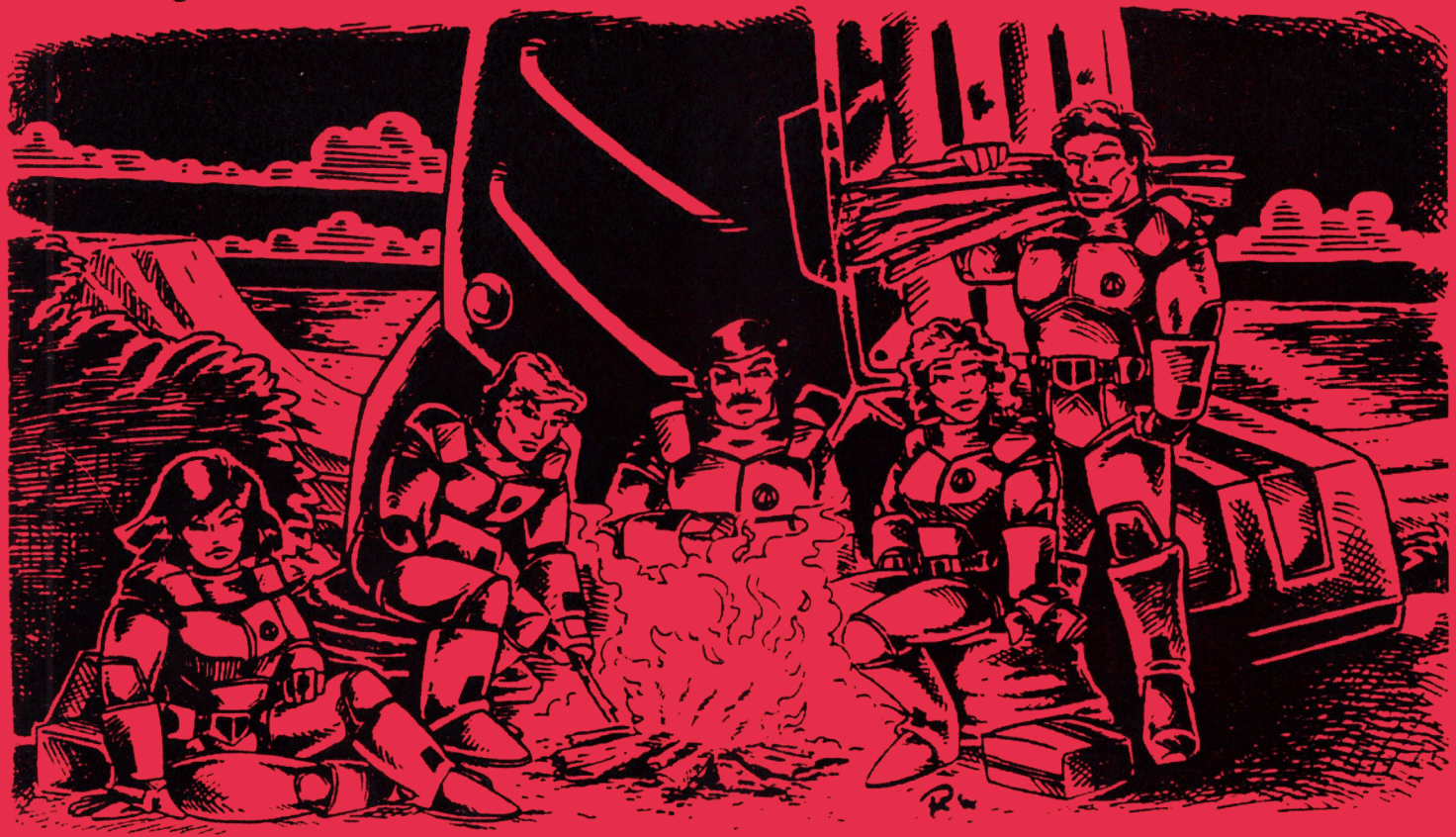
NorthCoast Roleplaying

(or Gaming From Behind the Redwood Curtain!)

ISSUE #6 Oct '88 $1.25



Editor's Opener

Doesn't it seem odd to you how many liscensed products there are on the market. As a gamer for almost ten years now, I have definitely wondered about this phenomenon.

Now, like most of you who've been gaming for five years or more, I began my gaming 'career' with AD&D. Quickly I found that this system was too restrictive. Interesting quotes can always be gained from the Foreword in any of the three main manuals: words from Mr. Gygax himself warning that if you deviate from the rules, Hell will cave-in your game and hordes of bad rolls will stab your players. It's a lot of hot air, but it's there for a reason. To tell you that AD&D is not the game of the future and one that will progress, but is instead, one that will quickly stagnate if you don't keep buying 'their' modules. So that forced me into a whole slew of other games. Why, you may ask. Simply because I seldom like being told what to do in something that should be my own free will (The Spider Queen will kill all, do not allow her to be killed.) The problem was, I never found a game that I truly like. Now came the interesting part.

Most people I know who progress in gaming do a simple trick called "bastardization". Simply put, this is making the rules of one game conform to the rules of another so, instead of having two games that aren't quite what you're looking for, you have a combination of the two that is. In my case, I began with TSR's original Gamma World (The First edition, not the flop of a Second edition, nor the Marvel Superheroes of a Third edition.) I picked up the game because I had played Gamma World with an old friend of mine, Geoff Zebrack, and decided that "Hey, I could run this much better than he is running it." I was wrong. Sort of. You see it wasn't the Game Master that was the problem, but the game itself. There just wasn't enough there. However, I found out that with a little work (and the bastardization of rules from some twenty-two other games) I could run a variant of Gamma World that was, well, Out-Of-This-World.

Then I began to wonder if others had learned to bastardize. In fact, I wondered if any of the games companies had caught on to the trick and were doing it themselves. I found my answer, YES. The biggest perpetrater of this was of course, Steve Jackson Games' GURPs. GURPs worldbooks seem to all come from old games, but with new additions (bastardization of the old games with another game, In The Labyrinth or the Fantasy Trip, Steve Jackson's glorious predecessor to GURPs put out by the now defunct Metagaming.) A perfect example of this is the new SPACE which is very obviously a rewrite in the GURPs system of the old-standby Traveller by GDW. Then I began to look at the other world books that were out: World books which did not have a game to directly bastardize from like HUMANX. Now where did these come from, and why do they sell? They come from books and these products are called liscensed products. And, sadly enough for me, they appear to be the wave of the future.

Steve Jackson Games has set its sights on a number of liscensed products (HUMANX from Alan Dean Foster's books, Conan from Robert E. Howard, and a number of others that are privy information.) I have even heard rumbles that they might get a Star Trek liscense. But why is a game company doing this? Aren't there any new systems that could be created that the intelligent Game Master could pick up and run any of these liscensed worlds in. I guess the answer is no, and this guess seems to be backed by many companies.

At conventions, almost all companies are refusing to look at new game systems; not on the basis that they are no good, but on the basis that there are simply too many on the market already and the companies do not wish to get bogged down with more. They don't feel that they could produce enough backup material for a new game and keep up with material for their old games at the same time. [Note: one company has mentioned that it will look at new systems, West End Games, but they give no promise of their interest in it.] Instead, the companies are asking people to do new Sourcebook/Worldbooks and Modules/Adventures. This is depressing for me since I have yet to find a complete Space system in the gaming market (my own insight is that it may be impossible to do a complete one, but I have yet to see one that even attempts to be complete; and I need no reminder of Space Opera at this point.) But again I wonder why the liscensed products are selling.

Star Wars by West End Games has appeared in Walden Books' top 5 best selling games since it was released. (Is it because it is a good game?) Even though Walden's carries a limited number of games, their listing seems to hold true about the market in general. I keep hearing raves about Star Wars and sales figures on the game that would make your head spin. So why is it selling? My sad feeling is that like Americans, the gaming people of this world have gotten lazy. Rather than take the time to sit down and plan out adventures, more and more gamers I see are running modules from the companies. This is great for the companies, but a said statement on gamers.

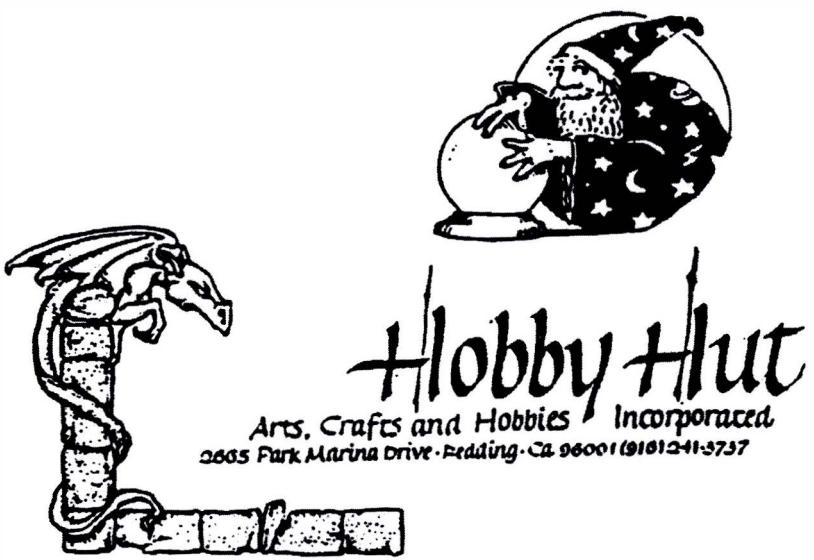
Besides the Science Fiction Writing market, we, the Gamers, are the most forward thinking of

people. We aren't bogged down by "it's unfeasible or impossible", that doesn't matter to us. We are doing it for fun, and we don't need to make the Nation's budget balance at the end of each game. We simply think and do. Now if we stop thinking for ourselves and start letting others tell us what to do and how to run it (even if they are gamers themselves, which few module writers today appear to be. Many of these writers used to play, but became to engrossed in writing to continue), well, I can definitely imagine (Gamers tend to have a very vivid ability in this department as well) Big Brother GG's face telling us that happiness is in following rules and that the computer is our friend. We just can't let that happen.

I do need to back up a second and tell you that I don't disbelieve in modules, or worldbooks, or any of the things I'm talking about. In fact, I am for them wholeheartedly. They need to be in the market place so that people can have a beginning. These are great, and I mean great, beginnings for games. I picked up G1 and G3 for AD&D when they were out and used them, but I used them as the beginning of a campaign and then continued the campaign on my own. I did not stick with the set and then run D1-3, run back and re-reun characters through G2, and then get Q1 and kill everyone playing because there was nothing more, the modules were done. Modules and other programmed "dungeons" are a great beginning, but don't let them rule your game and your mind. Come up with stuff on your own.

I also feel that, rather than quitting your old system, which I am seeing people do, to begin a new liscensed system, why don't you instead bastardize your system to fit the new liscensed world you want to play. There is no reason why someone needs a Tolkien Roleplaying Game and 1000 modules to run the famous trilogy: There is no reason you need a Star Wars manual and 55 supplements and character charts to relive this fine movie trilogy: You don't even need the Federation Manual of Living life in the future according to Kirk to play any one of your favorite episodes. In fact, I truly believe that if you wish to run a Thundercats campaign, you could even do it without the Snarf Book of 'How to raise Lion-O into the Lord of the Thundercats'. All you need is a little bit of time to work in the details and some imagination which I know you should have if you are a Gamer to begin with. Then the rest simply falls into place with you as the Game Master and your players as "our intrepid adventurers."

So the next time you have the chance to purchase the newest $15 ($15 for a module, is that what they cost now? sheesh!!!) module, try thinking on your own for a change and continuing one of the other fifty modules you already have as a campaign. You'll save the money and probably have a better feel about your whole game in general. Consider it, now you created it, not some unknown designer in some Lake. You created it and built all the people in it, so you know what they will do in any situation. You have no need to review the "Reactions to seeing a naked man in the Sun" Table found on Page 51a. You can roleplay it without rollplaying it. And isn't that what Fantasy Roleplaying is all about. Being someone else, somewhere else, doing something else that you aren't? Enjoy your own imagination.



A Closer Look At Fast-Talk

By Richard LeDuc

I would now like to offer up some guidelines to using my favorite GURPs' skill, Fast-Talk. Fast-Talk is useful for convincing people of some really outrageous things, but its effects can often be unpredicatabnle and short lived.

When using Fast-Talk, I recommend that first the player comes up with an outline of the story that is going to be used. The better this task is done, the better the modifier to the skill will be given. Use Table #1 as guide lines.

Table #1

+0 -	Rough outline - "We'll pose as police."
+1 -	Above and 'props' - "We have the badge and uniforms."
+2 -	A good story
+3 -	Well roleplayed - "Mam, We're from the..."
-1 -	Lacking props or having a bad story.

Next, a skill roll should be made, along with a roll of 3D6 vs. IQ of the victim. When the Fast-Talk and IQ rolls are made, subtract the amount that the Fast-Talk roll was made by from the amount that the IQ roll was made by and see Table #2. Example: Fast-Talk roll needed is a 13 and a roll 10 is made. The roll is made by 3. IQ roll needed is a 12 and an 11 is rolled. The roll is made by 1. Now, we subtract 3 from 1 and get -2. Now consult Table #2 for a result of '-2'.

Table #2

-6 or less	They figured you out.
-5 to 0	You did not get what you wanted, but the victim did not see through your story.
1 to 2	You can get little things that the victim would not oppose. Maybe into a P.O. Box.
3 to 5	You can get things that could cause a minor inconvenience to the victim. "It'll only take $20..."
6+	Just about anything is believed. "You can't get pregnant..."

Note that the victim gets a modified (by the amount originally missed by) IQ roll each minute that the Fast-Talker forces their Will on the victim, to discover the fraud. Each roll gets an additional +1, and with time, this can even become an overall plus. i.e. if you made your Fast-Talk by 5, your victim made her roll by 1, thus she rolls her IQ-4 on 3D6, if failed, she still believes you. After four minutes, she only needs to roll her IQ. After nine, it is her IQ +5.

If you made your Fast-Talk and your victim missed their IQ roll, then you automatically get the results that you wanted. Later resistance roll are made at the amount you made your Fast-Talk by plus the amount he missed his IQ by as a negative to the IQ roll. Again, plus one for each additional minute, though. If the Fast-Talker missed his roll, but the victim didn't, then the fraud is figured out. If you both missed your rolls, then the fraud is not figured out, but the victim does not feel compelled to grant your demands.

Other skill Modifiers:

-4	Victim has Fast-Talk or Acting.
+2	To the victim's IQ roll if he knows you have this skill.
-3	For an impossible story.
-5	If victim makes a *detect lies* roll.
-1	Per additional person present (on victim's side only).

Also, a good Fast-Talker can reduce the cost they pay for goods or services. To do this, reduce the cost they must pay by 10% for each point of difference in rolls between the IQ roll and the Fast-Talk roll, but if the fraud is discovered, assume the Fast-Talker gets, at best, a *poor* reaction. This is done by convincing the seller that you've paid more than you have or that you've been overcharged.

This skill can be alot of fun if properly used. Try not to let it get out of hand, though. For Fast-Talkers in action, watch "Face" on the old 'A-Team' reruns, or "Rockford" in the 'Rockford Files". Other good sources are the movies 'Papermoon' and 'Fletch'.

Vampires as player characters

By Ethan Marcus

INTRO:

I have the dubious honor of running an AD&D game which spans three counties (Humboldt, Imperial & San Diego). It is called the Ongoing Campaign, and indeed, it has been "ongoing" for nearly ten years now. Probably the most outstanding feature of the game is that it is what we call an all-monsters campaign. This means that players may run any creatures from any book, monster manual, movie, horrid nightmare or satisfying daydream. Of course, it is the responsibility of the DM (also known as GM or G.O.D. - Game Operations Director) to somehow adapt the character race into the milieu. There are two important factors involved in adaptatation:

1) Origin (for the race AND the individual)
2) Special Abilities (what can the charcter do?)

I humbly submit the example of vampires. In NCRP #3, John Sullivan told you of vampyres for GURPS. Now read of vampires as player characters for AD&D.

In my game, I have patterned my vampires after those in the Dracula series by Fred Saberhagen (highly recommended reading). Vampires are of three origins.

1) A breathing human being may become a vampire by exchanging blood with a vampire lover. This involves the lover biting the neck of the breather and sucking out a portion of the circulatory fluid of the vampire. Vampire flesh is notoriously hard to penetrate, and so the undead come equipped with sharp fingernails for just such an occasion. Usually, one exchange is IN-sufficient.

The human goes into a three day torpor which appears to the average coroner as death. After three days have elapsed, the newborn vapire rises. Henceforth, the relationship between the new vampire and his/her lover must be platonic as vampire reproduction (Make no mistake, the erectile canines of the vampire are the reproductive organs of that race) may only be carried out with breathers.

The subject of vampire rape is a distasteful one. You've all seen it in movies. No more need be said. However, if both partners are willing, sex between breather and vampire is supposedly MORE pleasurable than normal intercourse. I wouldn't know.

2) A person may be born a vampire. If a pregnant breather has a vampire lover, she may give birth to identical twins, one breathing, one not. Not yet knowing how to draw in air to make noise, vampire babies tend to cry mutely when born. Learning to talk is difficult, and many vampires may be diagnosed as learning disabled. ("What did you say, Mikey? You've GOT to inhale before you speak.") Behavior disorders may be suspected when the vampire child refuses to go to school during the day, complaining of overwhelming fatigue. ("Of course you're tired Suzie; you were UP all night...")

There was one character in my game (Art O'Malley) who was a lawful-good ranger (yes, lawful-good). He managed to grow to adulthood without his family ever suspecting the true nature of his strangeness (and indeed, he never truly KNEW what he was; only his mother ever suspected -- of course, he was such a STRONG child). When they finally found out, it was only with great difficulty that he persuaded them that sharp wooden articles insinuating themselves into the central portion of his anatomy would not be correct moral behavior. (Suddenly the story of Dracula becomes a TRUE horror story -- the tale of blood-mad breathers out for the life of a poor misunderstood vampire...)

3) A human may become a vampire by being murdered and then REFUSING to die. This is what transpired with the man who MAY have been the first vampire (certainly the oldest, currently living, Nosferatu). The man is known to history as Vlad Tepas (aka Vlad the Impaler, aka the Warlord Prince of Wallachia, aka Count Dracula, whose castle still stands as a tourist trap in Romania -- but I'll never see it, since it is behind the Iron Curtain. Oops, my biases are showing.). Anyway, Vlad was multiply stabbed by his enemies in the fifteenth century, but legend has it that he returned. There are also rumors that the Count survived Van Helsing's attack in 1891 (DRACULA by Bram Stoker and THE DRACULA TAPE by Fred Saberhagen).

Cecil (pronounced se-SEEL; don't ask me why she spelled it that way), another character in my game , was such a vampire. Her parents tried to kill her at the age of three. She had the last laugh

when she rose three days later and threatened to file child-abuse charges.

Vampires roll their characteristics on 3d6 (NOT 4d6 and take the best three, or any other system used to give players an advantage. Vampires will have advantage enough!) Their strength must be a minimum of 13 to start. If a strength below 13 is rolled, the strength is automatically 13.

Vampires tend to sleep during the day (but don't necessarily have to). They may ONLY rest in their own home earth. Vampire adventurers may carry some along with them is such things as bed-rolls or sleeping bags. They are terribly vulnerable if home earth is unavailable for resting purposes.

A vampire may survive one day per every 2 experience levels (up to a maximum of 4 days) without rest. For every day which passes without rest, strength is reduced by 4 points and dexterity by HALF (temporarily). The undead must then make up that rest on a one for one basis to restore her/his lost abilities. For example, if a vampire has not slept in four days, the nosferatu would need to sleep for four days straight (day AND night) in order to regain all lost prowess. If the nosferatu is awakened after only three days of rest or less, only three days worth of abilities are regained (or less)(dex doubled 3 times and +12 strength). Note that a fractional dex is considered as three for purposes of armor class and "to hit".

A vampire may *shape change* into any mammal (bats, wolves, and rats are traditional) or into mist (move 3"/turn), BUT a nosferatu character may only have as many forms available to him/her as she/he has experience levels. Thus, a first level vampire might only be able to turn into a duck-billed platypus, for example. Such shape changing may only be done at night. No possessions or clothing may be transported in the shape-changed form.

Vampires are able to communicate with any mammal into whose form they can *shape change*. If they can *shape change* into rats, they may also communicate with various tiny vermin such as fleas and mites (day or night).

The strength of a vampire goes up +2/level up to 8th level. Each level of superhuman strength is considered +1 (e.g. 18, 18/01-50, 18/51-75, etc.). Max strength for a vampire is 24. The charisma of a vampire goes up +2/level also. Max is 25.

Vampire characters may be of any character class (or race for that matter).

Vampire characters who are able to become mist also gain the following extra abilities. They can control fog and wind to a certain degree. Winds may be increased/decreased one level per turn for every two levels of experience (see DMG under "ships"). They may also elect to change the wind's direction one increment per turn for every level of experience rather than change the wind's level. They may also do some combination of the above wind effects. Wonderful for the vampire sailor! Windstorms may have appropriate rain and electrical effects if the undead so desires AND the wind is sufficiently severe. Furthermore, a nosferatu who is brought down to zero hit points will immediately become mist and seek out a resting place. One must be found within a certain number of rounds (the character's constitution) or the vampire is dead. The events described above may only occur at night.

Vampires heal ALL damage done to them by normal weapons (if they are not wooden) between "encounters". Damage done by wooden and magical weapons are healed normally. Vampire characters, exactly as normal characters, are truly dead if their hit points reach -10. Vampires also bleed 1 point/round if their hit points are below zero. Bind those wounds! The vampire below zero hit points cannot rest (even though unconcious) unless placed in her/his home earth. Consequences could follow...

Running water is an effective barrier to vampires, even if they are flying or being carried. therefore, THEY CANNOT CROSS RIVERS! Immersion in running water will kill a vampire in one round per every two levels of experience (max 5) with a proportionate loss of hit points per round (e.g. if the vampire were to die in 4 rounds, he/she would lose 1/4 of her/his hit points per round.).

Vampires may only enter dwellings into which they have been invited (at some previous time) by any mortal.

Holy items have no effects on vampires (unless, of course, they are religious).

Vampires who are of the Dracula/Cecil type (who had REFUSED to die) may go below zero hit points and still retain concioousness (although they will still die if their hi points fall below -10). They also gain an ability called <u>the hand</u> which allows them to prevent other vampires from using their supernatural abili ies. When using <u>the hand</u>, the vampire may not use any of his/her supernatural abilities either. Its hand to hand guys!

Vampire are unaffected by *sleep* and *charm* spells. Garlic doesn't bother them more than normal either. Neither does silver affect them.

COPIES HALF OFF

After your first 100 copies from one original, the rest are Half-Price!

WE WORK AS LATE AS YOU DO

Whenever you need clear, quality copies, come to Kinko's. We're open early, open late, and open weekends.

When you're working late, it's good to know you're not working alone.

kinko's

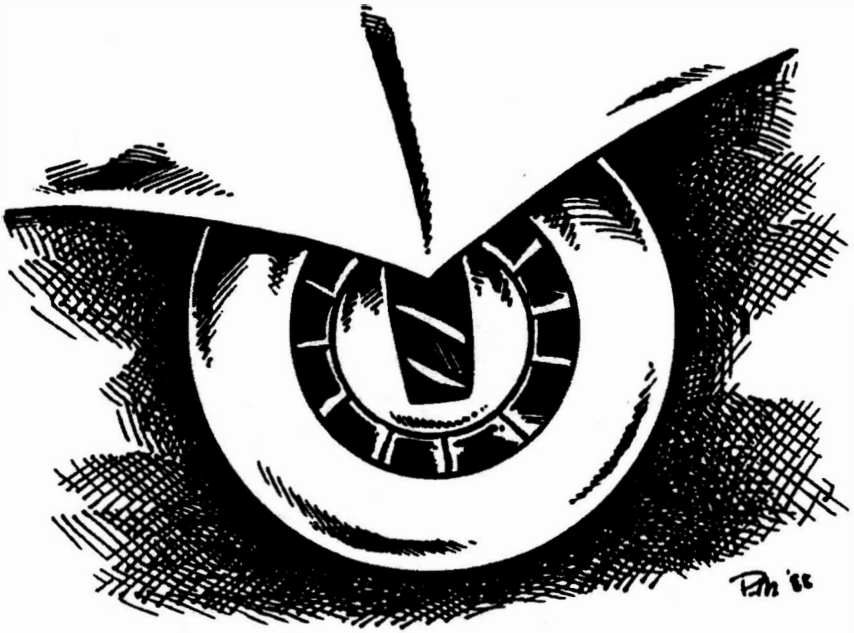
Great copies. Great people.

1818 G St. Arcata 822-8712

418 K St. Eureka 445-3334

THIS MONTH, FOR ROBTECH: THE ROLEPLAYING GAME, WE PRESENT:

OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE...



COMPUTERS PLUS
& KANGAROO SOFTWARE

DON CHIN
Retail Sales Manager
(707) 822 8332

1731 G Street, Suite B
Arcata, California 95521

Old Soldiers Never Die...

A scenario for *Robotech* RPG Book Five: The Invid Invasion by Craig Sheeley

This adventure can be put into any campaign, as long as the campaign is based in the U.S. Stockton could be a town in any state: All that is required is fairly wooded terrain, with hills, gulleys, and streams... Even parts of Nebraska fall into this category!

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PARTY:

I suggest that the palyers have at least a couple of Cyclone-drivers, at least one Bio-Mechanic O.C.C. in the group, and maybe an Alpha fighter. A few 'normal' vehicles would be very handy, too. If you don't have enough characters, generate more!

PLEASE NOTE: Robtech: the RPG and The Invid Invasion are necessary to play this scenario. There are mecha from Southern Cross in the scenario too.

Part I: The Adventureres Arrive

The PCs are going to the small town of Stockton because they are in need - GM, it's up to you to determine just what the party needs: Information, spare parts, food, supplies, ammo, fuel, etc. Medical attention is a good one since whatever the party needs, Stockton will be able to supply, but it will take a couple of days.

Scouting out Stockton will reveal that it is one of those places that passerbys miss if they blink at 70 mph. Perhaps 30 houses and a few 'public' buildings and businesses comprise the town, with tilled fields surrounding it, and a cracked concrete road running through it. The population could be estimated at about 60-100 people, with a n equal amount of farm animals. Stockton itself is nestled in a smqall vballey in the middle of a country of rolling hills, heavily covered with trees which threaten to engulf Stockton someday. These trees are tall growth, probably seeded just after the Zentraedi fleet blasted the planet - this would leave the trees about 25 years old and about 30 - 50 feet tall. Points of interest are the bar/public house, the livery stable, and the public square which the two aforementioned buildings border. The square has a grassy hill in the middle of it, and a large, tarnished bronze bell slung between two posts is set squarely on the hill.

If the Party comes riding into town using protoculture engines:

Surely by now, the players should realize that protoculture atracts Invid like honey attracts flies. If they're stupid enough to roll into the area of Stockton (within two mile of the town) on Protoculture, the area will soon come under the scrutiny of standard Invid scout formations (one armored, two regular) cruising at 50 mph at 100 yards altitude, looking for them. Strangely, they approach protoculture readings cautiously and slowly enough so that the party will have ample time to shut down any engines and hide. If they're really stupid and open fire, then the scouts will hover out of range and vector in a force of 2 Pincers leading 40 Shock Troopers to wipe out the party! (Fighting is not always the best option...)

Rolling into town:

How do the PCs enter town? Do they come in calmly, concealing their high tech weaponry and gear? Or do they roll in like blatant techno-jerks? Please note this: It will make a difference in the adventure.

The people of Stockton seem freindly and courteous, answering quetions cheerfully and giving directions to whatever the PCs need (please bear in mind that the only items Stockton can provide are non-tech, like food, medical assistance, auto repairs, common firearms ammo, and so on. No Reflex missiles or any military equipment here!). In all, Stockton seems to be a pretty nice place.

They are just as curious about the party. "Where you from, boy?" " What's happenin out there? We hain't heard any news fer weeks!" " Seen any o' them strange alien citters lately? Them Invid are a caution!" (Note: Few people call the aliens "Invid," unless they know something about them...) "Where ya headed?" And the natives never let the PCs out of their sight; there are always several townspeople watching the members of the party.

Intelligent players will soon realize that the townspeople don't answer questions as well as they ask them; any questions asked of the people of Stockton will be answered vaguely if the question is important - queries about weapons, Invid incursions, resistance to the Invid, etc., will be met with a quick change of subject.

Whatever the PCs came to Stockton for should make them hang around for at least a couple of days (medical aid is ideal, and parties almost always have wounds to heal). If they try to go out of town to check on equipment, they will be followed by clumsy shadowers who flee upon being discovered - the GM should not allow any of these to be captured! Of course, if the party was stupid enough to roll into town with their armed and armored vehicles and veriform mecha, then there won't be need for shadowers - there will always be eyes on the group and their machines. Despite the watchers, the party will not be disturbed that night, although the GM should make sure that they're mighty uneasy.

Part II: The Speech of the Herald

The next day, the villagers act just as strangely as the day before, snooping and watching the visitors. Around noon, though, everyone starts to gravitate towards the town square. They gather around the outsides of it and wait. At precisely noon, an Invid Scout flies down from directly overhead and lands gently in the square! It is apparently non-hostile, and everyone is attentive to it. Suddenly, it starts speaking through grid-like structures strapped to its shoulders (where the gun-pods go on an armored scout). The words are spoken by many voices in unison; ma e, female, and neither (those who have seen Macross: the Movie should think of the voice[s] of the andcient city computer in the formerly-underwater City of the Protoculture):

"People of this hive, attention. we are displeased. The attackers have not been found. We will reward the one who finds them. We rewarded the unit Cloyd, here, for a lesser task."

The Scout gestures with a claw at a thin, sinewy man lounging nearby with a Wolverine combat rifle slung over his shoulder. He grins at the attention.

"We give weapons and power, in greater proportion. Search hard! When the attackers are found, ring the bell." The Scout gestures toward the bell, "and we shall hear."

Following this address, the Scout will go vertical and fly out of sight, straight up (ain't anti-gravity wunnerful?).

Special note to the Gm: Anyone firing upon the Scout will be attacked by the townspeople and the Scout. If the Scout is destroyed (someone turns their Gallant H-90 on it and shoots it through the eye, for instance), the hill at the square will erupt with the onslaught of 1D6 Enforcers, 2D6 Troopers, and 2D6 Armored Scouts. You see, the Research Hive is directly beneath the village, and shooting the Scout would convince the Brain that the PCs are the "Attackers", just about sealing the fate of the party. Time to roll up new characters...

Finding out just what that Invid meant:

If asked what the Invid was talking about, the townspeople laugh, shrug, and say that they don't know. It is obvious that they are lying.

Of course, the PCs might try and drag off one of the townspeople and beat a confession out of them. This is not wise, for others will always be watching in the daytime, and such an action would spark a lynch mob - a fairly well-armed one, bearing shotguns, clubs and knives. Knowing players, they might try this anyway, thinking they're invulnerable. If they do, make the mob have one shotgunner, one clubman, and two knifers per member of the party, and let the brawl go in earnest...

Assuming that the above-mentioned brawl doesn't come off (a casual mention be the GM of the watching eyes and the ready shotguns might forestall it), one of the PCs should be allowed to overhear part of a conversation between the owner of the bar and a well-weathered farmer who drove into town in an old and battered pickup:

OWNER: The Invid are getting mighty itchy, Nick. They'll turn on us if we don't find those raiders soon.

NICK: (Speaks with a slight Russian accent) Don't worry about it, Frank. We haven't done anything. We are innocent.

OWNER: Yeah, that's what you think. They're like mad dogs; you can't trust 'em. (He drops his voice a little.) The last ambush was out near your place, Nick. Are you sure you didn't see anything?

NICK: Nyet, uh, no. I see not'ing, just the smoke over the trees. That's all for this week, Frank. See you next week.

The old farmer loads the last bag of flour into his truck and drives off. Anyone trying to trail him will be led up the road into the woods and be suddenly stopped by a massive tree recently pushed over to block the road! (Unless the party had VT jets or other flying machines in Stockton, they won't be able to get to their machines in time to follow Nick. Of course, if they lift off flying warmachines from Stockton, someone will panic and scream, "We're under attack!!" and run for the bell; so will other people, unless the flier sets back down immediately.) There are no tracks of the pickup around a corner some 20 yards from the downed tree... As if the truck had taken to the air!

The bar owner, if questioned about Nick, will say that he's just an old farmer from a different part of the country who setttled here some years back, and lives out in the woods up by the Gap. He's not very informative on where the Gap is.

Part III: Attack in the night

As night falls over Stockton, each adventurer is still shadowed by towny followers. Any adventureres who split off from the others are targets for the attack to come (arrange for the party to split up); they'll pick on the weakest-looking one. The target will be cornered in an alley or some other dark, isolated place. Four thugs will atack HTH, trying to pin the victim, while Cloyd watches from the rear with his rifle. When (if) the victim is pinned, Cloyd will start asking questions: Where does the party come from? Who are they? Aren't they the mysterious *Attackers* the Invid are interested in?

Allow the rest of the party to intervene in the nick of time (this is, after all, fiction). Of the thugs, two have revolvers and Cloyd has his rifle. They'll fight back if the PCs fail to sneak up on them, although overwhelming firepower will persuade them to surrender (they're not that stupid!).

Cloyd and his cohorts can be interrogated/persuaded to tell the following story: The Invid are an active bunch around Stockton, for their own reasons. They don't bother the townspoeple much and mostly just watch them for hours on end. Recently, though, someone has taken to shooting Invid patrols from range and ambushing foot patrols without mercy. To date, the Invid have been unable to discover or defeat any of these raiders, and are getting impatient about it. The last clash was up near old Nick's place, when a half-dozen troopers were ambushed and destroyed. Further interrogation on the location of the Gap identifies it as a fifty-foot cleft carved in the ridge to the north by the makers of the ancient concrete highway. To get to Nick's place, turn left at the second road past the Gap.

Part IV: Finding the Raiders and Nick's Place

After this little attack, someone is going to ring the bell and finger the PCs as the raiders; if they don't let anyone go from Cloyd's group, then a passerby will do it. This will call up the patrol squad (1 Pincer, 3 Shock Troopers, and 6 Armored Scouts) in the town square - the PCs will have a few minutes to scatter before the Invid come looking for them. They'll be able to make it to their mecha and vehicles and make a good start for the Gap before the Invid get seriously on their tails (you see, it's night, and the Invid see even less detail in the dark than in the light).

On the way to the Gap (if the players don't head there first, suggest it as a natural defense point

where the outnumbered humans can seek an advantage), the Invid will be flying over the road at about a quarter-mile of altitude, staying out of weapon range, perhaps two miles back. The players will be surprised by a series of pink-white laser (yes, laser) bolts which lance out of the darkness ahead of them to the north to spear all eleven Invid through the vulnerable "eye" sensors. Any airborne PCs will be able to get a temporary fix: someone with some heavy laser firepower nailed all eleven from a range of five miles out, on the ground!

Nick's shack is easy to find, with his truck parked outside. There is no one home, and PCs with Tracking skill will be able to easily spot a trail leading off into the woods. Following it with noisy or large vehicles will certainly alert any potential ambusher; the PCs may attempt to approach stealthily (actually, the only way to sneak up with a Shadow or Vindicator fighter with the claoking device on).

A mile down the trail, the ambush is sprung (if a successful *Detect Ambush* roll is made, then there is forewarning of mecha lurking in the woods). Two battloids step out behind the party while another two block the way ahead, flanking a well-used and battered Destroid Gladiator which looks like it might have fought the Zentraedi (it did, actually). In flawless English, the Destroid's pilot speaks over the loudspeakers, demanding to know which side the adventurers are on, Invid or anti-Invid". (Answering "Invid" will get the #@!* blown out of them. The battloids are all carrying old Zentraedi energy rifles, as is the Gladiator, which carries a dozen AP missiles besides.) If the answer is "anti-Invid", the adventurers will be "invited" to come with the old mecha to their camp.

The camp is a deep cleft in the ridge, overhung by tons of rock. Beneath it are another three battloids and a Destroid Raidar-X sporting a fission reactor-pack on its back... Any old RDF vets will realize that it is what massacred the Invid earlier.

Around the fire, the PCs will be questioned as to their origins and their intentions towards Stockton. The interrogator and leader of the group is a tall, powerful, old man who identifies himself as Gartan Soltek, the Gladiator pilot. If the PCs manage to convince him that they have no love for the Invids (or the people of Stockton), the battloid drivers will begin to relax, and lower their AKs. Gartan will be particularily interested in the news from any PCs born on SDF-3; he witnessed the launching of both SDF-3 and SDF-1! He is anxious to know when Admiral Hunter is returning to restore order and destroy the Invid. He'll be dissappointed if the PCs tell the truth (no one knows), but swears that he and his men will continue to harry and destroy Invid anywhere they can.

Sometime during the interview, a fiftiesh but still very attractive grey-blonde woman will join the group, wanting to know if certain Zentraedi are still with the fleet: Commander Breetai, among others. Any SDF-3-born PC will be able to tell her, and she mentions that "it is good to be destroying Invid once again; that is what we Zentraedi were made for." Gartan identifies her as his wife, Meltron (Zentraedi for female warrioir) Shyguri Talos, the pilot of the Raidar-X.

After the interview, the other East-Blockers will go to attend their mecha and other chores while Gartan tells the PCs about the battloid group: When the E.B.S.I.S. was wiped out by the Invid, this group was patrolling Mongolia. They could not save New Moscow or Peiping, but they wanted to strike back at the invaders. They got a ride on one of the East-Block nuclear subs still operating and came to North America to deal with the largest concentration of Invid. They have six Soldier Battloids, a Juggernaut Battloid (armed with a welll-supplied AKG-47 gun pod as well as its standard weapons), the old Destroids (the Gladiator is fitted with a fusion power-plant - its Protoculture ran out; the fission pack on the Raidar-X is to supply all non-laser functions - the Protoculture furnace is left off until the lasers are needed), and a pair of technicians, scrounge-wizards who keep the mecha running. All of the mecha except the Raidar-X show maroon patches of replacement armor scavenged from destroyed Invid.

Gartan has a burning desire to wipe out the Hive beneath the town - yes, there is a Hive hidden underneath Stockton! This should shock the PCs. And he has a plan. The East-Blockers have the firepower and bulk to stand off a major Invid attack, thanks to the Destroids and the Juggernaut, but they can't get into the Hive entrances; they're too big! Cyclones and Alpha fighters, though... Once in the Hive, all that has to be done is to carry a bomb (a Cyclone could do it easily in a back-pack arrangement) to the middle or lower levels, set the timer, then get out! The bomb is a one-megaton fission pack!! and should melt the complete Hive most thoroughly, not to mention blowing Stockton off the map. Will the RDF freedom fighters help? (Do they have much choice?)

If (when) they agree, the East-Blockers will repair major damage to the PC vehicles and map out the plan's details. If, through some circumstance, the PCs don't agree to help, they'll be out of their mecha facing the fully-warmed-up Juggernaut. If the sticking point is blowing up Stockton, Gartan points out that the townspeople are Invid-sympathisers and deserve no better. Pointing out that, Invid-symps or not, they are still human, will persuade him to issue a warning to the townspeople at the start of the attack to leave the town.

Part V: The Attack

The attack starts at dawn. If a warning was agreed on, Gartan's mecha-amplified voice will ring over the town, warning the people to leave forever or be destroyed in nuclear fire. A few laser blasts fired into vacant lots punctuate the warning. Another laser-blast will blast the bell in the square, alerting the Invid. Invid pour out, headed for the town. IT IS STRONGLY ADVISED THAT THE PCS HAVE THEIR PROTOCULTURE ENGINES OFF, or these dozens will attack them! After a couple of minutes, the Invid stop coming, leaving the two Trooper guards. This is the signal to start the bomb raid. The force-field blocking the entrance will reform in 30 seconds!

The Hive is identical the the Underground Hive described on pages 89-93 of The Invid Invasion. It is a small Research Hive, not a Combat Hive, and has gewer troops (X10 multipliers are reduced to X2); the majority of the troops are gone, and each level has the die-roll of each specific type with a X1/2 multiplier. For instance, the Room 1-B, Active Invid Living Area, has 21d6 Scouts, 1d3 Troopers and 1d3 Shock Troopers, 1d2 Enforcers, 1d2 Pincers, and 1d3 Royal Command Battloids. Non-die-roll forces (like the Power Core guards and patrol) are as stated. The PCs break in at Level Three at the access in corridor D, and can take it from there. The nuke is a bona-fide dirty bomb, the timer is real and will set off the bomb at the specified time (Demolitions, Demolitions: Removal, and Electrical Engineering will confirm this); there are no tricks or double-crosses. It is best placed close to the Power Core or the Brain. The PCs have to fight their way in, plant their "egg," and get out, for the timer is set for fifteen minutes!

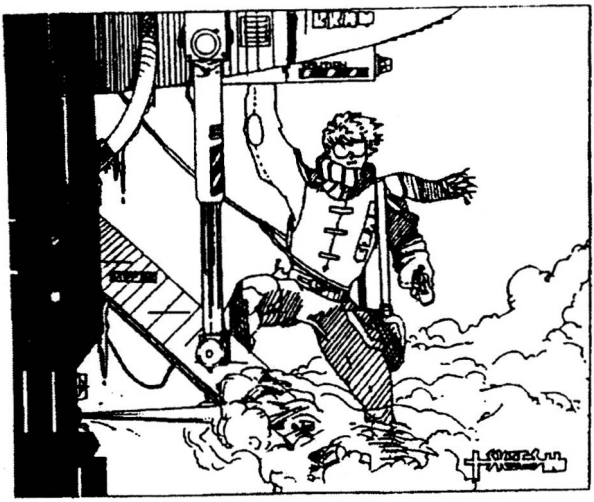
Part VI: Aftermath

The nuke will blow up the Hive if placed in the Power Core, doubling the chances of destroying the Brain. The East-Blockers can make short work of the remaining Invid, dazed by the loss of central control - the East-Blockers concentrated fire on the bell-hill, threatenbing the top of the Hive, and the majority of the Invid rallied there to protect it. The nuke destroyed them, as was Gartan's plan.

If the nuke wasn't placed, there's going to be the devil to pay. The GM had better convert the scenario to an "Escape from Avenging Invid" adventure, with all the ugly consequences!

It is likely that the East-Blockers will part company with the adventurers; they're a clannish bunch. Still, if they did a good job, the PCs will be given a radio-frequency and code-sign to contact the East-Blockers when there are other Hives to be destroyed.

Experience: Genereally, destroying a Hive (even with help) is worth a good 300 points. Individual experience bonuses are applicapble, too (see *Robotech: The Role-Playing Game*, pages 10-11). If the PCs persuaded Gartan to issue a warning to the people of Stockton first, add another 100 points to their experience total.



Writer's Notes/GM Information:

This would be a good beginning adventure for a campaign, giving the players some less-than-overhwhelming encounter witht the Invid. If the GM wishes to have the players skulk through the Hive abit, they should start to notice human-made items scattered through the Hive. The reason: This Research Hive is concerned with studying and identifying human technology for the Regis - its research subject is Humanity and its behavior! The players might even find a Fifth-Stage Invid play-acting at being human - this is a good place to stick an Invid spy into the group. Heck, it worked in Moespaeda (New Generation), didn't it?

Stats for the East-Blockers

The East-Blocker pilots are all average in stats (10-11), and are 4th level. The Juggernaut Pilot is 6th level. Gartan Zoltek is 12th level (he is a vet dating from the Global Civil War, you know), and incredibly skilled. Notable stats are PS 23 and PP 19. His skills are all 90%+; in his Gladiator, Soldat, he has 9 attacks/round, +7 strike, +5 parry, +3 dodge, +5 to roll with punch. Alignment is Aberrant. His wife, the micronized Zentraedi Shyguri, is 9th level; notable stats are IQ 18, POP 21, PB 18. Her skills are all 90%+, too; she gets the standard number of laser attacks in her Raidar-X, +8 strike, +5 parry, +5 dodge, +2 roll with punch. Alignment Scrupulous.

An Alternate Experience System for *Robotech: The Role-Playing Game*

For those of you who are less than thrilled with level-based systems (a level-based system is one where all skills improve at once by gaining Experience Levels rather than individually improving skills - D&D as opposed to, say, *Top Secret S.I.* or *Call of Cthulu*), I include my own variant experience system, which will allow you to break from the antiquated bonds of the ten-plus year-old level system:

To convert Experience Points to usable non-level Character Pints (CP), divide the EPs by 7.5 (use a calculator) and round up. CPs can be spent in the following fashions:

IMPROVE SKILLS: Each CP spent on a skill adds 1% to that skill. No skill may be inproved more than 5% per adventure, and no skill may rach over 110% without high IQ bonuses.

AQUIRE NEW SKILLS: Aquiring a new skill costs 50 CP and starts at base percentage as described in the books. If the skill is not normally available to the character through the O.C.C., then the new skill costs 100 CP, and the character will have to be taught the skill by an experienced teacher. The GM should rule how long this takes, with a minimum of one month. Bear in mind that certain highly technical skills (Repairing Mecha, Mecha/Veritech Mechanics, Electrical Engineering, etc.) are very difficult to learn and should take six months to a year.

ADD HIT POINTS: Another die-roll costs 35 CP; no more than one die-roll may be bought per adventure.

IMPROVING HAND-TO-HAND LEVEL: This costs 100 CP and takes a month.

RAISING CHARACTERISTICS: This costs 20 times the value of the characteristic to be raised. For instance, raising your PS from 9 to 10 would cost 10 times 20 CP, or 200 CP. Raising it further to 11 would cost 220 CP more. Only 1 characteristic point of improvement may be made per month, and there are different requirements for raising each raisable characteristic. Raising IQ, MA, or ME takes education, learning from texts or from a teacher in logic/philosophy psychology; these three stats can never be raised higher than 3 points over the original rolled value. PS, PP, PE, and SPD are raised through exercise: One month per point with an experienced trainer, or two months if the character is doing it alone. These stats can never be raised over 4 points more than the original rolled value (except through bio-genetics). Points gained from physical skills do count against this 4-point gain limit. PB can only be raised 1 point through non-surgical means; with plastic surgery, PB can be raised a mnaximum of 4 points.

Low Passage

New Gauss Weapons for Traveller

By Bill Burg

With the introduction of handheld gauss weapons at TL - 12, many weapon systems were replaced. There are the familiar gauss rifle and gauss pistol, but many more examples exist.

Weapon	Ammo Notes	Rnds	Pen/ Atten	Dmg	Max. Range	Auto Tgts	Dgr Space	Sig	Recoil	Diff. as
Gauss Mg		200	8/4	4	Distant	4	3	Low	Med	Rifle
Magnum Gauss (8mm)		10	8/2	4	Long	-	-	Low	Med	Handgun
Gauss Body Pistol		10	3/2	3	Med	-	-	Low	Low	Handgun
Gauss GL-12	HE	30	14	8	Distant	2	30	Low	Med	Indirect
Gauss GL-12	HEAP	30	38	6	Distant	2	1.5	Low	Med	Indirect
Gauss GL-12	Flech	30	4	2	Distant		150	Low	Med	Indirect
Gauss GL-14	HE	30	16	8	Distant	3	45	Low	Low	Indirect
Gauss GL-14	HEAP	30	38	6	Distant	3	1.5	Low	Low	Indirect
Gauss GL-14	Flech	30	5	3	Distant	3	180	Low	Low	Indirect
Gauss SMG		40	6/3	3	VLong	3	-	Low	Low	Handgun

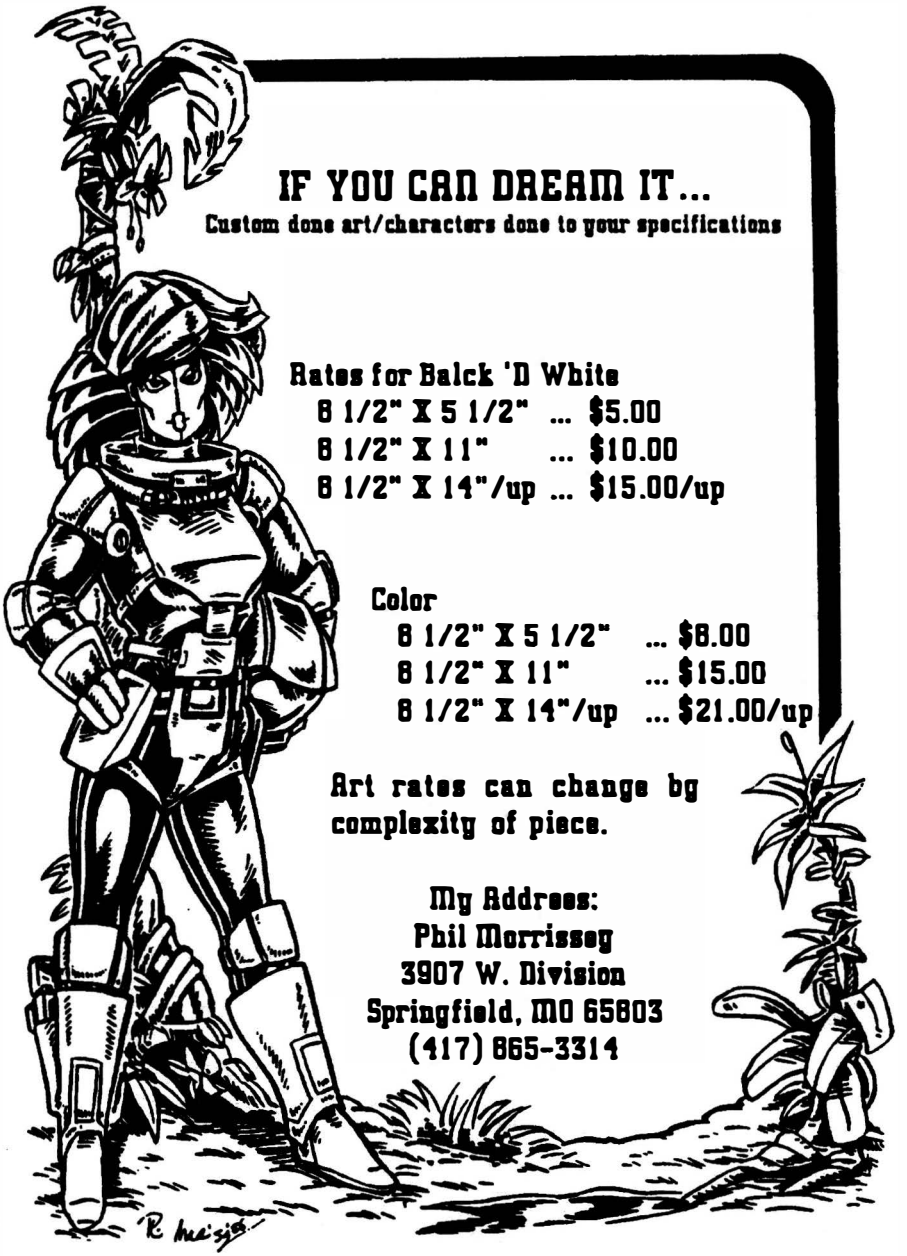
Gauss MG: This is a heavier version of the gauss rifle using the universal 4mm ammo but with higher velocity and rate of fire.
8mm Magnum Gauss Pistol: This is one of the few Imperial pistols which does not use 4mm ammunition. It has incredible recoil for a gauss weapon, but can be deadlier than a gauss rife at short range.
Gauss Body Pistol: This is a very compact pistol - in fact, it can be almost totally concealed in a normal human's hand. Its silence makes it an ideal assassin's weapon, and is without metallic partts (the barrel rails are superconductive ceramic) except for the bullets.
Gauss GL-12: This weapon replaces the RAM GL-11 at higher tech levels. Its low signature is ideal in commando raids. Note: All Gauss GL are auto-GLs.
Gauss GL-14: This is a refined version of the TL-12 model, fitted wtih recoil compensators like those of an energy weapon, making it useful for Zero-G combat.
Gauss SMG: Ths basic weapon of the Imperial Palace Guard, the Gauss SMG is simply a gauss rifle with a shortened barrel.

Weapon	TL	Length	Volume	Unloaded Weight	Price	Ammo Weight	Ammo Price
Gauss MG	12	1.0	5.0	5.0	Cr 2500	2.0	200
8mm Magnum Gauss	12	0.25	1.0	1.0	Cr 2000	0.5	50
Gauss Body Pistol	13	0.1	0.1	0.1	Cr 1000	0.02	10
Gauss GL - 12	12	1.0	7.0	8.0	Cr	10.0	*see below
Gauss GL - 14	14	1.0	7.0	8/1 *	Cr	10.0/1.0*	*see below
Gauss SMG	12	0.5	2.0	2.0	Cr 1500	0.40	40

* First weight is with gravitic compensator off, second is with it on.
Gauss GL Ammo: HE rounds are Cr 20 each. HEAP rounds are Cr 40 each. Flechette rounds are Cr 15 each.

THE FIRST LOW PASSAGE CONTEST - WITH PRIZES!!

To complement the Universal Bar Generator (last issue), I hereby announce the First Low Passage Contest: Namely, the Spacer's Drink Contest! Basically, I'm looking for unusual names for the alcoholic beverages of the far future. We're talking items like the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster, Vargr Vomit, Strephon's Revenge, you name it. Send as many entiries as you like, just write 'em down and send 'em to NCRP (address below if your cover got ripped off). Please send us only your own ideas. All the best will be printed in an upcoming issue, with your name in glorious monochrome next to your entry. Prizes will be awarded for the best of several categories (probably including Best Overall, Strongest, Most Disgusting, etc.) The prizes will include rare Traveller merchandise, free issues of NCRP, and anything else I find that I want to get rid of. Send entries to: Low Passage Contest #1, care of our address on the back cover. That's all for this month. Lok for more violence and stuff next issue!!



IF YOU CAN DREAM IT...

Custom done art/characters done to your specifications

Rates for Balck 'D White

8 1/2" X 5 1/2" ... $5.00
8 1/2" X 11" ... $10.00
8 1/2" X 14"/up ... $15.00/up

Color

8 1/2" X 5 1/2" ... $8.00
8 1/2" X 11" ... $15.00
8 1/2" X 14"/up ... $21.00/up

Art rates can change by complexity of piece.

My Address:
Phil Morrissey
3907 W. Division
Springfield, MO 65803
(417) 865-3314

Unfriendly Encounters

New Encounters by Mike Straus

KILLKGERS:

AD&D Stats
AC: 5
Move: 12
Hit Dice 3+1
No. of attacks: 2
Damage/attack: as per weapon used
Description of attack: weapon
Magic Resistance: Standard for Undead
Treasure Type: Nil
Size: M (5')
Alignment: As per creator
XP: 208 +5 / HP
Special: Regeneration, 1 HP/Meleeround. Infravision. Can cast Light, Continual Light, and Haste spells twice per day each. Hide in Shadows at 45%.

Equipment and Description are given under the GURPs Stats. The sweater will give them no additional protection except from cold (as a sweater does) and the knife can be considered a normal dagger (though they call it a knife!!).

GURPs Stats
ST: 12 DX: 12
IQ: 9 HT: 12
Speed: 6
Total: 5
Quirks: 1) Always wears same clothing
2) Likes knives
3) Prefers to save pretty girls for last
Disadvatages: 1) OPH - Slurred speech
2) OPH - Never baths 3) Bad temper
4) Overconfidence 5) Sadism
6) Sense of duty - Patron
Advantages: 1) Combat Reflexes
2) High Pain Threshold 3) Literacy 1/2
4) Night Vision 5) Rapid Healing
6) Toughness - +2 DR
7) Psycho killer: +3 PD, Never stunned, +2 to HT roll to stay alive, out as long as HT is below 0
8) Patron - 4 or less when summoned
TOTAL: 75
Skills: Fast Draw Knife -12 Brawling -12
Knife -12 English -9
The Tongue -9 Swimming -12
Stealth -12
Total: 8
Spells: Haste Self -9 Light -9
Continual Light -9 Darkness -9
Blur Self -9 (+1 PD per Pt spent up to 5)
Hide -9
Total: 28
Equipment:
Sweater - +1 PD
Knife: Thrust-1/Impaling
Description: The Killkgers, as presented here, are servants of your campaign's local Evil High-Powered Mage. They are a bizzare form of undead which are created through a process that combines the typical zombie creation ritual and a strange alchemic process. The result is a shriveled, demented humanoid who will gleefully go out and kill people for your Mage. They have one weakness, though, they are very fond of pretty girls and will go after such rather than do their master's bidding...

Hi, it's your ol' pal Hairy again and have I got news for you. The HOBBY HOUSE at 2911 F st in Eureka has got a slew of new stuff. Since last we spoke, they've acquired a stock of GURPS 3rd edition Basic Set (with all those new rules and fixed spelling errors) and they've gotten in 'Assault on Hoth' and the 'Light Saber Dueling Pad' for the Star Wars game by West End. From Games Workshop they received 'Realms of Chaos', 'Warhammer Armies' and 'Warhammer Fantasy', as well as their new game 'Dark Future' (which is supposed to be a new twist on Car Wars and Battletech). They are also expecting Robotech: The Sentinnels from Paladium Games any day now. In addition, they have begun carrying more magazines including Challenge, Battletechnology, White Dwarf, and Space Gamer. If you would like to see them carry 'Roleplayer' from Steve Jackson Games,just let 'em know. In fact, if there is stuff they don't carry, tell 'em, that's the only way they are going to be able to carry what you want to buy. They will gladly do special orders for stuff you can't get anywhere else (with a downpayment). Give 'em a call at 445-0310 or go in personally and see 'em. And this month, tell 'em Vlad sent ya' and they'll give you a 10% discount on your purchase. So what are you waiting for?

Excellence in Explosions II

More ways to ruin the neighborhood in 2300 AD
By Bill Burg

Last month we learned how to make homemade explosives. Here are some practical applications for them, and some other projects for field-expedient weaponry.

Pipe Bomb: This requires .5 kg of explosive, some pipe (Lv 1) and a length of fuse. The pipe bomb is used like a grenade. Use the explosive's EV, with fragmentation.

Grenade Launcher (pipe bomb or hand grenade): This requires .05 kg of explosive, a large pipe (Lv 3), a fuse, and either a pipe bomb or hand grenade. Launchers for multiple grenades can be made by simply multiplying the materials (a 5-grenade launcher requires .25 kg of explosive, a Lv 15 pipe, and 5 grenades or pipe bombs). The grenade laucher has a range of 200 meters, and all fire is treated as one task level more difficult. Reloading takes 2 combat round per grenade.

30mm Grenade Launcher: This weapon can fire standard 30mm rifle grenades. It requires a pipe (Lv 5) and some mechanical parts (Lv 20), along with a 30mm grenade. The grenade launcher has a range of 300 meters.

Gun: This weapon can fire a standard rifle/pisotol round. It can fire once every other combat round. It requires some wood/plastic for a stock (Lv 1), a pipe barrel (Lv 5), and some mechanical parts (Lv 10).The caliber of bullet used in the gun must be specified when built. Its range is 25% of the bullet's usual range. DPV is as normal. Note that one must have caseless bullets (not binary or gauss).

Smoke Grenade: This device requires two tasks: One to make the smoke mixture (requires Lv 10 per kg and a scrounging roll - see last issue) and one for the grenade (requires a Lv 2 pipe, .5 kg mixture, and a fuse).

Land Mine: This requires a detonator, either military-issue or improvised (see4 last issue) and an explosive (either loose explosive or a grenade/missile/bomb if you have a Universal Destructor). The mine is activated by the detonator (push/pull, weight, proximity, etc.).

TASKS:
To build a *pipe bomb*. Routine. Demolitions, Dex. 5 minutes.
If no fuse is available: To make 1 meter of fuse. Simple. Demolitions. 1 minute.
Referee: Fuse costs .1 Lv per meter and burns at 1 cm/second.
To build a *grenade launcher*. Routine. Demolitions. 15 minutes.
To build a *30mm grenade laucher*. Difficult. Demolitions, Mechanical. 20 minutes.
To build a *gun*. Difficult, Demolitions, Mechanical. 10 minutes.
To make *smoke mixture* for smoke grenade. Routine. Demolitions. 10 minutes.
To make *smoke grenade*. Routine. Demolitions. 5 minutes.
To build a *land mine*. Routine. Demolitions. 15 minutes (hazardous).

Referee Notes:
When stores are not available, parts such as pipes, mechanical parts, etc. may be scrounged using this task:
To find parts. Routine, Determination. See below.
Time increment is equal to cast of the item sought in minutes (for the mechanical parts in the 30mm GL, 20 minutes).

DOC'S GAMES...
JUST THEN, THE GM ROLLED THE DICE...
THE NAME SAYS IT ALL!
...CHEAP THRILLS SINCE 1985!
FOR INFO OR FOR A FREE CATALOG
DOC'S GAMES
3647 W. MT. VERNON
SPRINGFIELD, MO 65802

Solomani Power Marine Raiding Forces

By Craig Sheeley

As of 1118 TI, the Solomani Armed Forces had adapted to the stalemate situation which developed as fleet clashes became less frequent (and almost stopped altogether). Commerce raiders (long a specialty of SolSec's Intervention Branch) became the most common type of warship encountered, usually raiders in the 400 to 2000-ton range. Imperial elements responded by beefing up production of Close Escorts (which would operate in groups of three), Mercenary Cruisers (stripped of half their cargo for armor), and Destroyer-Escorts in the 1000-ton class and setting them to patrol the spaceways, seeking prey too puny for their multi-kilotonned cruiser brethren. SolSec and the Armored Forces rushed through the manufacture of the *Shark* class Attack Ship and its complement of Power Marines, Assault Suits, and *Remora* class fighters.

The *modus operendi* of the *Shark* and its contents relies on sudden, unpredicatable attacks, made completely at the discretion of the ship's captain and the Marine commander, operating independently of control. *Sharks* are sent on one-year missions, crewed by certifiably loyal Solomani. Their mission is to cause as much trouble and destruction as they can for the maximum amount of time. Swift, commando-style raids are their forte, with the *Shark* behaving like a docile freighter (they have transponder settings for this purpose) until it is in orbit. There, it will attack orbital shipping if the local space forces appear to be weak or inadequate; if planet-side spies indicate that more damage can be accomplished with a ground assault, then the ship will drop its "eggs," the platoon of Power Marines and the accompanying Assault Suits. These units will descend on gravs and chutes, strike the designated target(s), and leave in the special recovery shuttle before the planet's defenders can muster a response. The *Sharks* and their units always employ the "hit-and-git" principle of combat, waging guerrilla warfare on the enemy to destroy vital industries, stockpiles, and shipping. The effects of this continual warfare not only weakens enemy capability to wage war, but also has a *nervenkrieg* effect, causing planetary governments to divert resources meant for the Civil War to self-defense, anticipating further raids.

The *Shark*

Strike Raider	SR-E1446G2-785000-95109-2	MCr 3,453.68	5 Ktons
batteries bearing	4 111 1	TL = 14	
batteries	4 111 1	Crew = 67	

Passengers = 0. Low = 40. Cargo = 200. Fuel = 2300. EP = 300. Agility = 4. Troops = 45. One cutter, two fighters.

Tonnage: 5000 tons (standard). 70 000 cubic meters.

Crew: 15 officers, 42 ratings.

Performance: Jump-4. 4-G. Power plant-6. 300 EP. Agility 4.

Electronics: Model/7fib computer.

Hardpoints: One 50-ton bay; 40 hardpoints.

Armament: One 50-ton missile bay. One fusion turret. One particle accelerator barbette. Ten triple beam laser turrets.

Defense: Nuclear damper (factor-5). Armored hull (factor-7). Twenty-eight triple sandcaster turrets organized into four batteries.

Craft: One 50-ton cutter. Two 20-ton fighters. 40 armored suits with jump-tube. 7 assault suits.

Fuel Treatment: Fuel scoops and on-board fuel purification plant.

Cost: MCr 4,317.1 standard. MCr 3,453.68 in quantity.

Construction Time: 38 months singly; 25 months in quantity.

Comments: The *Shark* raider is meant for raiding, outgunning small vessels and keeping away from warships of equal tonnage. It is meant to operate without support for extended periods of time, and carries a large supply of spares in its hold.

The *Remora* Fighter

Strike Fighter	FS-01066B1-E30000-00002-0	MCr 25.2	20 tons
batteries bearing	1 1	TL = 14	
batteries	1 1	Crew = 1	

Passengers = 1. Cargo = 1. Fuel = 1.2. EP = 1.2. Agility = 6. Bridge.

Comments: The *Remora* fighter is specially designed as an auxilary system to the *Shark*. It is heavily armored and outfitted with a 1-ton ordinance bay which can either contain missiles for the single missile launcher or carry ground-attack ordinance to support the Power

Marines and bomb grounded targets.

Intruder Cutter	IY-0104411-C30000-00002-0	MCr 26.64	50 tons
batteries bearing	1 1	TL = 14	
batteries	1 1	Crew = 2	

Passengers = 40. Cargo = 10. Fuel = 2. EP = 2. Agility = 4. No bridge.

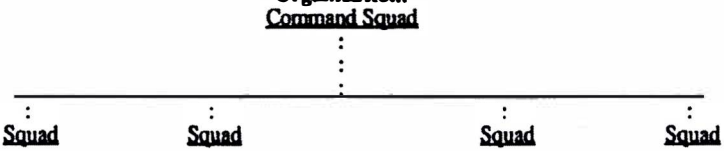
SOLOMANI POWER MARINES

Solomani Power Marines are arranged in single platoons; *Shark* units usually operate without seeing another Solomani ground unit for up to a year.

Deployment is via jump-tube drop, although the platoon may be deployed via cutter if the situation calls for it. Once on the ground, the troops use grav-belts to move swiftly and haul ordinance.

Power Marines excel at commando-style raids, destroying the target and avoiding engagement with the enemy. Should an enemy be engaged, the Marines are provided with weapons sufficient to deal with a small force (up to company strength). With the assistance of properly equipped Assault Suits, the platoon is capable of engaging a grav-tank company.

Organization:



Each squad consists of eight men and one Assault Suit; the Command Squad is three men and an Assault Suit.

Power Marines are equipped with TL 14 powered battledress, a grav-belt, a TL 13 laser rifle, a RAM-GL, various grenades and explosive charges (as per mission requirements), and full helmet electronics. All Marines are at least Regular troops; a large proportion of them class as Veteran troops.

THE ASSUALT SUIT

The Assualt Suit is really a legged vehicle operated by a single crewman. A modified civil construction design, it has no integral weapons, but provisions are made to attach weaponry to the arms. Furthermore, the area atop the shoulders and along the back is reserved for modular weapon packs; without a pack, the vehicle looks like a headless parody of humanoid form.

The Assault Suit is the heavy arm of the Power Marines. Depending on the weapon pack, it can fill the role of anti-tank, artillery, heavy weapons, and close assault. TheAssault Suit is not "fought" as a vehicle; the operator is well aware of the fact that a single RAM grenade could destroy the Suit. Therefore, the Suit typically moves like an infantryman, striving to expose as little surface area to enemy fire as possible (the "heads-up" positioning of the weapons pack enables the Suit to assume "hull-down" firing position).

STRIKER/MegaTraveller Specs:

The vegicle has a crew of one. It mounts two heavy robotic arms, one to each side. Dimensions: 4.5m tall, 1 m thick, 3 m wide. Total volume: 13.5 m. Price: Cr 922,375.

Weight: 25.95 tons unloaded. Maximum loaded weight 31 5tons.

Move: 60 kph (35 kph off-road) on legs; 400 kph (125 kph loaded) on gravs.

Armor: 28 on all sides.

Target Size: DMS Low +2, High +0

Equipment: TL 145 avbionics, Comp Model 0/fib (Model 0 backup), Holo-linked controls and heads-up display; 50-power Ladar, terrain-following Ladar, 500-power radio, 1000-power laser communicator, extended life support, synthetic vision sensors.

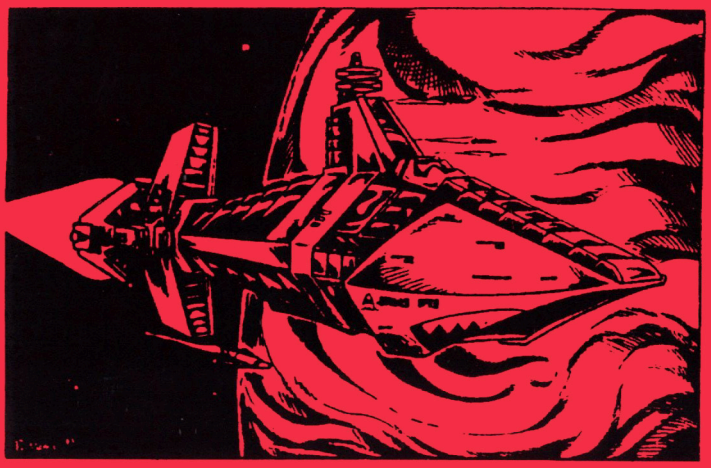
Power: 6mw fusion plant. Fuel for over 80 hours (760 litres). 1.5 mw of power over needed power supply.

Weapons: .3 m^3 for arm mountings. These are typically RAM GLs, flamers, plasma guns, or laser rifles. The rear "head" mounting area has 6 m^3 available for mounting weapons packs. Here are some generic samples:

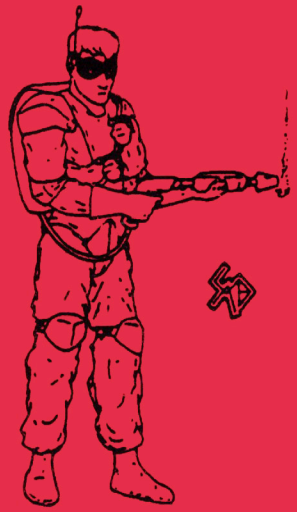
Anti-Tank: Stabilized 45 mw pulse laser, with 40 shots in its batteries and TL 11 DF control. Add a stabilized RAM Auto-GL with 200 rounds for light-vehicle attack. Total mass: 3.587 tons. Price: Cr 857,860. Volume: 4.5m^3 . Laser performance Eff 3.5 km (74), Extreme 8 km (74). The Auto RAM-GL is assumed to be using HEAP rounds.

Artillery support: Stabilized 9 cm mass-driver mortar, ROF 30, with 360 rounds and TL 8+ Indirect Fire Control and a TL 7 Indirect Fire Center linked to the Comp/0fib. Add two stabilized Auto RAM-GLs with 200 rounds apiece. Mass: 4.603 tons. Volume: 4.603m ^{3}. Price: Cr 227,960. The mortar is using CBM rounds and the shoulder-mounted Auto RAM-GLs use HEAP and HE rounds (one HEAP, the other HE).

Other weapons packs include rocket-launchers, suits laden with anti-personnel weapons, and demolition packs of explosives and laser-cutters. The variety is endless, and often units will jury-rig their own customized weapons packs.



B. Osser / NorthCoast RolePlaying
1018 F st. #1
Eureka, CA 95501

pstg

mailing address