AURORA

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THE MAKING OF THE SPITTING COBRA

OFFICIAL UPDATES AND MORE!

SPECIAL PULL OUT SECTION: ODYSSEY SEED

DREAM POD 9

Shades in the Night...

Before you lays Issue #2 of Aurora. Check out the table of contents -- we've nearly doubled the article count since our first outing! This is outstanding and a great sign of what is to come.

The time since our first issue has flown by. Scheduling (or, more often than not scheduling problems) is perhaps the perennial obstacle for gamers and gaming groups in general. Can we get everyone over, can we do it on a regular basis, can we do it for long enough at a time? And what happens when one person cannot make it a particular week? As the group size grows and as the players take on more and more responsibility outside of their gaming lives these issues often intensify. Miniatures-focused groups may have an easier time of it (unless playing through a specific campaign) but it can strike all groups at one point or another. Sometimes it leads to the end of a campaign or of a gaming group.

One of the great things about being the editor for this magazine is I get to witness first hand the enthusiasm and the passion for DP9 games from its "followers". I believe a certain advertising slogan (not DP9's) once stated "Those that like our X like it a lot". This seems to hold true for our games. Does this enthusiasm have an impact on a group's chances to keep gaming, or even an impact on the members' desire to work things out to meet often?

One thing is for certain however: this passion emboldens our mission here at Aurora. Knowing that the community is strong and that we can be a vehicle to deliver its voice to all those within drives us forward. To that end I present to you this issue.

Happy gaming!

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

PS -- Don't miss the announcement of two new contests!

What follows are three variations on the theme of Complexity. They each are suited for a particular level of game play or verisimilitude, and all result in a very different feel for games using them.

Simple Complexity is intended for groups that are not concerned with a lot of modifiers and options, but still want some of the flexibility that Complexity can provide. Characters cannot do a lot to overcome Complexity, making it so the only real way to overcome it is to buy up a high level of skill.

Conflict Complexity is meant for more narrative oriented, cooperative games. It is a nod towards "conflict resolution" mechanics that take a step back from the individual tasks being performed and focus instead on the overall conflict.

Finally, the option called Technique is more of an expansion and clarification of the existing Complexity rules.

SIMPLE COMPLEXITY

Simple Complexity eliminates Complexity as something that characters purchase for Skills. It represents only a facet of the task that is being attempted. Complexity ratings are from 0 to 4, and Complexity examples from SilCore should be reduced by 1 accordingly.

The task's Complexity rating is subtracted from the character's Skill level until it reaches 0 (unskilled), and any remaining Complexity becomes a negative modifier. If the task's Complexity is equal to or greater than the character's Skill Level the character may not take advantage of Skill Applications.

When making opposed rolls, either side may choose to bid the Complexity of the task up as long as they have not been reduced to rolling unskilled, in exchange for a reduction in the opponent's dice. Bidding stops when the Complexity reaches 4 or the bidder has been reduced to an unskilled roll, whichever happens first. The final Complexity of the task affects all parties normally, meaning that a character with a high skill level can force a lower skill character to take penalties. The same skill does not have to be used by both sides.

Examples:
A character with Medicine 3 is attempting a delicate operation that is Complexity 4. The Complexity is one higher than the character's skill level, so the character will roll as unskilled with a -1 penalty.

A world-class surgeon, with Medicine 8, performing the same operation would roll 4 dice. However, he is in a field hospital with minimal equipment (-1 penalty) and he needs to perform the operation in 30 minutes instead of an hour. The surgeon uses Skill Applications to spend a die to overcome the -1 penalty and to cut the time in half, and rolls 2 dice for the test as a result.

A character with Defense 3 is running away from a gunman with Small Arms 5. The defender has a +3 bonus because he is sprinting, and the gunman has a -1 penalty due to range. The gunman bids the Complexity of the defender's Defense roll up to 3 so that the Defender is rolling unskilled. In addition, he uses a Skill Application of 1 die to counteract the -1 range penalty. The defender rolls unskilled and adds 3 to the result and the gunman rolls 2 dice at no penalty.

CONFLICT COMPLEXITY

Under Conflict Complexity a character's Complexity rating with a skill represents the number of goals or conditions that the character can meet when attempting the task. As per standard SilCore, each skill comes with Complexity 1 for free and standard tasks have a Complexity of 1.

When the player attempts a task, it is divided into individual goals. The task's Complexity is rated according to the number of goals required for the task to be a complete success. All tasks have at least a primary goal that must succeed for the task to be a success. These goals cannot utilize multiple skills – they all should be something that the character can reasonably do using the same skill. The player is always told explicitly what the goals for any specific task are, what the primary goal is, and what the consequences are for failing the primary goal or the other goals. The GM also must explicitly state if any goals require another goal to be met. The GM and player should be in agreement about the goals and the stakes in succeeding or failing those to meet those goals.

If the character's Complexity in a skill is higher than the Complexity of the task, the player may decide which goals are met even if the character fails the roll. One goal may be met per point over the task Complexity the character possesses. The primary goal must always fail if the roll fails.

In the case of opposed rolls, each character has a separate set of goals. In most cases, especially combat, the attacker has only one goal – "hurt the defender" – and the defender only has one – "don't get hurt". However, occasionally a character may attempt something a little more complex, such as "Hold off the zombies, open the car door, and get in while shutting the door." In this case, goals are roughly synonymous with a combat action. These situations should be evaluated using the guidelines above.

Example:
The character's task is to "Get to the beaker before the mad scientist does, grab the beaker, and toss it to Joe." The primary

goal is to toss the beaker to Joe, and the character cannot toss the beaker to Joe unless he grabs it first. Failing the Athletics roll means that the mad scientist gets the beaker. Not meeting all of the goals means the mad scientist will have a chance to get the beaker.

There are three goals here, so this is considered to be a Complexity 3 Athletics test. The character has Athletics 2/2 so the player has to choose which goals his character accomplishes. The player chooses for the character to grab the beaker and toss it to Joe, and succeeds at the roll. This places the character next to the mad scientist but the beaker in Joe's hands.

The next round, the mad scientist chooses to grab the character, pull a pistol from his pocket and put it to the character's head. The GM rules that taking out the pistol and putting it to the character's head are one "goal", which makes it a Complexity 2 Hand-to-Hand task. The primary goal is to put the gun to the character's head. Unfortunately, the scientist only has Hand-to-Hand 1/1. He can only try to grab the character, or put the gun to his head, but not both.

If in the above example the character had Complexity 4 in Athletics the player could say that if he fails the die roll, he is still able to grab the beaker. Complexity 5 in Athletics means that he could say even on a failure gets to the beaker before the scientist and grabs it. Conversely, if the scientist had Complexity 3 in Hand-to-Hand he could say that on a failure he is still able to grab the character.

TECHNIQUE COMPLEXITY

This third option is actually the closest to the Complexity rules as written, just with some clarifications. One change is the renaming of a character's Complexity level in a skill to Technique. This is to help avoid confusion and clumsy wording.

Just as a refresher, the GM sets the Complexity level of tasks. Tasks by default have a Complexity of 1, and skills come with Technique 1 for free. The Complexity is compared to the character's Technique in the skill being tested. In the case of an opposed roll, the Technique of the two characters is compared with the benefit going to the character with the higher Technique.

On an unopposed roll, if the Complexity is higher than the character's Technique the character's skill is reduced by an amount equal to the difference. Any remainder is taken as a penalty to the die roll. If the character's Technique is higher than the task's Complexity the player may choose to take a bonus to the number of dice rolled or a bonus to the die roll, or some combination, equal to the difference on a one-for-one basis.

On an opposed roll, the player may either add dice to their skill or take a bonus to the roll equal to the difference but the character with lower Technique is not penalized.

Once die pool adjustments and modifiers have been determined based on Complexity, a character that has a die pool greater then 0 may choose to employ a Skill Application. The Skill Application rules apply – a character may only use a Skill Application during any round a number of times equal to their Technique. The character using a Skill application may only lower their own skill to unskilled, but the character on the receiving end may accrue penalties as a result of the Skill Application as if it were a static test versus a higher Complexity.

Examples:
A character with Melee 8/5 is fighting a mook with Melee 2/1. The character chooses to take 4 extra dice for his Technique bonus, and then sacrifices 8 dice to drive the mook down to rolling unskilled with a -6 penalty – while our hero rolls a "measly" four dice. This is why mooks only attack heroes in groups of 10 or more.

A character with Stealth 5/5 is trying to slit the throat of a guard with Notice 2/2. This is an opposed roll, so the final Complexity of the character's task is +3. The character can choose to either add a +3 to his final roll, add 3 dice to his pool, or some combination. The area is very dimly lit (-2 to the character's rolls) but the guard has nightvision goggles negating the environmental penalty. The GM rules that slitting the target's throat is a called shot, and will cost the character 3 dice from his Stealth pool. The character chooses to take +2 to his roll, negating the lighting penalty, and add another die to counteract the called shot penalty. He will roll 3 dice with no modifiers.

A character with Defense 3/2 is running away from a gunman with Small Arms 4/4. The character is at Medium Range and is Sprinting; he gets a +3 to his Defense roll and the gunman receives a -1. The gunman chooses to take the Complexity difference as an additional die and a +1 to negate the range penalty. The character knows the gunman has a good chance of plugging him so tries to move unpredictably, in essence executing a "deception defense" – dropping his skill 2 dice in exchange for the same reduction in the gunman's skill. However, the Gunman bids him up two dice to prove a point, which makes the defender roll unskilled with a -1 modifier (or a total of +2 with the bonus from sprinting) while the gunman rolls 1 die unmodified.

CONCLUSION
Depending on the feel you are going for in a SilCore game, how Complexity is applied can help to reinforce that feel. Combined with the flexibility of Skill Applications, the GM and players can help insure that important die rolls - in combat or out - can have more variety and encapsulate more information.
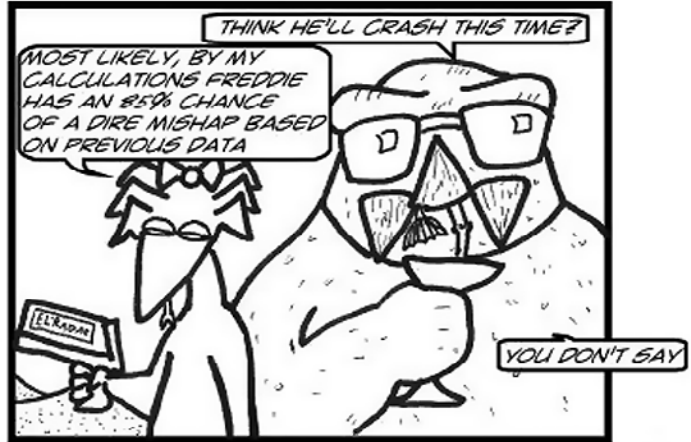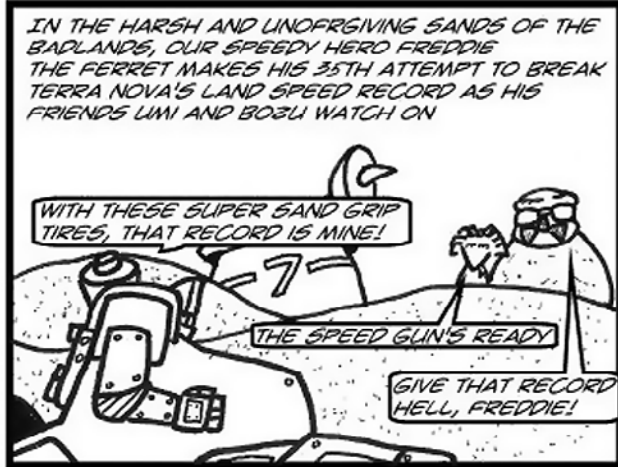
Duelists are the pride of their regiments. They uphold the honor and glory of their regiment, and represent what it means to be a true soldier. It's a path that few can walk. Standing both alone and never alone, Duelists make history with their actions.
The Role of a Duelist.

Duelists are often a key member on the battlefield. Used both to aide and supplement their commander's presence on the field or to leading small detachments of their own, a duelist has a wide variety of battlefield roles. Operating on their own, or with friendly squads, duelists can have major impacts on the flow of events that occur amidst the fire of battle and fogs of war.

Only one duelist may be taken per regiment. Duelists can be taken in place of a Veteran Squad. Duelists may be attached to a friendly squad and do not impact the squad's normal rules in any way. They may take full benefit of MAP provided and provide their own, and any special additional rules that apply to the squad also may be applied to the Duelist. Duelist may also operate as their own single squad, acting alone. If a Duelist is killed, roll leadership for each squad using their squad leader against a threshold of five. For each point above or below this, the squad loses or gains morale tokens accordingly. If the duelist was attached to a squad, this bonus/penalty counts double. Whenever a duelist takes a damage result, the squad gains a morale token (Only for light damage or worse).

All duelists start out with level 2 in all skills, Attack, defense, EW, and leadership. From here, they may take 6 upgrades. +15 for attack or defense skills, +10 for EW or leadership increases, Maximum of level 4 in all cases. These upgrades may be also taken from the Enhancement lists for the following costs.

Note on switching units: To leave a unit, the unit must have a surviving command gear (With leadership skills) and must not have any current morale tokens. The duelist is now a separate unit. He may join another unit at any point in time during his activation at the cost of an action, and must be within 10 inches of a member of that unit. They may or may not take over as squad commander in this case.

To solve how to make duelist gears for now here is a stand-in rule for the time being, until the kits come out, or DP9 decides otherwise. Duelists may use any base machine as their gear. They would pay normal costs for all machines. In addition, duelists may upgrade their machine in any way allowed by any squad composition including veteran options, even if the duelist is not part of that squad. If multiple options exist for the same enhancement, the most expensive enhancement must be used.

Combat Enhancements

- Gains an additional die for attack and defense when point blank. (+15)
- May take an additional sturdy box at (+30) (To those normally purchased)
- May take a Melee weapon of choice. (+5)
- Grizzly/Cobra/Kodiak/King Cobra may replace hand weapon with VHAC (+5)

Presence Enhancements

- Increase attached squad's breakpoint by 2 (+10)
- Remove one morale token from all friendly units within 10 inches per round. (+10)
- Double morale tokens suffered by the enemy when dealt by the duelist. (+10)
- Generate one CP per round similar to Satellite uplink. (+15 points)
- May be added to a squad, and may join new squads during the miscellaneous phase. If this purchase is not taken, then the duelist must act alone. (+15) See note below for more rules.

Costs for Base Machines: (Not all inclusive)

- Hunter/Jaeger/Warrior (40/40/45) (+5 for Headhunter/Command Jaeger/Chieftain)
- Jaguar/Tiger/Mamba/Warrior IV (60/60/65/65) (+10/+10/+10/+5 for command variants)
- Grizzly/Spit (85/85)
- Cheetah/Ferret/Iguana (65/35/50)
- Razorback/Peace Maker (45/50)
- Kodiak/King Cobra (105/110)

Example:

Jace is a Duelist in the 28th Stone Warrior's regiment. For his enhancements, he takes one attack skill upgrade, one defense skill upgrade, and two leadership upgrades. In addition to this, he takes the presence enhancement of generating one CP per round, and removing one morale token from friendly units. This is his full 6 upgrades, at a cost of 75 points.

For his machine, he pilots his reliable old Grizzly. It has upgrades of a HBZK and field armor (+10 for MBZK and +5 more for HBZK as per strike squad rules, +20 for field armor). He also links his two rocket packs for +10 points (Fire support squad rules). The total cost for his machine is 85 base + 10 + 5 + 20 + 10 = 130 points. This brings Jace to a total of 205 points to field. He is worth as much as an entire GP squad! However, if used correctly on the field, he will be worth his weight in gold.

His rival in another northern regiment is Harkins. He has two attack enhancements, and one defense enhancement. Along with this he gains a single die in point blank combat, generates one CP per round, and doubles morale tokens suffered by the enemy. This is for a total of 80 points. His machine is a Tiger, with 2 linked MRPs. The gear's cost is 60 + 10 + 10 for 80 points, which brings Harkins to a sum of 160 points to field.
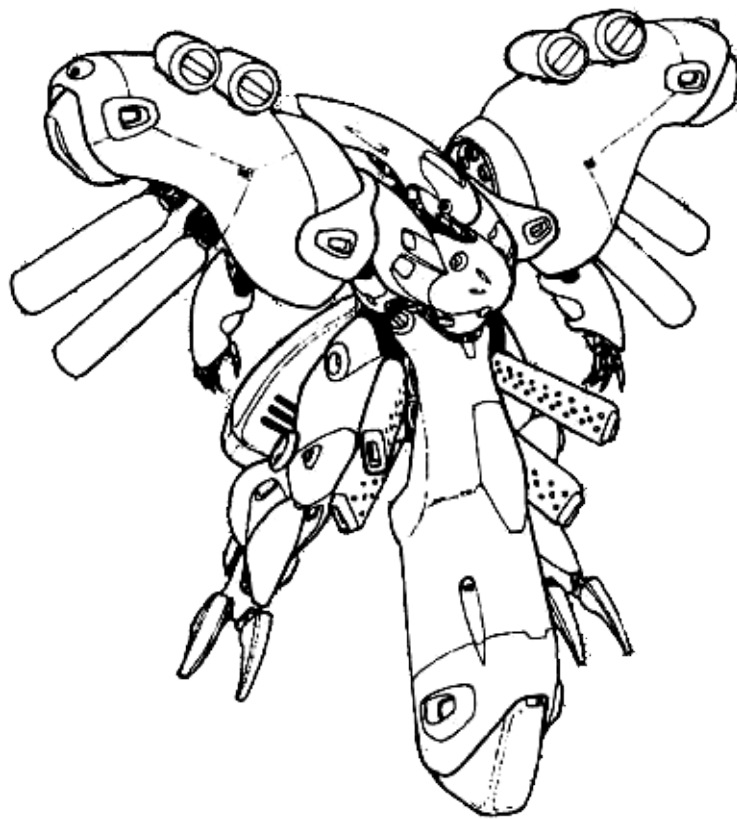

Painting: Duelist Initiation

Odyssey SEED

EPISODE #2: DREAMS OF SECRETS

JOVIAN CHRONICLES

EPISODE #2: DREAMS OF SECRETS

►LAST EPISODE

The PCs were instrumental in discovering and decomissioning a secret Venusian research station orbiting close in to Jupiter, known as Slumbering Eidolon. While the Jovian government recovered little information from the station, they did manage to discover some CAT-equipped exo-armor prototypes that the Venusians had been testing in the Jovian atmosphere. This lead to the Agora paying more attention to a request ofr assylum from one Dr. Peyarje, and sent the PCs to help retrieve him.
The Scenario

CEGA has conscripted the brilliant Dr. Peyarje into their service, forcing him to develop next-generation exo-weapons at a hidden base. In the interests of keeping an appearance of openness, they have allowed Peyarje to attend the 2210 Intersettlement Scientific Convention, though he is accompanied by a detachment of the CEGA military. Here, he will be allowed to present a carefully censored summary of his work on cyberlinkage technologies.

Peyarje was transported to Stanton several months before the conference, and has managed to get a plea for help and request for asylum to the Jovian embassy on Stanton Station (Venus orbit), where the ISC is being held. A small team has been dispatched, hidden among the Jovian delegation to the ISC, to retrieve Peyarje. The Jovians wish to reap the PR benefits to be found in rescuing a brilliant, pacifist scientist from CEGA's militaristic clutches and also hope that Peyarje can shed some light on some samples of his CAT/Rapid-Scan system found on a secret research station.

Unfortunately for these operatives, CEGA is taking the security of their prisoner very seriously. The third division of the CEGA 4th fleet has been dispatched to escort and guard Peyarje. The division's ships are moored just off Stanton, at the invitation of the Venusian Plantary Council, and permission has been granted for several officers and marines to accompany Peyarje as a security detail. Though the ISC filed a formal protest over the admittance of CEGA military officers acting in an official capacity, the issue has since been dismissed and other nations have been allowed to included similarly-limited security details for their detachments.

The players arrive on Stanton aboard the Jovian liner Georgia on my Mind, travelling with a large delegation of Jovian scientists to the ISC. They should take part in the early stages of the ISC while they investigate the conference and find a way to get Peyarje away from his CEGA handlers and off-station.

►CHARACTER INVOLVEMENT

The characters should be members of the Jovian extraction team sent to retrieve Peyarje. Since they should already know about the Venusian operation aboard Slumbering Eidolon and the prototypes found there, they might be the only ones on the mission that know of the real urgency behind their orders. While not all PCs will have the espionage training, the GM should be able to find some way to fit them into the scenario. Some suggestions are provided below, divided, as usual, into JAF, JIS, and reporters.

JAF pilots are, again, the hardest to fit in here. Exo-armor or fighter operations aren't really appropriate for retrieving Peyarje, especially not from within a Venusian colony. The authorities would definitely take a dim view of Pathfinders breaking into the colony and freeing the good doctor, though this is definitely an option for more cinematic, high-action campaigns. (And has justification in the source material. Many Gundam shows involve invasion of colonies by mobile

suits for various shady purposes.) Depending on skill sets, the characters could also employ the tactics described for reporters or JIS agents below.

JAF pilots probably won't be able to pass as scientists, or even research assistants, unless they have decidedly unusual skill sets. Better cover identities would be reporters, security, or interested civilians. They could also be members of an official JAF escort, added (as mentioned above) to balance out the CEGA military forces escorting Dr. Peyarje. The pilots would still be instructed to ask questions and discretely investigate, but would be intended to act as a decoy and backup for the real extraction team. By asking questions and poking their noses into places they don't belong, they would be expected to draw attention away from the real JIS operatives. Who could, in turn, be exposed and captured at the last minute, forcing the players to pull off the heist on their own with insufficient planning. (Possibly leading to the desparate exo-armor scenario described above.)

JIS agents are easier to fit in. Their skills (Disguise, Theatrics, and the like) should allow them to take a wide variety of cover identities, even those that they don't have the skills to back up. (Like scientists) Skilled agents might even be able to maintain several cover identities, making them very effective at infiltrating the ISC and acquiring the necessary information. Depending on skill sets, JIS agents will probably go for a "covert ops" approach to freeing Peyarje - either using subterfuge and sneaking him away, or a more straightforward "black ops" raid.

The players could be the backup JIS team instead of the primary, tasked with investigating and doing footwork for the primary team. This puts them on the front lines, while the primary team works to solidify their own cover. The primary team's cover could then be blown, forcing the players to execute the operation, and keeping them on the front lines. This has many hooks for complications and intruigue. What if the compromised team wasn't discovered, but betrayed by a double agent in their own ranks? This goes well with the scenario (see below) that has the players trapped in hiding on Stanton. What if the Venusians (specifically, Malachai) were aware of the operation all along and either want the operatives to expose themselves or for the operation to succeed/fail for reasons of their own?

Reporters have the easiest time finding cover identities - they don't need them. The ISC is a big deal, and reporters from all over the solar system can be expected to attend. And reporters are expected to be nosy, so no-one's going to take excessive notice of a few asking questions where they shouldn't. However, due to their typical lack of combat skills, reporters will probably be harder to handle for the actual freeing of Peyarje. They would probably have to resort to subterfuge and trickery if called upon to get Peyarje away from his guards themselves. One possibility is to have JIS agents already in place on Stanton handle the snatch, then pass Peyarje off to the reporters for transport, as in the JAF pilots write-up above.

►NPCS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND PLOT POINTS

Dr. Agram Peyarje
Suggested Stereotype: Veteran
Suggested Archtype: Scientist

Peyarje is the focus of this episode's action. CEGA wants to keep him in their grasp, the Jovians want to snatch him away, and the Bank wants him for their own ends. Peyarje wishes they'd all go away and leave him alone. A staunch pacifist, Peyarje is repelled by war in general and utterly disgusted by what CEGA plans to do with his inventions. He sees the Confederation as his best hope of escape, even if they too are warmongers.

Peyarje is rather old, probably around 65-70 years of age. He's in decent physical condition, but lacks combat training. That will make him a passive (and very probably offended) participant in any fighting. Despite this, Peyarje is well aware of the danger he faces, and will probably provide the PCs with a copy of his notes at the first opportunity, in case he is killed or recaptured, so that the Confederation will have a chance against CEGA's new exo-weapons. He will also act as smart as possible in combat (taking cover, keeping his head down, etc) to the limits of his skill.

What kind of person Peyarje is has been left up to the GM. He could be a righteous pacifist, scornful of the unscientific and brutish military types and restraining himself only because he happens to need them right now. (Like Lynn Kyle from Macross or Houseman from the Honor Harrington books) He could be a kindly old gentleman who only wants to use his discoveries for the betterment of humanity. He could be a crusader against CEGA, willing to use his knowledge to bring them down by any means necessary. (Think the Gundam builders from Gundam Wing)

Another thing to consider is whether or not Peyarje wants the PCs to take other members of his research team with him, and why. Insisting on a young female personal research assistant could creation the perception (rightly or wrongly) that Peyarje is a dirty old man, while insisting on a large research team could create the impression of a prima donna. Another possibility to consider is a CEGA plant among Peyarje's staff who insists on tagging along - this makes an excellent starting point for the "Betrayal" filler.

Ⓘ Ysa Cantroni
Suggested Stereotype: Rookie, Curiousity, or none.
Suggested Archtype: Reporter or Spacer.

Ysa should be closest to the PCs of any of the NPCs. Her thirst for adventure and action will likely put her in the middle of whatever they're planning, whether they want her there or not. Ysa has spent the past several years travelling the solar system and working odd job. This has given her an extremely wide range of skills (though none at more than 2/1 or 2/2) and connections, especially here on her native Venus.

Ysa is bright and intelligent, generally assuming a quiet but cheerful air. She's a wandering soul, and doesn't think she could ever stay happy in one place or one job for the rest of her life. She is seriously considering becoming a reporter, however, as this gives her a way to travel and encounter a wide variety of experiences while getting paid and doing good. Much to her shame, her father is a high-ranking executive in the Venusian bank. She has cut all ties with him, and does not regret doing so, but this secret connection could still draw suspicion to her.

As a very versatile character, there are many ways to introduce Ysa. She could be working aboard the Georgia and meet the PCs there, or be a staff member for one of the Jovian scientists. She could be a member of the extraction team, recruited by the Jovian government and assigned as a local guide. Or she could be assigned to the PCs as a local guide by the ISC organizers, possibly (if they are travelling openly as a JAF escort) to keep them out of trouble. She could help them out of a bad situation (such as a firefight), possibly even working with Aglaee.

Ysa is also an excellent resource for subplots. Her long-standing conflict with her father, a highly placed Bank executive, could easily flare up now that she's back on Venus. Her father wants her to succeed him as a Bank executive, while Ysa wants nothing to do with the Bank if she can possibly avoid it. She could even have travelled back to Venus for the express purpose of telling her father to suck vacuum.

Another interesting subplot could involve Ysa and Garand. Ysa got some training in Exo-piloting from a pilot boyfriend at some point in her past. Making Garand that pilot is a good way to

create personal tension between him and one (or more) of the PCs, especially if they've formed a friendship or are seeking a romance with Ysa. (Or if Ysa wants Garand to think they have, for some reason of her own) Ysa could also have animosity towards Garand of her own, and encourage the player(s) rivalry with him towards her own end, though this does make her a more sinister character.

Aglaee DesSources
Suggested Stereotype: Veteran or Specialist
Suggested Archtype: Supplier

Mysterious, beautiful, and cold, Aglaee DesSources is the captain of the Beautiful Dreamer, a privateer vessel. Once an extremely promising CEGA Navy captain, she retired at the age of thirty to her present position. How she knows about the PCs' mission and why she's willing to help them are two things she will never reveal. Aglaee should offer her help to the PCs at an appropriate juncture, allowing the circumstances to give them incentive to take her up on her offer. She could provide assistance as the players escape with Peyarje in tow - crying "Come with me!" as she provides them with cover fire, for example. Her ship could also be named as a backup escape route by a contact or superior.

Aglaee is really a member of the Society of the Evolved Human, and a fairly high-ranking one. The Society's connections within the Jovian government allowed her to find out about the mission to free Peyarje and position herself and her ship to help the operatives. She might even have hired Ysa to keep an eye on the PCs and guide them towards the Dreamer when the time comes. She is very professional, keeping her subordinates and associates at arms' length. An experienced captain, she is skilled at navigation, tactics, and personnel management, and willing to take large risks in the service of her beliefs.

Admiral Russel Kleb
Suggested Stereotype: Specialist
Suggested Archtype: Official

Admiral Kleb is the throughly corrupt commander of the CEGA 4th Fleet. A hard-line war supporter, Kleb believes the inhabitants of the colonies to be completely inferior to native Terrans. This provides him with the justification he needs to take any action in pursuit of CEGA dominance. He is in the pay (and service) of the Venusian bank, as they provide him with the means to further his own ambitions, but he will not hesitate to betray them for his own advantage. They are, after all, just inferior colonists, cowardly employing bribery when they should be using righteous force.

Despite his biases, Kleb is a brilliant tactician, equally adept at combat maneuvers and political backstabbing. He is a staunch member of the CEGA ruling faction, and an adherent to the warship-centric old school of military thinking. To him, adherents of the exo-centric school are children playing with fancy new toys. Ranho Garand, as the most prominently successful exo-pilot in the CEGA navy and focus of the Dragonstriker program, is a frequent target of Kleb's scorn.

Peyarje was relocated early as a favor to Kleb's Bank contacts. The reasons behind this request have not been revealed to Kleb, which irks him greatly. While he is aware of the joint Venus-CEGA exo-weapon development programs, none of these programs' teams' have requested access to Peyarje. (See the Bank's entry for some suggestions as to why they might want Peyarje on-station early.)

The Ronin operatives assigned to Kleb's case have been secretly dosing him with judgement-impairing drugs for several months now. The Admiral is no longer the sane, rational man he once was. While his tactical brilliance is unblunted, his judgement and restraint are seriously impaired and his temper is worse than ever. Perhaps his new outlook is best expressed by a quote from the original Green Book:

"I don't care about casualties! Get them NOW!"

Kleb, despite not being officially assigned to the operation, could've slipped into Venusian space secretly aboard the Hachiman destroyer that technically serves as the flagship for Garand's squadron. His irrationality and fanatacism provide perfect justification for illogical moves or horrific acts by the CEGA forces attempting to recover Peyarje, and his connections with the Bank can be used to motivate the otherwise-antagonistic CEGA and Venusian forces to co-operate. He should mainly be a figure working from behind the scenes, directing search efforts and commanding fleets.

Ranho Garand
Suggested Stereotype: Specialist
Suggested Archtype: Pilot

Commander of the 3rd Division of the CEGA 4th fleet, Garand is an ace exo-armor pilot and media darling. Despite his military connections, Garand is a devoted member of Chang's political faction. While he does believe the military to be a necessary tool, he doesn't believe that it is the proper one to further CEGA's domination over their wayward colonies. He was one of CEGA's first exo-armor pilots, and taught many of the current generation, passing on both his piloting skills and his philosophy.

Garand is a man of honor and discipline, with a spotless service record and excellent reputation. He does not enjoy killing or combat, but his honor demands that he follow orders and defend his people. Despite his iron will, he is prone to fits of irrational rage towards those who have forced him to commit (or involved him in) dishonorable acts. His discipline and willpower (probably a WIL of +2 or higher) have made him the prime pilot candidate for the Dragonstriker Program. While he is wary of the program's goals and Venusian involvement, he is honored to be at the forefront of a potentially revolutionary development in exo-armor technology. During his time at Dragonstriker, he may have befriended, or at least reached an uneasy truce with, Dr. Peyarje, as the two share many ideals.

Garand's skill and position make him an excellent recurring opponent for pilot characters. He is one of the first CEGA pilots to be issued one of the new Wyvern exo-armors, and is just as deadly with it as he was with his customized Syreen. Garand's exo-armor has a distinctive color scheme - probably red or bright pink, given the genre conventions that govern such things. His exo-armor pilot and gunnery skills are probably level three or four and complexity two or three, with an AGI and PER of at least +1.

In this episode, Garand is the commander of the unit sent to protect Peyarje. He will likely be present at the conference reception, in full dress uniform. When the players manage to nab Peyarje, he'll also probably be involved in the pursuit - either in person or (somehow) using his exo-armor.

Devon Malachai & The Bank

Malachai makes an excellent co-ordinator and adversary for reporter or agent PCs.The big questions when using Malachai and the Bank in this segment are how aware they are of the PCs' objectives and what their own objectives are.

One possible objective for the Bank is acquiring Peyarje for their own secret exo-weapon development programs. Having exclusive access to Peyarje would give the Bank a distinct advantage in any future military confrontations. However, just taking Peyarje would be too easily traceable, so they've arranged for some Jovian operatives to be allowed to grab him. The Bank plans on making it look like the operatives and Peyarje were killed by their CEGA pursuers, while secretly taking Peyarje for themselves. This has the added advantage of weakening CEGA and making it more open to Bank manipulation.

To make things more interesting, one of the other Venusian corporations (such as Waldsen-Nishiyama or Han Tzen) could be behind the plot. After all, the Bank can already get their hands on Peyarje through their CEGA proxies. But Waldsen-Nishiyama's Sakura project could be running into troubles (or need an added boost from the CAT/Rapid-Scan technology) or Han Tzen could be looking for a way to shake off the Bank's iron grip.

Its also possible that the Jovian operation has caught the Bank by surprise. While it does have a long reach, it is by no means all-knowing, and the Jovian system is just barely within its grasp. There are also many secret organizations and conspiracies free of Bank influence or subversion - the Principii or STRIKE, or even CEGA or the Confederation or SolaPol, could've used their agents to help create circumstances that could break the Bank's hold.

During the conference, if the PCs are in disguise, Malachai will probably try to unmask them or aid them in their plans, depending on his own objectives. He will work through intermediaries and thugs, including Ronin assets and his own agents among the CEGA contingent. If they go to ground while seeking an escape from Stanton, Malachai would be the one to orchestrate the search for them. Again depending on his objectives, he might work together with Kleb or clandestinely work to foil Kleb's recovery attempts while foiling his own plan.

❗ Plot: Terrorists?

CEGA is going to have to justify their miniature war against the PCs somehow, both to the public (who will eventually learn of it) and to the soldiers fighting it. The easiest way to do that is to label the PCs as terrorists and criminals - they shot up Stanton station, destroyed a Jovian passenger liner (the Georgia), and kidnaped a respected CEGA military scientist. Reporter PCs are the most likely to have the skills to combat this sort of propaganda war, and should be given the opportunity to do so.

If the PCs aren't reporters, combating the propaganda war becomes more difficult, especially if the methods they used to rescue Peyarje weren't entirely aboveboard. In the long term, it might be worth their while tracking down someone to tell their side of the story and vouch for them against CEGA's allegations. This could be the basis for a subplot at any point in the adventure, with the PCs tracking down a reporter who could help them restore their good names, perhaps based on a lead supplied by Ysa.

❗ Plot: The Intersettlement Scientific Convention

Similar to our Nobel Prize ceremonies, the ISC is a big deal in the scientific community of the 2210 solar system. The ISC moves around and is held at a different settlement every year, to give those scientists who cannot affort to travel a chance to attend. Budget for travel to the ISC to present research and network with other scientists is often part of research grant funding, and the Intersettlement Geographic Society will pay passage for scientists it sees as promising.

More relevant to the adventure, the ISC provides an excellent venue for the players to interact with their soon-to-be mortal enemies. Some sort of confrontation between the PCs and Garand, possibly over or instigated by Ysa Cantroni, would be a good side-plot during ceremonies, and would give the PCs some prior contact that they can use as fodder for verbal sparring during mecha battles. For more intrigue-oriented PCs, the ceremonies provide a way to introduce them to the machinations of Malachai, and perhaps even meet the man himself.

The ceremonies also provide a way for the PCs to investigate the securty surrounding Dr. Peyarje. The classic spy movie intrigue during a ball or party fits into place quite easily here. Other methods are also viable - direct observation during the ceremonies, for example, or the time-honored tradition of information extraction through large quantities of alcohol. (Take the guard out and get him drunk, then see what he says)
(Plot) The Heist

The actual liberation of Dr. Peyarje from CEGA hands should be a high-tension affair. The players should be the ones ultimately responsible for getting Peyarje out, so as to directly involve them with the main plot from the start. Having the players, whether they be pilots or agents, acting as a backup team that gets activated at the last minute when the main team is captured is one effective way of doing this, especially if the PCs aren't skilled in espionage and covert ops. The main team could already have sprung Peyarje, but with pursuit forces hot on their tail and several of their number down, they don't have the resources to complete the extraction.

For best results, CEGA should spot the absence of their valued asset soon after the PCs get their hands on him. A chase through the tightly-packed streets of a colony cylander is a great way to add some action to the episode, especially if the pursuer is (eg) Garand in his exo-armor.

The players could also get ahold of Peyarje only to find things coming apart around them, Ronin and CEGA operatives popping out of the woodwork to arrest/kill other agents, etc. Fortunately, colony cylanders are big - if there's no way to escape, the obvious choice is to go to ground and try to hide, then sneak off-station later, once the heat has died down. While it does stretch things out more, this option provides more opportunities for direct, immediate interaction with Malachai's schemes. It also provides another way to introduce Aglaee and the Beautiful Dreamer - the players can be referred to her by a contact, or she can approach them, as they start hunting for a way off-station.

Project Dragonstriker

Dragonstriker doesn't directly relate to the contents of this episode, but it can still be used as a side-plot. The Dragonstriker prototype could have been brought to Stanton aboard the 3rd Division's ships, for final tune-ups and assembly by Venusian technicians. The PCs could stumble across it, or some of its parts or plans, as a foreshadowing of what they'll have to face in Episode #5. Or, for more cinematic action-oriented campaigns, there could be multiple prototypes, and the PCs steal several at the request of Peyarje.

Operation Methuselah

Methuselah, being a Venusian scheme, is more relevant to this episode than Dragonstriker. The lab analyzing the Floater samples is located somewhere in Venusian space, and the players could uncover some information about it as part of a sideplot. They could be pointed in the direction of the lab by a Venusian deligate to the ISC with a guilty conscience, or stumble across evidence of its existance on their own. Either way, the information they gather could wind up being at least as valuable to the Confederation as Peyarje's technology.

Of course, the lab is likely to be heavily-protected. JAF pilots could face top-of-the-line Venusian exo-armors, fighters, or exo-suits as they try to get the information they're looking for, while JIS agents could confront more convenetional opposition. (Or exo-suits) Reporters will have a tougher time of things, and will probably have to employ the usual deception and subterfuge tactics to sneak in and acquire the information they want.

►TIMING AND OBJECTIVES

This episode should take several sessions. Take your time with it, and don't rush the players through. Give them a chance to scout out the security around Peyarje and make their plans, to explore some subplots, and use the busy ISC events for the introduction of and social interaction with NPCs. During and after the liberation of Peyarje is an excellent time to throw in some action. CEGA won't let their prize get away easily, and this segment lends itself well to chase scenes.

►NEXT EPISODE

The players should be forced to flee Venus aboard the Beautiful Dreamer, with the CEGA 3rd Division hot on their heels. After a desperate evasion in interplanetary space, the Dreamer, low on reaction mass, detours to the heart of CEGA's power. Seeking to loose its pursuers in the heavy traffic of the Earth system, the crew of the Dreamer are forced into an unpleasant choice...

►FILLER SUGGESTIONS

The players have a long trip on the Dreamer between Venus and Earth. This empty space is easily skipped over, as it has no relevance to the rest of the campaign - how could it, with the players on a starship that's trying to hide from pursuing warships? However, there are several filler adventures that could be run in the interim:

◇   Combat!

This is an ideal place to insert some mecha combat. One of the elements of the 3rd Division could stumble across the Dreamer, and the PCs will then have to drive off the enemy fighters and exo-armors. Crank up the tension as the Dreamer plays hide-and-seek with the CEGA warships and tries to conserve reaction mass while evading her pursuers.

◇   Betrayal!

Someone aboard the Beautiful Dreamer is a traitor, secretly giving away the ship's position to the pursuing CEGA ships. Maybe its a member of the crew. Perhaps its one of the player's companions, or (if any came with him) one of Dr. Peyarje's assistants. Do they know that they're betraying their shipmates, or are they the unwilling carrier of some kind of transmitter? And what will they do once they're exposed?

▶VEHICLES

The 3rd Division of the CEGA 4th fleet is composed of:

- 2 Tengu carriers with extra vehicle bays.
- 4 Bricru corvettes.
- 1 Hachiman destroyer.

One Tengu carries a Wyvern and three Wraiths, while the other carries four Syreens. The squadron is accompanied by several fuel ships, to give extra range to the short-legged CEGA warships. Garand's Wyvern is the Command variant. While the Hachiman is technically the flagship of the squadron, Garand usually commands from aboard his Tengu where he has easy access to his exo-armor. This can be used to involve Kleb in the scenario without Garand's knowledge - Kleb could be travelling aboard the Hachiman, watching and ready to take command should the situation demand it.

While deployed so far away from reinforcements, the 3rd Division will usually be cautious. Rarely will they commit their entire strength to a battle. If things seem to be going badly for them, they will attempt to withdraw. However, they're also not idiots. They know that they don't need to kill the players - they need to capture the Dreamer. The PCs should realize this, and be careful not to let themselves be drawn away... For what seems like a retreat could really be an attempt to lure them away so that another force can slip in and disable the Dreamer's engines. And "heavily damaged" enemies could turn out to be not-so-badly hurt after all!

The Beautiful Dreamer

The Beautiful Dreamer, at first sight, seems to be an Inari-class liner. As with most Inari, the Dreamer has been modified heavily, and there are many differences in the ship's lines. Two concealed railguns run along the ship's spine, providing an unpleasant and unexpected punch. The cargo bays on the craft's edges have been modified to carry exo-armors and fighters, complete with concealed catapults. If the players are pilots and have been separated from their vehicles when they discover the Dreamer, the bays should be stocked with appropriate craft. For more information on the modifications, see the entry for the Dreamer in the Vehicle Designs chapter.

If you really want to make the players wonder about their new benefactor, have the craft customized the same way their normal units are, down to the paintings on the hull and the trinkets hanging in the cockpit. No explanation should be offerred for the "strange co-incidence", as DesSources will put it if questioned.

The Georgia on my Mind

The players should be forced away from the Georgia when it comes time to escape. A simple, if somewhat dull, way of doing this is for the ship to be guarded or seized by CEGA marines, forcing the PCs to seek other forms of transport. A much more dramatic method, possibly best used in pilot-centric campaigns, is for CEGA warships to destroy the Georgia in some spectacular manner.

If you choose the (admittedly extreme) method of destroying the Georgia, be sure to have a good reason for it. Perhaps Kleb was responsible, seeking to deny escape to the players in a way that emphasized his own power. Or perhaps Malachai or the Bank were behind the explosion, seeking to implicate the players (they blew it up to cover their escape) or convince the CEGA fleet that Peyarje and the PCs had died in the blast. See the Malachai and Bank section above for more suggestions for evil schemes.

THE BEAUTIFUL DREAMER

Captained by Aglaee DesSources, the Beautiful Dreamer began life as an Inari-class passenger liner. While still officially registered as an Inari with a small interplanetary passenger transport company, the Dreamer has undergone major refits since DesSources became captain. Although still not in the same league as custom-built warships, the Dreamer is quite well-armed. Most of the modifications and weapons are concealed, but some - such as the spinal railguns or the extra armor - are obvious.

Many of the modifications are similar to those once performed by Martian orbital shipyards to transform freighters and passenger liners to warships. This gives some clue as to the origin of the refits, but not much. The same modifications have since migrated outwards to independant shipyards in the Belt, Jovian Trojan States, and outer solar system. Given the Dreamer's captain's connection to the Society of the Evolved Human, they no doubt funded the conversion.

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The Beautiful Dreamer (Modified Inari Passenger Liner)
Sections   1xMain Hull, 3xDrive Section, 2xHangar/Cargo Section
Movement   Space 3/6 (0.3/0.6 Gs)
EBPs            7000

Main Hull:
Size: 60, Armor: 70/140/210, Crew: Living 54; Computer 4 (Dumb, Level 4), Passengers 50;
Deployment Range 5000 hrs

Perks & Flaws:
Accessories: Autopilot, Life Support (Full), Ejection Pods; Communications (+0, 15km, Satellite
Uplink); Features: Accomodations (20,000 m^3), Cargo Bay (23,000 m^3), Laboratory: Kitchen,
Sickbay; Hostile Environment Protection: Vacuum, Radiation (5); Sensors(+1, 3km); Reinforced
Systems: Backups, Crew x2; Negative Feature: Large Sensor Profile (3)
Offensive & Defensive Systems    PDS x1, Spinal Railguns x2


Drive Section:
Size: 20; Movement: Space 8/15; Armor: 50/100/150; Crew: Living 4; Deployment Range: 5000 hrs;
Burn Points: 10000

Perks & Flaws:
Accessories: Life Support (Full), Ejection Pods; Hostile Environment Protection: Radiation(4),
Vacuum; Reinforced Systems: Backups, Crew


Hangar/Cargo Section:
Size: 30; Movement: Space 2/3 Armor: 50/100/150; Crew: Living 4; Deployment Range: 5000 hrs; Burn
Points 3000

Perks & Flaws:
Accessories: Catapult (2) x2, Life Support (Full), Ejection Pods; Cargo Bay (30,000 m^3); Hostile
Environment Protection: Radiation(4), Vacuum; Reinforced Systems: Backups, Crew

Offensive & Defensive Systems    1x Broadside Missile Bay
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Offensive & Defensive Systems:

Name	Arc	Acc	DM	BR	RoF	Ammo
Spinal Railgun	FF	-1	x25	7	+0	100
	AP					
Broadside Missile Bay	L/R S	-2	x30	4	+4	64
PDS	T	+0 x8	2		+4	Unl.
	AM, HEAT					
PDS (Shield)	FF	+0	x16	M	0	Unl.
	Defensive, E-Shield (Physical), HEAT					

Core Injections are meant as supplements to the existing set of rules and expansions; an addition of material to enhance game play. For the most part, these rules can be used piecemeal at will; that is, one does not depend on the other in order to function correctly. What rules to include also greatly depends on what RDL level being used, and also the tone of the campaign. Whether you call it variant rules, alternate rules or house rules, lay some down and expand your campaign to its fullest.

Automatic Weapons and RoF Attacks

Fast-repeating (automatic) weaponry has been a staple on the battlefield for a very long time. The advantages are obvious: the more harm you can throw at your opponent, and the faster, the better.

Fully-automatic weapons (weapons with RoF > 0) can use their RoF ratings in several ways for different effects.

BURST FIRE

With a Burst, a character aims to control the automatic fire of the weapon and put as many rounds as possible into the opponent. A single attack test is made during a Burst attack. For each point of RoF used in the Burst, an 'extra' attack is gained against the target at a cumulative -1 as each point of RoF is accounted for.

Treat each hit individually for the purposes of damage determination. Armour Value reduction occurs only after all 'attacks' have been accounted for.

A Burst expends 5 shots per point of RoF used.

Example:
An RoF3 Burst attack is made against a defendant. The opposed roll (including all modifiers) results in an MoS of 4 for the attacker. The defender is thus hit with four rounds (four attacks): an MoS 4 hit (the basic hit), an MoS 3 hit (Burst hit #1), an MoS 2 hit (Burst hit #2)and an MoS 1 hit (Burst hit #3). Assuming a DM of x20, this would be a x80 hit, a x60 hit , a x40 hit and a x20 hit.

SPRAYFIRE

Sprayfire attacks have as a goal using a high rate of fire to gain a better chance to hit the target. By trading a higher volume of fire (and ammunition usage), a character may use the weapon's RoF bonus to negate penalties from the attack, on a one-for-one basis (one RoF point to negate one attack penalty). Any penalty can be removed, including target circumstances (movement, obscurement and concealment),

attacker circumstances (poor Acc, movement, damage) as well as range penalties.

Sprayfire uses 10 shots per point of RoF used.

Example:
Again, the RoF3 weapon is being used, but this time as a sprayfire attack against a target running in the distance, on a lightly foggy day. One RoF point is used to negate the penalty from the fog (-1), the other two to remove the penalty due to the target's movement (-2). All other remaining modifiers still apply. The roll is made, and the attack hits -- though using up all remaining ammunition.

SATURATION FIRE

Saturation Fire is meant to spend as much ammunition as possible not only to guarantee a hit, but to affect a large area (and possible targets). Also known as Suppressive Fire, it is also an effective tactic to hamper enemy movement (lest they want to get hit) and deny them free access to part of the terrain, albeit at a high cost in ammunition.

When performing Saturation Fire, the character chooses two things. First, they chose a region to be the fire zone. Each point of RoF used this way can cover an area 2m in diameter. Second, they choose how much volume of fire they will send into each 2m zone. Everyone in the zone or who enters a zone later in the turn suffers the effects of the attack. The attacker rolls a number of attacks for each zone (applying all modifiers as normal) equal to the RoF used into that zone. Targets affected by the Saturation fire make a single defense roll, and compares it to each of the attack rolls, suffering damage accordingly (as though each attack roll was an individual weapon).

Defenders do not suffer any Multiple Attacker Penalties when defending against the multiple rolls from Saturation Fire, and Armour Rating is reduced only after all attacks from the Saturation Fire have been taken into account.

Saturation Fire uses 20 shots per point of RoF used.

Example:
After a quick reload, our RoF3 weapon is ready for action once more. To hold the enemy at bay while the platoon redeploys, it is used to Suppress an alleyway where the enemy is advancing. The whole of the RoF3 is put into suppression fire over a single 2m area, giving 3 dice rolls: 2 4 and 7 are the results. Two enemy goons attempt to enter the zone, and make defense rolls: the first rolls a 6 and suffers a single MoS 1 attack, the second a rolls a 3 and therefore suffers an MoS 1 and 4 attack.

As an option, a character may also use Saturation Fire against a single target. While inefficient, it dramatically increases the odds of a hit. When used in this manner, the attacker rolls one attack per point of RoF used, plus one.

COMBINING FIRE

The differng types of RoF attacks can be used in combination. An RoF2 weapon would allow a Burst Sprayfire, at RoF 1 each, to be combined into one attack (with appropriate ammunition usage). However, the cumulative RoF of such attacks cannot exceed the weapon's total RoF, and while a character can make multiple attacks in a round, a weapon may not exceed its MoS rating through cumulative MoS attacks. Thus an RoF 3 weapon could therefore fire an RoF0 and an RoF3 attack, but not two RoF 2 attacks.

GMs may wish to apply a further modifier on Burst and Suppressive Fire attacks where weapons have significant recoil. In these cases, a character's use of RoF is limited to their CPX rating in the Small Arms skill. While they may use as much RoF as desired (up to the capabilities of the weapon) in a single attack, they will only be able to utilize up to their CPX rating effectively. Any RoF used beyond their CPX rating is lost, due to loss of control of the weapon. GMs may further modify this based on the type of weapon and its controllability.

Grenades

Grenades have played a part in warfare for hundreds of years. They were originally developed around 1000 CE by the Chinese, just one application of their revolutionary gunpowder technology. On the battlefield, with their large areas of effect, from which there is little escape, grenades remain a devastatingly effective weapon.

Treat bursting weapons such as grenades as per the Area Effect Perk from the VCS. Thus, anyone caught in the radius of the explosion take a minimum attack of the weapon's DM, even if the attack was successfully defended against (ie, Defense reduces the MoS to 0 or less). There are two possibilities for avoiding this minimum attack:

1) If the target was already behind a solid obstacle, then the reduction of the MoS to 0 negates the attack completely (ducked and covered at the right moment).

2) It is also possible to dive behind an obstacle if one is nearby (within 3m or so); this requires an Athletics test. The GM may modify this test due to the nature of the obstacle, terrain, distance and awareness of the character to the grenade. The lowest of the character's Athletics or Defense roll is taken as their Defense against the grenade: if the MoS is reduced to 0 the damage is negated.

Shotguns

Shotguns, as a type, are rather unique weapons. Capable of firing an impressive array of ammunition types, their versatility is only offset by their rather short ranges. The in-game handling of shotguns depends on the type of ammunition fired; this also results in different Range and Damage Multiplier statistics. Several round types will be described here.

SLUGS

Slug rounds are, essentially, huge flat-headed bullets. Packing huge amounts of energy, they hit with amazing force, but find their penetration somewhat blunted by their large size and their usual construction of soft lead. Slugs are the easiest shotgun rounds to use in-game, and are handled the same as any other bullet-type weapon. However, armour is more effective against most slugs: double the value of armour before applying damage (in effect the opposite of the AP perk). A generic 12ga shotgun slug will have a DM of x28.

BUCKSHOT AND SHOT

Buckshot and shot rounds pack multiple spherical 'shot' into a single cartridge, which when fired fills a conical pattern. Buckshot rounds pack around eight to a dozen larger balls, shot use smaller bb-sized spheres numbering in the hundreds.

When firing buckshot, the shotgun has the multiple effects of Wide Angle (width per range band listed below), and an RoF (also listed below) that is treated as Burst Fire -- it is possible to be hit by multiple buckshot sub-rounds.

Starting with the closest opponent, and working out towards maximum range, each target in the affected area rolls a defense test against a Burst Fire attack at the effective RoF listed in the Generic Buckshot table below. Account for each buckshot pellet hitting -- once 12 hits have been marked all buckshot have embedded themselves into a target. The exception to the above is at point blank range ; at this distance, the shot is close enough together to act as a single, large attack (treat as a regular ranged attack).

A shotgun firing a shot shell has a wide area of effect that is effectively filled with small shot. The attack is treated as a conical Area Effect attack, and follows the same rules as described for grenades. Shot shells also have Attenuating Damage to represent the dispersal of the round and the lightweight nature of the individual projectiles. Again, at point blank range the shot is so densely packed together it is treated as though a single bullet.

GENERIC 12GA BUCKSHOT

	RANGE	PATTERN WIDTH	ROF	DM
Point Blank	1m	N/A	'Solid'	20x
Short	8m	20cm	4	13x/per
Medium	17m	45cm	3	13x/per
Long	35m	100cm	2	13x/per
Extreme	70m	250cm	1	13x/per

GENERIC 12GA SHOT

	RANGE	PATTERN WIDTH	ATT	DM
Point Blank	1m	N/A	'Solid'	20x
Short	6m	20cm	Area	15x
Medium	12m	45cm	Area	12x
Long	25m	100cm	Area	9x
Extreme	50m	250cm	Area	6x

One of the prime advantages of shotguns is an expansive set of options of specialized round types. From flechette rounds to rock salt, the large and smooth bore of a shotgun allows for some pretty interesting rounds. Here are a couple more for your games.
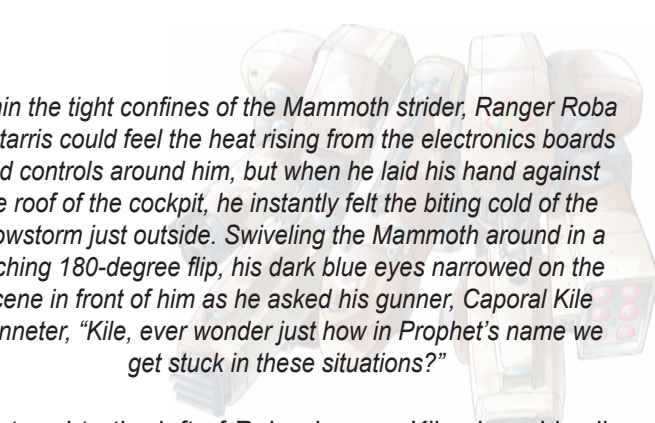
The StarFlash Muzzle Blast round is, effectively, a directional stun grenade producing a brilliant-shower of white-hot sparklets. This shower has quite the diversion and distraction effect. The StarFlash round affects a 2m wide column extending straight out from the firing weapon. Anyone caught within must make a Willpower Attribute test against a Threshold of 5. If they fail the test, they cannot take any actions this round except to cower beneath any available cover.

Various non-lethal rounds exist on the market as well, usually replacing the business end of the round with rubber or a fancy mechanism. Using a non-lethal round reduces the damage of a slug, buckshot or shot shotgun round by 25%, and all damage done is bruise damage. Note that at certain ranges this may still be enough to seriously injure or even kill!

One final note: the late 20th century saw the development of the autoshotgun, fully automatic shotguns with high RoF. Combined with the right type of rounds this can get extremely deadly. Slugs are handled per basic RoF rules. Buckshot is handled as a combination of Sprayfire (for the RoF of the autoshotgun) and Burst Fire (for the RoF of each round). Lastly, shot rounds are handled as a series of defense rolls as though attacked by a number of grenades equal to the RoF.
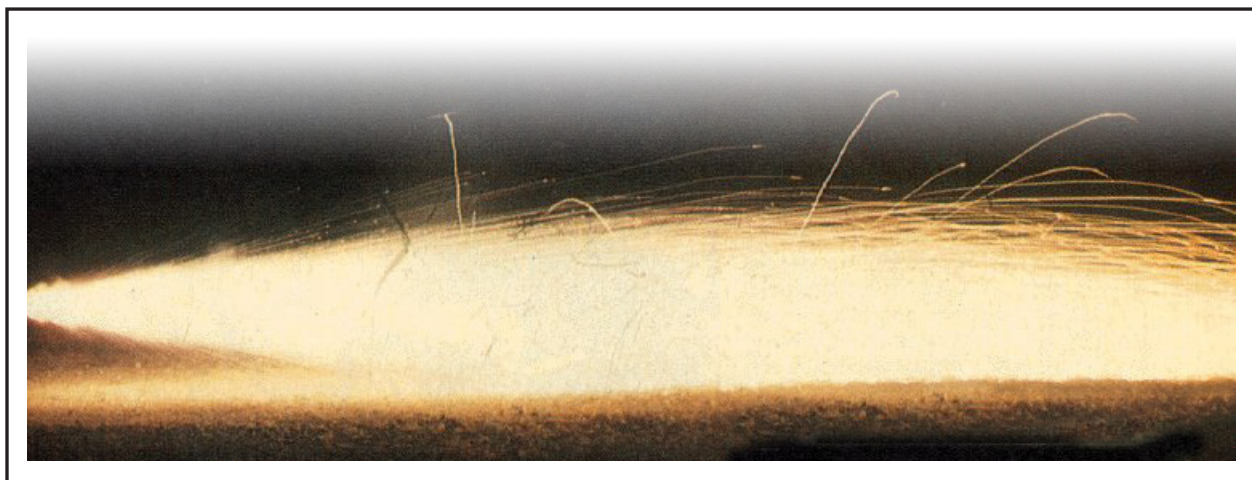
In Field: StarFlash Muzzle Blast

Within the tight confines of the Mammoth strider, Ranger Roba Pentarris could feel the heat rising from the electronics boards and controls around him, but when he laid his hand against the roof of the cockpit, he instantly felt the biting cold of the snowstorm just outside. Swiveling the Mammoth around in a lurching 180-degree flip, his dark blue eyes narrowed on the scene in front of him as he asked his gunner, Caporal Kile Benneter, "Kile, ever wonder just how in Prophet's name we get stuck in these situations?"

In front and to the left of Roba, he saw Kile shrug his slim, lanky shoulders and state, "Just lucky, I guess."

Roba wasn't quite so sure 'lucky' was the correct term for the matter at hand. While traveling on a routine patrol through the Pacifica Range, the three Badgers of the 18th Cavalry Regiment had been ambushed by a squad of Southern Gears. Running towards the nearest town, which was a small miner's village, one of the Badgers had fallen into a snow trap, and had called for help. Thus, the nearest units of the 74th Heavy Gear Regiment, the 'Nova Redriders', had been ordered to move in and assist. Along the way, though, a cold front that the weather observation post had been watching the last three days had moved in, gathering up against the semi-warm front into a ferocious storm that was a mixture of sleet and snow. While en route to the beleaguered Badgers and their infantry, who had set up a defensive perimeter on the outskirts of the town, Roba and Kile's Mammoth had been ambushed by the Southerners. From what Roba had seen in the blur of the sleet that had been lashing against his sensors, he counted a squad-size element using Desert Vipers and an Iguana variant that the computer identified as Racer Iguanas.

Whoever the snakes were, there were veterans counted among their numbers, and it had only been with the timely intervention of their old friend Caporal Jek Turnast with his fellow scouts Caporal Halerrson and Sous-Caporal Niko Faremsh that had given them the chance to push through the ambush and into the town. Now, having dug in, they had received word that the snowstorm had grown too severe for relief to arrive for the duration of the storm. As it was, the snakes had set themselves up around the perimeter that had been set up by the infantry, and were currently simply waiting, letting the cold do its miserable work of demoralizing the soldiers. Every now and then there would be a fleeting image in the swirling eddies of snow and sleet, yet every time it might almost have been a hallucination, as Roba and Kile both had fired rounds from both snub cannon and their missile pod in an attempt to catch the enemy.

They were down to eight snub cannon rounds and three missiles, and had resorted to using the 30mm autocannon on top of the Mammoth to keep the Southerners from getting too confident and trying to make a concerted push into the town. Roba could almost feel the pressure mounting on his back, as he realized that the infantry were all looking to the strider as their hope of getting out of this mess. It was frustrating, every time he tried to get a lock-on with the snub cannon he couldn't seem to focus in time to get a full lock. And while the missiles were guided, Kile had soon discovered that the enemy wasn't about to put themselves out in the open for a clear shot, preferring to stay on the fringes of the town and slowly wear them down. The front of their Mammoth had several personal markings added to its paint scheme… the word TUSK painted on the top of the cockpit, and around the front and sides of the cockpit they had painted shark's teeth, an ancient paint scheme that they were told dated back to the pre-Ice Age Earth's armies. Roba and Kile thought it was fitting to honor the warriors of the past in this manner. Plus, it just looked good to them.

"Green One, this is Big Guns, how're things looking on your end, over?" Roba inquired of Jek, whose Polecat, a modified version of the Ferret scout Gear, was positioned on the opposite side of the town.

"Big Guns, Green One, negative contact so far," he heard Turnast respond.

Sitting there, Roba marveled at the fact that he, Jek and Kile were all here together in this Prophet-cursed situation. Having been raised in the same small neighborhood of southern Baton Rouge, where they had spent their younger cycles stealing alcohol, vandalizing signs, and generally just doing what all youngsters had done. Although they each were twin-bonded to others, the three of them had grown nigh inseparable because of their rowdy, capricious behavior, and despite many attempts to change them, neither their families nor their bond-twins could convince them to break their friendship. Roba openly admitted that he enjoyed the freedom of having close friends who were just as close as a bond-twin, but not tied down by the Revisionist mannerisms and ways. As a result, when Jek had chosen to join the Northern Guard, Roba and Kile were not far behind. Their paths had separated for a time while they underwent their training, Jek focusing on becoming a cavalry scout, while Roba and Kile focused on commanding the firepower of the Mammoth strider. Now, here they were, once more, only now they weren't running from an outraged farmer who had had a couple of his crops picked or a law officer who had seen them vandalize a sign, they were fighting against a common enemy who was just as skilled in combat as they were.

He saw the movement out of the corner of his eye, and it was confirmed when he swung his head towards the sound of rifle

fire coming from one of the small outposts that the infantry had set up - they had seen the enemy! Kile had already trained the 25mm autocannon in the direction of the sound, and squeezed the trigger. *Wham-wham-wham-wham!* The rounds flew in a small arc into the falling snow, but there was no explosion and no sparks to indicate that they had even hit the enemy Gear. "Green Two, Green Three, sitrep," Roba stated.

"Two here, negative contact."

"This is Three, sensors all clear."

"Damn it," Kile muttered into his intercom, and Roba could see his friend's right hand clenching the targeting control stick on the right arm of his chair. "How long until they get that Badger out?"

"Don't know," Roba answered honestly, understanding Kile's frustration and in total agreement with it. "The other two Badgers have a third of their dismounts already working on hooking up the Badger up so they can pull it out… from what the crew says, there's relatively little damage to the chassis, it's just stuck."

"Thank the Prophet for that," Kile reached in front of him, and though Roba couldn't see it, he knew that Kile was turning the necklace beads he always wore over his thumb and forefinger.

"Big Guns, Green One."

Jek's voice caught Roba off-guard, and immediately he keyed the net, "Green One, is it the enemy?"

"Negative, Big Guns, just wondering if you guys are interested in getting a little something in your stomachs. Infantry have a couple pots of cawfee over here that they're willing to share."

"One, Two, what, you aren't going to offer me a cup? Oh, I see how it is, just 'cause you meet a couple of old buddies, you decide to forget poor ol' Niko."

"Two, shut up," Jek responded, even though Roba could hear the grin in his voice. "These guys are like brothers to me. 'Sides, there's a couple of miner girls up here pouring the cawfee, I'll make sure one of'em sends you a cup."

"Hey, hey, that I can deal with!" Niko answered from his own Polecat, elated at the possibility of having a friendly chat with a woman. "Three, how 'bout you?"

"This is Three, negative, already have a cup, thanks," Halersson's voice was straightforward, almost deadpan, with very little inflection in it, and through the infrared sensors Roba and Kile could both see the Cheetah Fang knelt down into a small mine on the eastern side of the town, its 70mm bazooka aimed unerringly out into the swirling eddies of snow. "For now, it seems like the snakes are keeping their distance, but we have to stay on our toes."

"Understood, Three, Big Guns moving," Roba answered back.

Pressing down on the foot pedals, Roba guided the Mammoth across the small town, making sure to keep as many buildings as possible between him and the outskirts… although he hated the thought of having to use the homes of these miners as cover, there wasn't any other choice left to him, and those Desert Vipers were packing heavy grenade launchers, not something that even a Mammoth would want to try and screw around with. He and Kile moved with the strider's lurching movement, left, right, left, right, a slow, plodding step that almost felt like being on the back of a domesticated herd springer. When they arrived, Jek was already sitting just inside the doorway, motioning them over with his hand. The cockpit unlatched, and as Roba and Kile climbed out and down the arms of the strider they noticed several young and rather cute ladies huddled near Jek. Roba just shook his head… trust Jek to always be able to offer some comfort to a woman, even when there was an enemy lurking out there in the darkening afternoon.

Walking over, the three of them traded bear hugs and backslaps with laughter all around, and Jek introduced his buddies to the women. Of them, two were short and had just enough meat on their bones to make them curvy, one wore a long thick overcoat, though it was obvious from her delicate facial features that she was tall and willowy, while the fourth was of middling height and build, her muscles well-developed as only a miner's could be. Jek sent off one of the shorter ladies, a blue-eyed, redheaded girl by the name of Asarai, off to give Niko his cup of cawfee. As they sat around and caught up on old times, Kile asked, "Jek, how's Teresa? Haven't heard from her in awhile…"

"Teresa's good," Jek said with a wistful smile on his face. "She's going to become an engineer for Northco, if you can believe it."

"Really? Thought she had her heart set on opening up her own little club," Kile swigged at his cawfee, obviously savoring the taste.

"Nah, she got out of that scene after some shock punks

crashed her opening night," Jek replied. "What about Sanya and Toya?"

"Working together on managing a little restaurant in Orion," Kile stated. "Remember Springer Street? Right on Lake Providence?"

"Yeah! Ha, we used to go looking around at the local artists' work down there!" Jek said, slapping his thigh. "Funny, how things turn out, huh?"

"Yeah," came a chuckled reply from Kile.

Having been quiet for much of the time, Roba finally had to get the question off his chest with his own smile of the memories, "Jek, I have to ask… what in Prophet's name possessed you to become a scout, of all things?"

"Heh, well, to tell you the truth, Roba, it was the freedom," Jek said as he swigged back on his cawfee and giving off a slight, contented sigh, the miner girl, Neisch, cuddling up against him. "I never was one for authority much, but the military beat it into me that I needed to follow my superiors. At the same time, though, I wanted the freedom to follow my own instincts… as a scout, my job is to go out, find the enemy, and report back, nothing more. Anything else beyond that is up to me and the guys."

"Halerrson's a little quiet, isn't he?" Kile inquired, noticing that the curvy girl that remained, a green-eyed beauty with short-cropped brown hair named Serai, was looking at him somewhat intently.

"He is, but then again he's had a rough time of it," Jek stated, taking another swig of his cawfee. "Been through some hard-ass missions, no doubt about it, and he's seen quite a few of his guys go down."

"Prophet bless them and may they be granted eternal peace," Kile murmured, rubbing the prayer beads round his neck.

"Heh, never knew you were so devout, Kile," Jek jokingly prodded.

Kile grinned, "That was before we enlisted, Jek… lot's changed since then… but not you. You're still the same crazy guy you always were."

"Hey, man has to keep his sanity someway, right?" Jek said.

"Jek?" Neisch asked, holding out a cigarette from her pack that she had produced from her miner's outfit, which, Roba

noticed was cut a little tight round the midsection… but then again, he wasn't complaining of the view, and was thoroughly enjoying the dialogue and the time with a dear friend. Jek grinned that lopsided grin once more, and took the cigarette, inhaling a deep drag as she lit it up for him, and then offered it to Kile, who refused. "No thanks, bud, quit that stuff cycles ago."

"You, Roba?" Jek asked, turning and quirking an eyebrow with that engaging grin.
Roba shrugged, taking a quick drag off the offered cigarette and let his eyes close as he relaxed a little bit, even as the stimulants caught into his bloodstream and began to speed up his heart rate. Opening his eyes, he asked the tall, willowy brown-haired girl, "Lilly, I was wondering, why aren't you and the others scared?"

"We are," Lilly answered quietly, a voice that whispered still seeming to be able to carry itself well enough to be heard over the draft that was coming through the closed door that Kile was leaning against. "But we've dealt with these sorts of things before… the Southerners have always been quick to come through this town and try to exert pressure on everyone, but the marshal won't have none of it, citing that we're a neutral town and have no interest whatsoever in getting involved with the dispute between the polar powers. No point in trying to fight someone else's war, all we want is peace."

"Don't you have any defenses?" Kile inquired from where he was sitting, sipping slowly from his cawfee.

"We do, but the marshal won't bring out the local militia unless the Southerners are spoiling for a fight. This is the first time in nearly eight cycles that we've actually seen any of the war come to our doorsteps, but it doesn't concern us."

"What will happen after we leave?" Jek looked over at Neisch, having draped an arm around her shoulder. Snuggling up against him she answered, "We'll rebuild those buildings that are destroyed, then go back to what we were doing before… mining, logging and living."

"That's a lot of work to rebuild after what someone has done to you, over and over again," Kile mentioned. "I'm amazed that you're all so kind as to give us even this much hospitality."

"You're soldiers… you follow orders, you don't make the policies, and you don't control the men that hand those orders down to you," Lilly spoke up. "Taking our aggression out on you would be just like biting the finger that pokes at you, when it was the mind that told the finger to do the poking. We can't touch the minds of the polar powers, and we never

intend to, so instead we try to make life as hospitable as possible for everyone involved."

"That sounds… nice," Roba murmured quietly, catching the others' attention. "If only everyone thought the same way that you did, than we probably wouldn't be in this position, and - "

BOOM!

The explosion rattled the entire building that they were sitting in, and immediately Jek roared out, "They're attacking again?! When will those frakkin' snakes know when to give up?"

Another explosion, this one farther away, and Roba had tossed his cawfee out on the snow as he and Kile pounded feet over to their Mammoth. Roba climbed up onto the snub cannon, Kile onto the anti-tank missile launcher, and together they scrambled up the arms to the cockpit, hopping into their respective seats almost simultaneously. Glancing over at Jek, Roba noticed his buddy grabbing hold of the knee of the Gear and pulling himself up onto the arm that hung just underneath the chest before jumping up and into the cockpit itself. He wasn't even thinking as his fingers flipped over the controls smoothly, cranking over the V-engines, closing the cockpit and turning on the main camera sensors while Kile booted up the FLIR and fire control computers from his own station, each knowing their job instinctively while they mentally prepared themselves for the oncoming action. Both of them pulled on their helmets, and Roba was the first to key the net, "Green Two, Three, this is Big Guns. Situation?"

"Enemy's making their move, I think," Niko mentioned from his own Polecat, which was pinned down behind one of the outlying buildings on the western side of town while several rounds from an enemy Iguana peppered the meager protection that the concrete provided him. "I count one Iggy, one Viper, advancing on my position."

"This is Three, count two Vipers moving on my position, over," Halersson answered, suddenly popping up from behind defilade and firing a snapshot in the general direction to try and keep the Southerners at bay for just a few more seconds to give him time to move into a different position.

Across the town, the infantrymen who had chosen their different locations were now beginning to join the fray - Roba could see two anti-armor guided missiles launching out of their tubes on the rooftops of two buildings to the south, shrieking over Niko's position and at the enemy Gears. The Iguana deftly dodged both of the missiles, and while one of them connected with the Viper, it didn't leave any sizeable

amount of damage that would cause it to slow down or stop its movement for any reason. The infantry armed with their anti-Gear rifles could be heard cracking off their shots, picking their targets carefully, but the high winds of the snowstorm were throwing their shots off just as badly, and they weren't going to make any solid hits until the Gears entered the town, and that was just way too close for comfort to the Badgers that they were supposed to be protecting from enemy fire. If those Badgers were hit or destroyed, there would be no way for those infantry to trudge it all the way back to the firebase without succumbing to frostbite or dehydration. Not to mention the fact that the Southerners would send more reinforcements just to make up for their lost brothers, and slaughtering all the people inside this small, middle-of-nowhere town wouldn't appear on the Hermes network, now would it?

Another grenade impacted only twenty meters away from the Mammoth, and Roba quietly thanked the Prophet as he heard several small pieces of shrapnel ricochet off the enclosed cockpit. Quickly glancing down at the building that they had just run out of, he was relieved to see that the young women had had the sense of mind to close the door, and undoubtedly were already underneath in the fortified basement that they had described early on in Kile's idle questioning of their town's defenses. For some reason that made him feel more confident as he turned the Mammoth around in its lurching stride and headed for the two Vipers that were said to be on the eastern side by Halersson.

For his part, the grizzled veteran was placing his shots carefully, his Cheetah Fang only coming up out of cover every once in awhile to try for a snapshot, and in the time that it had taken the Mammoth to fully power up and get halfway across town, he had only fired two bazooka shells. Roba was jealous of the man's incredible fire discipline and his ability to stare down two much larger Gears and still be able to keep them at arm's length without being pummeled himself. Halersson didn't need to speak all that often to convey anything… his actions spoke more than well enough for themselves.

"Three, this is Big Guns, we're going to be giving you covering fire, be prepared to move to another location," Roba's body moved in time with the rhythm of the Mammoth's steps, his finger flicking over the control stick to activate the 30mm autocannon that had now swung up over his head, tied to his controls.

"Big Guns, Three, going to fall back into the town," Halersson responded as Roba saw his Cheetah Fang prepare itself for a roadie run maneuver.

"Three, Big Guns, is there any other place you can move?"

"Negative, Big Guns, will have to fall back into the town limits in order to set up secondary defensive position closer to infantry support."

Roba winced… he had wanted to avoid it coming to this, yet it had seemed inevitable the whole time that they had been waiting for the snakes to move in close. And urban fighting, even in a small town like this, was not the Mammoth's forte. "Understood, firing."

Wham-wham-wham-wham-wham!

The 30mm spat out its slugs at roughly 1700 meters a second, the rounds impacting in the snow just in front of the lead Viper, which quickly shifted its momentum in a strafing maneuver to try and avoid a second burst, while the rear Viper took one of the rounds in the lower leg. However, the redundant systems and rugged design of the Viper's movement system pulled through as it paused and moved in the opposite direction of its buddy, splitting the targets for the Mammoth crew to track and follow.

Even in that instant that they realized the Cheetah Fang was moving, Halersson was already halfway across the small field that in the meager summertime the townsfolk used for agriculture. Leveling their weapons, several rockets screeched out of their tubes and headed for the Cheetah, but while in the roadie run the Cheetah was crouched over to make a much smaller silhouette and presented less of a target, making it to the fringe of the town and having a rocket crash right into the building that it ducked behind. Halersson didn't sound as cool as he did only a minute before, his breath coming in short pants as if he'd just run the 200-meter sprint on foot, "Alright… Big Guns, Three… go ahead… support Two."

"Three, One, no need, Two and I have these guys covered, but watch out for that second Iggy, we still haven't seen him."

"Maybe we got a lucky hit in on him earlier?" Kile asked, a lingering hope in his voice, though it wasn't much.

Roba felt a twinge in his gut, and shook his head, "No. He's out there."

"Where do you think he'll come from?" Kile's head was on a swivel, it seemed, roving back and forth over the frontal arc of the Mammoth and pulling the trigger on his right control stick, the huge machine rocking with the force as the snub cannon let loose a round at the Viper that had pushed off to the south. WHOOM!

Miss… the Viper had just taken cover behind a low hill, the slug smashing into the earth and letting up a huge cloud of debris from the combined impact and explosion. "Frak, seven left…" Roba heard Kile as his head faced the second Viper. "Roba, we going to move?"

Roba blinked and realized that the whole time he had kept the Mammoth at a standstill, just thinking, and not acting. Cursing himself mentally he pulled back on the controls, the massive feet digging deep into the road and pulled the strider into the main fairway that led through the middle of the town. What in Prophet's name was wrong with him? He needed to think on his feet, he needed to be active, not reactive, he needed to…

"Big Guns, to your rear, Iggy!" Jek's warning came at a yell.

 … be alert!!!

Roba pushed on the controls with all his might, feeling like he would tear them off at the base, knowing it was too late, the Mammoth wasn't fast enough, he couldn't hope to bring the weapons to bear… there, the Iguana, wheels digging up the snow and sending up plumes of mixed snow and mud behind it as it raced for them… Kile was bringing the snub cannon round, but the snake was right there… this was it…

Banga-banga-banga!

The Iguana lurched with the impact of the rounds, one of the 20mm high-explosive shells penetrating through the thin side layer of armor and exploding internally, catching the V-engine's fuel supply and blasting the machine apart at the seams. From his position in the side street, Jek's Polecat appeared, deployable pack gun clutched in its right hand, and Roba could hear his long-time buddy with cold steel in his voice, "Get your big ass in gear, Big Guns! I can't protect you and Two at the same time!"

Roba stiffened, and then turned his attention back to the east, only to see one of the Vipers moving in, its grenade launcher coming down to aim directly at their cockpit. "Kile, Viper left!"

"Got'im!" Kile already had the missile launcher on target, Roba could almost see the realization flash in the frame of the snake's Gear as the pilot realized he was caught. SHROOM!

The missile caught the Viper dead-center, the warhead blowing its superheated explosives in a thin, concentrated cone straight through the back of the Southerner and

demolishing the V-engine as a whole. The enemy Gear slumped and fell on its face, the lower half of the pilot already incinerated by the blast and probably the rest of him scorched beyond all recognition in the tight confines of his cockpit. Neither Roba nor Kile could see this, but they knew it from what they had heard from War of the Alliance veterans, and they also knew they would never want to see it in person. Roba sighed, knowing they had been lucky that time, the snakes wouldn't make another mistake like that again…

"Hey, hey, looks like you're not as slow as you look, Big Guns!" Jek's joking, laughing voice caught Roba's attention, and both he and Kile turned their attention to their old friend, who they could see facing them, his Polecat raising its left hand and giving them a thumbs-up.

The Polecat jerked, and only a split second later Kile heard the grenade's impact. WHAM! The little scout Gear fell over to the side, small pieces of shrapnel having pierced through the front of its armor.

"JEHHHK!!!" Roba didn't recognize his or Kile's voice as they screamed.

His vision tunneled in, Roba could clearly see the outline of the Viper just 75 meters back down the road, moving towards a side street. He didn't think, his eyes just focused on the point and he pulled the trigger. *Wham-wham-wham!*

The Viper's right arm was torn off by the first two rounds, the third connecting with the grenade launcher and setting off its remaining ammunition, smashing the Gear over into the side street and onto its side, its right side scorched and smashed by the detonation. Inside the cockpit, the Southerner was undoubtedly stunned by the hit, not having expected the snapshot to connect, and while he began to press down on the left arm to raise his machine up to get back on its feet, Niko's Polecat appeared, its left hand clenching into a fist and crushing into the side of the head, caving it in, and with it, the pilot's head.

"Big Guns, Three, on your left!"

"Roba, he's too close!"

Roba's feet and hands didn't even seem a part of him at that point… he was part of the Mammoth, part of the machine, feeling its movement as it swung back on its right leg, pivoting to face the oncoming Viper. He saw one of the Cheetah Fang's bazooka rounds connect with the rocket pod, ripping it off. Kile's trigger finger squeezed. WHOOM!
The Viper had rolled with the explosion, and just narrowly avoided a direct hit, instead having its left arm ripped off.

Even as it was hit twice, though, the pilot kept his head, firing his grenade launcher and connecting with the Mammoth's left leg. Lurching under the impact, red and yellow blinking up in a schematic before Roba's eyes. Lower left leg actuator damaged… lower left foot sensors destroyed… upper left leg wiring damaged…

"Hit him again!" Roba shouted despite the fact that their heads were only a meter apart.

"Can't, angle's off, bring her a little more to the left!" Kile responded in like manner.

The Mammoth was sluggish to respond, its leg groaning in protest to the strain being put on its joints as it moved to respond to Roba's commands, and the Viper was already up and dodging into a side street, closely followed by Halersson's Cheetah Fang, its vibroblade out and ready. "Big Guns, Three, I got this snake, find that other Iggy!"

"Big Guns, Two, the second Iggy just passed me, headed right for ya!"

"Frak!" Roba and Kile shouted as one, both moving as one, trying to swing their machine and their weapons to bear. This time, the leg was damaged, and Niko couldn't risk a shot without risking hitting the Mammoth and causing more damage to a friendly.

"Big Guns, Red Two, firing!"

Roba and Kile had just gotten the strider around far enough for them both to see it… several 71mm rockets streaked out of a side street and collided into the ground in front of the Iguana just as it had started to fire. *Banga-banga!* The rounds ricocheted off their cockpit's side armor, scarring the shark teeth, and the Southerner dodged south of the unexpected volley of rocket fire whizzing by and headed for where the Viper and Halersson were undoubtedly dueling it out. Roba registered that Red Two had been the Badger AFV caught in the snow trap, which meant they had freed it just a couple minutes ago, but he and Kile had other concerns at the moment. "Three, Big Guns, Iggy's headed for you!"

"Hang on, Three, I'm on my way!" Niko's Polecat had its buttwheel down, and it screeched round the bend into the side street, its pack gun spitting metal death as it leveled out. *Banga-banga-banga!* "What the-?! OOF!"

The Polecat fell back into view, the Iguana on top, having done a roundabout and tackling the Polecat. "I got this one!" Roba shouted, his vision still tunneled, clearer than daylight, it seemed, the targeting reticle on the back of the Iguana…

he swore he could see the kill markers on the left shoulder pauldron of the Iguana, even as it struggled to bring its vibroblade down into Niko's cockpit. *Wham-wham-wham-wham-wham!*

The first round kicked up the snow in front of the two machines, and Roba could hear Niko shouting, "What the fr-?!"

Just then, the next two rounds connected against the Iguana's arm holding the vibroblade, shredding it, the next two flying over and impacting just beyond. "- frak, Big Guns!?"

The Iguana had rolled off the Polecat, was starting to stand, and Roba saw the self-destruct grenade it held in its hand. "SDG!" he shouted.

Kile's finger squeezed. WHOOM! The round tore through the Iguana at this close range without stopping, and exploded in the street with a huge plume of snow and debris. As the Iguana fell back, Niko stood his Polecat up, "Three, you all right?!"

"Three here, last snake's bugging out," Halersson said.

Kile and Roba both looked out from where they were, just on the fringe of the town, and could see the last Viper rushing off into the swirling storm. Turning, it looked back, seeming to look straight at them, and they both saw the black shoulder pauldron on its remaining right arm, indicating a squad leader, one of the veterans. Roba's grip tightened on the controls, and even though they couldn't give chase, his voice made an ice-cold promise,

"We'll get you, you snake bastard."

It was only then that he discovered his face was wet, and he realized he'd been crying.

"Prophet help us… what will we tell Teresa?" Kile whispered brokenly.

"The truth… her bond-twin is dead," the ice in Roba's voice cracked. "No… our bond-twin is dead."

From concept to reality -- what goes into making a miniature that finds its way to your gaming store shelves? Join DP9's head BLITZ! sculptor on a journey...

First, when I start on a new project for HG, I gather some reference material. Books, of course, but also some minis from before, in this case:

Then I let it brew in my brain for a while. I basically spend a few evening with the subject, trying to get into its frame. Then, this comes into action:
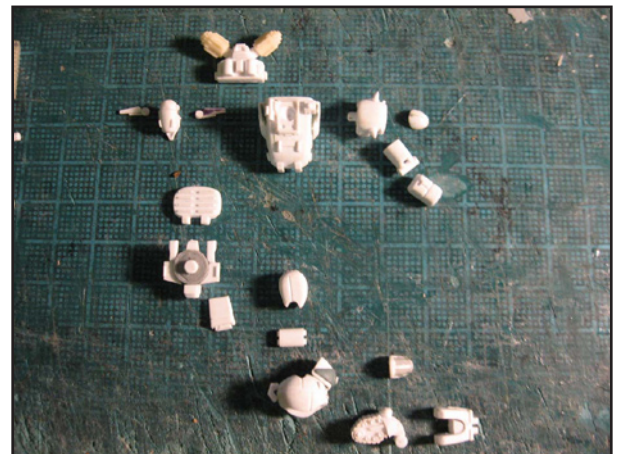

I usually start with the foot and the leg in general. Here it is:

Then I do the other part, and we have a leg:

It usually takes between two and four days to make all the parts, depending on the complexity and shapes. In this case, it took four days. Here are all the bits for the gear:

...and here are the guns!
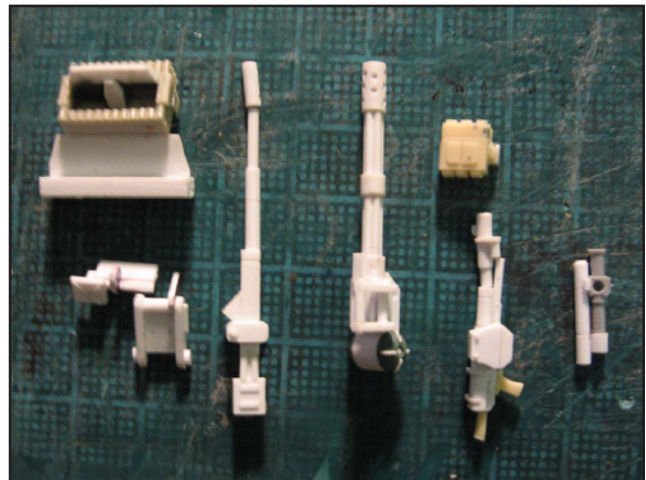
THE MAKING OF A SPITTING COBRA

You can see how the HAC, the VLFG and its mount all broke when I opened the mold. It happens frequently, but the damage is never really bad, its always a joint that fail. It also means that the joint might have to be reinforced on the master casting otherwise the metal part might end up with some weakness.

All the white stuff is styrene. I use sheets, tubes, rods, square rods, etc. All the yellow stuff is heat-resistant resin from earlier castings. The beige-grey resin is the heat resistant resin with some black colorant in it because I was tired of that yellow look... its really just an aesthetic thing.

I'll go over the actual sculpting process next time, fear not!

Once I have all the parts done, I'll make molds for everything. The South FS kit consist of 17 molds, including 5 just for the master parts, 6 for the finished arms and legs, 3 for the weapons and 3 that comes form the GP squad and makes Jäger.


The molds are made from silicone that is poured into square custom-made styrene boxes that have sprues of part glued to the bottom. When the silicon is set, I simply cut the part loose, saving days of work instead of building a two part mold. On the next two pics you can see a little of the inside. To cast a piece, I tape the mold shut. When the casting comes out, it has flashes and stuff that I have to remove.

So, I cast a lot of the basic parts, and then I build the sub-assemblies, namely the legs and the arms (arm pic is blurry) here are the legs sets:

The darker stuff in the joint is Knedatie, AKA green stuff. Well, in this case I used brown stuff. Its easier to sand, and have a texture that is closer to clay, which help to do "realistic" ballistic cloth. The parts are assembled using CA glue.

I also built the sprues, here you can see the "christmas tree" and the Command Jäger extras sprue, with the APM and the APGL.
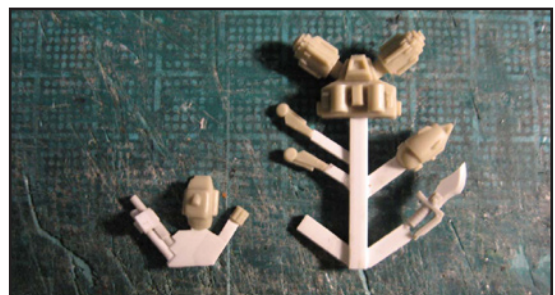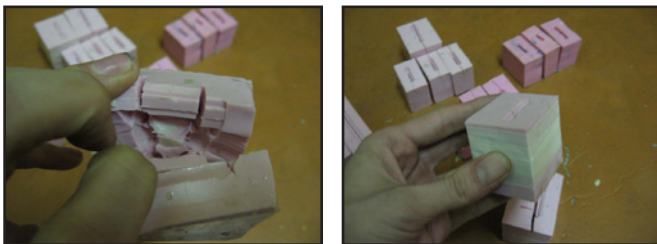
THE MAKING OF A SPITTING COBRA

Then, its only a matter to cast a lot of the finished parts and clean them up good, the send them to the metal caster. The resin I use for this is heat resistant and very hard. It is not the same type that I use for Minimaniak's models, which is much softer and easier to work with.

All in all, the whole process of creating a box set takes about two weeks: a week sculpting and a week casting and cleaning and filling bubble holes with green stuff. Sometime, I do it faster, depending on how much I want to have the week-end off!

Yah! So, that's what I have for now. For a future article I will document the development of the Iguana project much better, and I'll try to show you how I sculpt those lovely southern round shapes. Ah yes, round shapes. My head hurts already....

The back of the finished Spitting Cobra

The Spitting Cobra in a full Southern Fire Support Cadre

MODIFIED ANTI-MISSILE FIRE

CHRISTOPHER GREGORY

These rules are my replacement on the standard rules. They are meant to allow missile attacks to overwhelm a unit's ability to defend against missiles by sheer volume of fire, similar to the real world. After all, if the Phalanx CIWS was as effective against missiles as weapons with the AM perk are in SilCORE, anti-ship missiles would not exist anymore.

All weapons will have an Anti-Missile Usage (AMU) value equal to the ROF value with a minimum of one. These are for one turn only and reset at the beginning of the next turn. All weapons would have this value and AMU's cannot be transferred between weapons. The weapon does not require the AM perk to be used for anti-missile fire and will have an AMU value also, however, it will still receive the -6 penalty for firing on missiles without the perk. Additionally, a weapon with a negative ROF can only fire in an anti-missile role it it would have been able to fire normally that turn. If it was already fired that turn it is still reloading and unavailable for use. If used for anti-missile fire during the enemy's turn, it will not finish reloading until the enemy's turn after the one it would have become available again for use by you. This is to avoid using the weapon quicker than would normally be possible. Use of anti-missile fire otherwise does not interfere with a weapon's normal ability to fire. Perks such as wide angle and area effect have no effect on anti-missile fire, (mostly for simplicity).

Example:
An ROF 6 weapons gets 6 AMU's, while a ROF -2 weapon still gets 1 AMU. While the weapon with the six AMU's would get it's six free anti-missile attacks, it is not able to use the one AMU of the ROF -2 weapon to use the ROF 6 weapon seven times in an anti-missile fire role. If the weapon with ROF -2 was used to attack a unit on one turn, it is unavailable for anti-missile fire until the following turn. If it was used for anti-missile fire during the opposing player's turn, the weapon would be unavailable at all until his turn came around again. The weapon with ROF 6, however, can make as many ROF 6 attacks as the vehicle's action's would allow and still have it's full AMU value to defend with.

All anti-missile fire using AMUs must begin with the first missile attack, and continue consecutively throughout the turn for the AMU's to be valid. This represents the weapon systems and crew acting automatically and quickly to destroy the missiles instead of trying to identify them first as this would take too long. Should all the AMUs be used in a single turn, or be forfeited by not being used, additional anti-missile fire may be used at the cost of an action. This represents the crew diverting additional attention to the missile attacks. A vehicle may switch between weapons freely when using the AMU's without loosing any additional AMU's it may still have left so long as at least one weapon makes the attempt.

Example:
The unit being attacked by missiles has a weapon with ROF 2 and two actions for the crew. The first two missile attacks are automatically fired upon by the weapon's AMUs. The next two missile attacks are also fired upon with the weapon at the cost of both the unit's actions. The fifth attack gets through the anti-missile fire as the unit is out of both AMUs and actions. Had the unit not used the AMUs on the first missile attack, possibly because that attack was unable to harm his vehicle, it would have forfeited the AMUs for that turn and have to use actions to shoot the next two missile attacks, and then be unable to use anti-missile fire against the following two missile attacks since it is now out of actions. If the unit had a second weapon with ROF 0 then it could have used it's ROF capable weapon to intercept the first missile attack, switched to the single shot weapon for the second attempt, used the ROF weapon again on the third missile, then used it's two actions against the next two missile attacks, for a total of five anti-missile attacks.

A single missile costs one AMU to fire upon. An ROF missile attack cost a number of AMUs equal to the ROF of the attack to intercept. A Swarm of multiple linked missiles counts as an ROF attack equal to the ROF threshold it equals, rounded up in the event of left over missiles. A swarm of linked ROF missile attacks cost an amount of AMUs to intercept as the number of AMUs it would cost to intercept them separately. One roll is made for each anti-missile attack.

Example:
A unit fires three separate linked missiles. This counts as an ROF three missile attack and uses two AMUs to shoot them all down, but only one roll is made to determine the effects. Three missile racks launch ROF two attacks for a total of twelve missiles, but it costs 6 AMUs to intercept them.

Splash One Bandit

From the rules monkey...

Ever wonder what goes on inside the POD? What goes on within the minds of the designers, developers, or artists? Aurora presents the opportunity to crack open the hatch and take a look inside! Submit your questions to auroramag@gmail.com. Every couple of issues we will take the compilation of questions and answer them in this column.

HG Blitz: Why does weak facing work differently than reinforced armor? (Why not have "Weak Facing [X], [Facing]" where X is the number to deduct from armor?)

Honestly, the reason we didn't was we didn't really want to go through and change a fan favourite machine and spend time trying to rebalance it and cost the flaw in a non abusable way. The original flaw was costed and acted in a particular way to prevent potential TV abuses by taking flaws that did very little in game to gain massive discounts. Many Flaws with corresponding Perks are designed this way.

HG Blitz: The two books so far don't move forward with the story. How will that be handled in the future? The Earth Invasion book sounds like a candidate, but what happens after that? (Put differently, where are you going with Blitz line book releases after the Earth Invasion?)

Blitz is intentionally set in the vague time period around the first edition Heavy Gear rulebook. This lets us set down the basic situation and move from there. The CEF book will be getting a name change and the title in question will be moved to a book set for later. After the CEF book, we're looking at adding some additional army information, covering different time periods and similar. This will build upon the Blitz base and give a good deal of information and cover things from the War of the Alliance to the Black Talon raids with all pertinent information about the storyline and metaplot included in a way that will be easy to follow and allow you to play games in those periods. From there, the storyline and metaplot will kick into overdrive with players having a direct involvement in how things play out.

HG Blitz: What challenges do you have in balancing the army books?

Balancing the armies and the army books is a very involved process and really depends on the book in question. The feel of each army has to be balanced gameplay wise as well as in the fluff. No one faction can be "evil," but we also can't shy away from their flaws, since the flaws are what give the faction their "meat." On top of this, we need to balance the number of figures, accessories, packs and so on. The North was fairly easy to balance as they had very strong themes and fairly distinct squads, making it mostly a matter of ensuring each army included had a proper mix for their intended role. The South is much more of a challenge. Many vehicles have very little use on the field or have very odd design features that create a very difficult situation miniatures wise. We had to strip a lot of Iguana variants down into coherent swaps simply to be able to make miniatures. Additionally, the South has a very alien outlook and had the distinction of having most of their information presented in a very slanted way. This created a challenge of there being no real strong themes to bae some armies on and some notable organizations needed to have their flaws played up to present a more balanced view of their actions.

Like the Southern book, the Badlands book will present a series of highly disparate armies with very little to connect them, however unlike the South, they don't share a governmental link. I anticipate the difficulty in the badlands book will be giving a face to previously poorly detailed factions and trying to allow customization of Rover forces without blowing game balance out of the water. Port Arthur and the PRDF will be fairly straightforward and Port Arthur will give you (and us) the first tastes of the destruction the CEF will be able to unleash.

HG Blitz: Do you plan on offering new scenario types for random generation games? I am thinking of more objective based scenarios.

We plan on adding more scenario options in Aurora. In addition, the "additional army information" and such mentioned in the timeline answer will include scenario generation information.

JC Blitz: Other than fluff and appearance, how would you say that JC Blitz will differ from HG Blitz in terms of game focus, the way games play out, etc.?

The great thing about Blitz is you can change up gameplay by simply changing vehicles and terrain, both of which will be very different in Jovian Chronicles. Additionally, JC Blitz vehicles will be (re)designed from the ground up to take advantage of changes we've implemented in JC Blitz that we were unable to implement in HG or were added to emulate JC better. One major change will be the inclusion of Aces and the focus on the individual Units. HG is a squad game where there are no real heroes of the battlefield. JC is a game about heroes. The grunts are important and very useful, but even then they're like modern day fighter jocks, unlike gear pilots. Terrain and cover will be streamlined and support options will most likely be more "on-board" and interactive.

How do you balance competing priorities of the different game lines? Which ones get first in line at the feed-trough of your time?

Well, this is actually pretty simple. I'm the HG line Editor now, so HG in all forms comes first, Blitz in particular. After that, general Silhouette rules stuff comes second. For example, I'm not behind most of JC Blitz, but I do the rules concepts and sign off on rules changes to ensure it moves in a consistent direction and works in the overall scheme of things. But that comes after doing my HG work.

How do you balance work and life, without them becoming one and the same?

This is not so simple. I work from home, so it's really easy, particularly during crunch times, for me to not really have a life and ignore things like dishes. (looks in direction of the kitchen...) Oddly, having my fiancee (Beth Porter) involved as the lead artist has helped the situation a lot, as she now needs the computer at nights so I'm force to take a break and relax and do things like play Wii, see movies, and interact with humanity without hovering around her while she works.

Additionally, taking time off to do bike riding with Beth and generally getting out of the house helps a lot, as my computer really does seem like an office sometimes.

What do you look at for inspiration when thinking outside the box?

Mechanics wise or setting wise? ;) Mechanics-wise, I've always been a tinker and reading or playing games few others seem to play appears to help. Anyone can really come up with mechanics for Silhouette, but it takes a very deep understanding of the fundamentals of Silhouette and the reasons for things working like they do before your mechanics will mesh well and not affect other interlinked areas. Setting wise, I have a very large library of DVDs, games, fiction and nonfiction at my disposal. I watch and read or watch a lot of very odd stuff and have been finding Canadian military history particularly fascinating lately. However While I'm actually working I don't read or watch anything particularly deep or intellectual, as those types of books and shows tend to make poor game material and often don't make sense at 1 AM after a long day of writing.

Something else I do is to read or watch things I honestly don't like and to ruthlessly analyze my own work. If someone brings up an issue, I will quiz them endlessly on why they think it's an issue or what circumstances it came into play in, etc. Some people have misinterpreted this as being defensive, but it's really me attempting to find holes and problems in my own work. Just because a rule is good enough for print doesn't mean it's perfect or that I'm happy with it.

All of that said, the trick with all setting and mechanics stuff is really to not actually make it very different, but make it a new kind of familiar. If people can't identify with it, they won't accept it, no matter how good of a setting or rule it is.

How do you deal with annoying posters in the forum? :P

We don't have all that many annoying posters, really. Even the ones I don't agree with I listen to or read because even flawed or weird ideas or comments have a very large impact on what the community thinks and can give me insight into how to do my job better. What mistakes people make when reading or playing give great insight into what I can do better as a writer and help them avoid these mistakes (hence me being ruthless when looking at my own work). I really hope we see more actual play posts and so on, as they are great reading and help me immensely.

Beth: Why aren't you putting Ferrets in the Southern Book?

The Buttwheel does not meet the minimum snootyness requirements for the Republic.

Ferret on the Loose!

Official Rules for Heavy Gear Blitz!

Turrets were always a very enjoyable addition to my Second Edition games and we've received many requests to include them in Blitz. I didn't have enough room in the Main book or in the army books, but I do here.

```
                Defensive Turret

Name: Defensive Turret
Faction:    AHRP
Actions:    1
Defense     n/a    0     0     0     0
Attack      n/a    -    +2     -     -
Size:       8
Detect:     2
Sensors:    0
Auto Comm:  3
Comm:       0
Armor:      25
Damage:     SSLHC

Weapons:
2x HAC or 2x HRP. No reloads

Perks/Flaws: Backup Fire Control, Weapon
Link (both HACs or Both HRP)
Aux Systems:
Option:
```

Defensive Turrets may be taken by Players who have chosen the Defensive stance instead of Artillery Barrages. In this case, the artillery barrage limits are used for the Turrets. HAC turrets cost 45 TV and HRP turrets cost 90 TV.

Defensive Turrets may also be used in special scenarios as independent third parties, objectives, or nearly anything you can think a Defensive Turret could be used for.

Northern Squad Contest

Show off your modeling and painting skills! Create, paint, and assemble a Northern Squad from DP9 miniatures, built to meet squad guidelines from Hammers of Faith. Include all information about which HoF army the squad is for and the swaps you used to outfit the squad. You may include a fluff background for the squad, and notes you feel are important (such as if you spent 15 hours building something to get an effect). Regiments of note are allowed!

All entries will be judged by DP9 staff based on painting, modeling and theme, as well as the fit for the army you built it for. First prize is $50 credit at the DP9 webstore; second prize is $25 at the DP9 webstore. Deadline for entries is May 1st, 2007. Submit entries to auroramag@gmail.com with the following in the subject line: NSC.

Battle Report Contest

Had a battle recently you know should go down in the annals of history? Submit it to the Battle Report Contest. Write a turn-by-turn, blow-by-blow description of the battle, describing the game you played. Photographs will add to the effect, and extra fiction and background is allowed. Include the forces, size of the game, size of the table nd, of course, how you and your opponent are, regiments you play, etc. The main goal is to be entertaining and informative. Be sure to check the errata and FAQ before playing to be sure nothing was overlooked.

The entries will be judged by DP9 staff. The best ones will be published in a future issue of Aurora, and the winner will receive a piece of custom artwork. Deadline for entries is May 1st, 2007. Submit entries to auroramag@gmail.com with the following in the subject line: BRC.

Upcoming Releases

DP9-9032	Swords of Pride - Armies of the South	Mar. 2007
DP9-9033	Shields of Freedom - Armies of the Badlands	May 2007
DP9-9046	South Recon Cadre	March 2007
DP9-9047	North Grizzly Two Pack	March 2007
DP9-9026	Peace River Fire Support Squad	April 2007
DP9-9045	North Recon Squad	April 2007
DP9-9048	South Spitting Cobra Two Pack	April 2007
DP9-9044	Peace River Recon Squad	May 2007
DP9-9049	South Iguana Two Pack	May 2007
DP9-9050	North Cheetah Two Pack	June 2007

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, explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment and the like that draw on 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 it's 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 chose the best point to split the story, if necessary. In keeping with the nature of the magazine we ask that fiction 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, and you may request that another contributor be asked to create the rules support based on your story.

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

Submission Guidelines

All work for Aurora should be submitted in an .rtf (Rich Text Format) 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 150dpi for greyscale or colour images, 300dpi for black & white images (1-bit). Given the size of a page, images should be no larger than 7 by 7 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. If by including images the submission would grow over 2 megabytes in size, please place the images on an Internet-accessible server where we will download them (don't forget to tell us where they are located).

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 #3: April 14th

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.

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, below.

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.

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.

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. Submitted articles will be run by the game world historians, so check your work! You may, however, 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.

Beth Porter (thelieutenant@gmail.com) -- *Cover Image. Illustration: p23*
Beth Porter is an artist. She's done a lot of Heavy Gear fan art, and is currently working on illustrations for Swords of Pride. She has an unnatural fondness for Ferrets.

Brandon Fero (thanatosstorm@yahoo.com) -- *White Snow, Red Blood*
Brandon Fero is trained as an M1A1 Abrams tank crewman in the United States Army, and enjoys writing fan fiction, reading and roleplaying in his spare time. While browsing for mecha games he found Heavy Gear in 1998, and bought the computer game Heavy Gear II when it came out. Brandon is currently deployed with the 1st Cavalry Division in Baghdad, Iraq.

Christopher Gregory (chrisgregory@hotmail.com) -- *Modified Anti-Missile Fire*

Greg Perkins (gregoryperkins@gmail.com) -- *Illustration: Mammoth in Action, p17*
Greg Perkins is trained as an architect, and enjoys miniature painting, illustration and graphic design in his spare time. He discovered Heavy Gear while working at migscon for Global Games in 1995, where he's quite sure he met Robert Dubois who was discussing his excitement over the, then, upcoming Heavy Gear: The New Breed. Greg is currently a masters of architecture candidate at the University of Waterloo.

James Ryan Cunningham aka Stryker (gearheadwhat@gmail.com) -- *Blitz Duelists*
A long time Heavy Gear nut who's been causing trouble since the start, and there's no end in sight for it ever stopping. Currently serving in the United States Navy.

John Buckmaster (dp9.rules.support@gmail.com) -- *Messages from the Pod*
John Buckmaster is DP9's head rules monkey and line developer. He's one of the masterminds behind the whole Blitz thing, and has been a Heavy Gear fan forever.

Matt Valgardson (bentradio@gmail.com) -- *Freddie the Ferret*
Matt Valgardson is a long time Pod fanatic and self declared Woofpee. When he's not drawing strange things and pretending to host a local radio show he often serves as John Buckmaster's chauffeur.

Nick Pilon (npilon@gmail.com) -- *SEED: Odyssey*
Nick Pilon is a DP9 freelancer. He's particularly insane, because he keeps trying to track down and resolve continuity problems and ensure consistent capitalization of game terms.

Oliver Bollmann (kannikcat@hotmail.com) -- *Core Injection: Variant RPG Rules*
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Almost as soon as he began gaming he began writing, tinkering and adding for and to them, which led to self-publishing and e-publishing several supplements. In the times he's not playing games, practicing traditional Chinese martial arts, designing buildings, or being a stand for the world he continues to write and create for all manner of things. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began his direct involvement with the Pod crew a couple of years ago.

Paul O'Connel (vladthebad@gmail.com) -- *Illustration: Up In Smoke, p7*

Philippe Le Clerc -- *The Making of a Spitting Cobra. Ilustrations: p8. Miniatures: p 20, p24*
Philippe Le Clerc is DP9's miniature master. He designs and sculpts the models, and is the other mastermind behind the whole Blitz thing.

Wil Hutton (binarysins@rivetgeek.net) -- *Complexity: Options for Silcore*
Wil Hutton is a long-time Dream Pod 9 fan going all the way back to Ianus Publications' licensed Cyberpunk supplements, Jovian Chronicles sourcebooks for Mekton II and Mecha Press magazine. Constantly tinkering with new rules and material for Tribe 8, Jovian Chronicles and SilCore in general he is responsible for two websites devoted to Dream Pod 9 games, as well as serving as a moderator on the Dream Pod 9 forums. Wil currently lives in Southern California with his wife, daughter and step-daughter and is employed as a SQL data analyst.