do. The features all space suits have in common is the ability to fully seal air tight, carry at least a minimum of oxygen for the wearer, and has an emergency beacon which is designed to trigger should one of several suit failures be detected by the small monitoring computer.

The first class of space suits are survival suits. Within this category are two types, vacuum suits and emergency suits. Vacuum suits are essentially one piece body suits capable of retaining atmosphere. When a helmet is attached to the collar it is fully sealed. Vacuum suits typically have a small cartridge of oxygen on the belt or located in another unobtrusive place to supply five minutes of breathable air. This cartridge can be replaced while the vacuum suit is in use allowing a person to extend the time they can use it. Emergency suits are a one size fits all unit packed into a case the size of a small briefcase. If a person is in a hurry to get a space suit on all they have to do is open the case, step in it, pull the case to near chest height, and pull the bubble top over their head and seal it. Emergency suits are very baggy since they are designed to fit any body type and carry a thirty minute air supply. Both these suits are for very short term and are rarely used as a

primary space suit. Emergency suits are often derogatorily referred to as body bags, since these suits lack any ability to replace the built in air supply. Most people prefer to spend the extra time it takes to don a soft suit so they can have a much longer time to escape the problem.

The second class of space suits are soft suits. These suits are assembled from seven parts to form a whole space suit. These parts are the torso, arms, legs, gloves, boots, helmet, and mission pack. Each part is entirely self contained and locks onto one another at the appropriate location. This allows the suits to be mass produced yet still fit the wearer comfortably. Soft suits are the most common space suits in use in JC. This includes worksuits, various types of crew suits both military and civilian, and pilot suits. Work suits are used for general and safe tasks in space, crew suits are used by a ship's crew when the ship needs to depressurize or someone needs to go outside of the ship, and pilot suits are used by exo armour and interceptor pilots. The air supply in these suits is measured in hours, and most can connect to an external life support unit to recharge their own air and water supplies, or to even run off it saving it's own supplies for when it's disconnected from an external life support system.

Hard suits are designed for dangerous situations. They are large, bulky, and plated in durasheet. This allows them to protect the wear much better than the lighter and more comfortable soft suits. Most Hard suits are considered heavy work suits and are often used in construction, demolition, or other dangerous tasks. Armoured hardsuits are even heavier than other hard suits and are used by military forces as body armour in space or when the atmosphere may be suspect. Hard suits carry more consumables than soft suits and are very expensive, but also considered worth the cost. Only an exo suit can provide better protection and loiter time in space but only at a much increased cost and maintenance needs.

Exo Armours

Here's the bit almost everyone playing Jovian Chronicles wants, the giant robots of the game. If you're like me it's the giant robots that brought you into the game to begin with. Initially they were the stars of the show, but Jovian Chronicles has expanded beyond that to an extent over the years. Here, we're going to take a look at the exo armours and how they fit in with everything else.

The first thing that needs to be figured out is how the exos fit into the game world. The short story is that they are the main toys that the players get to use. The long story is that early industrial use powered exo skeletons were eventually



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

turned to military use, and over time started to get larger and larger due to the increased amount of equipment added on until someone decided to just make a giant robot with all the features already in it. The role of exo armours in the militaries of the 23rd century is that of battlespace superiority and close strike unit. The exos work best when they're closer to their targets and are able to use their nimbleness to avoid enemy attacks and rapidly get into advantageous positions. The level of responsiveness shown by exo armours to pilot input is primarily due to the way it is controlled, which we will look at later, making them difficult to target. They also often carry rather thick armour for protection in their dogfighting role, making them even harder to destroy. Added to the difficulty of engaging and destroying exo armours is the typically heavy weapon payload they are given, making them dangerous adversaries in any battlespace. While they are not kings of the battlespace, ships having more armour and firepower while interceptors have more speed, they are close to it.

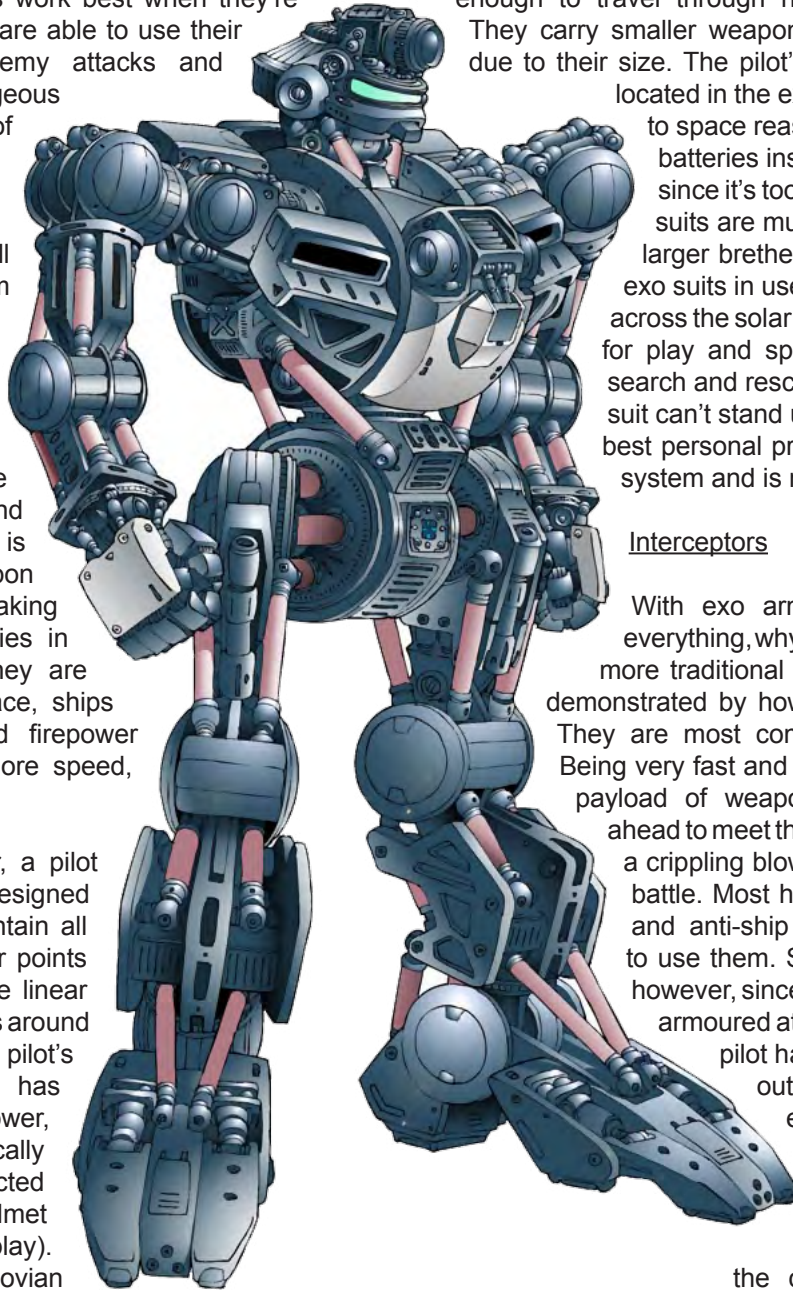
To control an exo armour, a pilot has to wear a specially designed pilot suit. This suit will contain all the connectors and anchor points for securing a pilot into the linear frame, a device which wraps around the pilot and measures the pilot's body movements. It also has connection points for power, life support, and data (typically important information projected in front of the pilot on the helmet mounted Heads Up Display). The different forces in Jovian Chronicles have standardized their pilot suits for their equipment, but rarely share standards with one another. Each faction has different design philosophies and capabilities for their exo armours, and typically make the best ones they can.

Exo Suits

Exo Suits are often looked at as the exo armour's little brother. It is still a one man craft which is humanoid in shape, but there the similarities end. Exo suits are often, but not always, small enough to travel through human sized passageways. They carry smaller weapons and have lighter armour due to their size. The pilot's head and limbs are often located in the exo suit's head and limbs due to space reasons. The exo suits also use batteries instead of a fusion power plant since it's too small for one. This said, exo suits are much more common than their larger brethren. They range from military exo suits in use by marine and army forces across the solar system to simpler ones used for play and sport, construction, and even search and rescue tasks. While a single exo suit can't stand up to an exo armour, it is the best personal protection system in the solar system and is much beloved by many.

Interceptors

With exo armours flying around doing everything, why would a military force require more traditional fighter craft? The reason is demonstrated by how they are now referred to. They are most commonly called Interceptors. Being very fast and capable of carrying a heavy payload of weapons, interceptors can race ahead to meet the enemy and, hopefully, deal a crippling blow in the opening moves of a battle. Most have a mixture of anti-fighter and anti-ship missiles, and aren't afraid to use them. Speed is their only defence, however, since most interceptors are lightly armoured at best. In short, an interceptor pilot has to get in, hit hard, and get out fast. Preferably before the enemy knows they're there. Interceptors are cheaper than exo-armours, easier to maintain, and easier to train pilots for since the controls don't have to be condensed onto a pair of joysticks. Despite the perceived weakness of the craft they pilot, interceptor pilots do not bow down to the exo pilots and take pride in being the first to the fight.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

Robots

Robots are semi-automated or fully automated devices which can perform work. There are a great many available in Jovian Chronicles, more than have been shown in the books.

The most obvious robots are satellites. Originally satellites were used to provide communications, weather observation, GPS coordinates, and so on. They were even used to spy on hostiles. In Jovian Chronicles, satellites are used primarily for observation and communication relay duties. There's no need for the other uses when one lives in a colony cylinder with integrated communication and positional systems, and stars are used to plot a ship's position in space since it's much more reliable. Some are occasionally sent out system for scientific reasons, but they are rare and typically are forgotten by all but the scientists receiving the automated reports from them.

Next up are Maintenance Bots, or M Bots. These are generally multi-purpose robots who's purpose is to clean and maintain things. They do all the menial tasks so that humans can perform the more complicated ones. Many are considered to be like dumb dogs, but they lack any real intelligence. M-Bots are equipped with wheels for general movement in gravity environments, and spindly legs with magnetic feet to move around in low or zero gravity environments. They can also use those legs to climb stairs, but it takes a little while when the M-Bot is in a normal gravity environment. The SVU-Bots are similar to M-Bots, but are designed for use solely in zero g environments, typically outside of habitable areas.

Another kind of robots are the automated factories, or autofacs. These structures are one giant robot which takes a steady supply of raw materials and spits out containers of finished goods. These factories can produce almost anything, provided they are set up for it. They are used extensively by many of the solar nations to allow a small number of people to produce large amounts of goods. Some autofacs used to use nanomachines to assemble materials and structures to strengths not otherwise possible, but all of these autofacs were shut down when the Edicts banned them.

Beyond that are more specialized robots, like the pixie bots of the Yuri-Gargarian calss tenders, or the automated cargo handling robots found in many docks across the solar system. These are typically purpose built and perform their job well, especially if given supervision from a technician. In fact, many tasks which require manual labour can be performed by robots overseen by a small number of people. Automated systems

can drive cars, pilot spacecraft, and even operate weapon systems. The only true limit to the usefulness of robots is the need for human oversight at some level since computing systems are only capable of making limited decisions.

Medicine

Medical technology is highly advanced in Jovian Chronicles. Much of it has been driven by the needs of living in space, and on planets and moons with significantly less gravity than on Earth. Other advancements came from curing existing diseases or healing injuries from accidents or combat.

One of the greatest advancements in medical technology was the mapping and subsequent utilization of the human genome for medicinal purposes. In many of the settlements in JC an unborn child can have it's genetics mapped. The technology exists to use this information to identify and eliminate hereditary health issues. Early on that genetic alteration technology was used to create what were called designer children, but when the Edicts were created laws were enacted to put an end to that. The side effect, however, is that some people have inherited these superior genetics. Others have inherited previously unheard of eye or hair colours. While most people have their genetics mapped before they are born, the information is considered, by law, to be the property of the individual and can only be accessed for medicinal purposes. The only real exception is if a police force can legally show a need to access the information. That need, however, varies from nation to nation. Police forces in the Martian Federation can access them virtually at will while in the Republic they are almost never allowed to.

A related advance to the aforementioned genetic therapy technologies is the ability to grow entirely new body parts, or to even clone an entire body if so desired. There are laws against cloning people, and cloning body parts is highly regulated. In some places, like the Jovian Confederation, people have easy access to limb and organ regeneration technologies. Other places, like in the asteroid belt, the technology is much more limited. Furthermore, the technology, when available, is often kept in secure government facilities and isn't given out to anyone who wants it. This means that few ships or private facilities will have access to the technology. Most militaries have one of these facilities on some of their larger ships, like on their flagships or some of their support vessels. Access, however, is not always guaranteed while away from base and a soldier injured while their ship is on patrol may have to live without whichever body part it is they lost until the fleet gains access to such a facility.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

Another major advance in medical technology is Vitamax. Vitamax is typically a liquid drug which can be tailored to a person's genetics if that information is known. When properly tailored for an individual it greatly enhances someone's ability to recover from illnesses and injuries effectively reducing the recovery time by half. Even if it's not tailored properly the person receiving it will see a faster healing time. It just wouldn't be as fast. While Vitamax is primarily in a liquid form, it can be adjusted for use in a variety of methods, such as nasal sprays, patches, or gel capsules. In fact, alternate methods of dosing are so common that few people outside the medical profession realize that Vitamax is actually a liquid at all.

There have also been advances made in supplements to aid the health of people living in low or zero gravity environments. While these supplements do not prevent the health issues of long term exposure to such environments, it does extend the time a person can be in such environments without ill effects. When combined with proper diet and regular exercise, a person is able to return from exposure to low or zero g environments for much longer periods of time with fewer and briefer side effects than they could in the twentieth century.

While it's less of an advancement as it is an adaptation to the realities of living in enclosed environments, the medical institutions of the solar system, whether it be on a colony cylinder, a small ship, or an arcology on Venus, is much more alert and reactionary to indications of disease and illness. This is due to the fact that many people are living in close proximity within self contained, fully enclosed, environments.

While this is less of an issue on larger facilities and ships that it is in smaller ones, the fact remains that a person can be ordered into isolation by a doctor until an illness runs its course for the health and safety of the rest of the populace or crew. This was far more common during the fall when illness

and disease caused by deprivations, insufficient life support infrastructure, and overcrowding was the norm. Since then it has happened less often due to the lack of actual illness. In some places people will voluntarily isolate themselves to keep their fellow citizens and crew safe from illness, especially in nations where the education system teaches children about the dangers of disease in enclosed environments and close living conditions. It is often a requirement to see a medical professional to obtain a doctor's note first though.

Food

Food and water are two of the necessities of life. Importation of food from Earth became impractical very early in the colonization of space. The solution was for settlements to create their own food. The Orbitals around Earth did this by adding farming modules to their colony cylinders. Through careful control and plentiful access to sunlight, these farms are capable of producing more food than the people of the attached colony cylinders can actually

eat. This allows them to export the excess to the Selenites on the moon, and even to Earth to supplement farm facilities operating on the surface of Earth. Hydroponics is common for fruits and vegetables due to the lower space requirements and higher crop yields produced.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

Mars, being further from Earth, has had to use genetic technology to enhance their crop's ability to grow in the lesser sunlight. Many of these farms are attached to the domed cities and aid in maintaining a livable environment for the inhabitants. It also makes it easier to maintain control of the farms and distribute their crops.

Venus, due to the thick clouds and completely hostile environment outside the arcologies, has taken a very different approach to its food problems. In the lower levels of the Arcologies exist unusual farms. Instead of growing livestock and crops like would be found on earth, they grow giant mushrooms. These mushrooms were genetically engineered before the existence of the Edicts to both provide food and to act as a sewage filtration unit. The farm is supplied with the sewage outflow from the entire arcology, which is eventually processed by the mushrooms into clean drinking water. The mushrooms also filter the air in a similar manner to trees on earth, making mechanical life support systems more of a redundancy than a necessity. The mushroom caps can be harvested and processed into the majority of the foods enjoyed by the populace.

The Nomads, living with low numbers in each habitat, have more traditional crops in hydroponic facilities. The lack of gravity limits their ability to raise livestock and certain crops, but what they do grow is sufficient and is often supplemented by trade. In general, however, the Nomads exist with a primarily vegetarian diet.

The Mercurians acquired their food production methods from the Jovians through trade. How both these nations feed their population was a matter of necessity as much as practicality. Both nations exist with environments where traditional farming methods produce low crop yields. Around Mercury it's the excessive amount of sunlight and the need to stay in Mercury's shade which causes the problem. Around Jupiter, it's the absolute lack of any usable sunlight at all which causes the problem. The solution was to take the majority of the biological waste produced by the population and funnel it into special algae farming vats. These vats have a small culture of the algae and are filled with biological waste, including deceased people. The algae multiplies as it feeds upon the waste. Near the end of the process the algae is emptied out and sent to a processing factory which turns it into protein blocks similar to tofu. These blocks are naturally tasteless and have a rubbery consistency. When they are cooked, seasoned, and artificially flavoured in other food production plants, restaurants, or at home they can simulate almost any known taste and texture. It is considered the mark of a great chef to make entirely different tasting meals solely by changing the cooking and preparation methods and times.

The rest of the biological waste is sent to farms growing fruits and vegetables to supplement the algae blocks. The amount of fruits and vegetables produced is insufficient to feed the colony and cannot be used in place of the algae food factories. Livestock on Mercurian and Jovian colony cylinders are virtually unheard of and the populace of both nations live on a vegetarian and protein block diet. In fact, most of these people find real meat to be unpalatable.

The Edicts

They've been mentioned several times now. The Edicts. Just what are the Edicts.

In short, the Edicts are a set of laws restricting access and information on certain technologies and research which may prove hazardous to humanity as a whole. They were enacted by the United Nations in 2068 shortly after an incident involving nano-technology resulted in a near catastrophe. It was re-ratified in 2168 by diplomats representing the emerging solar nations at the United Solar Nations with Earth in absentia since the Fall was still going on. In fact, until the re-ratification occurred many of the emergent solar nations did not consider the Edicts to apply to them. The entire goal of the Edicts is to prevent the development of technology which could prove dangerous to the continued existence of the human race. It has been expanded beyond that to also include multiple types of technologies that people generally find distasteful or which have no purpose other than to cause harm. While it does prevent a renegade AI from creating an army of killing machines to exterminate humanity, unfortunately it also put an end to many nano-robotic assembly factories effectively preventing the replication of some past feats of engineering such as single pane windows for the O'Neil cylinders in Earth orbit or building new sky hooks to mine the atmosphere of Jupiter. The latter is considered a moot point since the Jovians had created more than enough skyhooks for their purposes by the time they signed the Edicts.

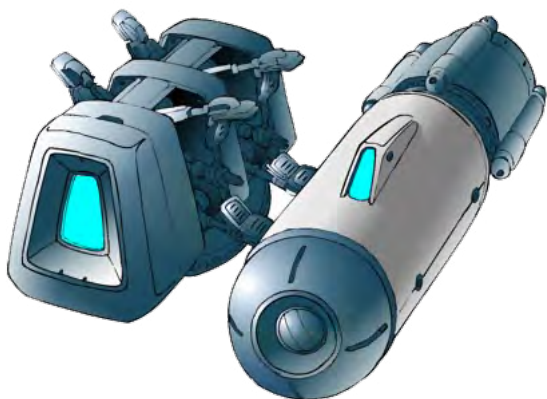
The important thing to remember about the Edicts is that it doesn't make anything illegal. It merely restricts it. Access to information on technologies restricted by the Edicts is limited to special research facilities which have to be certified and monitored by the USN. Research into restricted technologies is likewise required to be monitored. The technologies which fall under the control of the Edicts include, but is not limited to, genetic manipulation, cloning, Artificial intelligence, nano robotics, biological and chemical weapons, and weapons of mass destruction. In 2209 the Jovians began lobbying for research on alien species to be added to the list, primarily due to the discovery of the Jovian Floaters.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

Every nation in Jovian Chronicles officially respects and obeys the Edicts. By law they are allowed to maintain a number of facilities which may access information and conduct research into edict restricted technologies, but these are heavily monitored by the USN. Most also maintain discrete and secretive laboratories conducting illegal "Edict Violating" research. These laboratories are most often on small stations or hidden settlements on moons or in asteroids which keep a low profile and appear as any other than a high tech research facility. Sometimes these facilities exist within other scientific facilities or are disguised as legitimate research institutions not performing Edict Violating research. About the only people who can be safely considered to not have any black laboratories are the Mercurians, as the fallout of being caught conducting such research would hinder it's trading relations, and the Nomads who simply lack the ability to conduct research at all. The Martian Federation and Martian Republic skirt the edge of the Edicts with their terraformation projects, but they are carefully monitored to ensure that nothing crosses from world building to inhumane unstoppable weapon.

Of all the technologies in the Edicts, cloning is the one which is constantly on the boarder between outright evil and incredibly benign. On one hand, the ability to clone new body parts for crippled or maimed people allows them to return to full health without the side effects of using organs donated from another person or prosthetics. On the other hand, no one wants someone to create an evil copy of themselves. Before the Edicts were created a cloned human was created. Adam, as he was called, lived to the age of eighteen when, after a life consisting largely of depression and other mental problems, he committed suicide. By that point most of the nations on Earth had banned the cloning of people, although it was proven that despite cloning a person's body it was impossible to recreate the personality and memories of a person. It is widely believed by researchers that the attempt to replicate someone's personality is what ultimately lead to Adam's suicide.



Weapons

Let's face it, it's not a fun giant robot game unless things are exploding. Jovian Chronicles is not one of peace and all around happy feelings. There is plenty of conflict both large and small, and every nation has a stockpile of weapons to arm it's soldiers with. There are numerous categories of weapons and we'll look at them by groups.

Lasers

Laser stands for "Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation". We're all widely familiar with them, even if you don't know it. CDs DVDs and Blue Rays are all devices which use light to read information off of disks. We can go to the store and buy a laser pointer. Lasers are used to perform surgery on eyes. They can be used to measure movement and distance. They can even be used to transmit information directly to a single receiver. In short, they're everywhere in modern day life and much more common than the man who invented them every thought they would be. In Jovian Chronicles lasers have been weaponized. Large versions are mounted on ships as long range accurate weapon turrets. Some exo armours and interceptors use them as their primary weapon. The Jovians use them as firearms for it's army and marines. As useful as lasers are for every day life, they have become just as useful in combat.

Many ships, not just military ones, maintain an array of laser emitters on the outside of their hulls. These can be used to shoot down incoming meteorites or pirate fighters, or can be set to shield mode which enables multiple emitters to work together to essentially shave down incoming matter so it causes less damage when it hits the hull.

Particle Beam Cannons

Particle Beam Cannons are a series of weapons which fire charged particles at their target. While shorter ranged, slower firing, and somewhat less accurate than equally large laser weapons, PBCs have the advantage in damage output. In fact, the electrical charge of the beam can often cause secondary damage effects as well, making these weapons very useful for quickly knocking out targets. The Jovians made the initial developments of Particle weaponry and maintain their position as a leader with it. Unfortunately for them CEGA had managed to acquire the plans for the largest class of Particle Cannons the Jovians had developed and have since down scaled it into smaller versions for the smaller ships in the Joint Service Navy. They are still bulkier and less efficient than Jovian designs, but in general are on parity when it comes to battlespace performance.

Missiles

Missiles are a common enough weapon despite their vulnerability to anti-missile fire. Most missiles in use have similar range and rate of fire capabilities, with only the size of the warhead and the payload of the launcher being different factors. In most cases though, missiles are an opportunistic weapon in ship to ship battles and many captains will not fire them until they are guaranteed to reach the target unimpeded. A single such missile attack can cripple most ships, and even destroy some. Missiles are also used on exos and interceptors to provide a hard hitting capability, although the limited numbers tends to keep them as weapons of opportunity. Of all the factions in Jovian Chronicles, CEGA relies the most on missile weaponry due to the ease of manufacture and maintenance and it's destructive power.

Mass Drivers, Railguns, Gauss guns, Cannons, Guns

This category, despite covering five types of weapons, all do the same thing. They launch a projectile at high speed to cause damage to a target by impact. Sometimes a weapon in this category will be using more than simple chunks of metal as a projectile, but the effect generally remains similar. The intention is, to put it simply, to cause damage by hitting the target hard and often. Most weapons in this category are capable of rapid fire, launching multiple projectiles in very rapid succession.

Power Sources

Electricity is essential to humanity. It powers all the technology that makes life even possible. Without it people would still be living in the Victorian era at best. Humanity has developed numerous means of generating electricity. In Jovian Chronicles there are several popular means as outlined below.

Solar power is a cheap and reliable means of generating power. Panels are used to catch light given off from the sun and converts it to electricity. In space these panels can face the sun at all times, meaning that they can generate power constantly unlike solar panels located on a planetary body which rotates. That rotation means that in many cases these solar panels are attached to batteries to store extra power for the times when the panels are not in sunlight. Solar panels are more efficient when they are closer to the sun, and lose effectiveness when they are further from the sun. By the time one reaches the asteroid belt, the sunlight is so weak that one needs to either use massive panels, or rely on alternate methods of power generation.

More popular than solar power is nuclear power. While fission power generators were used by humans for hundreds of years, in Jovian Chronicles science has managed to create fusion power generators. The difference between fission and fusion is that while fission splits atoms and generates radioactive waste, fusion works essentially by having the atoms fusing together creating new materials. These new materials are rarely radioactive and can be used in other ways. Another difference is that while a fission reactor requires a large support infrastructure to contain the reaction and the radiation as well as to get rid of the waste, fusion generators use magnetic fields to contain the plasma within the reactors, meaning that fusion reactors can be much smaller. In fact, they are small enough to mount on exo armours and interceptors. Fusion power requires fuel supplies and more maintenance and monitoring than solar panels, but it provides large amounts of constant power. Beyond the asteroid belt fusion power is almost mandatory to power everything. Most military ships and fighters use fusion generators for the simple reason that it lets them operate with a constant and reliable power supply.

While not technically a power generation technology, power cells are incredibly useful for powering portable devices. Power cells come in a variety of sizes depending on how much power a device requires, and the size of the device. The power cell in most devices contain a remote charge system allowing it to be recharged by placing the device near a recharging unit. Powercells are capable of powering anything from a wrist watch and nanomachines to even the largest structures and colony cylinders. Typically anything large enough to contain a fusion reactor would normally have one since power cells require recharging, and larger constructs tend have power requirements too large for power cells to be a feasible means of supplying that power.

A recent innovation on the power cell is the dual sectioned powercell. This technology allows power cells to rapidly supply large, quick bursts of energy. The Jovian Armed Forces have used the Dangerous/Military Technologies Act to declare the dual section powercells a military technology. With it they have managed to create man portable rapid fire laser weapons, something no one else has access to.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 3

Communications

There are a variety of communications technologies in JC. They vary from small personal communication devices carried by most people up to the large long range transceivers utilized to send and receive massive amounts of information from one end of the solar system to the other. Many ships and facilities have built in communications networks so a person doesn't have to rely on portable communicators. These networks are fully integrated telecommunication and data networks meaning that a person with even a small hand held computer can access just about any information they might need. This means that people are more connected than ever. Despite this the close living conditions means that people still tend to favour face to face communication rather than relying solely on telecommunications.

On most ships in hazardous conditions communications between sections tend to be limited to essential communications only to avoid flooding the communication network with a mass of questions and panic. They still have an emergency channel, but this tends to be restricted to emergency use only and there are penalties for using it trivially.

A subset of communication technology is the written word. While some poorer places, and especially Earth, still use paper, many of the solar nations use a thin plastic sheet. This sheet is actually an electronic device which can be written on, folded, and erased as if one was using a normal piece of paper. There is also a permanent version which is not electronic and has the information printed on it's surface. Another development of the written word is Spacer's Runic. Spacer's Runic hearkens back to the old Morse Code and consists of a variety of discrete symbols to relay simple but important information. It is often used by people in distress and is recognized across the entire solar system. Due to the nature of space the first character of a sentence typically orientates which direction is up so the message can be read properly.

Metals, composites, and assorted other materials

Just about every material in use today still exists in JC. With access to space, it has become easier to mine for metals, and there were a few new additions to the periodic table as exotic elements were discovered. The greatest advance, however, was the advent of zero g processing. This allows for composite materials to be made much more homogeneously, and much stronger as a result. It also allowed for the invention

of new metals. The most common of these new materials is called durasheet. Durasheet is a layered material consisting of various metals, composites, and mineral layers which could never be manufactured in a gravity environment. It is commonly used to construct just about everything in space, from hardsuits to colony cylinders. It is flexible, easy to work with, light weight, and incredibly strong. In short, it's become the new wonder material the way steel was when it was first invented.

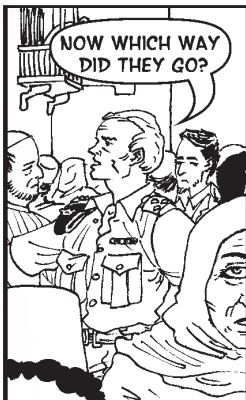
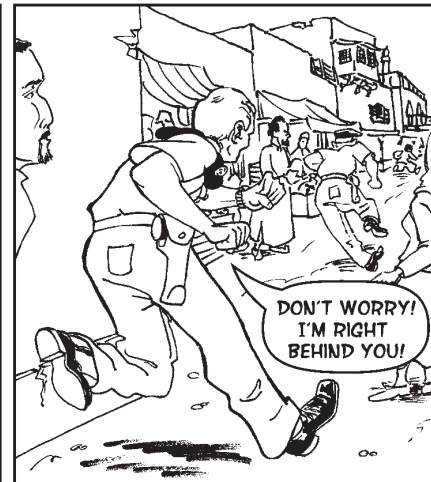
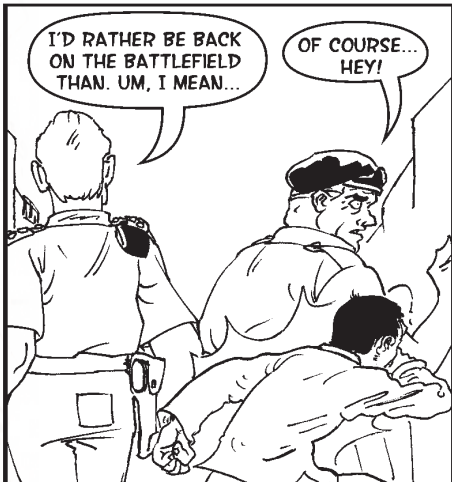
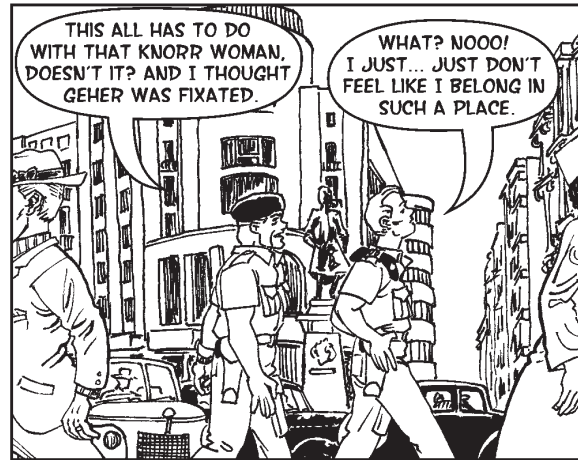
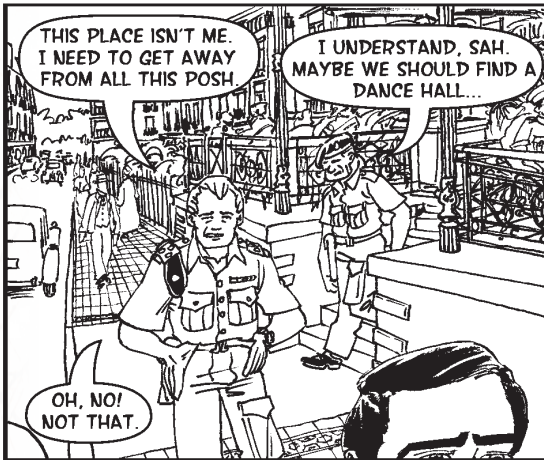
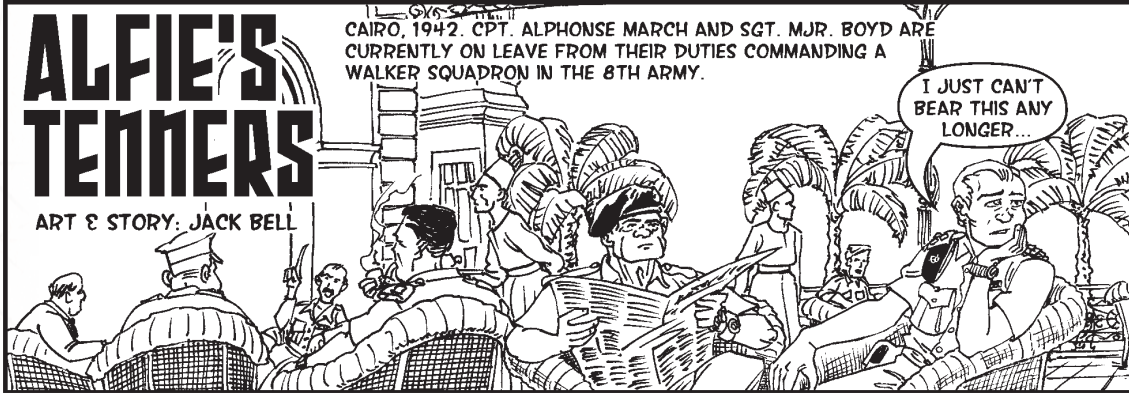
Conclusion

To end off this part of the series, it should be noted that the ideas listed here are not all there is. Any technology which exists today does so in JC, often in a more advanced form. Simple tools like screwdrivers tend to be electrically driven, and made of more advanced, stronger, and lighter materials. Some other devices, like zero g movement aids, don't exist today but were developed to help those not used to the new environment people are experiencing for the first time. With the exceptions of things like intelligent machines, faster than light engines, and so on almost anything found in science fiction can be found in JC. As a rule though, technology advanced more as an improvement on modern technologies rather than as a development of new ones.

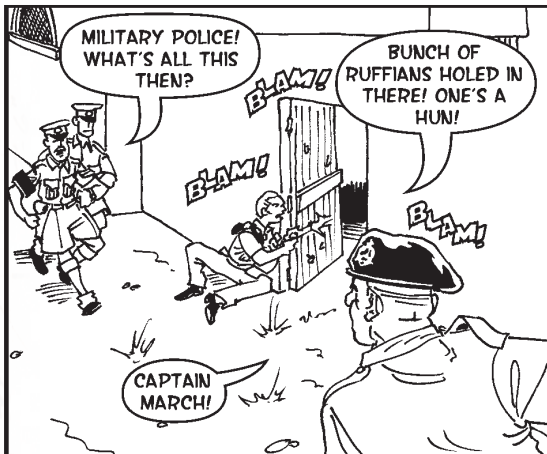
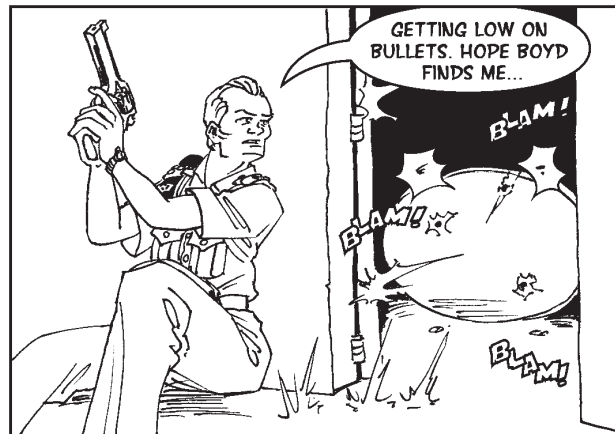


ALFIE'S TENNERS

JOHN BELL



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
ALFIE'S TENNERS



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS

LATER THAT NIGHT

"WE'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE..." AND THEN THEY QUESTION US ALL INTO THE EVENING.

IS THAT A PLANE?

NOT A PLANE, BUT A GLIDER. AN ENTIRE WING OF GLIDERS HEADED EASTWARD.

EVERYONE READY? WE WILL STRIKE AND THEN MEET UP WITH OUR ARABISCHE FRIENDS.

BY THE TIME WE WILL REACH THE SINAI, OUR BOMBERS SHALL MAKE SHORT WORK OF THE CANAL.

THERE ARE THE FLAK GUNS. WE HAVE THEM BY THE SEAT OF THEIR TROUSERS!

MEIN EYES!

AAAAH! I AM BLINDED!

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE SHINING A BRIGHT LIGHT IN THE FACE OF VERMIN. ALRIGHT, CHAPS! LET'S TAKE CARE OF OUR VISITORS!

ENGLANDER KAMPFERS APPROACHING?! ABORT THE MISSION!

THANKS TO ALFIE'S SERENDIPITOUS ACTIONS, THE AFRIKA KORPS EXPERIENCED ITS OWN VERSION OF "LOOSE LIPS SINK SHIPS." THE ALERTNESS OF THE SOLDIERS PAID OFF, COMBINED WITH THE USE OF THE CANAL DEFENCE LIGHTS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE LUFTWAFFE BOMBERS DID NOT HAVE AN EASY NIGHT RUN.

NEXT TIME: CAN THE TENNERS AND THE REST OF THE DESERT RATS ACT BEFORE ROMMEL ATTACKS EL ALAMEIN?

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL, PART 6: EMPTY

In any case, we wasted no time needing a repeat of that message. We closed the door and set it to automatic again. Duncan immediately punched the inner door release and waited, fuming, while it slowly opened automatically under its own power.

Agram and I were shoulder-to-shoulder and had taken a step back from him without realizing we'd even been moving.

"They couldn't have known, Captain." Olivia's voice on the speaker included a hint of warning that we seemed to recognize was for both us and for him. Duncan said something inside his helmet that we couldn't hear, and his nostrils flared.

"Then you can teach them. But later." There was a beat, then Clarice's voice came to us, saying, "Gentlemen, please help him out of the suit, and send him to the bridge for some tea and some food. Clarice will meet you both in the engine room, after you've stowed the suit."

I'd been looking up and listening to Clarice's voice and instinctively backed-away from the flashing swoosh I saw in my peripheral vision.

Duncan stood there, arms now held out at me. He wasn't actually moving to strangle me, though I wasn't sure he wouldn't just wait until we got him out of the suit. Even now, he could just take another step forward and squeeze me to a purple-faced mannequin of dead scientist. His eyes had been very hard, but when he saw I'd been startled, he toned his expression down to a scowl. I was pretty sure this wasn't my moment to die.

Agram and I set about releasing the locks on all the extremities, removing the tools and things he'd strapped to himself, and only at the last possible minute, we unlocked and carefully removed his helmet. No hair was put out of place by us. No, sir, not a one.

His eyes were closed when we got it off. He inhaled deeply a few times, making slow and controlled breaths in the relatively plentiful air of the ship. He rolled his shoulders, tilted his head side-to-side, and held his head forward. I watched him from the side while I put things in the locker. He still wore the torso and leg pieces, but had already stepped out of the boots.

He looked a little relieved. I hadn't seen that in him in this way before. He's usually calm and full of good-natured swagger and charisma. In this moment, he looked like he'd been rescued. I don't know, it's hard to describe.

"Thank you", he said. It was to both of us. He pulled the rest of the suit off, and while I stowed the final pieces, he and Agram closed the inner airlock and set to opening the bulkhead doors again.

When they'd gotten it open, Duncan's voice rang out down the hall: "We're going over ship safety protocols and emergency features as soon as we get the engines going again." It sounded like an order. "Your ignorance of the basics of spaceships will get someone killed, and if anyone gets maimed or killed on my watch, I don't want to give Olivia the satisfaction of telling me it was my own damned fault."

I admit it: I stalled at the locker for a while, until I felt I could walk again without wobbling into things.

.....
Tue 08/28/2210 21:45 Ship Time

After letting some time pass from the near-killing of Duncan earlier this evening, we fixed the electrical fault near the bridge and ran through the engineering checklist.

The console has a Start button. This giant thing turns on with the press of a "Start" button. (It seems odd, somehow.)

The clack and clank of things moving into position and locks releasing themselves from the generator and the core started a controlled chaotic rumble throughout the ship. The displays for the major systems went from a cautionary yellow to a bright green, and with each system that joined the verdant family came a little more relaxing on our part.

I watched the bulkhead monitor check each connection and indicated those few we'd chosen to leave open. Life support was running at full capacity and the backup systems looked to be recharging, too.

The shared sigh we all took was a soft note among the din of the engineering room. Olivia ran her fingers over the navigation console and figured out where we'd drifted to, then setup a schedule of maneouvers that would maximize our velocity toward our destination over the next several hours. Communications was working again, and she shot a message off to Duncan's ship.

We actually did very well for ourselves today, and on the whole, we must be doing pretty well since nobody has been grievously harmed.

.....



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL, PART 6: EMPTY

Alastair had crawled off me a moment before, and I had only just noticed him. He glanced at me, then assured by whatever he saw, turned to the man curled on the floor.

“What happened to that guy?” I asked Duncan.

“You did, of course.” It was good to see that my reputation as the cause of most people’s troubles was now something to laugh about instead of worry over.

I then noticed a guy moaning on the floor, a few feet from the bed. He was cradling a badly bloodied face with one hand and cradling his hand over his neck with the other.

Alastair went to him, checked that he could stand on his own, and helped him up and out of the room. Duncan released his grip on my arm.

I told them I want to give them an explanation, but I want to write it out first. Clarice handed me a tablet and I recorded the following:

I was inside a rotten old building. In a studio apartment, the front door was to my right and lead directly to the living/dining/sleeping/office area. My vantage point was the bed, and I was laying in it on my back, head and shoulders braced-up by pillows.

I looked from right to left and noticed how the dawn light shone purple and red through the two smallish windows there. My calmness in this environment seemed familiar. In the dream, I knew I had lived there a while now, in the safety of the old building, and -- so far -- free from whatever was outside that might seek to harm me.

No, us -- there was somebody in bed with me. I had my arm curled in a familiar way over the back of the woman laying up against me, with her head tucked into my side. I felt her snoring lightly against my skin.

It was very quiet here, wherever this was. There were no sounds of industry and commerce outside, and nothing in the building seemed to make noise, either. My hand slid lazily over the peaceful body next to me.

I turned my eyes to the windows, letting my eyes follow the form of the frame, and at the patterns of the poorly made glass within. Then at the shapes outside the window.

At the angry primate face outside the window. And then all of my attention was on the sickly yellow eyes. It knew I saw it.

I was suddenly very aware that I had ceased moving at all. It had already been watching me, waiting for me. I could just tell, and I chilled sharply from the inside. I breathed again, deeply and as silently as I could.

The large face glared unblinking. My heart banged thumpa-thumpa-thumpa in my chest, and I glanced around the room, looking for anything I might use for defense. (I knew it was futile at the time, but the instinct exists, and must be followed.)

It’s eyes brightened while it’s dark lips slowly peeled away. I wish they hadn’t, because now all my attention was on those too-large, too sharp teeth. The fangs were menacing. If there is such a thing as a reaper, it’s face must look something like that.

THUMPA-THUMPA-THUMPA when the banging in my chest, startling me into hyper awareness. I listened. And heard still nothing. The woman muttered in her sleep, but I could not hear her. It struck me as odd that I couldn’t. There was no sensation of anything audible; I had no hearing. It was not missing, it was just not there, and I felt like I had forgotten something that I’ve never even known how to experience.

But the laughter slipping into my awareness was real. I heard it, and only it, coming from the beast on the perch outside our window. Hearing nothing was startling, but hearing only that sound? That was bone-chilling to a degree I have never experienced before.

I panicked. I knew it was futile, but when our instincts choose fight or flight, we have no choice in the matter. We just go along. And so I tried to escape, but the covers tangled around me. I bucked and tore and my head slammed back against something and suddenly I was in a daze. My ears hurt from the laughter, and covering them with my hands -- which is when I discovered they were bleeding -- did nothing to ease the noise.

The laughter of the maniac went shrill and piercing. Thumpa thumpa thumpa was my whole body now, like my whole self became the organ in my chest and about to break free of me. I screamed against the pain and pressure. I felt myself pushing and shoving and tearing at things, feeling myself hit against one thing and another.

There were hands on me now, more than could have been there, grabbing me forcefully and pinning me against the bed. I felt a heavy sack fall across my kicking legs and, immobilized, I screamed as hard as I could and I cried.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

THE JOURNAL, PART 6: EMPTY

As the dream tears fell, I became more aware that I had been dreaming, but a lot of the physical feeling from the dream was still with me. On the other side of the fog of half-sleep I awoke to the three people pinning me. My BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG heartbeat loud in my ears.

... That about covers it. I'll write some more after I'm done going over this with them, and figuring out what happened to me while I was having the worst dream I think I've ever had.

.....

Wed 08/29/2210 - 03:46 Ship time

I've just found myself saddled with more to deal with, more crazy things to organize in my brain. I'm trying to capture it all, since my mental health is now in question, and I'll need something to reference later to help figure out if I'm losing it or not.

On the updated list of "well, this is my new life", is the possibility of a pretty bad infection of some kind, hopefully not some form of meningitis. It might also have been food poisoning, though we're pretty sure we've all eaten the same things in the last week or so.

There's also a not that unexpected consequence of the "medicine" the medical team at Venus was feeding me, the one with the little black specks of tracking devices I had unknowingly ingested some of for a whole lot of hours after my accident.

Duncan began asking more questions, and I got the sense that he had asked these before, and whatever it had been like, it got to him. Every question was business, clear and cut and he would ask and ask until I gave him a straight answer to every one. I tried to get Clarice to back me up on giving it a rest for a while, but she declined to interfere with the conversation.

When Duncan started asking me about the kinds of thoughts I'd been having for the past few hours before going to bed, and in the last couple days, I sobered-up, too. I stared at him, answered every question as simply as I could. When I wasn't sure, I told him, but I tried to give him something for everything he asked.

Somebody with the kinds of rough experiences Duncan has had, and with the lives of a whole crew to command, is somebody you want to listen to when they start probing into things that would otherwise be way the hell too personal, especially when they just helped stop me from hurting myself more with my thrashing around on the bed.

It was sometime into that questioning that Agram came back with a medical examination kit, and worked with Clarice to take my temperature and check my blood pressure and do who knows what with the little diagnostic tool. While they took blood and cultures from my mouth, peered in my ears, and did the light flashy thing in my eyes, I answered Duncan's questions. They didn't ask for a stool or piss sample, and I was grateful for that little bit of dignity.

For another twenty minutes or so, they sat around me and we talked. They looked as tired as I felt, and with my voice dwindling to an exhausted whisper, they agreed to call it a night. Agram and Clarice were across the hall and we'd agreed to leave the doors open a crack so they could hear if I started in with another nightmare.

I waved them off weakly, then flopped back on my bed.

She was standing by my bed, then sat quietly. I recognized the way Olivia moved; it was distinctly smooth, effortless, and dangerous in some situations. She didn't sound dangerous right now.

"We gotta talk, now, huh?" I rasped at her.

"Yeah, Alastair. And we're in a lot of trouble if we lose you." She said seriously, and with real concern in her voice. "It's not just because of whatever you and the doctor are involved with, but it's because the person who paid us specifically set the condition that you must arrive safely, or all of this would have been for nothing."

There wasn't much to say to that. I blinked my eyes open, and looked at her. She continued, detailing how she had been contacted, and what had been happening with her and the contact. She described in unusual detail how exactly they communicated, and what was said by the contact, exactly as it had been transmitted to Olivia.

After a thorough walk through the department of "here's what you've been missing out on", she said she was going to ask a question, and that she only needed a yes or no answer. I gave her an okay to continue.

"Do you know who sent us on this mission? Again, I need only a yes or a no." She waited.

I've never been in any situation like this, and aside from my sore body, foggy brain, and difficulty understanding the larger strokes of this, I really couldn't figure out anything about what she'd been telling me. I didn't even realize it was supposed to sound familiar.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE THE JOURNAL, PART 6: EMPTY

I shook my head once. She tried not to sigh.

“I’m trying to help Duncan keep everyone alive, and get us to safety, but I’m running out of things to go on here. I’m sure she left you some codes in these messages. Only you know her well enough to know what they mean. Hopefully, her idea of how well you know her isn’t misplaced, or our trip to Mars is going to go very, very badly.”

I felt afraid all the sudden. I was now responsible for pulling meaning out of nothing, and have it get a literal shipload of people to safety.

No pressure, right? Not a problem. I’m a good scientist, I’ll figure it out. I told her I’d keep thinking on it.

“Alastair, we’ve got all the money we could want. I don’t want to know about whatever you’re protecting. I have a personal curiosity, of course, but there is no professional need to know. It’s also probably safer if I don’t know too much anyway. My job is to get you to your destination and we’ve come a long way to make that happen.”

Oh. Well, then...

And that’s when I really noticed I had been carrying some concerns that these guys were all really up to something

sneaky and bad. That Agram and Clarice and I weren’t really going to make it out of here, and we were this crew’s ticket to a posh meal at the expense of some misguided do-gooder.

“I trust you, Olivia” I whispered. I hadn’t even realized I’d said it until my voice came back to me through my ears.

“Thank you, Alastair. Please take some notes on what we said before you sleep, and then come find me when you are ready to review the facts. We need to know pretty soon what the next step is or we’ll find ourself way off course.” I knew she meant it literally, as well as figuratively.

I thanked her, and brought this document up again. She stood quietly. “Please do not discuss this conversation with anyone. I will tell you why in the morning, but for now, even with Agram or Clarice or Duncan, please do not let anybody else in on this.”

Waiting until tomorrow seemed fine enough, anyway. I didn’t want to talk to anyone, so it was easy enough to keep that promise.

“Yeah, fine.” I looked up from the pad to the door and saw a slight movement passing out of sight in the hall.

She’s pretty amazing. I’m really glad she’s on our side.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Article Guidelines

The Aurora Magazine focuses on the worlds created by Dream Pod 9. As such, we are primarily interested in, but not limited to, articles dealing with SilCore and Blitz! rules (variants, additions and explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment, artwork and similar ideas that draw on the established DP9 universes. This does not mean, however, that articles that are generic in nature or that do not deal with unique or original material, only that the focus is on exploring Silhouette and its attendant universes.

Any article that is a promotion piece for another product, be it an excerpt or a lead-in to another product, must be clearly defined as such within the article body.

No articles will be accepted that use another's Intellectual Property or Copyrighted material without an included signed permission to use said material.

Fiction may be a one-off or serial based, as desired. Please note that long works of fiction may be split into multiple pieces over multiple issues for length reasons; if you are writing a long story it is best to indicate breaks in the story (chapters, for example) that allow us to choose the best point to split the story, if necessary. Stories are encouraged to be accompanied by Silhouette CORE or Blitz! rules detail of some kind, be it stats for characters or equipment in the story, game scenarios, mechanized designs, new rules or explanations of how to simulate aspects of the story using the Silhouette/Blitz rules. This is not a hard requirement however, and stand-alone pieces will be considered and published.

Aurora is also looking for original artwork. Art may be used to accompany the article and/or for the cover of the APA as well as individual pieces. Please see below for copyright information regarding images.

Submission Guidelines

All work for Aurora should be submitted in an .rtf or .doc file. The text within should be in Arial 10pt font, and single-spaced. Hard returns should be used only to separate paragraphs (with a double hard return) or with bullet points and list items. Do not indent paragraphs. You may use italics, boldface or bullets where deemed necessary.

Tables may be included in the submission. Preferably, tables should be created with minimal lines between cells, instead using background colour and/or cell spacing for clarity. Tables may also be included in courier-font/fixed-formatting. Identify these kind of tables with the following: <<<Table>>>

The article's title should be clearly noted at the beginning of the file, followed by a short (less than 75 words) introductory text. This introductory text can either be a synopsis, a quote, story, etc. It will be used at the beginning of the article to 'set the stage'.

The file should end with the Author's name(s), contact information (if desired) and a short bio (optional). This information will be placed on a Contributing Author's page in the magazine.

Please spell check and proofread your article. English or American spellings may be used as desired.

Photos, drawings or images should be accompanied by photo credits as well as a brief description/caption for each photo (optional). Indicate within your article where the images are to be included like so: <<<Image_Filename.ext>>>. Images should be sent at a maximum of 200dpi for greyscale or colour images, 600dpi for black & white images (1-bit). Given the size of a page, images should be no larger than 7 by 10 inches (18 by 18 cm). If we need a higher resolution image, we will contact you. Images should be compressed with an appropriate method; please check the quality of your images before sending.

Copyright Guidelines

Quotes or information that are attributable to other sources are permissible in appropriate quantities, and should be identified/cited (including page numbers), preferably within the article. Be sure that each quote is written exactly as it appears in the original source.

If you wish to include photos/drawings/images with your article, please provide the photo credits (artist/photographer/illustrator and subject if applicable). You may only submit images for which you have obtained permission to include in your article.

All articles and images used by Aurora remain in the copyright of the original submitters. You, as the author, must consent to release the article for publication by Aurora, with the knowledge that Aurora will not provide any compensation other than what has been listed above, and that Aurora, as an online magazine, will be downloaded by third-parties in a PDF format. All work for Aurora is volunteer-based. Should DP9 decide at a later time to compile and sell articles within a contract will be negotiated with the author at that time.

The End Print

Please send all submissions to the following email address:

auroramag@gmail.com

Thank you everyone for your interest, and we look forward to seeing your submissions soon!

Deadline for Submissions for Issue #10.1: December 28th 2015

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ARTICLE SUGGESTIONS

Historical Articles

Under this broad category are pieces meant primarily for illuminating or detailing something within the game universe. This can be truly historical in nature (describing history), detailing a region, the language, customs, architecture, technical systems, corporations, social structure, music, and more, to name a few. Articles may either be written from a neutral point of view (impartial observer from above) or written 'in character', that is, in the manner such information may be presented if it were available in the game world. See the Historical Accuracy note, below (especially important for this category).

Fiction

Any story (narrative with characters) that takes place within the established DP9 game worlds falls under this category. See the Historical Accuracy note, below, and also see the submission guidelines for further requirements.

Modules

Also known as adventures, a written collection of plot, character, and location details used by the gamemaster to manage the plot or story in the DP9 RPGs. All manner of modules are open for submission, from espionage to social to military to a combination of all three. Module submissions must be detailed enough for the GM to run the entire adventure, including descriptions and dispositions (where applicable) of major NPCs, locations, accessories and story/plot. See the Historical Accuracy note, below.

Scenarios

These are the tactical equivalent of modules, an encounter between two (or more) factions set up for combat. A complete scenario will detail the background of the encounter (the why), the forces engaged (the who – what physical units at a minimum, regiment and designations to go the full way), the map and terrain (the where) the victory conditions (the how) and any special rules or conditions (the what). Scenarios should be designed to be balanced for each side, either via the types/numbers of units or through special circumstances or conditions. If the scenario is not balanced this must be mentioned in the background. See the Historical Accuracy note, below.

Note: Historical Accuracy

Aurora is committed to accuracy within the established DP9 worlds. All articles that take place 'within' the game world should be checked for its accuracy within the established timeline, faction dispositions, available equipment, etc. Please double check your work! You may also submit your article clearly marked as "Alternate History" and if published the article too will bear this mark. Be sure, if you submit this way, to provide in the background all that is necessary to describe what has changed.

Designs

New mechanical designs/vehicles/ships for use in the DP9 worlds. Designs must be legal and use either the latest SilCore rules (including all errata and the FAQ) or Blitz! rules. Please indicate which design rules were used. Mechanical designs should fill a void that is not already covered by another unit. Background and a description must be included with the design, while artwork is optional and preferred. See the Historical Accuracy note, above.

Artwork

Aurora accepts all artwork for consideration, no matter the media type (rendering, sketch, painting, etc) within the rules set herein. Miniature photographs will also be accepted (dioramas encouraged!). Artwork must relate to an established DP9 universe and be easily identified as such. Artwork with nudity, racial undertones, sexism or sex will not be considered. See the submission guidelines on how to submit images.

House Rules

Original rules for the Silhouette/Blitz! system and modifications to existing rules. All rules submittals must include an explanation of the rule's purpose, the rules themselves clearly written, and an example of the rule in play. If you are tweaking rules that exist within the game already, please clearly denote those as well as the reference to where the original rules reside. Do not copy any existing game rules text, only note what is changed from the existing rules.

Note that all rules will be clearly marked as "House Rules" or "Home Brew Rules" when published within Aurora, to distinguish them from official rules that can be used at tournaments, conventions, and etc. Around the home gaming table, however, we all love house rules!

Tactics

Have you won countless battles? Have a strategy you would like to share? Write a tactics article. Usually this type of article will be in a step-by-step (or turn by turn) format to illustrate the tactic. An introduction and conclusion is required to create a complete package and to convey to the reader where the tactic is applicable and how it came about.

Miniatures/Modeling

Any article on preparing miniatures, painting, terrain making, sculpting, foliage techniques, etc will be accepted. Photographs and/or diagrams are strongly encouraged.

Something Else!

We pride ourselves on the creativity of our gaming friends. If you have something else to contribute that's not listed here, please submit it!