

A U R O R A

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
SKIRMISH BATTLES
NEW CAMPAIGN SETTING
HEAVY GEAR MARCH MADNESS!



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
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AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

“As we got further and further away, it [the Earth] diminished in size. Finally it shrank to the size of a marble, the most beautiful you can imagine. That beautiful, warm, living object looked so fragile, so delicate, that if you touched it with a finger it would crumble and fall apart. Seeing this has to change a man.”

— James B. Irwin (Apollo 15)

It's amazing to ponder: only twenty four humans have walked on the face of the moon. And of those still living it is a number that is slowly diminishing. There have been many more who have orbited the Earth, including six right now as I write this, all orbiting in the ISS. Even as we play our games, set on far flung worlds, it is humbling to remember that there are extraordinary feats of engineering, perseverance, and professionalism happening right now to take our first steps into the vast ocean of space that surrounds our home.

And that home of ours. That perfect vessel that keeps us alive. Our vehicle for hurtling through the cosmos. The quote by James Irwin is a common sentiment expressed by many who have travelled above our delicately thin atmosphere, to gaze down on home. Practically every tourist to the ISS has spent most of their free time (of which they have plenty, not being crew) just staring back at our home. It changes people.

It's a bad pun, but talk about a change in perspective. To look down and suddenly see, no, not just see, but viscerally grasp, understand and imbue the reality that we ain't much, in the grand scheme of the universe. That world that seemed so infinite and ever enduring, so vast how could we ever possibly affect it, well, it isn't so vast, and not so ever enduring as we thought. And it is all we have. If we break it, we are in a heap of trouble.

As gamers we hurtle ourselves through the cosmos with the greatest of ease, to inhabit worlds far flung. Perhaps through that virtual travel, we can alter our perspectives as well. As the Little Prince said: “It is a question of discipline. When you've finished your own toilet in the morning, then it is time to attend to the toilet of your planet, just so, with the greatest care.”

Welcome to issue 7.2 of your Silhouette Magazine.

Game on,

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

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

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I'm a fellow Pod Squad Member based in Las Vegas NV and I am a Postal worker trying to help the cause of global dominance of DP9 gaming!

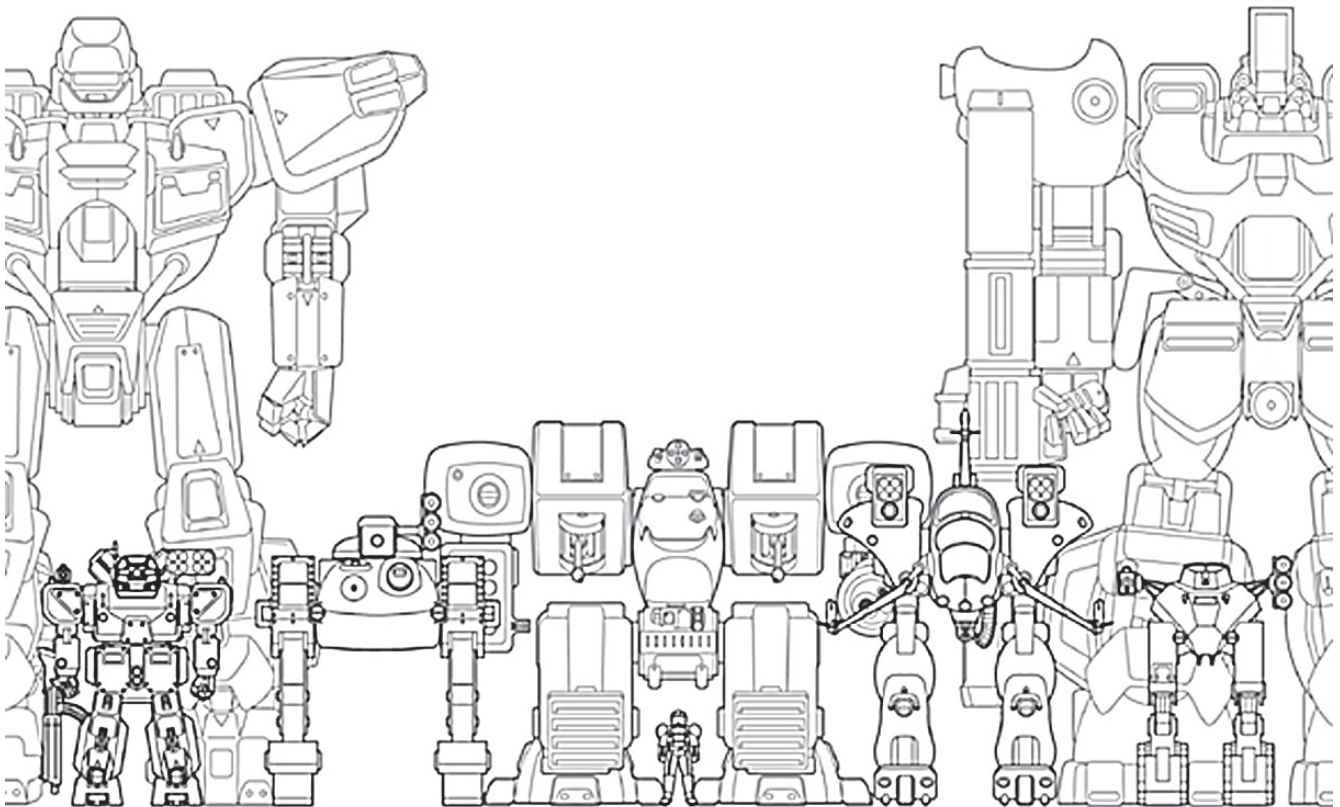
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It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Since then games have just become a big part of his life. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began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

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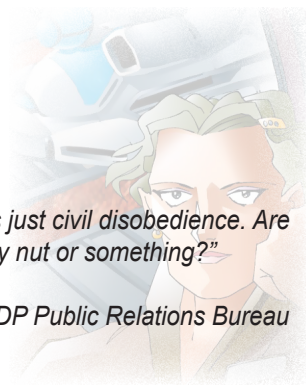
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“What do you mean? Of course it’s just civil disobedience. Are you some kind of conspiracy nut or something?”

-Sous-lieutenant Marcus Bolun, MDP Public Relations Bureau

Office of First Citizen Cheng
Loyang, Mekong Dominion
25 Winter, TN1942

“First Citizen, you must authorize the use of letha-”

“No!” The leader of Loyang cut off the Peacekeeper Commandant mid sentence with a single harsh syllable. He paused for a moment to collect himself and took a deep breath. “No, my friend, violence is the remit of the desperate and evil, and we are neither. Taipan Logan has told me of the future of the Hemisphere, but it requires us to earn it. Attacking citizens in the streets, even rioters, are the tactics of the mindless thugs in the MILICIA and the SRA. Indeed, the fact that Molay and deRouen turn to those tactics so readily is exactly why we face these trials today.” He looked out the window of his office, the view was as poor as ever, he couldn’t even see to the city’s edge through the thick smog, though today it was lit from within with the devilish red glow of burning buildings.

“But sir, the riots have lasted nearly two weeks, and we’ve not been able to dissuade them with water canons and tear gas. Hell, with the environment here I’m amazed they even react to tear gas. But they just...” Commandant Mika Donald punched the Taipan’s expensive wooden desk, “Dammit sir, my people are dying. Yesterday a group of rioters rushed one of my Asps, brought it down by literal weight of numbers, dragged the pilot from the cockpit and... and hanged him from a street light. Whether you authorize it or not, sir, at some point my men are going to find themselves fulfilling one of your conditions: desperation, and I will not punish them for defending their own lives.”

Cheng hung his head and let out a heavy sigh. “I’m sorry for your men, Commandant, but we must hold to our principles.” He considered his options, thinking of his own brother, a peacekeeper who gave his life in the inter-polar war. “Very well,” he turned around and rested his hands on the desk in a calculated move to lend both gravitas and authority to his next statement, “I will authorize lethal force but only in situations where your constables feel they can prove an imminent threat to their own lives, and only when they have exhausted all other possibilities. I will not have these riots turn into an indiscriminate blood bath, and I will not have anyone made an example of, unless it is you for disobeying my direct orders. Are we clear?”

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LETHAL FORCE
SCOTT MCINTYRE

The Peacekeeper nodded and gave the Taipan a crisp salute, “As crystal sir, thank you.” She turned on her heel and marched smartly out of the man’s office.

.....

“Here Chatt, keep it here.” The helicopter settled into an easy hover above the milling mass of Mekongese in the square below them. “How do I look? Eyvan, can you get me in frame with the rioters behind me?”

The cameraman nodded as they listened to the anchors in the studio finish up the previous story and throw to their news team. Eyvan gave the woman a thumbs up as the indicator in his Camera’s HUD showed they were on the live feed. “Hello, this is Talia Takinawa coming to you from high above the Loyang Riots. As you can see behind me the city is in utter pandemonium, as it has been for much of the last two weeks. We still don’t know what set the people of Loyang off, but while there doesn’t seem to be any unified front to the protests, one of the most prominent names in the riots is called the Free Air Keepers, a group that has been agitating for cycles about the environmental disaster that is Loyang.”

“Eleven o’clock low kid.” Chatt’s voice on the internal comms led Eyvan to pan around in the direction the grizzled old pilot had indicated, quickly enough to see a Cobra MP fully emerge from the cover of a side street. “Prophet, why the hell would they have a Redeye in this?”

The woman took the development in stride, watching on a monitor as the camera focused on the powerfully built gear. “Here we see a member of the Mekong Peacekeepers, who were called in by First Citizen Cheng after the protests turned violent. My pilot has identified this gear as a Redeye Cobra MP. As yet the first citizen has strictly forbidden any use of lethal force, though reports have come in that the rioters feel no such limi-”

Even from nearly a hundred meters away and twice that in the air the thunder of the gear’s powerful rapid fire canon was just audible over the thrum of the craft’s rotors. “Mother of god...” Eyvan spoke out loud, rather than sub-vocalizing into his throat mic, and the comment was quietly picked up by the newswoman’s microphone. He swung the camera around quickly towards the vehicle’s target. Individuals in the crowd were simply vanishing as high calibre rounds tore through the mass of people in a steady stream.

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"The... the Peacekeeper is firing on the rioters!" Talia's voice cracked as she watched the carnage unfold, "My... I can't even, my god. Eyvan, zoom in, get his badge number!" The camera zoomed in, but the bold black numbers that would have identified the gear's pilot to the world had been hastily daubed over with yellow paint.

The gunfire stopped, and the woman heard Chatt curse before being thrown against the side of the chopper's passenger compartment. Outside the window a stream of tracer rounds split the night sky. "Did... did he just fire on us? Are we being fired on? Oh my god, he's shooting at us! Chatt he's-"

"I know Tally!" the pilot wrestled with the controls, mentally cursing the clumsiness of the civilian craft, and wishing more than ever to be back at the controls of his Titan "Congratulations, you're a war reporter, now pull yourself together and get reporting!"

The woman grabbed a hold of the mic and braced herself against the side of the vehicle as it continued its gyrations. "We appear to be under fire from the Peacekeeper gear. I have no idea why it has turned its weapons on us, perhaps it's ooph-" she grunted as Eyvan was pitched into her lap by an especially forceful judder.

"We're hit!" Chatt announced from the cockpit, "Strap yourselves in if you're foolish enough to not be yet, I'm not going to be able to keep us up much longer!"

Talia, already strapped in, grabbed Eyvan's camera as the young man fumbled with his own restraints. She held it up pointed towards her own face. "We have been hit by peacekeeper gunfire, I repeat, we have been hit by peacekeeper gunfire. I don't know if we'll be able to land safely, please tell Trisha that I lo-"

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"Nice shooting kindling four, but we have no boom, just splash. Scurry Six, can you confirm boom?" The shadowy figure watched the displays on her various monitors, her face barely visible in the low red light of the vehicle cockpit.

The reply was quick. "Roger that Watcher Actual, we're on it."

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The Peacekeeper command centre went dead quiet as the trideo screen cut to blank static, then back to the anchors in the studio. The shocked looks on the newsmen's faces mirrored those of the Commandant Donald and her senior officers. The woman finally broke the silence. "Who the hell was that!?"

All around her officers started flipping through notepads and computer readouts. "I... I don't think we know, ma'am." The young adjutant spoke up from the back of the room where he was flipping through a half dozen clip boards. "In the last few days over 20 cadres have entered the city from precincts all over the League. With the business district in flames and the sin district close on its heels we've been sending them out on patrol almost as soon as they show up. The Sergeants who've been registering them have been doing so in a rush, I've got three cobras listed here, but none specifically as Red Eyes, and only one of them has a name tied to them. I've got a half dozen Cadres where we've got pilot's names but no idea of the gears they're in. And at least two of these rosters could be Cobras but the Sergeant who filled out the form might as well have been using some kind of cipher given the quality of his hand writing."

The officer cursed and grabbed a radio set, "Attention all units, attention all units. This is a general order, there is a Cobra out there with its badge number painted over. He is to be neutralized on sight. Capture if possible. Any other officer located with his identification obscured is also to be brought in. I repeat-"

The high pitched whine had been growing in the command centre for a few seconds before anyone noticed it, a sous-adjutant who had served in the MILICIA during the War recognized it first. "Mortar! Cover!" Grabbing the Commandant he dove under the map table just as the room's windows blew in.

Mika crawled out from under the sturdy metal table amid the screams of the wounded and the acrid stench of expended explosives. "Get a medic in here, and get me a report, where they hell did that come from?!"

One of the radio operators lifted up the severed wire from his set and then pulled an undamaged headset from the unmoving form of the man beside him. "Report-" he stopped to cough heavily for several seconds, "report coming in ma'am, looks like it came from the roof of the Lo Guang building." Lo Guang Limited owned a pair of small refineries on the edge of town. Their head offices were in a four storey building in the downtown core of Loyang, and had been occupied by the Free Air Keepers almost since the beginning of the riots. "The cadres on watch of the building are requesting permission to return fire."

The officer thought back to her meeting with the first citizen and scowled at how much she wanted to make an example of the Keepers. "No! My orders stand, they are not authorized to use lethal force unless they come under direct fire." Her turn to cough as the first medics made their way into the badly damaged room. "Everyone who's mobile vacate the room. You

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LETHAL FORCE

two," she indicated a pair of constables who had been acting as runners for her officers. "Grab the maps and whatever equipment you can carry and get it down to one of the store rooms in the basement, we'll re-establish there."

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"Dammit Scurry Three, we want to scare them, not bring the building down on them. Adjust target 10 mark 36." On the vehicle's main monitor a column of smoke rose from the large crater in the side of the administration building. A few moments later another pair of mortar rounds landed, gouging deep holes into the building's parking lot.

"Better, Watcher Actual?"

The woman smiled cruelly and nodded. "Much, Scurry Three, maintain bombardment and await my signal."

.....

Caporal Goffry Talbot and Constable Haria Nguyen's Jaegers made their way down the boulevard through the choking smoke of the nearby business district fires. "Sounds like someone finally let these cretins have it, eh Goff?" The woman's grenade launcher tracked along the windows of the abandoned buildings that lined the street.

The Caporal's autocannon tracked along the windows on the opposite side of the roadway. "I'll have none of that Constable. Even if they don't realize it we're here to protect these people as much as we are to protect the city." The woman didn't respond but he was used to her starting to sulk when she was reprimanded.

As they moved into a side street they found another Peacekeeper gear, a Hunting Iguana MP. They froze for a second as they watched it bring its baton down in a sweeping arc through a crowd of rioters that were pressed up into the corner of two buildings, nearly trampling each other in an effort to escape the rampaging gear. "You! What the hell do you think you're doing?!" The Iguana paused and looked back at the two gears as Goffry levelled his canon at the rogue officer. "Stand down, NOW!" he signalled his partner with his free hand. "Haria, watch that cross-"

He simultaneously heard the ka-thunk of the woman's grenade launcher and her cry of "AGR!" before the fragmentation shell exploded in the middle of the still fleeing rioters. He spun around just in time to take another of the projectiles to his faceplate. He was still reeling when the Iguana's rifle shell punctured his gear's fuel tank.

The remaining two gears stared each other down for a moment before nodding at each other, the Iguana slipped away down a side street while Haria put another grenade through the door the rioters had been fleeing into.

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"Kindling two to Watcher Actual. Match is lit, this powder keg is about to blow." The woman smiled at the report.

"Roger Kindling two. Scurry three, copy?"

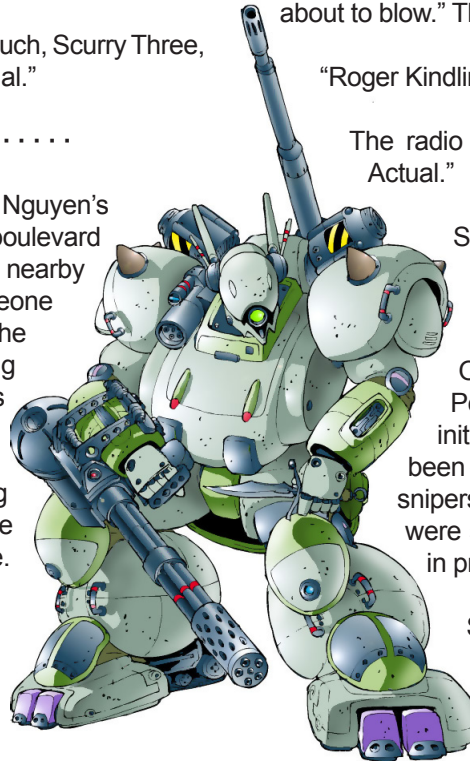
The radio crackled for a minute, "We copy Watcher Actual."

She nodded. "Light it up."

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Outside Lo Guang Limited's head office the Peacekeeper's stood a tense watch. After the initial lucky shot most of the mortar rounds had been going wide. They'd gotten the go ahead to get snipers on the mortar teams, but the sharpshooters were still trying to get clear shots on the well dug in protestors.

Suddenly an Anolis reeled backwards, a hole punched in its chest plate by an anti-gear rifle. Almost as if they'd rehearsed it the peacekeepers sprang into action. The vehicles opened fire on the building, driving the protestors away from the windows while the constables on foot rushed towards the front door. As expected they found it heavily barricaded, but a charging Caiman made short work of the thick timbers and was left idling in the building's lobby. The hole and the lobby were big enough that an Anolis was able to squeeze into the space to ensure none of the criminals could escape.



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Sergent Kavits lead his men into the building on a full tactical assault. They cleared room by room, the ground floor seemed empty, but he didn't want any surprises before he pushed up to the upper levels. He passed a number of protestors that seemed to be suffering self inflicted gunshot wounds, and he wondered just how fanatical these environmental nuts were.

Confident the first floor was cleared Kavits led his men up the stairs to the second floor of the building. Reaching the top of the stairs one of the constables kicked the door to the stairwell open with a textbook perfect flying kick and slid across the floor his weapon tracking for any targets. The rest of the tactical team followed him in not a moment later.

It took Kavits less than a second to recognize the large pile of boxes in the centre of the second floor corridor, another moment to register the indicator light on the box change from green to red, and then in his last moment he drew forth the most vile, vitriolic curse he could bring to mind.

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The woman sitting in the cockpit of her vehicle waited several tense minutes for the report to finally come over the heavily encrypted comm channel. "Watcher Actual, Scurry Three reporting all hands on deck. How'd we do redecorating?"

The woman smiled with relief, "Trust me Scurry three, it was a real blast." The shaky drone camera footage was barely able to show the rubble that had been the Lo Guang offices through the thick haze of smoke that still filled the streets around it.

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Talia came to hanging face down from her shoulder straps. Everything seemed to be in one piece. Well everything attached to her. She could see just looking forward that the helicopter had snapped in half as it had crashed. Reaching up she undid the clasp on her four point safety belt and just barely got her arms under her to keep herself from smashing face first into the ground. She heard Eyvan moaning somewhere above her and saw him slowly coming to as well. Fairly certain Eyvan wouldn't be in much worse shape than herself she half crawled towards the front half of the aircraft, a half dozen meters away.

She found Chatt before she got to the twisted wreckage. He was still strapped to his command couch, which had been torn loose of its frame and dropped onto the asphalt between the two halves of the vehicle. She climbed around to be able to see him. "Chatt? Chatt, are you alright?"

The old man smiled and coughed, a trickle of blood forming at the corner of his mouth. "Hey Tal, glad to see you made it down ok. How was my landing?"

The woman looked down to see a half meter spar of metal sticking out of the pilot's gut. "Oh my god, Chatt, it's alright, they'll find us. They've got peacekeepers and paramedics all over the city, we'll get you off of... to a hospital and you'll be just fine." She heard shouting over her shoulder asking if there was anyone still alive. "Yes! We're here, hurry, we've got wounded! You just hold on Chatt, you're the best pilot anywhere, keeping me and Eyvan safe as that bastard was shooting at us."

The pilot shook his head. "The only thing you have to thank me for kid is getting you on the ground in one piece. I didn't do any of it up there." He gestured vaguely skyward.

"What are you talking about you old coot, you were dodging bullets for-"

He just shook his head. "From that range, with that gun, and me not watching for it? Either that Cobra was piloted by the worst scrub to ever fail out of the MILICIA, or they wanted us to report in before we went down." Talia held the man's hand as she heard foot steps drawing closer behind her. "I don't know the tune, but we got played like a fine violin." He looked up and a resigned look came over his face. "Anyways, been nice working with you darling. See you on the other side."

The woman shook her head, "Chatt, hold on Chatt, we'll-" she froze as she heard the pistol cock behind her head. "Oh."

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"Scurry Six to Watcher Actual."

Things were nearly wrapped up and the woman was much more relaxed now. "Go ahead Scurry Six, did we have boom?"

"Negative boom Watcher Actual, but the situation's been dealt with. Three marks."

The woman nodded, thinking back to the flaming descent of the news chopper and mentally congratulating its late pilot on his excellent piloting skills. "Roger that Scurry three, make rendezvous at point bravo two, you're the last ones out, so I'll see you there." With barely a sound the Green Mamba rose from the shallow tailings pond on the edge of the city and pushed its way into the sickly brush around the edge of the choking metropolis.

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LETHAL FORCE

Port Oasis
Office of Jaques Molay
27 Winter, 1942

“-frankly Diane I’m amazed it took as long as it did for this powder keg to go up.” The talking head on the Trideo screen was facing to someone off camera as Cornelia entered the well appointed office. “Two weeks of utter impotence in the face of someone killing your colleagues, your friends even, will drive any man to the edges of his moral high ground, Peacekeeper or no.” Behind him video was playing of anarchy in the streets of Lo Yang. The riots were all but extinguished now, as more and more Peacekeepers reported facing grave personal threat in the streets of the city, and the rioters numbers dwindled as a result.

“And what about the instigator of this horrendous violence? The gear pilot who shot down our colleague, the late Mrs. Takinawa and her crew?” The camera had cut back to the host of the talk show, Diane Youan, the gorgeous blonde woman with perfect teeth had a look of anger on her face as she spoke of the dead woman. Cornelia found herself mentally tabulating how much the woman’s appearance must have cost her in Atsi. Those kinds of mods cost more than some of the more outlandish one, specifically because ‘celebrities’ like Ms. Youan would pay for them. “The Peacekeepers are claiming ignorance as to the identity of the pilot, and saying a full investigation will be launched. Abnar?”

The Camera jumped again, this time to a vaguely Arabic looking man with a thick beard. “Of course they’re pleading ignorance. They’re not going to turn over one of their own to the Taipans’ questionable sense of justice, and I use the word as loosely as possible, for doing what I’m sure every last one of them wanted to do. There’ll be an investigation but the Peacekeeper’s will close ranks like any other government organization. It just goes to show that they’re no better than the MILICIA, just slower to actually decide they’re going to slaughter our people wholesa-”

The Trideo turned off and Cornelia turned to face her mentor. “Lord Protector, I’ve got the report on that special operation you were asking about.”

The man smiled a kindly smile and reclined slightly in the high backed leather chair. “It’s alright Cornelia, I just had the room swept for bugs this morning. You may speak freely. I take it from the news that Loyang went to plan?”

The woman nodded curtly. She was sharp featured and several decades Molay’s junior. He knew she had extensive tattoos beneath the conservative business suit she wore, and a set of lizard like fins ran along her jawline. The older man would normally have frowned upon such obvious cosmetic alterations, but the ‘dragon fins’ seemed to suit her perfectly. Besides, she was one of the sharpest analysts he’d met in the SRID, and a valuable asset. The fins flared as she spoke. “Within tolerances, yes. The news chopper’s pilot was apparently ex-MILICIA, and was able to bring the vehicle down relatively safely. Our foot troopers had to finish off the crew.”

Molay steepled his fingers and nodded. “I assume their cause of death will not be too obvious?”

The woman pulled one folder out of the bundle she was carrying, opened it, and placed it on his desk. “They were suitably treated before being killed. And it’s been strongly suggested to the coroner that they were set upon by a band of rioters before the Peacekeepers could get to them, brutalized, and shot. When his report is issued the media should go into a feeding frenzy as the first signs of a coverup start to emerge.” The fins stood to full attention as she beamed with pride through her thick framed glasses.

“Any losses on our side?” Molay flipped through the pictures, admiring the skill with which the operatives had broken bone and bruised flesh to make it look like a half dozen unorganized brutes, instead of a few trained assailants, had inflicted the injuries.

The woman nodded “One infiltrator Iguana was downed as he fled the city. Watcher Cadre was able to ensure operational security.” Molay nodded, it was a sanitized way of saying they made sure the pilot wouldn’t be able to talk. “And of course, the infiltration Cadre’s vehicles will be found abandoned outside the city. By the time they’re traced and a headcount is run, the only missing Redeye Cobra should belong to a Cadre out of Mekong well known for being a unit favoured by Taipan Logan as his personal bodyguard, and who will have mysteriously vanished on the twenty third. If the Peacekeepers publish those findings it will look like they’re shifting blame rightly or wrongly to the Taipan’s office. If they try to keep it quiet we’ll see that it gets out and then it looks like Mr. Abnar was right and the Peacekeepers are no better than any other government stooges.” The woman paused heavily. “If I may, sir?”

The man signalled for her to proceed with her question. “I’m not really seeing the point of this Operation. It doesn’t seem to relate to Operation Heartstrike in any meaningful way.”

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Molay put the folder down and rested his chin on his hands. "You're right. It doesn't." He gave it a few beats for that to run through her head, when he saw the look on her face begin to shift to acceptance he carried on. "At least not directly. Would you vote for a Lord Protector who couldn't even keep his league's security forces from massacring one of his own cities?" The woman shook her head, "Of course not, and neither will the Curia. Logan's getting too big for his own good, this will give him something on the home front to really distract him, and when Heartstrike does go into its final stages deRouen will have one less group he can trust to help him, as after this week's demonstration no one in the Republic would welcome the Peacekeepers into our borders without protest."

The woman nodded as she processed the information. "I suppose if there is enough outrage it's possible Logan may even be voted off the board, yes?"

Molay stood up and walked over to a sideboard as he responded. "Possible, yes, but unlikely. And undesirable." He poured two glasses of brandy and handed one to the woman, who had a quizzical look on her face, "Logan is ambitious, maybe even dangerous, but he is a known quantity. I'd rather continue to play him as long as possible than attempt to fit my plans around someone who may be even more of a threat."

The woman took a sip of the drink and nodded. "I've got a lot to learn still."

The older man nodded back. "You do, my dear, but you are young, and eager to learn. I feel you will have little trouble finding people who wish to teach you."

She held up her glass, "To Heartstrike, and learning."

He tapped his glass to hers. "And to those willing to learn."



MEKONG CITY: Inside the Golden Temple

A little After Battle Report with pictures from Avatar Comics and Games' Heavy Gear March Madness weekend!

Friday March 8th we held a lightning Blitz! Tournament PL1 285TV one squad. Our winner was Randy Guintivano with his PRDF winning it all in a glorious flurry of gaming. Walter Childs was our Best Painted winner!

Our Saturday March 9th Iron Gear Tournament Had Cory Coltrain Winning the event, with Randy Guintivano winning both the Best Sportsman and Best Painted awards!



1ST PLACE WINNER: RANDY GUINTIVANO



1ST PLACE WINNER: CORY COLTRAIN

BEST PAINTED: WALTER CHILDS

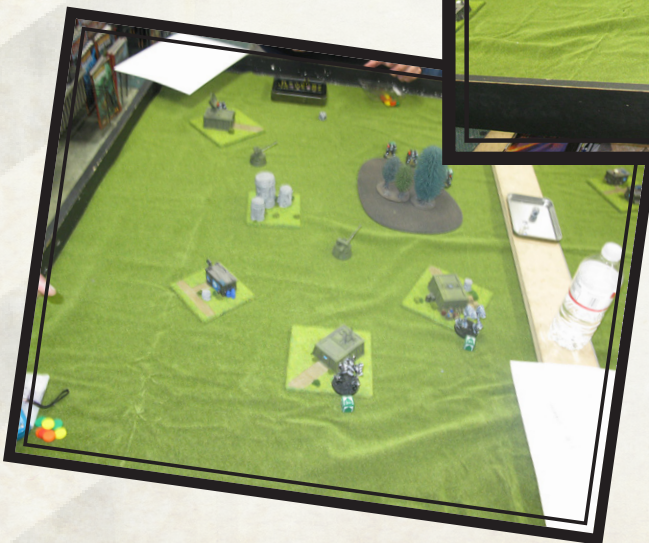


BEST SPORTSMAN & BEST PAINTED WINNER: RANDY GUINTIVANO

Much fun was had at both events and many gears died but none were harmed in the event. If anyone is planning a trip to Las Vegas, AKA Sin City feel free to stop by Avatar Comics and Games and get a game of Heavy Gear on Sin City Style!

Remember what gears die in Vegas stay in Vegas...

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE HEAVY GEAR MARCH MADNESS!





We all love our gears, striders, and tanks. Because we all love them, there is no need to discuss how to play them. However, my little friends, the N-KIDUs, are often overlooked, or forgotten entirely. In this article I am going to talk about the drones, armigers, and other vehicles of the Utopian forces, and how to use them and how to abuse your opponents with them.

Lets talk about your hardware. You have the N-KIDUs rated as C, R, T, and F; you have the Armigers rated as commando, race, and fire support; then you have the hc3 hover car and apes. There are three things here for you to notice: No tanks, no gears, and ridiculous amounts of EW capability. There is also nothing similar to the troopers that Terra Novan forces get, nor is anything close to the speed and hitting power of CEF. This puts you at a disadvantage in most situations. Unless you get creative and mean. I will show you a couple different techniques for doing just that.

Here are the top three Utopian units.

Utopia offers open and virtually unlimited access to the N-KIDU R. I LOVE this little guy. It has a TD, ECM, or ECCM with a COM rating of +1 and detect 5. It has a gun, but that is for show, and access to the VLP/32. The VLRP/32 is available to the R, T, and C N-KIDU units allowing a much larger and scarier pinpoint barrage. With whichever EW equipment you want, and the rocket pod, this guy is 35 points. And you can get 8 of them as a core unit. Oh I'm sorry, did you want to spend that command point?

If the N-KIDU R isn't enough EW dominance for you, there is the HC3 command car. COM +2 available to get to +5, detect 6 sensors 1, ECM and ECCM plus a sat uplink. Not only can you spend your command points at will without worry, your opponent isn't going to be able to do any com event without your permission unless he packs his gears together in autocom range.

To utilize that TD that N-KIDU R is carrying, you get the Armiger FS 101. This guy is my 2nd favorite weapon that Utopia has. It can take up to 4 control units, giving you up to 8 drones apiece, the option for ATM or Heavy Guided Mortar, and a choice between VHAC and LLC. All of its choices are good ones, all suited to your tastes. It gets to hide and rain death. The support troupe also gives you a total of 18 actions for a single activation.

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UTOPIA DIRTY TRICKS

DAN LISWOOD

Backing up the above, you can take the CO 101 which gives you hover mobility HGLC or LGL and solid access to the N-KIDU C that carries the VLRP/32 or AGM and LBZK. The RC 101 gives you more EW dominance, (ECM ECCM SAT UP) and can be stealth 4. The N-KIDU F Can take either the MRP/9 or a 4 shot AGM. There is also the Ape (Not a Golem, this is Utopia!), which are mostly cheap. They can take stealth, and drones, plus a random LGL. I like theses guys to finish off an army, and use them for objective taking and anti infantry. Though the Man-At-Arms does have a VLRP/128 with a staggering ROF of 6, which can be stupidly useful.

The only piece of hardware that Utopia has which never pulls its weight is the N- KIDU T. It best feature, the linked VLAC really only scares Asps, Infantry, and critically damaged light and trooper gears.

On top of this impressive list of hardware, Utopia has two additional weapons: The pin Point Barrage and the Command and Control special rule. The barrage allows for your cheap drones and their weak weapons to turn into a devastating strike that will inspire tears from your opponent and for you to yell "behold I am Kali! Destroyer of Worlds!" Command and Control allows your Armiger Pilots to initiate direct control of their drones.

The Pin Point barrage has three weaknesses, all of which are toothless. The first is that it is a communications event, which means that it can be blocked. However, you have a COM bonus on each drone, as well as the above-mentioned amounts of ECCM available. The second is that all of the participating drones must be firing the same weapon and be relatively unharmed (must not be heavily or critically damaged). There weapon similarity is why I push and recommend the VLRP/32 because both the R and C N-KIDUs can take it. (The T can too but that is beside the point). Avoiding the damage issue will come later.

"What is this pin point barrage?" Other than an amazing offensive weapon it is what Utopia does. It is a communication event that combines your drones attacks together. The stipulations sound like it is hard to create, but it is easy: aside from what was listed above your drones need to be in range, have an action, and within 10 inches of another drone. You also need line of sight to the target or be capable of indirect fire (VLRP/32). For every three extra drones you add +1 to the link and +1 to the skill. That means 10 drones can fire together on a target with a link

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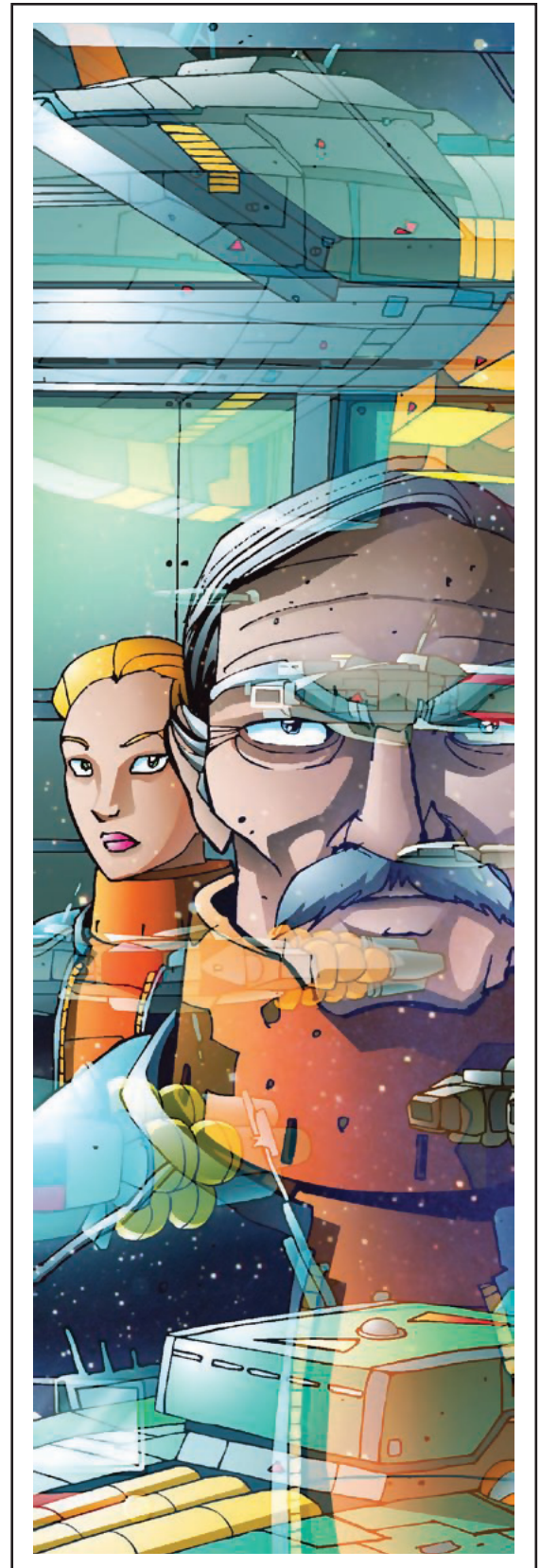
UTOPIA DIRTY TRICKS

4 and a skill of 5. If the lead drone direct line of sight, it will not be considered indirect. At an ROF 3 you can make a 6-inch wide zone of death (8x linked 4 times can be devastating) or a single shot at 11x and linked 4. Because you can get to stealth 4, there is a good chance that the target wont sees it coming. Less epic sounding, you can have 4 F firing AGMs. Because you have shut down your opponent's ability to use command points for re-rolls via you EW dominance you should be able to drop and entire GP squad in a single turn even if just by making 5 gears defend 4 times. Or drop anything shy of a heavy tank through constant dice rolls.

You also have the option of using Command and Control you can jack your drones skills from 2's to 3's giving you that slight extra edge on the your pin point barrage or to sneak an AGM into the rear of a high value target. Again that this is a communications event, which means that be can be stopped. The last, unspoken, and most devious weapon of the Utopians is the N-KIDU durability, which give N-KIDU immunity to stun. Combining all of these rules together you can jump your drones skills to 3, crash stop and launch a pinpoint barrage. Assuming optimal range of a R drone, in a 10 drone barrage, at a target in the open you are rolling 6 dice, with a net +2 (+2 for stop +1 for open -1 for accuracy) that must be defended against for times either as a 8x 3" radius or 11x target.

Now that we have talked about weapons and strengths, you know the weakness. Now its time to get dirty. You will out number your opponent. You can simply out action them. But there is no need. After the first pinpoint barrage, if not before your opponent will start gunning for your drones. You can play hide and seek with them. On a map with lots of terrain your superior sensors and detect will let you attack them with impunity while they struggle to find you, unless they get close. If they get close they will be exposed to a lot more dangers, like your armiger units with their heavier and more accurate weapons. Use communication events a lot, do your best to give your opponent the opportunity to ECM you. Your HC3 will win that fight.

This is the dirty of Utopia Trick: *Electronic War*.

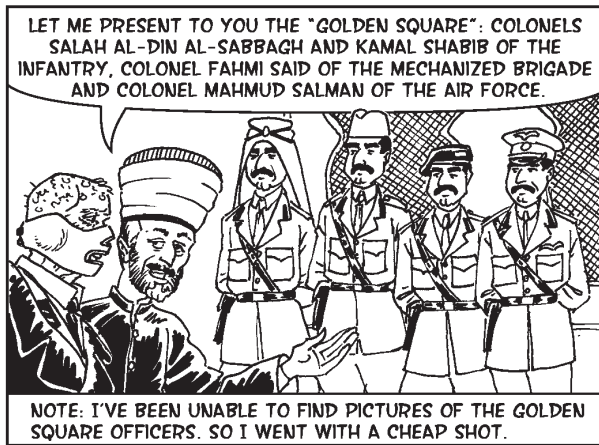
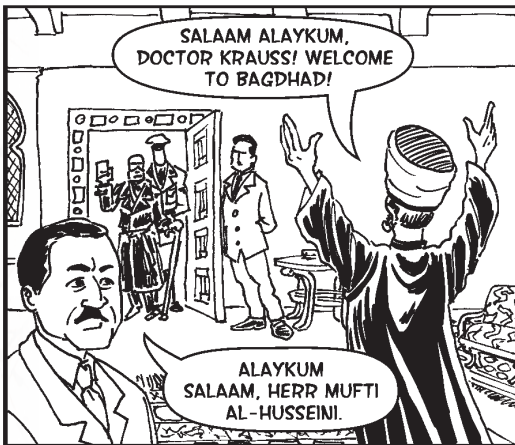
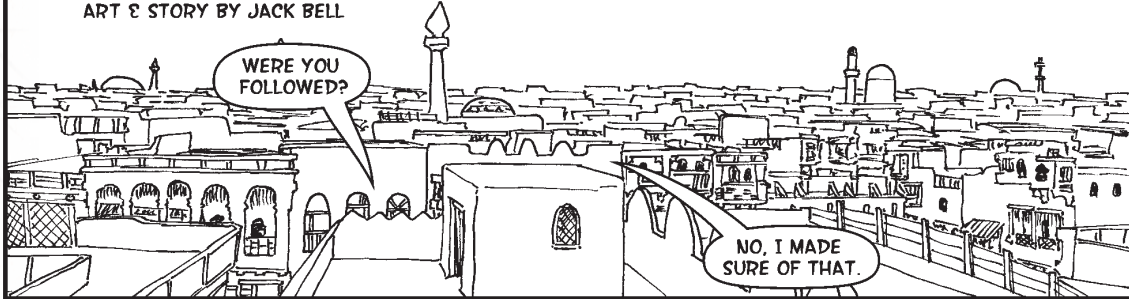


FLEET REVIEW: Utopia

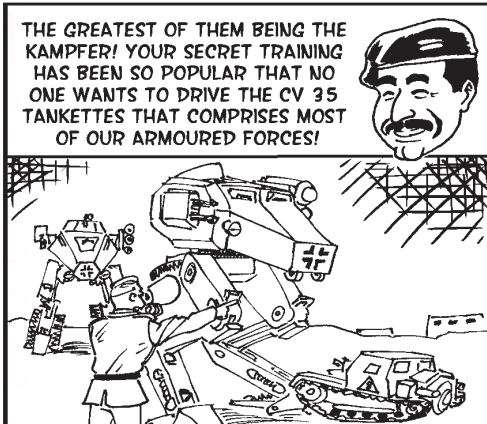
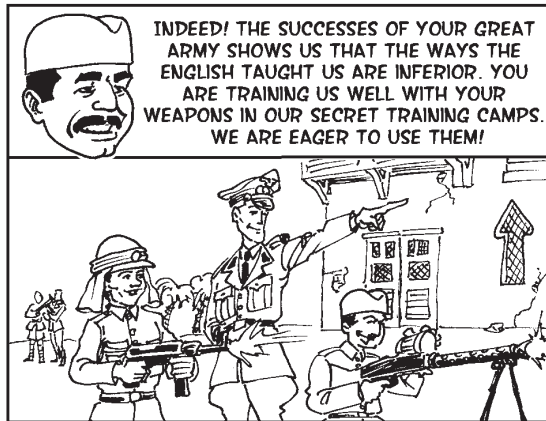
1941 - DECLARED TRAITORS BY THE NAZI PARTY, OTTO KNACKER AND TRAUOGOTT HUNDT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WORK UNDER THE ORDERS OF SS HAUPTSTURMFUHRER SCHRAUBER AND THE MYSTERIOUS DR. KRAUSS. THEY ARE NOW THE...

Kraut PATROL

ART & STORY BY JACK BELL

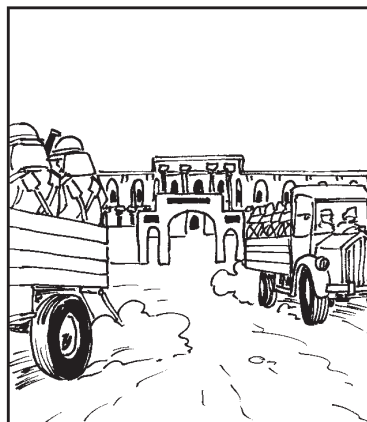
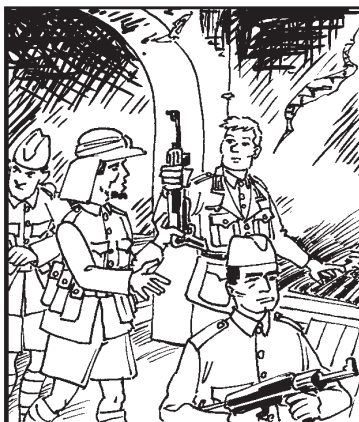
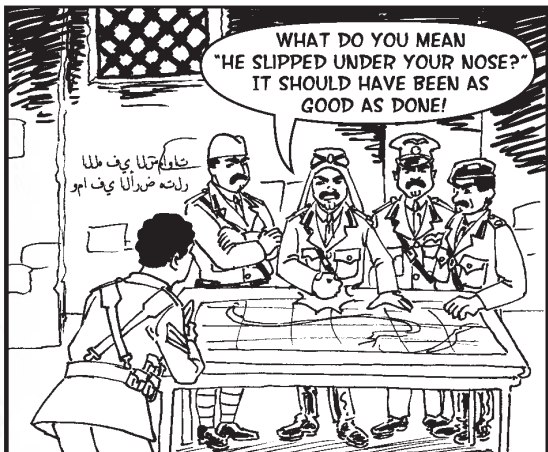
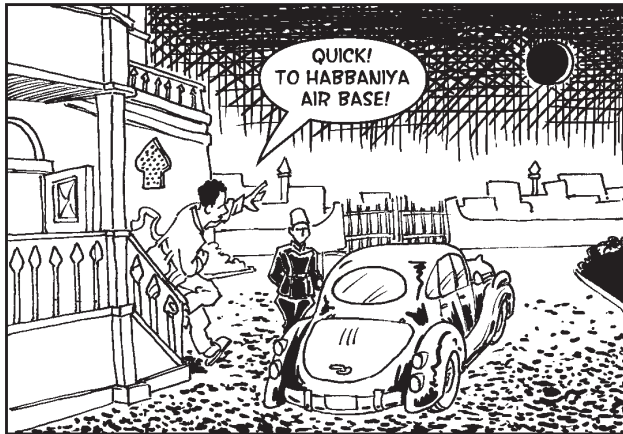
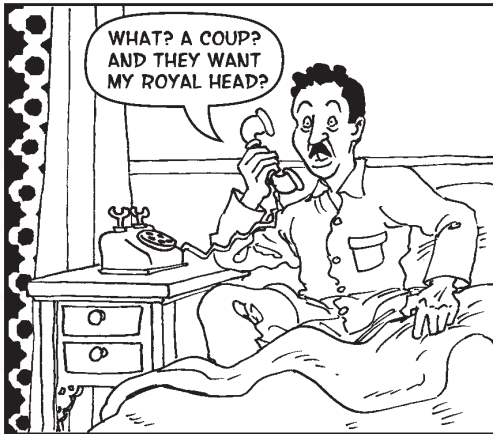
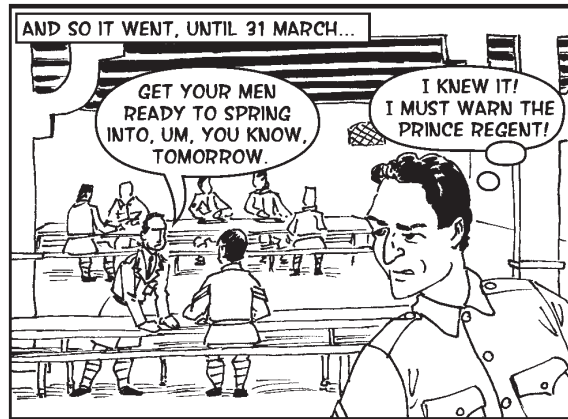
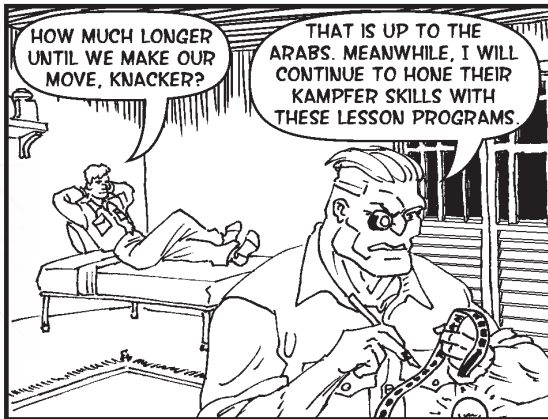


NOTE: I'VE BEEN UNABLE TO FIND PICTURES OF THE GOLDEN SQUARE OFFICERS. SO I WENT WITH A CHEAP SHOT.

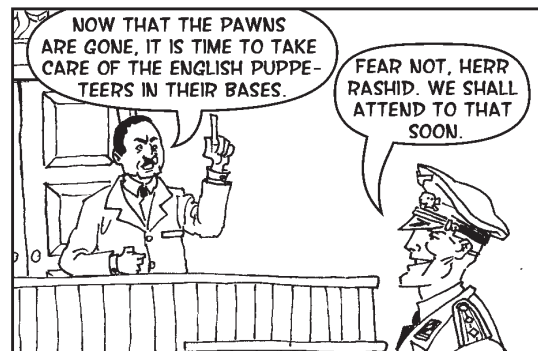
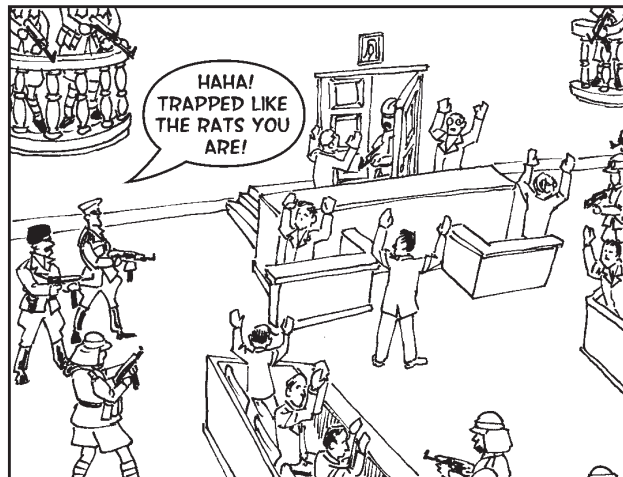
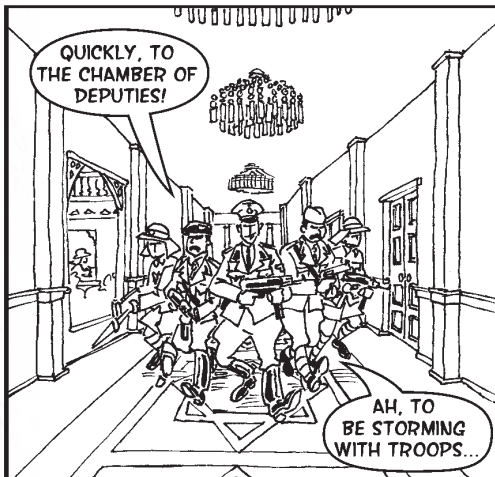
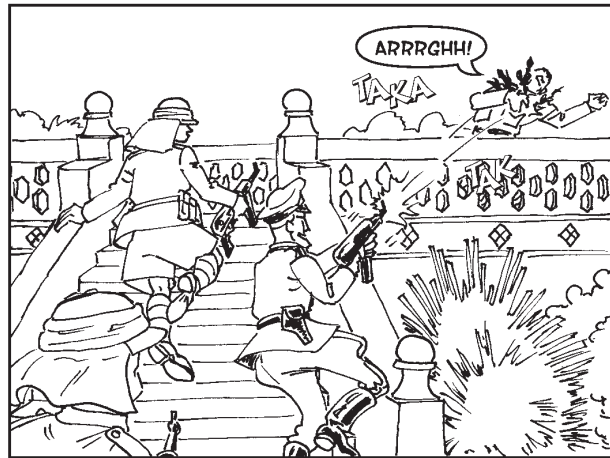
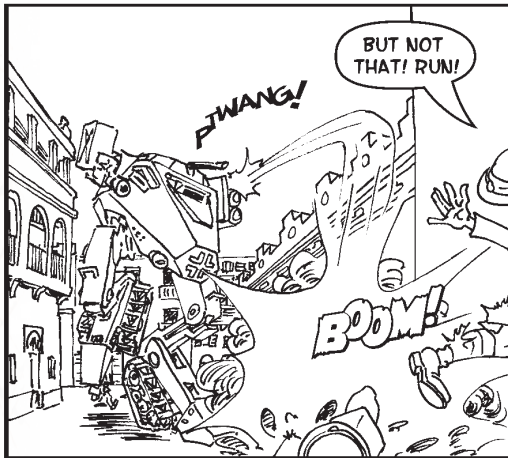
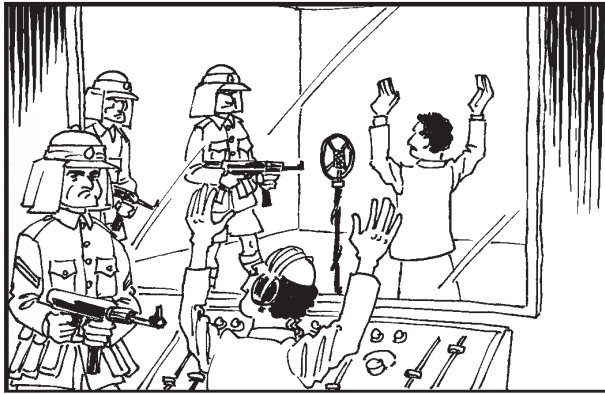


AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

KRAUT PATROL



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
KRAUT PATROL



NEXT TIME: BY AIR AND BY SEA, THE ORIENTKORPS ARRIVES!

Ever wanted to squeeze a bigger variety of combat groups in your 750-800TV Heavy Gear Blitz games without increasing the total game size and increasing the game length?

If you've ever sat there looking at your army and wanted to do a smaller skirmish sized game in between the size of the older Tactical Rules and the current wargame Blitz scale, the following house rules may be just the thing for you. As with all house rules, these require your opponent's permission prior to the game to use. Since the rules significantly alter the number of combat groups available in a standard sized game compared with the combat groups presented in official rules, it's recommended that both sides use the rules below to prevent inequities in the number of available units to activate.

Start building your army in the normal fashion by choosing the various basic squads you'd like to use as per the normal rules for your army/faction. The smaller combat groups presented below are referred to as fire teams for gear and other walker based squads and sections for tracked/hover vehicles instead of the normal Blitz terminology of squads and cadres. Each fire team or section counts as a single combat group for the purposes of assigning veteran slots. Before upgrading or swapping any models from the basic entry in the Field Guide, consult the appropriate section below.

Infantry: This category includes all combined models. There is no change to the rules of these types of combat groups.

Gear Squads: This category also includes all combat groups that start at 4 or more models including non-gear based squads and Dark Series Black Talon squads. These 4-6 model combat groups will be converted to three model fire teams as follows:

- The CGL is automatically included in the fire team and any CGL specific upgrades are available as per the normal rules for regular and veteran squads.
- Examine the remaining 3-5 models in the basic combat group prior to any changes and separate them into groups of identical models. If you have any two identical models, one of each pair is automatically included in the fire team. For instance, a Northern Guard strike squad has a Jaguar CGL and two regular Jaguars and two regular Hunters as the standard loadout; the skirmish scale fire team would be a Jaguar CGL and one of the Jaguars and one of the Hunters. If a the squad has doesn't divide evenly into pairs, you may choose the third fire team

model from the available two left. For example, a Southern Field Artillery Fire Support fire team from the new Forged in Fire Field guide would consist of a Jaeger CGL, a Support Cobra, and your choice of another Support Cobra or Jaeger.

- Upgrades to the fire team are available as follows: "any model" upgrades are still available to any applicable model as are CGL only specific upgrades. For upgrades limited to a certain number of models, you may take ONE per two allowed upgrades. If an upgrade is both available to normal squads as well as a veteran upgrade, use the final cumulative number to determine availability for veteran squads. In addition, veteran squads may take a single swap or upgrade for the fire team that would be otherwise unavailable. Using the Northern Strike example above, a regular Strike fire team would not be able to swap out a Jaguar's LRP for an AGM since only one model may do so. A veteran Strike fire team can however swap for one AGM since vet squads have access to two such upgrades in a traditional veteran Blitz scale squad.

- Options that are expressed as a ratio are kept at that same ratio. For instance, Southern Tank Regiments may upgrade half the models (round down) in certain cadres to attack/defense 3 as a general upgrade. In Flash!, you still would upgrade half of your smaller fire team or section models.

Strider/Tank Squads: This category covers combat groups that start at 1-3 models like hovern tanks, transports, and including Claw Series Talons) and will be converted to 1-2 model sections. The CGL must be included as the first model in the section. If your starting combat group has 3 models, you must choose either of the remaining models from the original squad to join the section. If the original Blitz squad had the choice to continue adding models and can reach 3 or more models, you may add one of those base models to the section prior to any other upgrades/swaps. Upgrades/swaps are chosen with the same restrictions as written above in the Gear Squads section. Any squad that requires a minimum number of models before choosing a second of that squad type in Blitz (such as Northern Tank squads) is considered to have met the requirement if the section has two models.

**HOME
BREW
RULES**

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SKIRMISH BLITZ! COMBAT GROUPS

In order to calculate the TV value of the new fire teams and sections, you have to start by upgrading the squad with the options wanted in the free Gear Garage army construction program keeping careful watch that you follow the upgrade rules above (namely 1 fire team upgrade per 2 squad upgrades for example). Gear Garage automatically lists the costs of the individual models in the left most column. Simply add up the individual TV for the models you're actually using for your total fire team or section cost.

A player who owns one of the current gear-focused starter sets generally has a support and a strike squad of 5 models each allowing a 750-800TV game to be played. If the player wanted to try out a game with a recon squad as well, he or she would need to add at least 250TV to the size of the game thereby increasing the game length by an hour on average. With the smaller combat groups, they could still play a game at roughly the same model count total and the same TV but with 3 combat groups of 3 models each including the new recon element. The smaller combat groups presented here instead of the full size squads in Blitz allows you to use the almost all of the upgrades, models, and rules of the larger game at roughly 2/3 the TV and model count and game play time.

The easiest way to convert a Blitz army to the smaller skirmish combat groups is to have the book open next to you (either physically or virtually with pdfs) while you have Gear Garage open. You add the squad you'd like and then add the upgrades and swaps that you'd like in groups of two. For instance, in a standard 5 gear squad, make sure that the four non-CGL models are two groups of two identical models (including swaps and upgrades). If Gear Garage allows you to take two of each upgrade/swap, you'll be able to take a single one in the fire team. Here is an example of a Southern Forged in Fire squad that I prepped for conversion into a fire team.

You can see that I've got two sets of two identical models (the King Cobra and Blazing Mamba) in addition to the CGL. I upgraded two Jagers to the King Cobras as well as the both regular Mambas to Blazing. Alternately, I could have used the veteran status to instead turn one of the standard Mambas into a Brawler Mamba that would otherwise be unavailable. The CGL Mamba took a CGL only swap down to an Iguana (in the squad entry) and then to a Black Box Variant (the Gear Regiment CGL only upgrade); since these are both CGL specific upgrades, they are allowed without needing two allowed. The final step would be to simply mark the units on the Gear Garage printout that you're actually using (similar to how I bolded the models taken above) and then add up the TVs.

You now have a smaller 3 model Fire Team with the most of the same feel and playstyle of the 380TV 5 model Blitz cadre for 219TV. That same 750TV game that could only fit a Strike and Fire Support squad comfortably now can fit a Strike and Fire Support groups as well as a Recon fire team without a significant increase in play time.

**HOME
BREW
RULES**

VETERAN LINE STRIKE CADRE (SPECIALIST) - 388 TV


Black Box Iguana [2/2/1/2] (14/42 LHC)
LAC MPZF VB CGL (2 options) 60TV

Blazing Mamba [2/2/1/0] (17/51 LHC)
HGLC APGL APGL HG VB (1 option) 55TV

Blazing Mamba [2/2/1/0] (17/51 LHC)
HGLC APGL APGL HG VB (1 option) 55TV

King Cobra [2/2/1/0] (21/105 SSLHC)
LPA HRP/24 MRP/36 LGM LAC APGL HG VB CR
(1 option) 104TV

King Cobra [2/2/1/0] (21/105 SSLHC)
LPA HRP/24 MRP/36 LGM LAC APGL HG VB CR
(1 option) 104TV

A background image showing a futuristic, heavily armored vehicle, likely a Heavy Gear unit, in a desert-like environment. The vehicle is yellow and black with red accents. It has a large, rounded front and a complex structure on top. The scene is lit with a bright, hazy light, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

This is a module I've been working on for some time. It's the setting for a campaign currently being written with a scifi murder-mystery set in the world of Heavy Gear. It can also serve as the setting for any number of adventures, especially those with a gothic feel.

A module for the Heavy Gear Universe

DIRTY CLOTHES

"Listen to me." Adler grabbed Remy by the arm. "I don't care how tough, or how much smarter you think you are than everyone else. It doesn't matter! If you and your friends start trouble, those MILICIA bastards won't think twice about mowing all of you down."

"What am I supposed to do, then? Keep playing errand boy for you and your gutless friends while you're all twiddling each other? The snakes are marching through our town every day and all you do is play pranks on them!" Remy shook Adler's grip off. His voice cracked as he shouted back.

"This isn't-!", Adler caught himself, snarled as he looked to either end of the alleyway, and began again, hissing this time. "This isn't a game, and this isn't your fight. You're too young. After you take the aptitude test you can start making your own choices, but until then you're a child. Stay out of it, and stay alive!"

"I'm not a child", Remy replied, lowering his voice as well. "And you can't stop me. I'm going to go meet the others in the labs. You? You have to get yourself a new errand boy, or do these shit-chores yourself." Remy threw a sack into the puddle between them. "I've got more important things to—"

"The labs?" Adler cut Remy short. "What are you going to do at the labs? What are they planning?"

Remy didn't answer, glaring at his uncle instead. A smirk inched onto Remy's face as he simply refused to speak. Adler's fist curled reflexively as he took a deep breath.

"Listen to me," Adler spoke slower, containing himself, but he stopped short. Remy heard the noise too, snapping out of his defiance to glance over his shoulder. The low thrum of an engine gradually filled the alley. Remy looked back at his uncle, still glaring, but all the venom was gone from it. Adler was still listening. He gritted his teeth.

"Shit, they're too close," Adler concluded. "Hold on to that", he pointed at the sack Remy threw on the ground. "We're going to have to run for it."

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

HERAKLION - PART 1

CESAR MATED GONZALEZ

SMALL TOWN SECRETS

The summer of TN 1947 is a trying times for all of the Humanist Alliance. The Theban blight crippled the league, undoing the stitching that held it together. Heraklion weathered this storm well, as it has weathered others. It was, and still is, too remote and too small to be affected by such catastrophes. Now that the chaos is receding, and the Humanists seek to regain control, Heraklion has attracted some unwanted attention. The Southern Republic and the Humanists have chosen this place to wage a quiet war of insurgency. MILICIA soldiers patrol its streets, while the HAPF's scattered forces wait for them in ambush, with Heraklion always in their crossfire.

This backwater, xenophobic town has secrets of its own. The history of its creation answers the basic questions when, where, how and what, but not why. While the Humanists and the Southerners' proxy army hunt each other, the Heraklionite scientists are hard at work, with their biochemical laboratories resembling a startled hive. Whatever their purpose, the clash between the MILICIA and the remnants of the protectors is inching closer every night. It seems obvious that the researchers want to finish what they are doing before the conflict is at their doorstep. The MILICIA already suspects that the researchers may be in cahoots with their adversaries, and they're paying closer attention to what is happening in the labs.

Meanwhile, the social malaise over the stark inequality between Heraklion's castes is also coming to a head. Heraklion's commoners find themselves trapped between the Southern Republic, the Humanist Alliance, and their own leaders. Even if they appear to be powerless, the commoners' patience is at its breaking point. Murmurs of an uprising have coincided with these crises.

To make matters worse, the Southern Republic and the Humanist Alliance don't seem to trust their own in the field. Commandant Alexander Brecht, the leader of the MILICIA regiment the 57th Stalwarts, is a shell-shocked drunkard. On the Humanist's side, Chief Administrator Inachus Abbate has already been labeled a traitor, but the alliance has been too preoccupied to bring him to justice thus far. Both men may find themselves in the sights of their own people, if this goes on for much longer.

The end result of all of this is a small town on the verge of the precipices of all-out war, rebellion, and betrayal. The tension is ratcheting up with every passing day, waiting for the triggering event, the tremor that finally sends Heraklion tumbling into one or the other. Maybe it'll be some apparently insignificant event that finally lights the powder keg.

OUR WORK

"We're nearly there," Dr. Len mused as she studied the readings on the trideo disk that lit her beatific smile. "We're nearly, nearly there."

The readings flipped between graph charts, DNA marker grids and seemingly random images of flowers. Rather than attempting to read any of the information flicking in and out of view, she seemed to bask in it. Desideiro had caught her in such reveries before, so he knew better than to interrupt his mentor's moment of satisfaction. Instead, he stood in the shadow of the threshold to her office, holding the results of the latest samples in his hand against his chest.

"We've been working on this for so long. Isn't it amazing that we will be the ones to see the work of ten generations, of so much effort and sacrifice, finally bear fruit?" Dr. Catherine Len asked her pupil, Dr. Desideiro Novitsky, without as much as turning her head. Monochromatic flowers shone their light on her aged face, with tips of their petals reflected on her glasses. "Marcus didn't get to see it happen, the poor dear. It wasn't his destiny, but he knew we were getting close. He knew, right at the end, that it'd be us that would see this happen at last. He knew we would be the ones to give this gift to all mankind. I could see it in the way he looked at me. I'm sure he was pleased."

"Yes ma'am", Desideiro replied. Catherine looked away from her flowers, turning slowly in her chair. She was still smiling, but now, rather than with that immense joy she had a moment ago, it was with infinite patience. "But you're not here to listen to me muse. Why did you come up, dear?", she asked. The images kept flicking as Desideiro wordlessly walked up to her, handing her the electronic clipboard with yet more raw, indecipherable data as though he was admitting some mischief to his mother. Catherine smiled all the way through as he scrolled through it with a few button-presses, even as she sighed and handed the clipboard back.

"Switch to the second genetic line and get rid of this batch. We'll need to begin incubation immediately if we hope to have a proper spore sample with the latest round of chromosomal corrections this season." Catherine said as she stood up, her smile was faint by then, and still vanishing. Desideiro nodded once, bowing his head low. "Of course ma'am. There was one more thing. The MILICIA soldiers... They're getting restless. They came into town again. There was an incident."

"Another? Heavens...", Dr. Len replied. "This whole mess with the soldiers and the humanists is awful, awful. Was anyone hurt?"

Desideiro shook his head. "None of our people ma'am. It shouldn't affect our schedule, but the MILICIA soldiers are stepping up their patrols after that. They're breaking into houses, searching for someone. They even came here and ransacked the upper labs," he said. "They seem to suspect we're helping the humanists, but they don't know where to look. The chief administrator was demanding we cooperate fully with their efforts..."

"Abbate? How unlike him. He must be worried they'll take the town away from him" Dr. Len said. She walked towards the window that saw over the edge of the wall, towards the poorly-lit streets of Heraklion. The glow of the sparse streetlamps was softened by the rain. In the dark, her expression hardened. "Somehow it seemed inevitable that everything around us would start splitting at the seams just as we're making real progress. But there's no reason to worry. They won't stop us. I won't allow it, not from the Humanists, not from the MILICIA, or that wizened vulture Abbate."

"Of course ma'am," Desideiro stayed across the room. "Is there anything you need?"

"Thank you, no. I'll take care of that problem myself. You have your own work to do now, don't you?" Dr. Len replied, "Everything is well in hand. As long as we keep our secrets just a little longer, we will finish our work."

The Setting of Heraklion

ORIGIN

Heraklion is one of the oldest scientific research centers in Terra Nova, established in TN 1374, just as the age of colonization was coming to an end. It also happens to be one of the smallest. Isolated and unremarkable, Heraklion was never considered as an asset, economic or strategic, by the powers that surround it. Heraklion's stated mission was to be a center for biological research, studying the life-forms of Terra Nova for any valuable resources the flora and fauna could offer. Such discoveries didn't materialize in time, and the corporation that built Heraklion, Farchilde Industrial Concerns, was bankrupted by the project. The decisions that led Farchilde to build Heraklion were attributed to one man, Owen Galanos.

Owen Galanos received a controlling majority of the company's shares after he married Aneeta Farchilde, daughter of the company's founder, Thomas Farchilde. After earning the company's trust through several seemingly risky ventures that turned a hefty profit, he pressed the company to join the push to colonize Terra Nova and exploit its resources. Farchilde, at the time a middling industrial equipment manufacturer, became an upstart in space exploration. Owen Galanos's personal capital as a shrewd and unrelenting businessman drove other companies to join him in this venture, coming under the Farchilde Industrials name, even as other companies were quietly withdrawing from the colonies. Heraklion was their last project. It took nearly two decades to complete, and was five years behind schedule. Several shipments were lost to Terra Nova's inclement weather, including an unexpected storm that nearly wiped out one of Heraklion's construction crews. During that time, Owen Galanos made several trips to Terra Nova in order to oversee the project himself. He became a frontiersman of that new age exploration. Some would say he did so several centuries too late. He made the fateful decision to transplant himself and his family to Heraklion in the Summer of TN 1375.

After his shuttle crossed the threshold from the stratosphere it encountered Terra Nova's high altitude winds. It crashed into the side of one of the mountains overlooking Heraklion. His immediate family was on-board and there were no survivors. He left behind an enterprise in shock, just as the Age of Isolation was about to begin.

AGE OF ISOLATION

Just as unrest on Old Earth reached its peak and the Age of Isolation began, Farchilde Industrial disappeared, wiped out by the economic upheaval that followed. Construction of Heraklion's facilities had completed and the research center was already operating with near-total autonomy. Consequently, Heraklion shut its doors to the world when Terra Nova was cut off from Earth. Heraklion allowed itself fade from memory as it focused on its own survival. Owen Galanos had the foresight to invest heavily in hydroponic cultivations and geothermic power generators, as well as the manufacturing and engineering capabilities to maintain them independently. Heraklion's community at the time was a small handful of scientists and technicians, enough to sustain themselves for an extended period of time. As Terra Novan society reweave itself across the new colony, visitors came to the their gates. Vagrants, traders, wanderers; Heraklion turned away those it could.

Heraklion became an insular community at the very edge of what would become the Humanist Alliance. The citizens of Heraklion saw to it that their settlement would continue to function while the outside world became increasingly chaotic and hostile. The fact that Heraklion was forced to see to its own needs, disconnected from the rest of the Terra Nova colonists, by design and by circumstance, shaped Heraklionite society in peculiar ways. Heraklion's scientists saw themselves as selfless scholars, working for the betterment of all mankind while surrounded by aggressive, desperate people who couldn't appreciate the importance of their work. To this day, Heraklionite scientists are still slow to trust outsiders, and they rarely think of the world beyond their walls. They also came to see the technicians that maintained their equipment as competent servants; vital, but beneath them. That prejudice became part of their culture.

Heraklion learned the hard way that, without allies it, they weren't strong enough to defend their town. A band of raiders swept through Heraklion, pushing aside their feeble resistance with ease. They destroyed the town's mostly automated defenses and razed the buildings outside the reinforced biochem lab complex. The criminals occupied Heraklion for nearly two seasons, until a small force of Humanist Alliance protectors came to their rescue. Heraklion joined Yuri Gropius' league shortly thereafter, though it never made a real attempt to become a part of the Humanists' society. As part of their incorporation into the Humanist Alliance, Heraklion was forced to accept an outside administrator. Its citizens were divided amongst the three castes as well, though this did little to change life in Heraklion. Outsiders began to appear at their gates from the rest of the humanist league as the Age of Isolation was coming to a close. Some stayed, most didn't, while the Heraklionites kept working feverishly on their own, secretive projects.

WAR OF THE ALLIANCE AND RECENT HISTORY

As centuries passed and Terra Novans came into their own, Heraklion was still there, making modest, unexciting advances in agrarian science and medicine that they shared with the world through Oxford and Thebes. To the rest of Terra Nova, Heraklion was best-known for its genetically-engineered crops of water-root and soy. It seemed to be a place without anything worth taking, or worth hiding. As a result, the war between the North and South had as little significance to Heraklion. Life kept going as it had behind its walls for centuries, with only a muted echo of Terra Nova's turmoil making it through their isolation.

After the Earth's failed bid to reconquer Terra Nova, after the Peace River disaster, paranoia and suspicion became rampant throughout the South, even more so than the rest of the planet. The Allied Southern Territories and its member states turned their attention not only out towards the other colonies and Earth, but towards the darkest corners of themselves as well. However, the institutional rot caused by the Theban Blight meant that the Humanist Alliance couldn't maintain control of Heraklion. Again, Heraklion's isolation proved to be a boon. The disease didn't decimate their preceptors as it had throughout the rest of the league. The HAPF unit that was stationed nearby was redeployed to protect places with "greater significance", leaving Heraklion undefended. The MILICIA sent one of their own infantry divisions, which then simply marched on the base the HAPF had abandoned. From there, the Southern Republic assumed control of the region through their MILICIA proxies. Heraklion found itself besieged by so-called allies. Then, in a moment of political shrewdness and apparent disloyalty, Heraklion's chief administrator Inachus Abbate offered the seat that the HAPF held in the city council to the MILICIA commander, Commandant Brecht. Brecht accepted, on the condition that his men would police Heraklion, imposing martial law. Inachus accepted without objection. Thusly, Heraklion became one of the focal points for the low-intensity conflict between the Southern Republic and the Humanist Alliance.

A small band of Protectors now operates in the area, carrying out guerrilla attacks on the MILICIA forces, who struggle to respond. The guerrillas focus on causing as much mayhem as possible, sabotaging MILICIA vehicles and ambushing their patrols to create a constant state of tension and low morale. The MILICIA, meanwhile, have begun to take out their frustration on the town itself with an increase of patrols and by raiding the HAPF's suspected allies, often inflicting more damage than necessary. As was inevitable, there have been MILICIA, HAPF and civilian casualties, leading to a gradual ratcheting up of the conflict.

THE PEOPLE OF HERAKLION

Heraklion has three thousand residents as of TN 1941, which is the result of slow but steady growth since the town was brought into the Humanist Alliance's fold. Life in Heraklion is highly stratified, even more so than in other Humanist settlements. Commoners have few prospects in life, given the town's small economy and closed doors. They're usually forced to work manual labor jobs in the farms surrounding Heraklion. The lucky ones find work in one of the businesses that have put down roots in the town, usually small-scale wineries and shops. The clever ones go for an apprenticeship with the technicians. Otherwise, they leave Heraklion as soon as they can, if they're able. Those who are stuck in Heraklion languish under Terra Nova's star Helios, picking genetically-crafted vegetables, destined to poverty and a passive sort of oppression. In all, Heraklion's commoners lead quiet lives. That has changed in the past five cycles. The world is creeping into their town, and most of them resent it. The MILICIA soldiers are seen as the symbol of an outside power that can only make matters much worse.

Heraklion, however, is ruled by neither the technicians or the researchers. When the Humanist Alliance imposed their form of government on the town, they intended to place the towns authority on the farms. Heraklion's farmers are all required to join a cooperative, which was supposed to be the seat of political and economic power. The chief administrator, who is designated by the Humanist central authorities, is supposed to be the town's leader. Inachus Abbate, the current administrator, worked hard to assume control of the town. Subjugating the researchers to his will proved to be too difficult a task. The technicians usually do as their told, but they still maintain a certain level of independence. The researchers, on the other hand, openly oppose the administrator's authority. The researchers do everything they can in their limited sphere of influence to undermine or subvert the administrator. Rumor amongst Heraklion's inhabitants has it that the researchers have blackmailed, poisoned or discredited every previous administrator. Inachus Abbate, according to those same rumors, is doing the researcher's bidding, explaining how he has been able to survive for the better part of twenty cycles at the post.

Finally, Heraklion's Protector caste, no more than a hundred men and women all told, were displaced out of Heraklion when the HAPF's central authority collapsed. They're trickling back home now to fight a low-intensity conflict with the occupying MILICIA forces. They have supporters amongst the commoners and the technicians, but there are dissenters. Meanwhile the researchers as a whole haven't picked a side. The guerrillas are short on equipment, vastly outnumbered, and hemmed in from nearly every side. Even so, they are becoming experts in finding weaknesses in the MILICIA's defenses and exploiting them with their limited resources for maximum effect.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

HERAKLION - PART 1

THE TECHNICIANS

Heraklion, in many ways, is not really a town. Rather, it's still a scientific outpost surrounded by unwelcome squatters, with all the complex, sensitive machinery that implies. While Heraklion's researchers busy themselves with lofty pursuits to expand the reaches of human knowledge, someone has to take care of the menial and thankless task of keeping the lights on. This falls to the technicians, commoners trained in the centuries-old traditions of the auto-wrench and cable-spool. The technicians refer to themselves as a brotherhood, the spiritual descendants of a handful of families that did the work when Heraklion was first founded, but it is more analogous with a secret order combined with a labor union.

The Humanists' caste system actually made Heraklionite society, and therefore the technicians' brotherhood a little more fluid. Rank and role in Heraklionite was no longer a matter of inheritance. The child of commoners could become a Preceptor by virtue of the humanist aptitude tests, and would be welcomed into the privileged ranks of the researchers if they so chose. Conversely, the child of even the most prominent researchers in Heraklion still had to prove his or her worth. If the aptitude test placed them in the commoner caste, the child would inevitably become part of Heraklion's unwelcome rabble when they turn sixteen. Redemption for these "disappointments" is all but impossible, but there is still a little dignity to be had as a member of the brotherhood of technicians. The nature of their relationship with the researchers, and Heraklion as a whole, makes them secretive. They are also very protective of what they see as 'theirs', and they had to fight for every inch of what they've earned.

The Aqueduct and the machinery in it is their realm. They also maintain the Heraklion fixtures and utilities, but that work is often left to the apprentices. The master technicians work in the geothermic powerplants deep underground, the laboratory equipment for the entire biochem complex, and the aqueduct's own mechanisms. They also maintain the archives, which they use extensively. A notable feature of their secrecy is that the technicians don't keep maps of the aqueduct. Instead, they have secret marks along the pipes and on the concrete that guide them from place to place. The Archive stores the schematics of their machines, the procedures to repair them, as well as other historical information about the technicians.

In all, there are easily four to five hundred technicians, a large section of Heraklion's population, with a few hundred apprentices and aspirants trying to become journeymen. Normally, there are about twenty apprentices per journeyman, fifteen journeymen of various levels of seniority, and a handful

of master technicians at the top of the pile. Typically, Heraklion technicians wear simple coveralls and carry their tools with them everywhere they go. They also have distinctive coats that haven't changed their design much since they were worn by the original Heraklion colonists. Practical, heavy, and checkered with pouches, the thick, pumpkin-colored garment closes down the side of the chest. The coat has a hood tucked into the collar, which the wearer can tug free quickly for protection from hazards, such as corrosive chemicals and open flames. When technicians venture into areas of the aqueduct with toxic gases and other such perils they will wear gas masks and rebreathers, but they'll keep wear their coat over any other protective equipment they may need.

Amongst Heraklion's society, the technicians are, broadly speaking, the middle class. They are paid, directly from Heraklion's coffers, enough to own a small home and support a family. The researchers view them as a necessary evil and a nuisance, while their fellow commoners regard them with respect, even admiration. Technicians are, for the most part, quietly proud. They try to keep the fact that the machines they maintain are well past their service life hidden. However, Heraklion's hidden infrastructure is slowly rotting away beneath the town's feet, and the technicians are doing their best to replace it with modern equipment. It isn't an easy process, and sometimes dangerous, but the biggest challenge they face is acquiring the equipment they need. Despite their technical expertise, they are not well-versed in how to purchase, modify and install newer machines.

THE RESEARCHERS

When Owen Galanos recruited the scientists that would work in Heraklion, he didn't choose the most brilliant minds in their respective fields. Instead, he picked the most committed, the most obsessive. Those researchers worked themselves to their graves for Heraklion, and that singular drive was passed down from one generation to the next. It's not rare for researchers to work themselves to death in their laboratories. They are encouraged to go far beyond the reasonable, both in regards to their working hours as well as in their theories. This, however, is not a very effective way to carry out research, especially since scientific ability isn't hereditary. Heraklion's research projects only began to make real progress, after nearly a full century of stagnation, once the Humanists' caste system was applied to their society. That hasn't changed the standard attitude of Heraklion's scientists - they are still as obsessive as their forebears. They are indoctrinated, overtly and surreptitiously, to become that monomaniacal.

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HERAKLION - PART 1

Behind the reinforced doors of the biochem labs, they live in a mangled web of bureaucracy few can grasp. As a rule, everyone engages the worst kind of academic competition and skulduggery to advance their own careers within the small confines of the labs. There are several departments that specialize in different fields, each with its own internal pecking order, leading to confused and volatile confrontations between individuals, and even pitting departments against one another. This internal strife often spills out of the laboratories and into Heraklion itself. Scuffles, even murder between competing researchers is also not uncommon. In the past, the researchers were allowed to deal with crimes one of their own committed on another, but now there is much closer scrutiny.

With such high-charged tensions within the lab, the world outside their scientific fish-bowl is usually not their concern. They allow the technicians to deal with most menial aspects of Heraklionite life. One exception to this is farming. The biochem lab maintains several hydroponic farms around Heraklion, producing almost half of the town's food. Needless to say, these crops are highly experimental, with exotic gene modifications that have dubious purposes at best. The generous stipend researchers receive from the town's coffers also make them the preferred customers for businesses in town, giving them considerable leeway for their eccentricities. There are close to two hundred researchers working in Heraklions lab and farms, making them a minority, but a visible one.

As of late, activity in the laboratories has ramped up considerably, making researchers outside of their hive a rare sight. Rumors about another project coming to fruition abound, though facts on that subject are hard to come by. The reality is that the researchers have had little influence or interest in Heraklion's current situation.

57TH MILICIA INFANTRY REGIMENT - THE STALWARTS

The 57th Infantry regiment of the MILICIA is a mid-line unit composed mostly of burnt out veterans, pulled from the front after commendable service, to languish there until they retire. The regiment has been based deep in the South, along the border between the Southern Republic and Humanist Alliance for close to twenty cycles. Officially, they're there to provide protection to the nearby settlements and towns of the Humanist Alliance, including Heraklion. These places are so remote and insignificant that the MILICIA soldiers there very rarely see action, and hardly justify the regiment's presence. They're there to extend the Republic's sphere of influence into the territory of their ally. From time to time they were called upon to dispose of rover gangs that venture along White Rock's mountain range, but their presence there was, until recently, mostly symbolic.

This changed when the Humanists' leadership fell apart due to the Theban blight and they lost control over much of the Humanist Alliance's territory, leaving it vulnerable to the Republic's greed. Commandant Brecht was given control of the unit, presumably to while away a few cycles before retirement like his predecessors, but now he had a new directive. His mission was to fill the power vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Protector forces from the region, and maintain order. This pretext doesn't fool many, however, including the regiment's own soldiers or most of Heraklion's inhabitants.

The regiment is full of soldiers from all the southern leagues, with a slight majority of South Republic soldiers amongst the officer ranks, making it mostly neutral to the civilians they are now meant to police. Nevertheless, due to the recent guerrilla incursions by the remnants of the HAPF, they are quickly souring towards the mostly humanist population. The shell-shocked veterans are becoming increasingly unpredictable, with morale and discipline sinking lower still, making them more dangerous to everyone around them, including their comrades.

Nevertheless, they are professional soldiers, and they'll hold fast as long as they're able. They are a cohesive infantry unit, even as demoralized as they are, and they are more than capable of fighting in an organized fashion. However, the enemy is fluid, cunning, and nearly invisible on the field and amongst the civilian population. The rank and file are running out of patience, and Commandant Brecht seems to be doing nothing about this.

SOMEWHAT MECHANIZED

The 57th has a small complement of Asp and Jager gears, mostly to provide armored support when the unit is deployed. They are operated by rookie pilots, training to join front-line units. These machines are particularly old, given that the Stalwarts are near the bottom of the equipment priority list. They are kept running by the valiant efforts of the support crews attached to the regiment, who have kept these machines in surprisingly good working condition. Nevertheless, regimental officers are always very reluctant to commit them, given that they may not see a replacement for any of these machines for several seasons, if not several cycles.

Aside from the small Gear cadre, they also have a pair of Caiman troop carriers, just as outdated and painstakingly maintained. The Caiman APCs see greater use, especially now as the regiment tries to control the HAPF guerrilla's movements with raids and patrols into Heraklion itself, though they have little to show for it.

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Next issue!
Explore the environs of the Heraklion campaign setting...
.....

ALFIE'S TENNERS

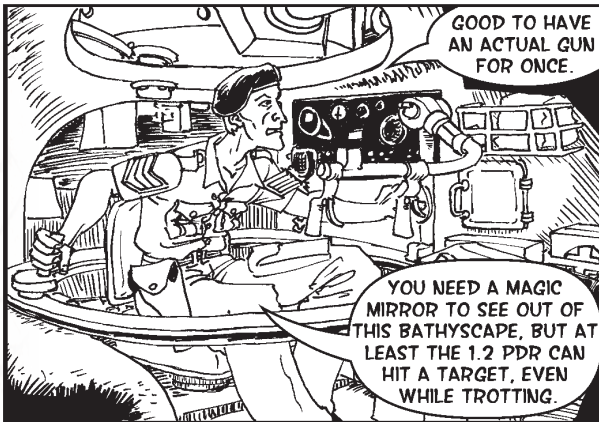
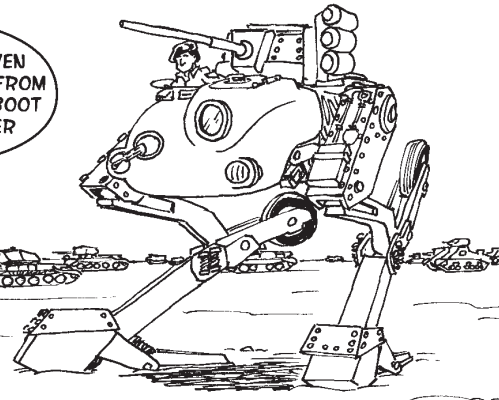
JOHN BELL

ALFIE'S TENNERS

ART & STORY: JACK BELL

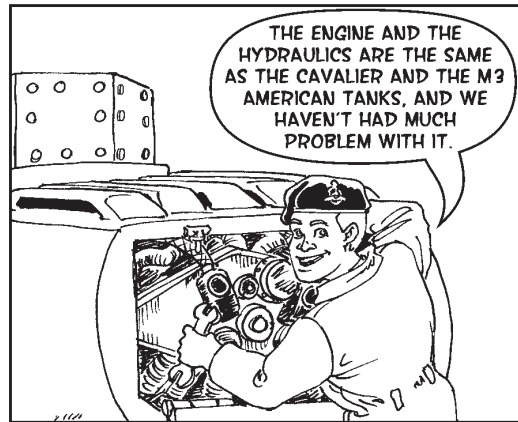
JUNE 1941, EGYPT. FOLLOWING THE FALL OF CRETE IN MAY, BRITISH FORCES, INCLUDING LT. ALPHONSE MARCH AND HIS WALKER TROOP, ARE PREPARING TO PUSH ROMMEL AWAY FROM HALFAYA PASS. LUCKILY, THEY HAVE A FEW NEW TOOLS TO BRING THE FIGHT TO THE FOX.

HOW ARE THE ROUNDHEADS FARING? GIVEN HOW THEY CAME STRAIGHT FROM BLIGHTY, THROUGH THE U-BOOT GAUNTLET, THEY'D BETTER BE WORTH IT.

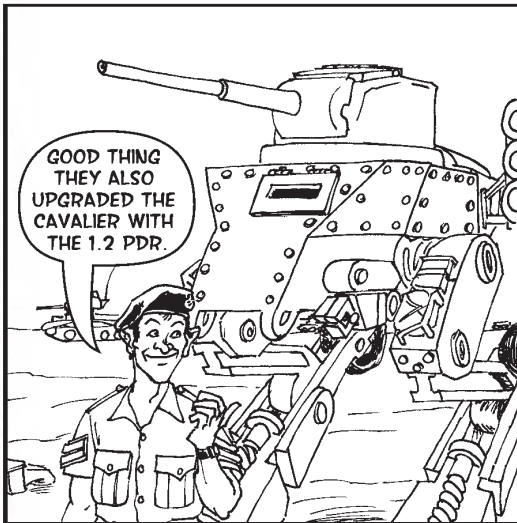


GOOD TO HAVE AN ACTUAL GUN FOR ONCE.

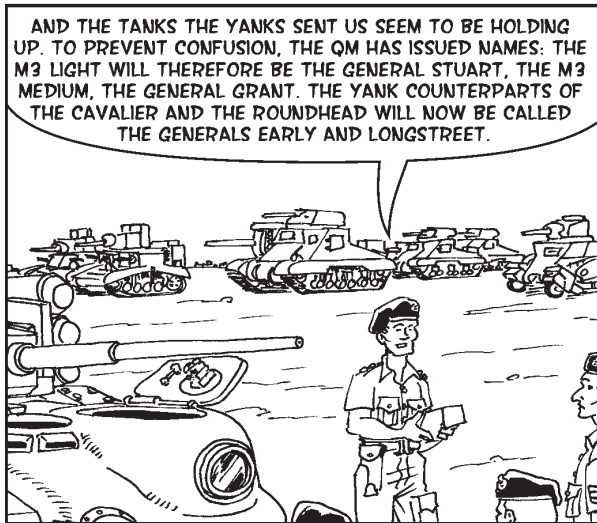
YOU NEED A MAGIC MIRROR TO SEE OUT OF THIS BATHYSCAPE, BUT AT LEAST THE 1.2 PDR CAN HIT A TARGET, EVEN WHILE TROTTING.



THE ENGINE AND THE HYDRAULICS ARE THE SAME AS THE CAVALIER AND THE M3 AMERICAN TANKS, AND WE HAVEN'T HAD MUCH PROBLEM WITH IT.



GOOD THING THEY ALSO UPGRADED THE CAVALIER WITH THE 1.2 PDR.



AND THE TANKS THE YANKS SENT US SEEM TO BE HOLDING UP. TO PREVENT CONFUSION, THE QM HAS ISSUED NAMES: THE M3 LIGHT WILL THEREFORE BE THE GENERAL STUART, THE M3 MEDIUM, THE GENERAL GRANT. THE YANK COUNTERPARTS OF THE CAVALIER AND THE ROUNDHEAD WILL NOW BE CALLED THE GENERALS EARLY AND LONGSTREET.

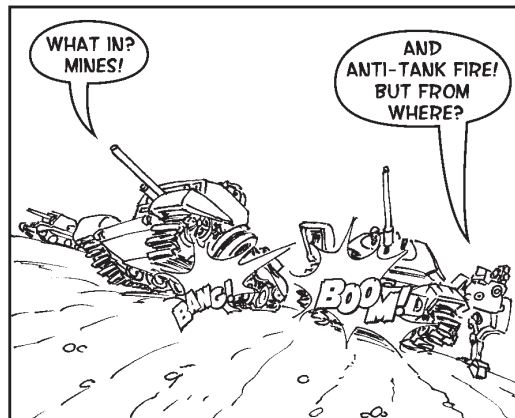
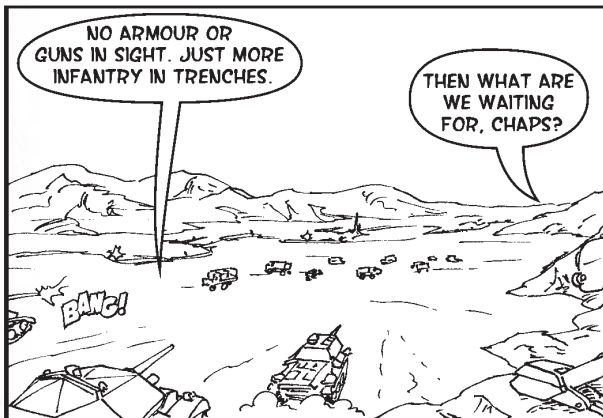
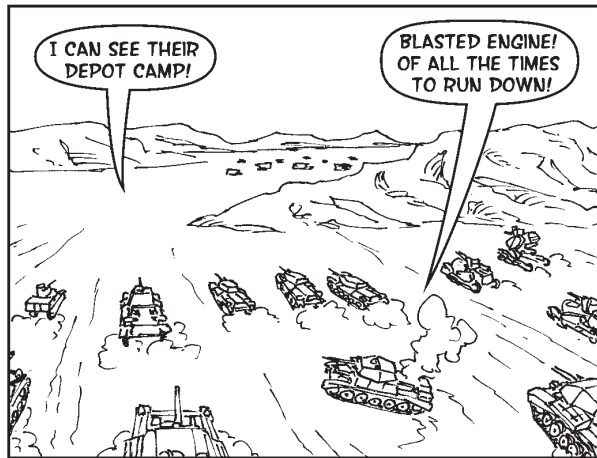
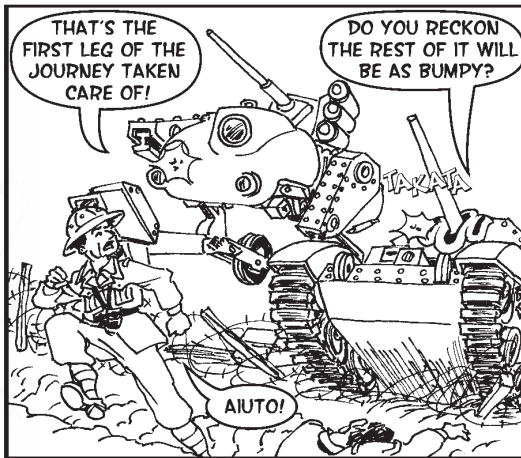
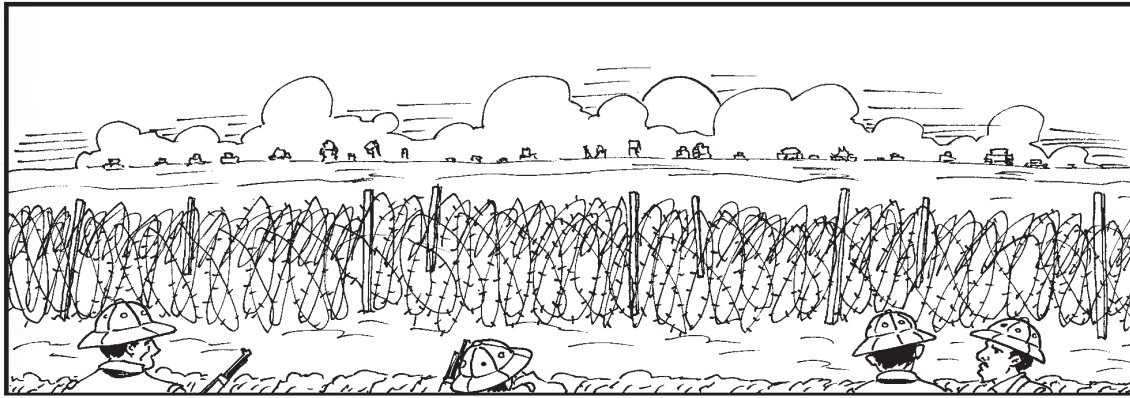


DAWN, 15 JUNE...



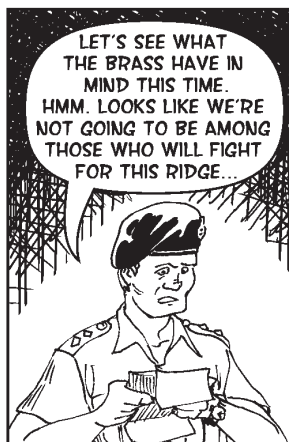
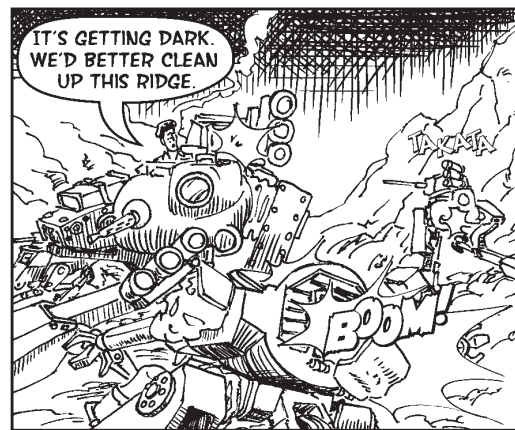
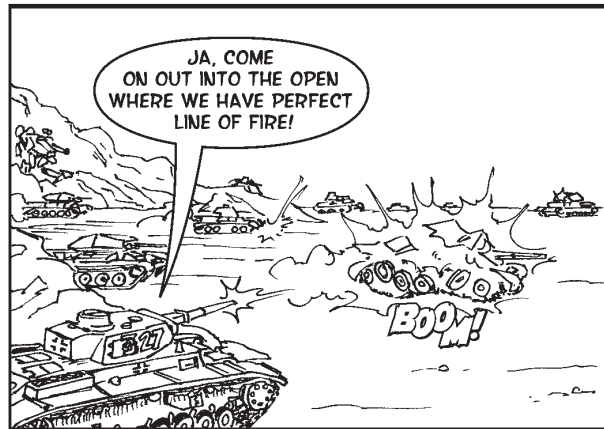
THERE'S NOTHING LIKE HAVING THE SUN AT YOUR BACK TO SURPRISE 'EM.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
ALFIE'S TENNERS



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS



NEXT EPISODE: THE TENNERS TRY TO CRAWL INTO THE RAT HOLE THAT IS TOBRUK!

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Article Guidelines

The Aurora Magazine focuses on the worlds created by Dream Pod 9. As such, we are primarily interested in, but not limited to, articles dealing with SilCore and Blitz! rules (variants, additions and explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment, artwork and similar ideas that draw on the established DP9 universes. This does not mean, however, that articles that are generic in nature or that do not deal with unique or original material, only that the focus is on exploring Silhouette and 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. Stories are encouraged to be accompanied by Silhouette CORE or Blitz! rules detail of some kind, be it stats for characters or equipment in the story, game scenarios, mechanized designs, new rules or explanations of how to simulate aspects of the story using the Silhouette/Blitz rules. This is not a hard requirement however, and stand-alone pieces will be considered and published.

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

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

Photos, drawings or images should be accompanied by photo credits as well as a brief description/caption for each photo (optional). Indicate within your article where the images are to be included like so: <<<Image_Filename.ext>>>. Images should be sent at a maximum of 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.

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 #7.2: June 20th 2013

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ARTICLE SUGGESTIONS

Historical Articles

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

Fiction

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

Modules

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

Scenarios

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

Note: Historical Accuracy

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

Designs

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

Artwork

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

House Rules

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

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

Tactics

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

Miniatures/Modeling

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

Something Else!

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