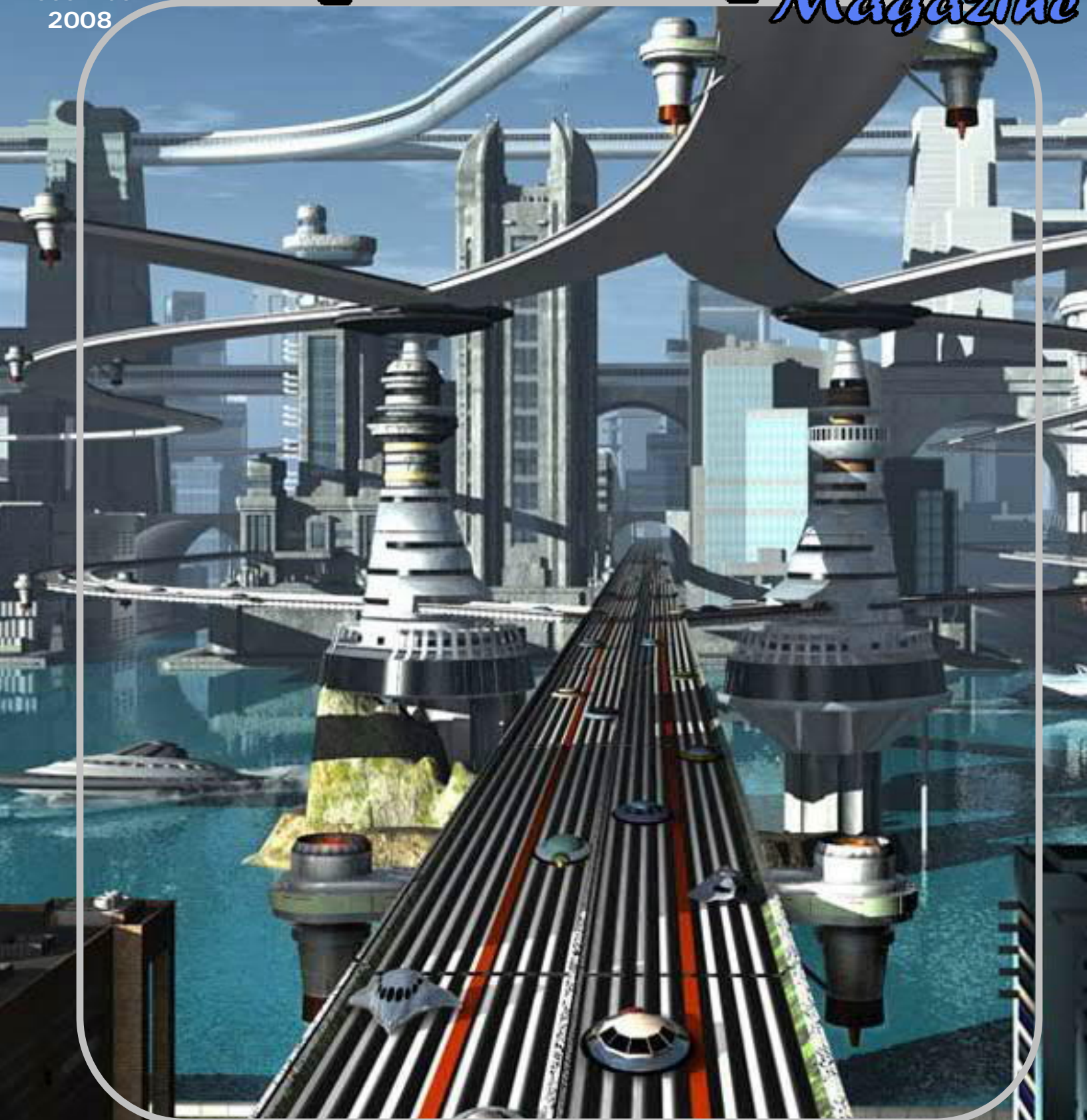


ISSUE

10

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STAR FRONTIERSMAN Magazine



Action And Adventure Too Big For One World!

STAR FRONTIERSMAN Magazine

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On the cover: Metropolis by Vic Barreto. We found this image while browsing a free digital wallpaper site (<http://fantasyartdesign.com/free-wallpapers/>). The artist's personal website and gallery can be found at <http://absolutearts.com/barreto/>.

Editing: Larry Moore, William Signs, Tom Stephens
Layout: Tom Stephens
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Interior Art: Bill Logan, Chris Harper, Larry Moore, Art Eaton

LETTER FROM THE LAYOUT EDITOR

Welcome to issue 10 of the Star Frontiersman. We had planned to make this a Thanksgiving issue but as they say about plans: "The best laid plans of mice and men are usually about the same." This one was no different and various real life distractions got in the way. On top of that, we had our websites kicked off of their previous hosting service. We were the victims of our own success and were generating too much load on the server. So in the end, it took us a bit longer than we planned to get it out but here it is, just in time for Christmas.

In this issue you'll notice a few new things. First, we have a lighter layout for the border art. A lot of you print out each issue and this should help you cut down on your toner and ink bill. This is likely to evolve going forward as we continue to work on the image for the magazine.

Another thing you will notice is the addition of a new feature section at the beginning of this issue (and all future issues as well) entitled Frontier Feedback. This is the new "Letters to the Editor" section of the Star Frontiersman. It is an opportunity for you to provide feedback on articles from previous issues. If you have questions, comments, suggestions or want to relate an experience using the material provided in the magazine, send them to submissions@starfrontiersman.com and we'll include them in a future issue. If you have questions for the author of an article you can send them in as well and we'll try to get the author to respond. To help us out, please include 'Frontier Feedback' in the subject line.

As always we are constantly looking for more content, especially artwork. If you'd like to contribute images or articles just send your contribution to our submission e-mail (submissions@starfrontiersman.com) and we'll get it into a future issue.

So turn the page and dive into the Frontier once again. We hope you enjoy the issue.

- Tom Stephens
a.k.a. TerI Obar

FRONTIER FEEDBACK

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Frontier Feedback section is a new addition to the Star Frontiersman magazine. This is the "letters to the editor" section where you can send in questions, comments or suggestions about articles seen in previous issues of the magazine or the magazine itself. All submissions for Frontier Feedback should be sent to submissions@starfrontiersman.com and should ideally include "Frontier Feedback" in the subject line.

If you have specific questions or comments about the articles from previous issues, we'll try to get the authors to respond and post your questions or comments along with their response.

POWERED BATTLE SUITS CLARIFICATIONS

Here are the answers to some questions as well as some feedback I received about my power battle suit article in issue 9 (p16):

Q: p16 - Stats: -20 to DEX and RS, would an experienced pilot be able to off set some of this penalty?

A: I meant this to represent the inherent bulkiness of the armor. A character could boost up his DEX with experience points to offset the -20.

Maybe we should have a specific skill for using a battle suit. This would probably make the most sense. Realistically a character would have to be trained and practiced in using a suit. I didn't want to open that can of worms yet.

Q: p16 - Would a Vrusk suffer from hits to their antennae area?

A: It makes sense that the antennae would be vulnerable. It just seemed like a complication to worry about a specific part. It is built into the battle suit critical hits, to lose sensor systems. This would represent the antennae being hit.

Q: p17 - What is the range of the HUD's 3D and tactical display? Can it receive a satellite feed to enhance?

A: Generally the HUD display is line of site. The idea is there are dozens of redundant fiber optic ports all around the suit that gives the pilot a rotatable 360 degree view with magnification and infra- red filters.

A Tech can use interface skill to link with an orbiting ship or a satellite, to get a real time view. Or

if there are maps available of a region they can also be interfaced with the HUD.

Another battle suit can transfer images and targeting information to a suit that is out of site (not out of range) of the target, for indirect fire support. A pilot can also use a snoopier drone (future Star Frontiersman issue) to map an area; or for targeting.

Q: p18 - The article appears to read that you must remain still to fire missiles or mortars for one turn. And that you get a +15. Can a character fire missiles without the targeting computer?

A: You can fire without aiming. You just don't get the +15% and you cannot fire multiple rockets or grenades.

Q: Can a suit be modified so that there are tiny explosions that rip the hull apart enough to let a character free himself? (In the case that there is no power.)

A: I meant the hatch to be mechanical. So, the pilot can escape in case power is lost.

Q: Does the following Alpha Dawn (AD) rule apply to using heavy weapons with the suits?

From the AD rules:

Heavy lasers, sonic devastators, recoilless rifles, grenade mortars and rocket launchers are heavy weapons. When a character fires a heavy weapon, he must subtract 1 from his skill level with that type of weapon. A character with no training for that weapon has a -10 penalty.

A: That is a good question. The idea is that the suit and targeting computer helps the character wield and aim the weapon. So, firing a machine gun would use the character's normal projectile skill with no heavy weapon penalty. Of course this is up to referee discretion.

Reader comment: The "armor stamina points" is a great idea. I can see this used for vehicles as well. A vehicle could have HP - hull points (some use SP - structural points) with an armor layer on top called, as you so notably wrote, armor stamina points.

Great article. It's great how we can be inspired by the 'zine to incorporate it into our games, ideas and articles. The battle suit sheets are a work of art.

Thanks for the feedback.....

- Chris Harper

NPC ABLATIVE DAMAGE SHEET

We have adopted Bill Logan's ablative damage system (see the Star Frontiersman 8: Back in the RoboSaddle Again, p45) in our Star Frontiers Campaign. It has worked out well. It is fast and easy and adds a little more realism to the game. I have also started using the same damage system rules for NPCs (non-player characters). This created a little more bookkeeping for NPCs so I made up some nifty NPC sheets to help out.

I made these sheets with boiled down details of a character sheet. Sometimes I don't put much detail for a standard 'goon' NPC. Sometimes I flesh them out more, depending on how much interaction the characters will have with the NPC.

Most of the sheet is the same as a standard character sheet with the ablative part added on. I have added a 'story' box. This can be a bit of background on the NPC. Like his attitude or affiliations. It can also be notes on how the NPC fits into your game.

- Chris Harper

EDITOR'S NOTE: The sheets are included on page 25 of this issue just before the classifieds. You can also download a PDF version of the sheets at <http://starfrontiersman.com/SOMEURL>

You can vote or make your wishes known about adding NPC sheets to the starfrontiers.us website by logging on and following this link: <http://starfrontiers.us/node/3277>.

FRONTIERSPACE

There is a new game being developed that you will begin to see coverage of here in the Star Frontiersman. The full details of the system can be found at the projects website which is located at <http://dorkswithdice/frontierspace>. Here is the introductory statement that all new visitors to the site see when they arrive. It best sums up the purpose of the site and project.

This site [FrontierSpace] is devoted to development of a new paper & pencil role-playing game. Inspired by fond memories of games such as Top Secret/S.I., Star Frontiers, Gamma World, Marvel Super Heroes, Traveller, and many more... this will be a game that all ages will enjoy

Unhappy with the increasing complexity and rising costs of our favorite hobby, several of us older gamers have risen up and now hold our dice-hands high, declaring enough is enough. Sure, the newer games have amazing artwork and admirable depth of character generation. Some of the settings are splendid in their detail. But if these new games are so great, why do we keep going back to the classics of the 80's? Why do we get frustrated when the first gaming session or two is devoted to character generation? Why do we look at the shelves of games we have that collectively cost less than the couple core rulebooks of a modern game and sigh in admiration?

Our main goal is to produce a simple and modular system, where the core rules are divorced from the setting in a way that anyone can produce a setting book (though a default starting setting, Astra Incognita, will be provided). Details are to be thought-provoking but at the same time sketchy enough for you to fill in all the necessary gaps with your own brand of imagination. Lists of abilities, skills, gear, and other things are to be categoric in their comprehensiveness, not exhaustive and finite. Complexity can be added but must be added in well-tested, very modular optional systems (because gaming tastes and settings may vary). It is our belief that realism and fun can be balanced, and if done properly will result in a great game that we'll look back at twenty years from now and remember as fondly as the old classics.

Imagination is to be given wings and a rocket pack, not told it can't fly.

If you are one of the people of whom I just spoke... raise your dice hand high and join in... help us make this game great!

So if you are interested in following along and watching the game grow, or possibly helping out, drop on by the new site and see what it is all about.

- FrontierSpace Design Staff



ABSTRACT REFEREEING

Brian Conway (Imperial Lord)

SUBMISSIONS EDITOR'S NOTE

I talked to Brian about my experience playing the Star Wars SAGA and D&D 4th Edition RPG's with miniatures and asked him to write an article about abstract refereeing. Let me tell you miniatures totally changed the RPG experience. I've been blessed to have Brian as an online GM. His ability to use the online medium to create a scene and paint a picture is incredible. At home I enjoy the awesomeness of Bill Logan's tenacious attention to detail - he paints such a vivid image in my mind with his words, voice inflections, hand gestures that I feel like I'm really there slugging it out with Sathar agents or hurtling myself across a gorge to escape a predator. I truly believe you will enjoy this presentation.

"We should just use our imagination."

I remember a 2nd Edition AD&D game in the mid-nineties that I was DMing with miniatures. One session, a PC made the above suggestion to me that miniatures slow the game down and cause unnecessary tedium. While the figures were beautifully painted, and visually attractive to use on the table top, we found that unleashing ourselves from them led to a much faster paced gaming experience. Over the years, after many fits and starts, I can present several over-arching concepts when using this method of play, in Star Frontiers or any RPG. We can call this method "Abstract Refereeing."

It is understandable that many gamers love to use miniatures. They provide a tactile link to the game. They are often gorgeously painted, and I have played with many who had worked on painting their miniatures with such skill that they could not imagine playing without them. Many also play miniatures war games and enjoy the link to those games that using miniatures with RPGs provides. Lacking miniatures, Star Frontiers players can use the counters provided in the box sets and even design their own.

However, set-up can be a problem. With miniatures, the referee has to provide many maps. While this can also be done on a white board laid flat on the table, even then, the referee has to be concerned with accurate scale and precise measurements. Small mistakes in encounter distances can have major consequences, either in terms of realism or play balance. Many detailed



tactical variables come into play (which some players enjoy) that slow down play as rules get looked up and determinations made.

Miniatures gamers see this as perfectly natural. The required pre-work by the referee is just a part of his job. The problem is that these games risk being bogged down by combat details. Highly complex encounter areas can result in battles that can take entire sessions to resolve. How is abstract refereeing different, and what does it do to improve game pace and speed? How is it done?

Abstract refereeing (or gamemastering) is a simple technique that can speed up encounter resolution. In turn, this puts more focus on the story, role-playing and character development, which, of course, are the most important aspects of the game. Groups that once played with miniatures will notice their campaigns moving much more rapidly and fluidly.

The first step, as a referee, is to try to reduce the use of specific distances. When the encounter is designed, determine the distance in *ranges* and *turns to close*, not just in meters. That way, if the enemy is going to attack the party in melee, there immediately is an idea of how long it will take for the two sides to get locked in combat. In Star Frontiers, range categories are useful here. Use the simple matrix below to determine melee closing times.

Encounter begins at :

Extreme Range:	10+ turns to close
Long Range:	5+ turns to close
Medium Range:	3+ turns to close
Short Range	1 or 2 turns to close
Point Blank:	1 turn or immediate melee - 2 meters

Race	Walking	Running
Human	2 meters	6 meters
Dralasite	1 meter	4 meter
Vrusk	3 meters	7 meters
Yazirian	2 meters	6 meters

Of course various weapons have different ranges. However, most rifle weapons fall into these categories based on being charged by most creatures. Multiplying by 30 meters is one way to rapidly calculate charge distances. 30 meters per turn is the average speed of a Human, Yazirian or Sathar. Vrusk are slightly faster and Dralasites slightly slower. Other creatures are based according to their individual speed, which should be written down somewhere in the campaign notes. Nevertheless, with the system above, specific distances can almost be thrown out altogether. This makes the situation much easier and allows the Players to concentrate on game play instead of counting squares or hexes.

What if the PCs want to execute a flanking maneuver and go around them? That will simply add x number of turns to the closing times. Lateral movement results in no progress towards the objective, unless the referee determines that some kind of diagonal movement is possible. In an abstract game, the referee needs to be prepared for what to do in the case of that kind of movement, paying particularly close attention to possible obstacles in the encounter area. While these obstacles might slow the party down, they may also provide hard or soft cover.

Preparation need not be in the form of notes, but a short form might go something like this: "Medium range, 2 Sathar guards, no cover, 3 turns to close, 5 if flanking." Maybe the Sathar are on the other side of a small station docking bay that is empty of ships or equipment. As PC's close, they will also reduce ranges. Perhaps after a one turn mad dash, they can get to short range with the Sathar guards. One turn after that, point blank, and then

finally melee. In this particular circumstance, the flanking may not be useful, or it might result in an enhanced melee attack if the guards get engaged first from the front. Use paper and pencil to mark the relative positions and ranges of the enemies. In more complicated encounters, referees can use simple x's and o's to represent the various sides and explain from there. The table top white board (or, for us old timers, wax crayon) can still be used to display those same positions for the PCs but it should be kept to a general sense, rather than exactly to scale.

Once distances are converted into ranges and turns, the game is abstract! Use judgment rather than the grid map and rulebook and keep the game moving. Miniatures can be replaced with practical and portable maps. Outside of combat, there is no reason to use miniatures in any case.

Remember to add additional verbal detail to make up for the lack of visual stimulation that were provided by the figures or counters. However, once a referee recognizes and learns to add that additional detail, he will find other aspects of his storytelling improve simultaneously, so it is worth the effort. Attention to detail is an important habit to develop.

Abstract refereeing is very common and particularly popular at tournaments and conventions. Car trunk sizes, as well as theft concerns, limit the total number of miniatures available to bring to the game. Abstract refereeing probably has its origins in the early conventions and pick-up games because of its ease of use. With a modicum of targeted preparation and some pencil and paper, a referee can move through large amounts of storyline per session. All players and gamemasters agree that a fast pace is better than a slow pace. Abstract refereeing is key to achieving that goal.

Trust to judgment and let the imaginations of all involved be unlocked.

SUBMISSIONS EDITOR'S CONCLUSION

The Star Frontiers Alpha Dawn boxed set originally came with maps and counters (chits). At that time this is novel for the RPG industry. Maps give visual representation for the Players to imagine the environment their Characters are in. I believe the best fit for maps and encounters are during movement on a planet or moons surface or when engaged in vehicle combat. Typical maps are in hex format and each hex represents 1km. This allows the GM to "see" the decision of the character and to pre-build the planned encounters. I also believe basic deck plans and building layouts are beneficial so that Players can visualize their environment and "scope out" the area.

Consider using a whiteboard or laminate with a dry erase maker to assist in the visualization.

- Larry Moore

MERCENARIES

OF THE UPF PRIVATE SECTOR

Greg Rapp

INTRODUCTION

This is part of a series of articles I hope to get out about the Private Sector. A place where every man can make the good, old, hard-earned credit for his services and death is something he usually deals with.

In this article you will get plenty of information of how to play mercenaries of the Private Sector. This article is meant as a guide, not set in stone rules/canon. Use it the way you see fit.

"Sometimes it takes evil people to do good things" – CEO of UPF SECURITY FIRM.

"They say it takes a special person to be a trigger man and it takes a real man to work the private sectors of the Frontier" – Colonel Johnson: Wet works Specialist for TRANS-FEDERATION OPERATIONS (*Helix Mineral Crisis*).

The private sectors of the Frontier are as vast as they are unique. Anything from Corporate Wars to Black Budget Intelligence Agencies: those who work in this business must be determined and unafraid to die in pursuit of the almighty Credit. Only those who have accepted death as their business and blood money as their pay can handle such a life. This is an individual-based business, no middle-man, no war crimes courts, just your weapons and the skills of your acquired trade.

"Killing is business and business is good."

DEFINITION OF A MERCENARY:

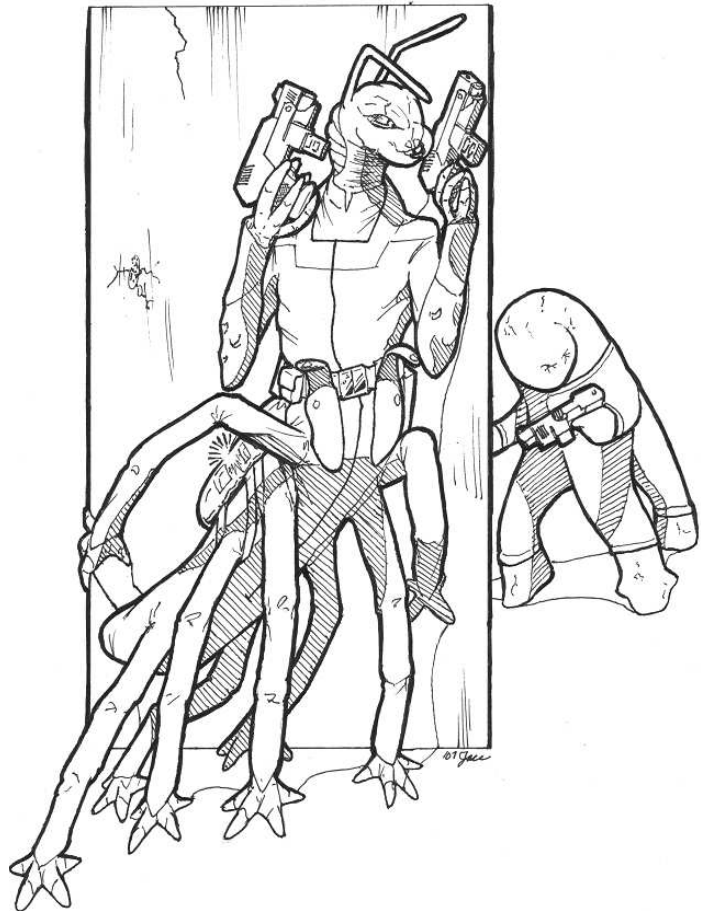
1. Motivated solely by a desire of monetary material gain.
2. Hired for service in a foreign military (also sometimes domestic militaries).
3. A professional soldier hired to fight wars for a certain group or person.
4. One who makes money off of fighting in wars not directly involved with the individual.

Mercenaries can be a touchy subject for many people in today's world. We have all heard of companies like Black Water, Halliburton, etc. All of which are hired by either the US or NATO countries. So it got me thinking, what if a GM (referee) used this same concept in their Star Frontiers role-playing game? What kind of sides could players take? Is it technically legal? Are PMCs (Private Military Companies) small or large? All of these

questions are what gave me an idea on how you can use this concept in the frontier.

One concept that was important about getting information together for the use of mercenaries was conflict. Since the Frontier has seen conflicts like the Sathar Wars gave me a beginning point for a true PMC market. Because it was a time that probably was challenging for the UPF to find fighting soldiers to fight on all the fronts it had to cover PMCs could offer a way to fill in the void where the military couldn't. Thus it gives a perfect situation where PMCs had an advantage in policy and making lots of money of conflicts the UPF was involved in.

Another important concept for PMCs (and their mercenaries they hire out) is what kind of money they can make. If they aren't able to make enough money at what they do they aren't going to continue business. Thus PMCs are going to cost more per soldier, which equals about 1,000 to 2,000 (or more) covering the cost of the mercenaries (skills + experience + risk



bonus) and their equipment. In the long run, operational costs are far less because mercenaries aren't given the best equipment, armor, ships, or armored vehicles to fight with. Everything they have is cheap. So, this creates a soldier that has to have more experience in order to fight wars and survive which makes these breeds of soldiers a force to be reckoned with. If you look at page 94 of the Remastered edition of Alpha Dawn you can add up the different skills a character has in order to find the money made-per-day.

REQUIREMENTS OF PMC CHARACTERS

- Characters who wish to become mercenaries must have at least three level 3+ weapons skill of some sort (projectile, beam, gyrojet, etc).
- Must be able to speak at least two languages (Pan-Galactic is mandatory out of your languages you speak).
- If they do not have a weapons skill sometimes PMCs will hire characters that have technological skills (computers, robotics, etc) but these have to be at least 4th level or higher and must have at least four of these skills.
- If you are using Knight Hawks you can also throw in characters who want to be pilots. These skill levels must fairly high (Referee's decision).
- Characters must also have some kind of background that can help prove they have experience in the field (law enforcement, military, criminal, intelligence, etc).

Legality issues behind PMCs can be a touchy subject for people today. So what about Frontier politics governing these kinds of companies? Can they only operate in certain locations? Are they held to the laws of the UPF?

Well no matter how you look at it there are going to be politics involved with these PMCs. With some hard thinking I came up with a set of laws that would seem realistic to Frontier politics.

UPF BILL 7291 (LEGALITIES OF PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES)

- 1). Star systems have the rights to grant licenses to Private Military Companies during times of peace only (when no war is going on).
- 2). In times of war PMCs are exempt from the rules of engagement, certain sentient laws (natural rights), or a star systems right to grant licenses for operations. Reason for such exemptions is because this restricts soldiers from getting the job done, so PMCs have argued that they need to be exempt from such things in order to perform their missions successfully (supported by many politicians unofficially).
- 3). PMCs must report who they have hired in their operations. During times of war PMCs don't have to report this because it is thought that mercenaries are

being hired under the extreme circumstances of being needed for fighting in the conflict.

4). Private Military Contractors can be charged for crimes against sentient beings. Such crimes come with the death penalty (unless specified by the Judge involved with the trial).

5). During times of war criminals who help out Private Military Companies will receive a full pardon upon leaving the Private Military Company. This helps criminals serve their time usefully to the UPF. But, criminals who join PMCs to rid themselves of crimes are given little or no pay. This has been referred as the Indenture Service Act.

6). During times of war (even in some special situations) PMCs are not held accountable for acts committed. They are thought to be instinct decisions and not thought through do to extreme situations.

7). Illegal use of PMCs will result in major fines or loss of ownership of the company. Mercenaries who were involved in illegal activities will arrested for the crimes committed along with company officials who gave the orders (note very few times do corporate CEOs of PMCs ever get arrested just the underlings).

PMCS (PRIVATE MILITARY COMPANIES)

It is said with the rise of capitalism in Frontier space that over 30% of armed security forces will be privately operated and funded within ten years. This has been said to be a generous increase of the defense industry involving PMCs. With the anti-merger laws and other legal restrictions on corporations has allowed Private Security Departments (PSDs) of corporations to split from their parent corporations and flourished on their own accord. Many smaller companies that deal in private security have been known for their strong presence in the Frontier worlds near the fringes of UPF space. These smaller companies are contracted by many larger corporations to protect their interests in the fringe worlds. Such jobs include the defense of mining colonies, remote labs, and even in some cases VIP protection (very limited in these areas). But, larger companies are spread across all fronts of UPF space dealing with protecting VIPs. With the two Sathar wars, political rivalries, and whatever else, has caused the need for politicians in the frontier to be well protected. Who better than PMCs like Trans-Federation Operations, UPF Security Firm, or Dynamic Defenses Corporation? Besides protecting VIPs, many worlds have turned to PMCs in safe-guarding special cargo, interplanetary defense, and even helping with riot control; which has given these companies a bigger foot hold in UPF politics. During times of war all PMCs are asked if not required to support the war effort. Such support is meant to help supply the UPF with extra manpower in cases where the UPF military is spread too thin. During the first and second Sathar wars there were over a half-million contracted mercenaries working all across the Frontier doing jobs like VIP transport, protecting cargo, helping back the UPF

military, and even defending worlds from Sathar attacks.



TRANS-FEDERATION OPERATIONS (TFO)

This PMC is a smaller corporation that mainly deals with mineral rights on-planet. TFO personnel usually use extreme measures to ensure that conflicts do not go beyond small engagements. Typically, if you have ever seen TFO personnel they patrol around in assault vehicles that carry heavy amounts of firepower. Trans-Federation Operations claim to hire anyone who is willing to kill. This means most TFO personnel range from the usual soldiers to psychotic-killers.

TFO COMPANY SLOGAN

"You got a problem and we got the solution."

TFO RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. You are the law. In situations like these when TFO is contracted, contractors are above all laws inside the UPF and even outside the UPF.
2. Mineral Rights are your last priority.
3. Keep the peace in anyway that deems necessary.

TFO CONTRACTOR STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- Light or medium personal armor or screen
- RFID Identification Chips
- Combat knife
- Night vision goggles
- Chronocom communicator with built in GPS
- Small Arms
- Explosives (anti-personnel and anti-vehicle explosives)
- Heavy Weapons (for taking out fortifications or heavily armored vehicles)
- Assault Vehicles

STANDARD TFO PAY GRADE

- Ground Liaisons (diplomats) – 200,000 to 500,000 credits a year (based on what TFO wishes to pay)
- Personal Security Advisors – 150,000 to 400,000 credits a year (based on what the client wants to pay)
- Personal Security Contractors – 100,000 credits a year

- Pilot Contractors – 150,000 to 250,000 credits per year (based on experience)
- Technicians – 300,000 per year (or more depending on the situation and experience)
- Medics – 150,000 credits per year
- Doctors – 200,000 to 450,000 credits per year

TFO COMPANY BENEFITS

- For every nine weeks, you are in the field you get three weeks off (part of the risk factor).
- Insurance pays 100,000 credits to the family if the contractor is seriously injured and released or if the contractor dies in the field.
- All money made is tax-free.



UPF SECURITY FIRM (UPFSF)

UPFSF specialized in guarding company resources. Equipment consists of small arms weapons with a few hover cars for fast cargo and VIP transport. UPFSF is known for their reaction time and their precision. UPFSF keeps track of cargo shipments and known to help guard VIPs in times when there is money to be made.

UPFSF COMPANY SLOGAN

"You pay we deliver."

UPFSF RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Contractors are to stay within UPF laws as much as possible.
2. Under no circumstances are you to stop when transporting cargo (risk factors involved).
3. Fire only if fired upon.
4. Safe-Guard VIP or cargo if attacked.
5. If you are in immediate danger, retreat with VIP or leave cargo.
6. If captured you must cooperate with your captives until UPFSF is able to assess the situation and act.

UPFSF CONTRACTOR STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- Light, medium, or heavy personal armor or screen
- RFID Identification Chips
- Combat knife
- Night vision goggles
- Chronocom communicator with built in GPS
- Small Arms
- Heavily Armored Vehicles (cargo and VIP transport)

STANDARD UPFSF PAY GRADE

- Ground Liaisons – 300, 000 credits per year (depending on experience)
- Personal Security Contractors – 200, 000 credits per year
- Tactical Advisors – 250, 000 credits per year (or more depending on experience).
- Pilots / Drivers – 350, 000 credit per year (or more depending on experience).
- Medics – 150, 000 credits per year (or more depending on experience)
- Doctors – 250,000 credits per year (or more depending on experience)
- Technicians – 300, 000 credits per year (or more depending on experience)

UPFSF COMPANY BENEFITS

- For every month, you are in the field you get a week and a half off.
- Company insurance pays family 150,000 credits if the contractor is seriously injured or killed in the field.
- Money made is tax-free.

DYNAMIC DEFENSES CORPORATION (DDC)

Specializes in re-acquiring lost assets due to a hostile invasion or take over. They are the true mercenaries of the UPF. Every company employee goes through tough scrutiny in order to get accepted into the company. Those who make it past this scrutiny go through six months of special forces-like training to help get the new contractors into combat-readiness. From there contractors are placed on the frontlines of the UPF. They are charged with covering-up problems, protecting VIPs, and even taking place in military operations (seen in the First and Second Sathar Wars).

DDC COMPANY SLOGAN

"We'll get anything back and take care of any problem, just don't ask us how."

DDC RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Kill those who are in your way.
2. You are the supreme law.
3. Help civilians if they are in immediate danger.
4. Ignore military orders unless said otherwise by your DDC supervisor.

DDC CONTRACTOR STANDARD EQUIPMENT

- Light or medium armor/screen
- Small arms (projectile rifle, laser rifle, or whatever is given to the contractor)
- Explosives (used for anti-personnel and anti-vehicle)
- RFID Identification Chips
- Combat Knife
- Specialized Gravity Chute (meant for High Altitude Low Orbit jumps)
- Jump Boots
- Chronocom communicator with built in GPS
- Night Vision Goggles

DDC PAY GRADE

This is decided per job. If you do more jobs, you will ultimately make more money. The Referee/GM must decide how much is ultimately made per job on top of usual base pay (skills + experience + risk bonus).

DDC COMPANY BENEFITS

- Contractors are given three weeks off every one month there are in the field.
- If a contractor wishes to leave before term is up they made do so, but there must be some serious reasons for leaving.
- Contractors who are killed in the field, their families get 250, 000 credits.
- Contractors who are discharged for wounds are taken care of for 15 years (from the DDC insurance company).

To be continued...



TALES FROM THE FALCON

Richard a.k.a. Shadow Shack

(Game report from the Basically Speaking game)

MISSION TWO: S.O.S.

Corporals Johann, Slade, and Tichat-Ka head for the CMS Falcon to disembark on yet another day in the space lanes. Midshipman Bluto Goorhud, their boarding party leader, greets them at the Falcon's loading deck where they are introduced to a pair of newcomers: Danyon Fenn (mH) and Gret Korg (mY). Danyon is a transfer from the Clarion Royal Guard, the land based military force under Clarion's monarchy. Gret is a former hovercyclist looking for a new lease on life.

Once the introductions are complete, the crew begins to make preparations for launch. The Falcon has been assigned to inspect an incoming Class:XII liner, a job that promises to kill the bulk of this outing. Just as Lt. Shirrah gets the Falcon's beak pointed in the right direction, Clarion Flight Control orders a Priority Epsilon threat (Epsilon is a non-aggressive threat, but a threat nonetheless).

A Class:VI Pacific class freighter has dropped out of the Void, hailing from Madderly's Star. Her captain has issued a distress call, informing anyone listening that his drives have malfunctioned and he is unable to get them repaired. The craft is on a direct collision course with Clarion Station. The SS Gullwind, under the helm of Captain Garlus Tylappar, has made many visits to Clarion Station and has berthing dues paid up for the next few months. The fine craft has brought a lot of revenue to Clarion so it is important that the Marines help the crew to not only prevent a collision with our station, but to preserve the craft for future income. As the Falcon nears the malfunctioning craft, Captain Tylappar informs Lt. Shirrah that the drive motivator has been damaged beyond repair, requiring drydock facilities to fix. Unfortunately the drive motivator is the primary controlling feature of the engines, without it deceleration is impossible.

Jr. Lieutenant M'kix Ris'z II reports that the Falcon is currently carrying a spare motivator that might work, and despite the obvious size differences, in theory at least one drive could be restored to operational status with the scout's smaller unit. Shirrah orders M'kix Ris'z to bring the motivator down to the loading deck and have the boarding party meet him there. M'kix Ris'z and Shirrah will be assisting the Gullwind crew with the drive repairs, and the boarding party will oversee the operations as a security measure. Also, the captain reports a small load of parabatteries is in the hold and

since the craft will be docking at Clarion Station for repairs, the load must be inspected.

The Falcon races to meet the disabled craft, and gets there with time to spare. The ships are soon linked by their airlocks, and the Falcon boarding party is met by the freighter's captain. Once the group is aboard the Gullwind, Garlus seems somewhat absent minded (he is an elder after all) but quickly snaps back, apparently eager to get underway.

His five Dralasite crewmembers assist the Falcon crew with repairs and replacement. Tichat-Ka joins M'kix Ris'z and they follow the Gullwind's rubbery engineer into the elevator, lugging the drive motivator along. The doors close and Bluto nods to the Gullwind's skipper, suggesting that they get on with the inspection of his hold since the disabled ship will be docking at Clarion Station. Garlus calls the elevator and it arrives a few minutes later, and they all pile in. He takes the car down to the 'Wind's hold, and the group exits.

Garlus' manifest lists six crates of parabatteries and a rocket battery weapon system, with no destination. "Personal goods?" Bluto asks. The skipper nods, as he is busy stuffing his worn pipe with some Inner Reach tobacco. Johann takes the elevator position as Bluto joins the rest of the inspection team, and begins making small talk with the elder. "Stuff will kill you, y'know...of course modern medicine can counter that as well." Garlus looks over at Johann, and points to his chest. "A little late in the game to worry about that. Got the big C, detected it too late. Not sure how much time I have left." He begins with some sporadic coughing, but it ends just as quickly.

Meanwhile, Danyon and Slade begin to open the crates as Gret and Johann look over the stored weapon system. Both are in order, nothing raises a suspicion with the inspectors. Meanwhile, Tichat-Ka begins to install the motivator under the watchful eyes of his vruskan engineer, M'kix Ris'z II. Once it is installed, M'kix gives it a once over and say "You almost got it right, Corporal. But the couplings are reversed. Fix that and it ought to work."

Tichat-Ka apologizes, explaining that he's used to smaller scale technical repairs. He switches the couplings and the Gullwind's Dralasite engineer waddles over to the engineering station to run a diagnostic check. After a few minutes of data scrolling, he looks up and bellows "I think that'll do it. We're good to go, that should hold us for the trip to Clarion Station!"



M'kix Ris'z and Tichat-Ka head back to the Gullwind's crew deck, calling to Bluto that all is well on the maintenance deck. The rest of the boarding party meet them there, along with Garlus. Once assembled on the crew deck, Tylappar informs the group about a class:X freighter that was 20-30 hours behind him that he overheard in a spacers dive at Kdikit Station that may be smuggling contraband, possibly either Ixiol or Streel provided weaponry, that is destined for the Throne City. The rogue freighter is dubbed the SS Nightshade, and Garlus informs the Falcon crew that the Dralasite owner "Dablak" is not one to be underestimated. Several of the inspection team members gather additional information on the Nightshade, and they thank them for the tip. Garlus salutes them as they leave, and he closes the 'Wind's outer hull hatch behind them.

Soon after the boarding team is buckled in aboard the Falcon, the craft breaks loose and pulls away. The Gullwind's single drive ignites, and her skipper reports that the repair is working well. He thanks Shirrah over the subspace radio and points the Gullwind's nose toward Clarion Station. Lieutenant Shirrah calls in to Clarion Station Flight Control to report the tip, and then proceeds into deep space to meet the incoming vessel.

True to the Gullwind skipper's word, the SS Nightshade drops out of the Void 20 hours after the Gullwind is underway. Lt. Shirrah calls it in on the radio and Clarion Flight Control directs the Falcon to intercept and investigate the claims. After all, the Nightshade is registered under MalCo Enterprises, a company with reputed ties to organized crime, so any inbound loads will require extra special attention, moreso with this intel that was recently gathered....

As the Falcon closes in with the rogue freighter, a lengthy radio conversation ensues. The freighter crew

claims they are not stopping at Clarion Station, nor are they carrying any cargo and as such no inspection is required. They insist that they are merely passing through, on their way to Theseus or K'tsa Kar, they haven't decided which. After a lengthy argument the freighter captain finally agrees to an inspection, telling Shirrah that they have nothing to hide. The Falcon closes in and docks with the Nightshade.

The boarding crew is on the loading deck, and Bluto leads them to the Nightshade's outer hull hatch. A rough looking Yazirian meets them at the Nightshade's hatch, and opens it to allow them inside. A Dralasite with a rich black cloak flowing over what passes for shoulders stands near the Yaz. The Dralasite bellows out "Well, let's get this dog and pony show on the road, we got things to do!"

The dral hands Bluto a cargo manifest, it simply reads "No cargo obtained for Madderly's Star/White Light voyage".

The Yazirian sneers and points to the elevator. "Right this way, folks." Neither seem pleasant about this unnecessary inspection, both seem anxious to get back underway.

Bluto and Gret remain on the crew deck to watch the airlock and access to their ship, the rest of the group piles into the elevator car and it descends to the Nightshade's hold.

The doors open and the group exits. Danyon, Johann, Slade, and Tichat-Ka look around the vacated hold, its floor occasionally littered with broken crate remains and an occasional mangled piece of plasticard. "Wow, whaddya know, " the Dralasite interjects. "Just like the manifest says, empty!"

Danyon stoops to retrieve one of the mangled plastisheets and finds it is the remains of an old invoice. He shows it to Slade and Johann, who read the inscription: "FOODSTUFFS - Point of Origin: Inner Reach, Destination: Outer Reach" The duo both nod and Danyon drops the plasticard to the deck. Tichat-Ka appears to be pacing the hold and tapping the deck with his pistol butts.

Once finished the Vrusk glances over to Johann and he nods. Johann speaks up, "We'll have to inspect your cabins next." The Yazirian looks to the Dralasite, who mimics a Human expression by rolling its eyespots. "Ooooooh-kayyyy," the dral lets out. "Let's go, back into the elevator. A lot of back and forth with you guys today!"

Everyone gets on and the car returns to the Nightshade's crew deck. Johann calls Bluto on the chronocom to report nothing found in the hold and that they are returning to the crew deck to inspect the cabins. The elevator doors open and the group sees Bluto and Gret waiting, and they exit. Johann gives Bluto a whispered update as to what was found in the hold as far as the mangled invoice.

Bluto begins barking orders to the inspection team. Slade and Johann begin to search the cabins while Tichat-Ka and Danyon head for the galley. The cabins are all vacant and unkempt, with nothing out of the ordinary. Try as they may, they find nothing incriminating. Then Tichat-Ka returns from the galley holding an empty vial and an aqua-pipe, obvious paraphernalia of a narcotic drug. Bluto nods, and Tichat-Ka asks the dral/Yaz duo about it. The Dralasite shrugs, but the Yazirian dips his head down and mutters out "It's mine, personal use and all that." Tichat-Ka gets cross and demands where the drug is, telling them that while the Clarion Royal Marines can not impound the craft over the items, they can still issue a fine.

The Yaz simply answers that he used the last dose a day ago.

Slade begins to ask if they know of a Captain Tylappar while Johann whispers to Bluto, who calls the Falcon C.O. on the chronocom.

The Dralasite acknowledges Tylappar but knows nothing of his presence in system, simply declaring that like

themselves he is an independent hauler making their way through the Frontier. They have crossed paths in the past, and they merely look at him as competition.

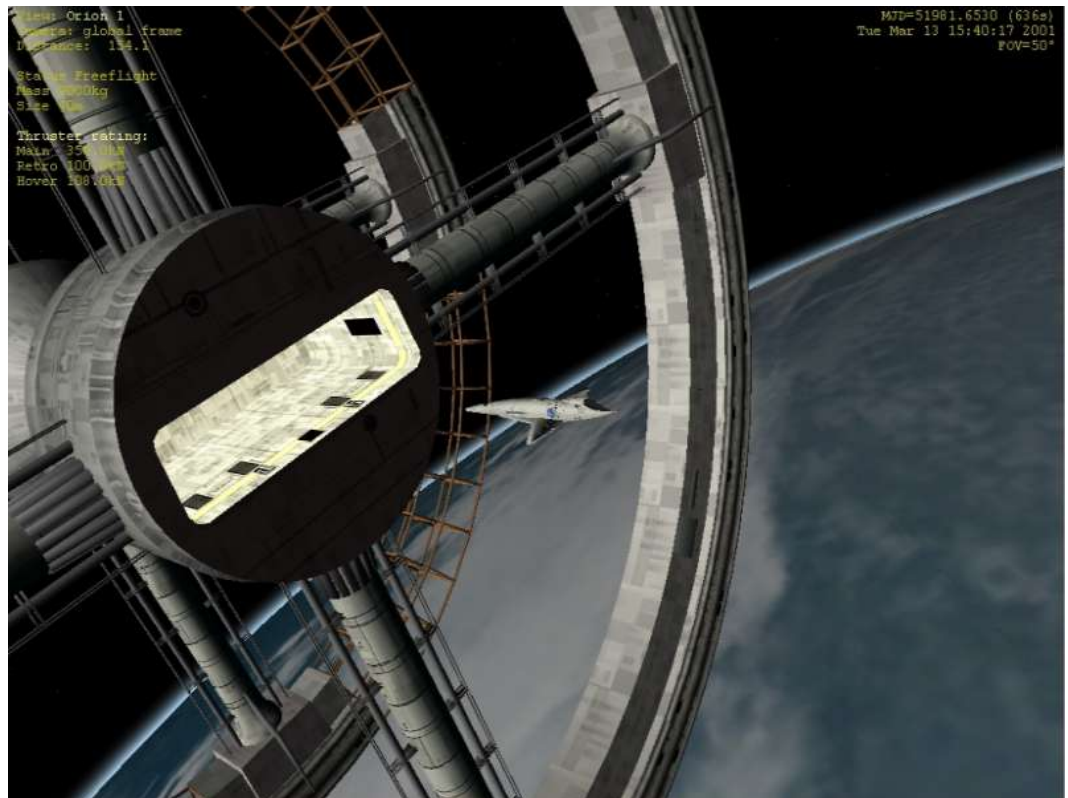
A heated debate begins as to why Garlus might drop info on "competitors" that may be carrying contraband, but in the end there is nothing gained by this and that the Marines can do little else in detaining this vessel.

Bluto hands the Dralasite a plasticard and offers an apology, and that the Nighthshade may enjoy complimentary berthing for up to ten days at Clarion Station as restitution.

The group herd themselves back into the Falcon with a feeling of dismay, having garnered nothing and feeling taken for as fools. Lt. Shirrah meets them inside to reassure them, saying that it happens and not to let it get to them.

Gret looks back as the Falcon's outer hull hatch is closed and catches a glimpse of the Yazirian in the opposite hatch, who is giving the Falcon crew a nasty look. Gret returns it with an unpleasant gesture of his own, one that Bluto countermands him for.

"At ease soldier, we don't get to win all the time." Tichat-Ka clicks off with "Give us a princess to rescue, we're pretty good at that." The witty repartee brings some welcome relief to the group, and they head back to their stations to buckle in so the Falcon can rush to its next job, a Class:XII freight hauler that just dropped out of the Void.



DRALASITE FACTS

One night in **STAR FRONITERS™** chat, a gang of Dralosite enthusiast talked some Dral and took notes.

UNIVERSITY OF ZEBULON, DRALASITE FACTS

1. Dralasitas are hard to clean out of cloth car seats on a hot day
2. Especially if you're a Yazirian with a few liters of ale in ya
3. Chances of a Yazirian going into Battle Rage after 5 cold ones whilst listening to a Dralosite tell jokes = 100%
4. A Star Lawman's worst fear: bringing in an intoxicated Dralosite in his squad car
5. Dralasitas and Norelco worked out a weapons deal in 82
6. Since 82, Dralosite doctors love to shave patients even if they don't need it
7. What do Dralasitas and Jell-O Pudding Pops have in common? Lick one and tell us. (Ewww :-P)
8. Dralasitas make good bowling balls.
9. Dralasitas reproduce by telling each other bad jokes until one of them splits with laughter
10. w00t is actually a Dralosite
11. w00t has two Dralasitas in his name
12. Gilbert has logged out.
13. You really don't want to experiment with test tube Dralosite babies
14. Dralasitas in a blender make you a murderer
15. But they make a descent fondue
16. A Dralosite in a blender really is funny!
17. If you ate a Dralosite, how would you know which part you're eating?
18. Dralasitas in a blender is messy, in the dryer it really really funny looking
19. Dralosite, tastes like chit
20. There's a reason why Dralasitas have never become cannibals
21. Restaurants have been known to cut down costs and serve rubber instead of Dralosite
22. McDralasitas
23. Dralasitas flavor really lasts , and leaves your breath minty fresh
24. Five doctors surveyed say, "Dralasitas are make bad patients. The jokes on us."
25. Dralasitas taste like chicken. No wait... Nucleic

Coming up with 100 Dralosite facts is really hard and most of the time we want to eat one, see above. ...or put them in a blender

[Corjay] You know guys, these lines would make even a Dralosite shake his head in shame

[Shadow Shack] Yeah they're turning into real groan-dral-ers

[w00t] Corjay has been kicked out of the 100 Dralosite Facts group

[Corjay] :-P

[w00t] Fact #26 Who started this topic? We should kick him in the Dralosite

[Shadow Shack] I think you did, w00t

26. Dralasitas make good Zero G Basketball- you never know if the ball went in the hoop, or them.

27. This Dralasitas on you

28. Dralasitas make great hammocks

29. Dralosite Facts are mostly fiction

30. Dralosite facts were made by Humans, chance of inaccuracy, 100%

31. Dralasitas are mostly fiction

32. Dralasitas are not in D&D

33. nor AD&D

34. D&D is not real

35. Corjay is not a Dralosite. Honest. If telling bad jokes makes you a Dralosite, then so is w00t

36. Dralasitas make moves in "meters" outside, "inches" inside and "yards" in zero-G
[CleanCutRogue] oh boy

37. Dralasitas like to say "Oh Boy" after a good joke/pun

38. There are no bad Dralosite jokes, only punny ones
[CleanCutRogue] oh boy

39. CleanCutRogue is an "Oh Boy of a Dralosite "

40. Dralasitas can be carried in a bucket when drunk

41. All bars on Dralosite home worlds are equipped with Dial-O-Bucket

42. I Dralosite, do you?

43. w00t loves Dralosite humor

[w00t] Im Drally like dat

44. As Dralasitas get older they get harder on the outside, shrink and can be bounced like super balls

45. Dralosite facts get old after 44 facts

46. Two Dralasitas walk into a bar.....everyone else leaves covering their ears and yelling "no more jokes"

47. Dralosite Clans all come from one lump.

48. A Dralosite was in the "Lil' Abner" comic strip.

49. Dralasitas love Dogpatch, USA

50. Al Capp paid his Dralosite handsomely, just so he wouldn't have to listen to it make jokes.

51. Between listening to John Lennon for a week, and spending an hour with his Dral, Al Capp chose to spend a week with John Lennon....

--- END OF TRANSMISSION ---

SPACER SKILLS REVISITED

Menoitios

MODIFIED PREREQUISITES FOR KNIGHT HAWKS

It has been pointed out that the prerequisites for spacer skills are burdensome and such levels are rarely met by players in normal game-play. I have heard of many people that have modified the prerequisites for Knight Hawks skills, so I present my system with a fair amount of humility. It enables new characters to go to the stars more quickly and lowers the levels of NPCs who the characters encounter, do you really want to have a brand new PC fight a pirate with a 6 Beam weapons skill?

Recall the original requirements for first level in spacer skills:

Spacer Skill	Prerequisites
Pilot	Technician 6 Computer 6
Engineer	Technician 4 Robotics 2
Astrogation	Computer 6
Energy Weapons	Beam Weapons 6
Rocket Weapons	Projectile Weapons 4 Gyrojet Weapons 2

If a NPC with a Tech skill of 6 is at the highest possible level of intelligent species technical ability, might not employment other than pilot of a pirate ship be found for such a being? Not to get too realistic, in a game that does not aim for excessive realism, but being a pirate is rather desperate work for rather desperate people.

In addition I find that the high levels required for most KHs adventures require overly powerful player characters and NPCs, and imbalanced interaction with low level PCs.

Indeed often the requirement that players have spacer skills means that new players have to use a pre-rolled character rather than start their own from scratch and get the enjoyment of earning and spending those precious XP points.

Instead of requiring a high level of skill in the prerequisites before achieving even a low level spaceship skill, I propose a different system that allows you to get your beginning level of spacer skills with only a low level prerequisite skill. However, in order to increase your spacer skill, you must also increase you level in the foundation skills as well.

The following table list the required prerequisite skill level in the foundations skills needed before acquiring the specified level of the spacer skill:

Skill		1	2	3	4	5	6
Pilot	Technician	2	2	3	4	5	6
	Computer	1	2	2	3	3	4
Engineer	Technician	2	2	3	3	4	4
	Robotics	1	1	1	2	2	2
Astrogation	Computers	2	2	3	4	5	6
	Beam Weapons	2	2	3	4	5	6
Energy Weapons	Beam Weapons	2	2	3	4	5	6
	Projectile Weapons	2	2	3	3	4	4
Rocket Weapons	Projectile Weapons	2	2	3	3	4	4
	Gyrojet Weapons	1	1	1	2	2	2

For example, a PC could get his first level pilot skill after only achieving a level 2 Technician skill and a level 1 Computer Skill. However, in order to get a level 2 Pilot skill, he must first advance his Computer skill to level 2. Then he will have the prerequisites needed for a level 2 Pilot.

With these skill levels prerequisites, players can level up in a few adventures and take to the stars with ease, or referees can give players spacer skills at character creation without worry of unbalancing the game too much.

This creates a more "space opera" feel to the game allowing dirt farmers on back worlds to have the pilot and weapon skills necessary to destroy the enemy battle station, with a well placed shot, at the apex of their first adventure.

If a more restrained and slightly more realistic game world is desired, where only highly trained people have spacer skills, one can use the original system or some compromise between the above system and the original.

EDITOR'S NOTE

As far as we know, this particular skill modification has not been extensively play-tested. We would love to hear your experience in using it. Send any suggestions, comments or experiences to us at submissions@starfrontiersman.org for inclusion in the Frontier Feedback section in an upcoming issue.

NEW FRONTIER WEAPONS

Chris Harper and Larry Moore

HEAVY GYROJET RIFLE

By Chris Harper

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Sometimes you don't have to look far to find science fiction. Star Frontiers is over twenty five years old. A lot of the technology represented has been updated to fit present day ideas of science fiction.

That brings us to gyrojet weapons. They are old technology, an abandoned attempt in the 1960's to make a micro rocket firing gun.

They were updated to science fiction performance and fit into Star Frontiers seamlessly.

There is a new generation of small arms being developed for the US armed forces. They are hand held semi- automatic grenade launchers. They promise to be versatile and pack quite a punch. I have converted them to be used in Star Frontiers. I think they look pretty cool. So, the looks have not been changed much.

Play testers: Zackary Harper, James Whitehead, Jenny Harper, US Army

OPERATION

A big brother to the gyrojet rifle, the weapon fires a larger (25mm) rocket propelled bullet. It can be used as a direct fire rifle. The bullets have a shaped charge of Tornadium D-19 for armor penetration. With a flick of a switch the gyrojet bullets turn into small air burst fragmentation grenades. The heavy gyrojet rifle has an integral scope. Lock in the range and the grenade will burst at its pre- programmed destination.

When using the heavy gyrojet rifle the rifleman can adjust the proximity fuse to explode the gyrojet rocket near the enemy. The rifleman can shoot over or past cover to hit the enemy. This effectively negates the effect of hiding or cover. So, the attacker does not get the -10 for soft cover or the -20 for hard cover. If the roll to hit fails; the grenade bounce table is used.

When the rifle is set to impact, the attack is resolved as a normal rifle. The rocket impacts on the target and detonates the armor piercing shaped charge.



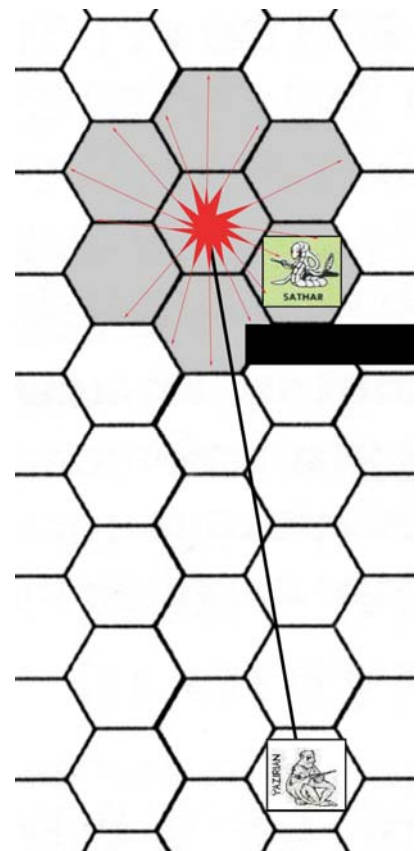
The player must declare what setting the gun is on before firing or the rifle will keep the previous setting. (ie: the previous shot was an 80 meter air burst. So the undeclared shot is also an 80 meter air burst.)

AN EXAMPLE

A Yazarian is targeting a Sathar in hard cover behind a wall (-20 to hit) as shown in the figure below. Since he can't get a clean direct shot, the Yazarian targets a hex on far side of the wall to catch the Sathar in the 6 meter radius area burst. The Yazarian targets this hex normally without the -20 hard cover penalty.

If the rifle attack succeeds, the Sathar gets to make a RS roll. If he is successful, he only takes 1/2 damage from the shot. If he fails, he takes the full 6d10 damage.

This also works if the target is hiding behind the wall. If any other beings had been in the 6m radius they would also have to make a RS check or take 6d10 damage.



WEAPON STATISTICS

RIFLE

Caliber: 25mm

Type: semiautomatic, clip fed

Cost: 2,000 Cr (Heavy gyrojet clip, 10 shots, cost: 50 Cr)

Overall length: .9 meters

Weight: 5.5 kg

Damage: 8d10 impact (40 structural). 6d10 area burst.

Ammo: 10 shots

Rate: 2

Defense: Inertia

Range: -/5/75/150/500 (700)

500 meters max. impact, 700 meters max. area burst.

Skill: Gyrojet

BULLETS

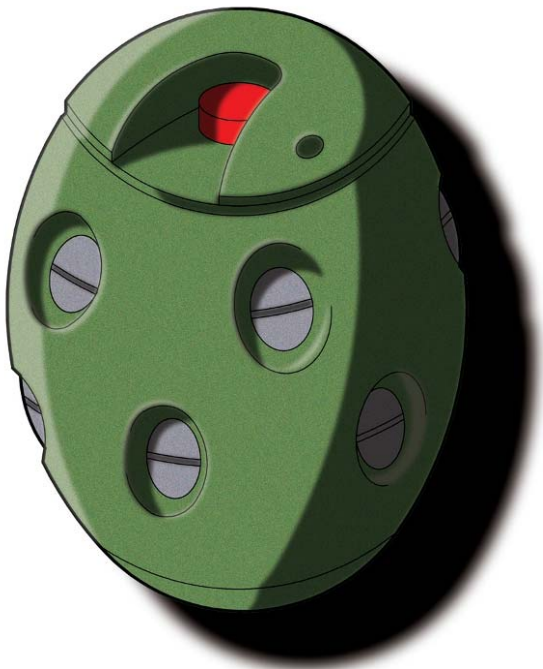
Type: gyrojet stabilized rocket. Proximity fuse air burst, or impact armor piercing

Damage: 6d10 air burst fragmentation grenade. 8d10 impact armor piercing (40 points structural)

Air burst area effect: 6 meter radius

SCOPE

Integral mounted. infra-red vision, laser range finder and a ballistic computer. Makes shots one range closer (ie: L range becomes M range). Designates ranges for air burst setting.



ALBEDO GRENADE

by Chris Harper

PURPOSE

Ablate the effectiveness of lasers.

CONSTRUCTION

An oval plastic grenade with ports distributed around its circumference. The device will jet out a cloud from the many ports that cover the grenade. The cloud contains smoke and lightweight plastic filaments with a reflective coating. The filaments float slowly to the ground. Many colors of smoke are available. The smoke obscures the target, while the filaments deflect the laser beam.

OPERATION

In combat a character hits the button and throws it towards an opponent or just drops it near where he/she is located. The button arms it and the shock of being dropped instantly sets the grenade off. The albedo grenade will expel a reflective cloud. The grenade will not cause damage to anyone near it. The cloud will take effect at the end of the combat turn.

The effect is ablation of the laser beam. This means that the laser damage is halved. Anyone firing into or out of the cloud receives a -10% to hit. This is due to the cloud obscuring the target. The cloud covers a 6 meter radius.

The duration that the cloud takes effect is 1d10 combat rounds. There is a -1 round modification for wind that is traveling at 5kph. So, if the wind is 10kph the duration would be 1d10 -2 rounds.

If more than one grenade is thrown the effects do not halve the damage or the aiming again they just add to the duration of the effect.

ALBEDO GRENADE STATISTICS

Cost: 50cr

Effect: -10 to hit, 6 meters, ½ laser damage

Radius: 6 meters

Rate: 1/turn

Duration: 1d10 turns

Range: 5/10/15/25/50

LASER GRENADE

By Larry Moore

Pan-Gal, in direct competition with Wartech's **Frontiersman Heavy Pistol**, has developed a portable laser component in the form of a grenade. While the Frontiersman heavy pistol's starfire grenade launcher maxes out at 8d10 damage the laser grenade maxes out at 10d10.

Additionally, Pan-Gal is able to leverage common technology to keep the cost low. The laser grenade cost is just slightly higher than the standard 5Cr per SEU rate.

The core of the grenade is a sturdy plastic sphere charged with a predetermined SEU setting during the manufacturing process. An incendiary timer is used to melt the plastic releasing the SEU charge which is channeled through tubes containing focusing crystals, which work the same as a laser pistol. The focus tubes are placed evenly around the charge so that the blast pattern is uniform.

Laser grenades can be purchased in the following increments: 5 SEU and 10 SEU. Each grenade fires a burst of lasers equal to its SEU setting. For example, a 10 SEU grenade will fire 10 laser beams in all directions while a 5 SEU grenade will fire 5 causing the respective 10d10 or 5d10 damage.

A character caught in the blast radius takes full damage (half damage with a successful Reaction Speed check). An albedo suit or screen halves the damage from lasers.

If a character makes a successful RS check *and* is protected by an albedo suit or screen the damage is reduced to 1/4.

EXAMPLE

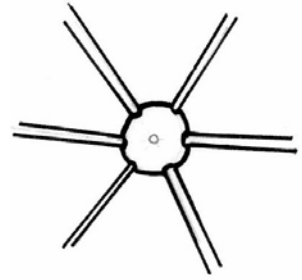
A pirate tosses a 10 SEU laser grenade at Sgt. Muldoon. It hits the wall and bounces right between his three legs! Muldoon makes a successful RS check and leaps towards an open door forming himself into a ball to lessen the impact. He's a Dralasite after all. Without any sound the LG explodes sending laser death towards Muldoon. The successful RS check reduced the damage to 5d10 while his albedo suit reduced another 1/2. Muldoon ends up taking 2d10 damage.

MISSING TARGET

If a character misses her To Hit roll use the Grenade Bounce table to determine the direction the grenade bounces.

AREA EFFECT

Unlike fragmentation and incendiary grenades, laser emitted from LG's will not slow down but will keep going until they hit an object. If the grenade misses its intended target and bounces in a square that does not contain a character there is a 15% chance one of the laser will hit anything within 20 meters. Remember that ceilings, walls and floors will absorb damage from LG's.



STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

Laser grenades cause 2 points/SEU structural damage if thrown and 5 points/SEU if placed.

AVOIDANCE ROLL

Character can reduce the damage by making a successful check against their RS. If the character has nowhere to move to, he/she can not try to avoid the blast. A character can try to avoid only one grenade per turn.

LASER GRENADE STATISTICS

SEU	Cost (Cr)	Damage	Rate	Defense	Range
5	35	5d10	1	RS / Albedo	5/10/15/25/50
10	55	10d10	1	RS / Albedo	5/10/15/25/50



LAST OF THE BREED

William Signs

PART I

**Aboard the Free Alliance Ship *Wanderer*
In orbit, 1,500 kilometers over Histran, Scree
Fron System
01/08/95, 09:22:16 Galactic Standard Time**

"Creet," Ensign Amanda Puller curses, fighting the scoutship's controls, as the *Wanderer* plummets through Histran's atmosphere, alarms shrilling throughout the cramped, red-lit bridge.

Hells of a way to end a first command, she thinks, managing to turn a dive into an uncontrolled glide, nothing but endless forests and unbroken mountains coming up to greet her and the *Wanderer's* other three crew members.

"Maneuver jet's back on line," shouts the ship's flight engineer, Master Petty Officer Arriz Soshee, the jet firing fitful amounts of thrust through the vectrals located throughout the spaceframe of the SR-15B-class scoutcraft at Amanda's command.

Just barely enough power to land somewhere without crashing, Amanda remarks to herself, holding the control yoke in her left hand, knuckles turning white as she grips it tightly.

Or, she adds, as *Wanderer's* flight path takes it over open water, *maybe not*.

Just voggin' great, she thinks, coaxing enough thrust from the maneuver jet to keep the nose up.

An instant before it gives out completely in a shower of sparks shooting across the piloting station.

Just voggin' great, she repeats to herself, in the instant before *Wanderer* hits hard.

**War Room, Planetary Government Center
First Landing, Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 09:26:26 GST**

"If you have anything to say," Admiral Isak Bellinghausen says to the monkey who has come up to him, "other than 'we have located the Free Alliance scoutcraft, Master,' then, it is best if you say nothing."

"We have located the enemy craft, Master," the Yaz chief petty officer replies. "It has crashlanded on one of the islands in the Sea of Volcanoes; naval patrol units in the area have been dispatched to recover the

wreckage, whatever intelligence might be stored in its intranet, and the crew."

Bellinghausen smiles thinly, especially at the thought of crew surviving being shot down by the Landfleet planetary-defense fightercraft, slapping the riding crop in his leather-gloved hands, remembering every story he's ever read about the *animals* infesting the Wilderness, the alien and perverse things they made each other do to one another, what they'd make their moral superiors do to them, once they'd been captured and put in their cages in the center of First Landing's public square, what they'd do to *one another* inside those cages, as their anointed Masters were made to watch—

The commander of Task Force *Dominator* finds it difficult to breathe, his vision tunneling for a second, impure thoughts put into his head by the filthy proks clouding his mind, gravely affecting his better judgement, possibly even making him appear weak in the presence of inferiors.

Bellinghausen takes a deep breath, reciting the 69th Affirmation to himself, the immoral thoughts washed away with the blood of He who was broken upon the Wheel for the Redemption of His Chosen Few, the five-year veteran of the New Frontier's Spacefleet telling the Yazirian:

"Keep me informed, *especially* if any crew are found alive."

**Aboard the FAS *Admiral Margaurite Dermond*
In orbit, 1,500 kilometers over Verdant, Wayland
System
01/08/95, 10:15:24 GST**

Commodore Chek Groznal stares absently into space, the elder Yazirian's mind on what could've been, if only....

"...you bastard!" Hannah screams over comms, as Groznal fires on Albatross, the bodies of his own bridge crew hanging limply in their straps, all of them.... ...dead, by his own hand, and they had trusted him to lead them to better than that.

He'd been a Star Lawman, the whole damn Frontier had trusted him to do—to *be*—better than that.

He thought he had been, all these years of serving the New Frontier, of doing things he'd should've known no Star Lawman ever would have done, all in the name of

the law and the justice he'd been told he would serve by helping to destroy the Federation.

The door to his office slides open, the *Dermond's* executive officer, Captain Janna Wortz, fighting to disguise her contempt for the former UPF Chief of Military Operations, as she walks up to his desk, says, without pleasantries or preamble:

"The *Wanderer* is an hour overdue for its comm check." "Vog," Groznal whispers...he'd sent *Wanderer* to Histran as bait in a trap the senior Admiralty had hoped to spring on the Federation, placing the young lives of its four crew in more danger than they'd been led to expect in the process.

"What's the nearest ship to them, Captain?" he asks, without hesitation.

"The *Shadowboxer* is still in the Araks system," Janna replies, "and can reach Histran in eleven days."

Not fast enough, Groznal curses, the Yazirian sighing, the gasps of his gunship's crew, as they struggle to breathe one last breath, echoing in his ears, as he banishes from his thoughts the things his former employers have in mind for those four younglings after they capture them.

"Signal Captain Quinn, Admiralty cipher, crash priority," he orders, forcing all emotion from his voice, "tell her to jump for Histran immediately."

Janna instantly turns on her heel, not leaving the room fast enough for her taste, Groznal whispering:

"Eternal Light of Space, shine on the reflections of Yourself, and keep them safe."

**Aboard the FAS *Shadowboxer*
20.07 billion kilometers from Araks X, Araks System
01/08/95, 10:15:24 GST**

"Incoming crash priority communication from the Admiral Dermond!" Chief Petty Officer Karish Nayae's shout cuts through the whooping of the jump alarm.

"He's out of his vogging mind," she adds, Captain Alissa Quinn turning in her chair to face her sensor tech.

"Ma'am, the traitor wishes for us to abort our return jump for Verdant, and jump immediately for Histran," Karish explains.

"Hells and damnation," Lieutenant Delia Cael, the *Shadowboxer's* second in command, interjects, echoing Ali's sentiment, the master of the *Shadowboxer* nevertheless turning back towards the front of the bridge, snapping out the order, "Astrogator, abort jump for Verdant, jump immediately for Histran."

"Immediately," Ensign Star Forces Y'aken T'kk asks, "as in—"

"Now," Ali replies, no hesitation, even knowing the difference between smoking a jump and *smoking* a jump.

And, this definitely smokes *something*.

"Jump now," she repeats, knowing that even the traitor wouldn't have asked this, if it hadn't been absolutely necessary, "cross your fingers and pray to all the gods you can think of."

"Void entry," T'kk replies, in a voice which remains maddeningly matter of fact, in light of the risk, "in five, four, three, two, one—"

Spacetime twists and distorts like a funhouse mirror, the 605-ton *Puglillist*-class war cruiser surging forth into the Void at 350 times the speed of light, the ship's astrogator announcing "emergence in eleven days."

"In whatever star system," the Vrusk female quips, "we end up in."

"Thank you for your optimism, Ensign," Dee replies. "You're welcome," T'kk says.

**Grataan Island, Sea of Volcanoes
Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 10:20:12 GST**

The quickdeath splits the air with its growl, as it bounds from the troop deck of the Landfleet naval patrol hovercraft, its powerful legs propelling it into the dense undergrowth of the island beyond the narrow strip of sand in the island's lagoon.

The six-man Landfleet infantry squad steps down the boarding ramp at a more sedate pace, Sergeant Callan Knightbourne sniffing the air, almost as if his nostrils can pick up the stench of prok in the breeze, the squad's two combat bots trundling out behind them, both of them waving their light electron cannon about as they assume point, one of the company's attack creature handlers the last to debark, the blob's grey lump of protoplasm looking even more grey as it steps off the ramp onto the sand.

"Trooper S'sshak," he says to a pale brown and pink worm almost fading into the dull brown of its powered skeinsuit, "take point behind the bots. I will bring up the rear, behind the blob. Corporal Havi, I want you behind the worm."

"Stay together," he adds, checking his M16A4 electron rifle one last time, "no more than a meter between you; remember, the directive is to capture them *alive* if possible."

The others nod in acknowledgement of his orders, other squads stepping down off the hovercraft onto the beach, Knightbourne not waiting a second longer to tell his men, "*move out!*"

The squad enters the woods, having difficulty with the vines and other undergrowth in spite of their powered skeinsuits, the cam built into Knightbourne's electron rifle switching to low-light, the visual information from the camera fed directly to the inside of the squad leader's faceplate, the chittering, buzzing, clacking and hooting of the various creatures a discordant jarring cacophony to someone used to the narrow streets and endless arcologies of his old neighborhood block in Villa Novo, where the only wildlife he had to contend with was rats, scavenger dogs and carrion birds.

The growling of the quickdeath assigned to his squad, along with the crashing sounds of its rapid passage through the woods is a more pleasant sound to him...the first memory he has, after being decanted, is of attending a prok circus held in the creche of his assigned arcology...even now, Knightbourne could *smell* the prok running around the arena floor, desperately trying to climb the wall, the quickdeath unleashed into the pit on it on a flash, the creature's powerful jaws fastening onto its ankles, pulling it down, eating it in three screaming snaps of toothy mouth, each time those jaws snapped shut spraying the crowd in the lower tier of seats with blood....

Knightbourne holds onto to that memory, of the way it makes him feel, ten years after first witnessing it, the tightness in his groin that memory brings almost as pleasant a feeling to him.

"It has picked up their scent, Master," the handler informs him, the blob's coloring changing to something more pleasing to his eye, as it studies holoprojections floating in front of its skeinsuit's helmet.

"They are some three hundred meters from our present position," it adds, "and at least four to six hundred away from any of the other squads."

That is welcome news...the honor of capturing proks alive would go to him and his men, as would the right to—

Laser fire erupts from the direction of the quickdeath's passage through the woods, confirming the Dral's report and the happy news it has given him, Knightbourne exhorting his squad to move faster, the squad leader breaking into a run, his weapon set on stunning force and ready.

**Grataan Island, Sea of Volcanoes
Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 10:21:08 GST**

"Keep firing," Amanda tells Petty Officer Star Forces V'erka A'kla, the Vrusk female glancing at her, before firing pulse after near-useless pulse of laser fire into the charging quickdeath's reflective hide, the hideous creature's tail whipping forward, pumping out four or five darts in quick succession, all of them thankfully thudding into the trees around them.

Arriz is on Amanda's left flank, firing pulses almost as ineffective as A'kla's into the quickdeath's flanks, Amanda telling it to "open wide, you bastard," aiming her M-151 laser rifle at the attack creature's snout.

The creature obligingly opens its maw wide, showing Amanda a view of its teeth she could've lived without seeing, the young Star Forces officer driving a single pulse at setting 20 right down its throat.

She then thanks the gods the damn thing's insides aren't reflective, the quickdeath dropping to the floor of the forest and burning brightly from the inside out, the stench even worse than it had been when the creature was alive.

She hears the unmistakable sound of those not used to moving through the forest trampling it underfoot, at least eight, maybe nine beings coming straight for her. White-hot bolts of lightning sizzling through the brush at her, Amanda cursing, as she tuck rolls out of the way, firing four more pulses into the woods, hearing the high-pitched sound of a Dral screaming in pain, a Human male cursing, and—

A brown blur flies at her from out of the trees, the Corpco native cursing her own stupidity for not looking up, the Yaz Landfleeter pinning her to the forest floor, the look of sadistic lust glazing his eyes behind the faceplate of his suit.

She replaces that look with a look of pain, as she tucks her legs under her and kicks the Yaz into a nearby tree, the lighter, hollow-boned monkey's body crunching wetly against wood, Amanda changing out the spent 50 SEU backpack, as she struggles onto her knees, aiming her M-151 single-handed, drawing her M-95 laser pistol with her other hand, checking to make sure it's set on 5, before she takes a deep breath and fires blindly into the forest.

**Grataan Island, Sea of Volcanoes
Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 10:22:00 GST**

"Vogging fool," Knightbourne remarks, spitting at the broken body of the worthless Yaz he'd been fool enough to trust as his second, the Landfleet sergeant ducking down, as pulses sizzle past him, S'sshak hissing in anger as the worm pumps electron bolt after electron bolt into the woods ahead of him, Trooper Peck and Private Hargut bringing their man-portable electron cannon to bear on the source of those pulses, forming a perimeter with the combat bots, laying down a blanket of fire to pin down the proks who dare fight on, rather than submit to their ordained Lords and Masters, as their True Lord and Master commanded.

" S'sshak, Dobrazza, with me!" Knightbourne barks out, the three Landfleet soldiers swinging around the perimeter, Knightbourne's M16A4 vibrating in his hands, as he licks his lips in anticipation, flashing back to the prok circus, the memory of the two prok gladiators whipping and beating one another for the

amusement of the crowd, until one—blonde and supple—had subjugated the other—smaller, darker, plumper—forcing it to kneel at its feet, to *beg*, before it was *taken, conquered, killed* by the one who had defeated it, the crowd on their feet, febrile with the emotions the proks had filled them with, cheering the degrading things that only a filthy *prok* would do to one of its own subhuman kind.

To the Chosen of the One True God if they were not constantly taken in hand and kept broken and subjugated to their ordained Masters' will, as their Progenitor and their Lord commanded them to.

S'sshak's hissing is as air leaving a ruptured balloon, a laser pulse slicing through his midsection, spraying worm guts all over, Knightbourne cursing the Sathar's weakness and moral inferiority, as he continues to charge forward, empowered by the febrile lust of that long-ago crowd.

The fevered dream of conquest which burns hot and pure through his veins.

**War Room, Planetary Government Center
First Landing, Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 10:24:13 GST**

Bellinghausen watches the imminent capture of the proks, as it is being relayed to him through the cameras of the Landfleet soldiers on Grataan Island, mentally tallying those amongst them who have fallen and would face reassignment in the life to come.

One of the proks now comes into view of the cameras, its indigo Star Forces skeinsuit stained with grass and dirt, its soft face lined with scratches, its long, black hair matted and tangled, its lips bloodless and set in a grimace, as it faces the camera with both laser pistol and laser rifle in hand.

The commander of Task Force *Dominator* sips at the cup of strong, black coffee in his left hand, smiling thinly, remembering the first test he'd been put through, five months after his decanting, remembering the prok looking up at him with wide, frightened eyes, trying to trap him with a look, as it crawled on the floor away from him.

It was far too easy, he thinks to himself, as he watches the other prok's dark eyes harden. *Better when they're defiant, like this one, much more pleasurable to slowly snuff out a fire in the eyes than simply to poke at ashes.*

The screaming of the man through whose eyes Bellinghausen is witnessing this scene jars the Spacefleet admiral back to reality, as a Yazirian's growling turns into a pained, frenzied, proklike howling in the background, the cameras abruptly switching from a view of the defiant, filthy prok with her weapons out to a view of the twilight sky overhead.

"We know where they are now, Master," Bellinghausen's second, Vice Admiral Johnathan Elmore, says from

behind his commander's left shoulder. "They will be taken in hand soon."

"Do you seriously think," Bellinghausen replies coldly, not turning to face his immediate subordinate, "that I am actually *fascinated* by this, Vice Admiral?!"

"I," he adds, "am not one of *them*, though I may wonder if *you* are, given that comment."

"I will show you the strength of my morality, Master," Elmore replies, "if that is what you desire."

"The Military Staff Committee has received your report," he then tells him, "and have relayed it to the Council of Worlds and the President for their perusal."

"And?" Bellinghausen asks.

"Fleet Admiral Creed himself has asked for more information," Elmore says. "In particular, he wishes to know the precise circumstances behind the scoutship's appearance in the Scree Fron system so soon after the raid on Hentz and the concurrent destruction of the *Strategos* by the Star Forces cruiser *Shadowboxer*."

"He doesn't believe they are unrelated incidents," Bellinghausen states.

"That would be my assessment of his query, Master," Elmore remarks.

"Call up a map of the Frontier," the commander of Task Force *Dominator* orders one of the techs in the War Room, the map of the Frontier, displaying the stars of the New Frontier in cool blue and the systems abandoned to the Wilderness in garish, discordant red, appearing instantly before him.

Bellinghausen stabs a fat finger at the Araks system, commenting:

"It is only twelve days from the Star Forces units in the Wayland system...the proks may already have a sizeable invasion force en route to capitalize on the damage caused by *Shadowboxer's* raid, and no end of willing soldiers to swell their ranks once the NOCCM's garrison has been overwhelmed."

"Yes, Master," Elmore remarks simply.

"Since we don't know how long ago the enemy entered the Void on course for Hentz," Bellinghausen further remarks, "any forces dispatched from the Gruna Garu or Scree Fron systems may end up arriving too late to prevent Hentz and its inmates from falling into the hands of the Free Alliance, and will have the added disadvantage of leaving those two systems underdefended and vulnerable to the kind of gambit which cost Groznal both the Timeon system and his commission."

"Assuming they risk jump through the Belnafer system to take Scree Fron," Elmore replies, "and already have a force underway from Moonworld for Hargut."

"He can't afford to take that chance, Admiral," Bellinghausen reminds him. "The capture of either the Gruna Garu or the Scree Fron systems would cripple our efforts to redeem the Wilderness. The loss of *both*, in conjunction with a concurrent offensive from the Zebulon system against the Abbott system, would cut the New Frontier into little pieces, isolating the Sundown, Gayim Garu, Nexus and Watchtower systems here—"

He points to the appropriate section of the map. "—the Araks, Athor, and Prenglar systems here—" He moves his finger to that part of the map. "—the Rhianna and Plague Beta systems here, the Pan-Gal system here—" He points to those sections of the map in quick succession. "—and every system from Muld to Frontier's End along this line here—" His finger traces the line from Muld to Frontier's End. "—from one another, and, that will be the end of the war *and* the New Frontier, Admiral," the commander of Task Force *Dominator* concludes, "and we all end up slaves to the proks and their Wilderness."

"But," Elmore says, "if we can find evidence that the scoutship was in system as a prelude to the campaign you've just outlined, we can convince the Military Staff Committee, the Council of Worlds and the President to divert our forces in the Nexus system to reinforce Histran and Hakosoar, they will arrive here before any Free Alliance force can hope to arrive here from Belnafer, and we will have them instead."

"And, we will be able to reinforce Hargut from Alcazzar and Pan-Gal," Bellinghausen remarks, "quickly enough to overwhelm any potential enemy force dispatched from Moonworld, isolating the Araks system and trapping the invasion force sent there between two powerful armadas, crushing them at our leisure." He strikes his right hand squarely with his left fist, smiling at that prospect.

"They'll have all the proof they need, very shortly, Admiral," he adds, his submission to the will of the One True God once again clearing his mind of everything but the things which truly mattered most, "and, shortly after that, it will be the Wilderness which shall be tamed and made to submit to *our* will."

"As was meant to be," Elmore intones.

"Yes, Admiral," Bellinghausen replies, "precisely as it was meant to be."

**Aboard the FAS *Admiral Margaurite Dermond*
In orbit, 1,500 kilometers over Verdant, Wayland System
01/08/95, 10:38:01 GST**

Groznal sighs, as the the scoutship assigned to the reconaissance of Hargut transmits a final, detailed report on the planet's defenses, before a firestorm of Federation heavy electron cannon bolts vaporize it, and the holoprojection dissolves to snow.

Four more dead by my hand, the aged Yazirian—traitor even to the Amona he had helped dismantle by force—thinks glumly to himself, as he studies the workstation terminal's holodisplay, *four more reflections of the Light extinguished on my order...it's supposed to be for a greater good, but I thought that about all the other lights my actions snuffed from existence, and I was so terribly wrong about that, wasn't I?*

He sips his cup of Athoran goldleaf tea, a rare delicacy in Free Alliance space, as Yast remains in the hands of his former clan's enemies and the New Frontier they willingly serve for *their* greater glory, with the rest of those trapped on his home world enslaved, penned up in kennels, abused for the amusement of their "moral superiors."

He is hated on his homeworld, a *gromaagyaziri* to those Amona and Pasamoria still alive and fighting the New Frontier in spite of him, a *gromaag* reviled by both the New Frontier *and* the Free Alliance, not even trusted by those who only follow his orders out of *their* loyalty to the ideas of the old Federation bombed into ruin by the Juggernaut Fleets he'd helped bring down upon the Frontier worlds twenty years ago.

He laughs bitterly at the irony of it all...he'd once thought the old Federation and its ideas had been weak, insufficient against the worms, the Streels and all the others threatening the safety and security of the citizens of the Frontier he'd been sworn to protect...it had been that oath which had led him to join Billingslea's New Frontier, back in the days when the Streels and the Sathar had kept everyone too distracted to even notice the real enemy working behind the scenes.

His terminal bleeps, Janna's holoimage floating over it, tersely reporting, "Commodore, I have an incoming communication from Fleet Vice-Admiral Creed aboard the *Melinda McCoy*."

"Put her through," Groznal says, the image of his old friend—looking much older than her fifty-three years of age—appearing instantly.

"Hannah," the commander of Battle Group *Dermond* says, Fleet Vice Admiral Hannah Creed snapping out, "let's make this short, *Commodore*. What steps have you taken to recover the crew of the *Wanderer*?" "*Shadowboxer*," Groznal replies, trying to keep the hurt out of his voice, "is en route to Histran now."

"Eleven slaggin' days," Hannah remarks.

"Yes, Admiral," Groznal says, only too well aware of this fact, "but Quinn's cruiser is the nearest vessel."

Reluctantly, Hannah nods her head.

"Did any of *Diogenes'* crew survive?" Groznal asks.

"I didn't know you gave a flying vog about the lives under your command, *Commodore*," Hannah replies

coldly, cutting her former commander and friend to the core.

"I haven't heard from Captain Fallon," the Star Forces Fleet Vice Admiral then adds, "but, if anyone survived the destruction of the *Diogenes*—"

She trails off, setting her jaw in a firm line, before concluding:

"—Lindy knows where her duty lies. She always will."

"Unlike you, Commodore," she snaps at Groznal. *Melinda McCoy* out."

**Aboard the FAS *Oath-Bound*
350 million kilometers from Hargut, Gruna Garu System
01/08/95, 10:44:45 GST**

"Vog," Captain Melinda Fallon curses, as her bridge lights dim, "that was too close. Sensors, do we have *anything* at all?"

"No sign of survivors, Captain," Master Petty Officer Star Forces L'ak K'kkin replies from the sensor station directly behind Melinda's command chair, *Oath-Bound's* executive officer, Lieutenant Jezzine Pasamoria, desperately jinking the ninety-year old former Star Law frigate and Star Forces strike cruiser in every direction at once, as fighters, bombers, corvettes and cruisers swarm all over her, battering her mag shielding, draining her interceptor and anti-beam launchers, harrying her squadron of six F19D Boomerang star fighters.

The elderly ship's ten heavy laser cannon slice a burning swath through enemy *Hatchet*-class corvettes, gashing a *Marauder*-class cruiser's starboard flank, vaporizing another *Marauder's* Void engine exhaust venturi, a wave of torpedos flying from the former Star Law vessel towards the remainder of the enemy, all ten of her medium laser batteries duelling with Stinger fighters and Reaver bombers by the score, as well as with corvettes and cruisers turning over to bring their main beams to bear after having shot past her.

"Void entry in 32 seconds, Captain," the *Oath-Bound's* astrogator, Ensign Mohara, reminds her captain, the young Mhneme female clearly nervous at the odds stacked against them and their continued presence in the midst of almost certain destruction.

"I'm aware of that, Astrogator," Melinda replies tersely, "thank you."

"Engineering," she then says, "divert all available Void engine power to weapons and mag shielding."

"Captain, I have something!" the Vrusk sensor tech then cries out. "Plus four-five, one-thirty-five Zulu, precisely fifteen thousand kilometers from us!"

"Captain," Chief Petty Officer Udano reports from the comm station opposite the sensor station, "am picking

up a transponder signal from *Diogenes's* escape pod at those coordinates."

"Life signs?" Melinda asks, knowing the answer already.

"Can't tell at this distance, Captain," L'ak replies, before adding:

"Captain, Federation *Shadow*-class escort carrier emerging from the Void near the creet can. Distance 7,500 kilometers, and closing rapidly."

"Carrier launching fighters," she then reports.

"Void entry in nineteen seconds," Mohara reports.

"Astrogator, plot an intercept course for the creet can," Melinda replies grimly. "Communicator, inform the fighter squadron, have them interlink with us."

**Aboard the United Planetary Federation Ship
Spectre of Doom
350 million kilometers from Hargut, Gruna Garu System
01/08/95, 10:47:26 GST**

"Close to grappling range," Fleet Lieutenant Felez Anglann orders, the dark-furred Yazirian male smiling, leaning back in his command chair, as the 605-ton *Shadow*-class escort carrier maintains a constant velocity of 2,900 kilometers per second, its two squadrons of twelve Stinger starfighters arrowing towards the relic from another time at an acceleration of twenty gravities.

They should have left them to our mercy, but, instead, they chose to stay behind, the master of the Spectre observes, just so they can fall victim to our mercy as well.

Why the outcome of this war will never be in doubt, he adds, barking out, "gunnery deck, bridge, launch seekers; pilot, fire main beams, cripple the Oath-Bound, but, do not destroy her, on pain of reassignment in the life to come!"

"At once, Master!" comes the reply from both the *Spectre's* gunnery officer, Ensign Scott Thorn and its pilot, Lieutenant Colin Crowe, the escort carrier's four heavy electron cannon firing searing-white bolts into a cloud of detonated anti-beam ordinance into which *Oath Bound* disappears, interceptors streaking out of the cloud to slam into the *Spectre's* first wave of seekers.

"Master," Crowe then reports, "we are now within grappling range of the scoutcraft's escape pod."

"Landfleet detachment to the forward airlock," Anglann barks into his headset computer. "Gunnery deck, launch a second wave of seekers and—"

"Master," the *Spectre's* sensor tech, Master Petty Officer Rimaran Olkonkwin reports, "based on her

vector through space, the *Oath-Bound* should have passed through her cloud of anti-beam ordinance precisely—"

True God in Heaven, why didn't I see this coming?! Anglann curses to himself, screaming "Pilot, evasive maneuvers, accelerate to—"

"Enemy cruiser emerging from the Void!" the sensor tech shouts out, "sixty meters off our port quarter and cl—"

**Aboard the FAS *Wanderer*
Grataan Island, Sea of Volcanoes
Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 11:16:11 GST**

"At your orders, Skipper," Chief Petty Officer Opalupa wheezes and whistles at Amanda, as she and the other three members of *Wanderer's* crew clamber through the mangled remains of the forward airlock.

The Dral adds, "it took some doing, but all the secondary scuttling charges have been set and wired directly to the subspace radio; the ship'll blow the instant the radio finishes uploading all the reconnaissance data in the ship's intranet to the *Admiral Dermond*."

Amanda nods, sighing in regret...this *was* her first command, after all, she certainly didn't want to end it by blowing it up, but her orders had been clear regarding this contingency.

"Strip the equipment locker of everything we can carry," she orders the other members of her crew, noticing Opie's already brandishing a light laser cannon and a 200 SEU powerpack, as well as a pair of Frontiersman heavy las pistols in holsters crisscrossing its amorphous body, "and retreat deeper into the woods."

The other members of the crew move towards the equipment locker by the ruined forward airlock, finishing the job Opie's started of stripping it bare, Amanda walking over to the Explorer sitting next to the forward cargo ramp—useless as *Wanderer* landed hard on her belly—nodding her head again, as she assesses the condition of the ATV.

Even if they could cut a large enough hole for it to be driven through, the Explorer's not going anywhere, not with all four of its wheel motors hemorrhaging fluids all over the deck and at least one of the wheel spindles broken.

Amanda turns back to the equipment locker, helping the others load themselves down with as much gear and weapons as they can carry, wishing at least *one* of the ship's bots had survived the crash, as she finishes stuffing the pockets of her skeinsuit with as many powerclips and belpacks as they can hold, adjusting the overloaded backpack on her shoulders, before turning to the others and telling them:

"Let's go. Chief Opalupa, as soon as we're clear of the ship, trigger the subspace radio by remote."

"Aye, Skipper," Opie replies.

**Ten meters from the FAS *Wanderer*
Grataan Island, Sea of Volcanoes
Histran, Scree Fron System
01/08/95, 11:23:40 GST**

There it is.

It and the others are moving away from their wrecked ship, Knightbourne staggering towards them, pushing through the pain which he knows is mere moral weakness fleeing a body which was the temple of his True Lord and Master, Hargut, Peck and the combat bots flanking their squad leader, all of them raising their weapons to fire.

The blob turns, firing its light laser cannon into one of the bots, vaporizing it instantly, even as the bot's return shot makes the Dral's protoplasm run like candle wax along the floor of the forest, the other proks turning as one to face the survivors of Knightbourne's squad.

And, they immediately open fire, as they start running deeper into the forest, Peck dropping to the ground from a hole blasted into his chest to die without a sound of distress, Hargut, Knightbourne and the remaining bot pursuing the proks, firing blindly into the woods, the proks returning fire just as blindly, as they continue their headlong flight into the woods. Memories of the prok circus burn through his veins, Knightbourne not seeing the wilderness, not hearing the sounds of its brutal savagery.

Instead, he sees and hears the sights and sounds of the *true* Wilderness and the brutal savagery of the animals haunting it, those sights and sounds firing his blood even further, until his head pounds with the pure white flames of perfect hatred and righteous anger screaming through him like the rivers of lava the True God sent to wash away Satama and Samarra and all the unrighteousness that dwelled within their ancient walls.

And like the wave of fire which sweeps in from behind him, pushes him forward through the forest, and knocks him down onto his hands and knees.

To be continued ...

NPC CHARACTER SHEETS

Larry Moore

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				


Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

Character			Current STA	
IM	STR	STA	Special Abilities:	
	DEX	RS		PSA: Skills
PS	INT	LOG		
	PER	LDR		Weapons:
Ranged		Melee		
Defenses:				

STR / STA
DEH / RS
INT / LOG
PER / LDR



INITIATIVE MODIFIER + _____
PUNCH SCORE + _____
RANGED WEAPONS _____ %
MELEE WEAPONS _____ %

SKILLS

NOTES

NAME _____
RACE _____
GENDER _____
SPECIAL ABILITIES

STORY

npc

0: HEAD

1: CHEST 2: CHEST

4: R. ARM 6: L. ARM

3: ABDOMEN

5: R. HAND 7: L. HAND

8: R. LEG 9: L. LEG

DEFENSES: _____

WEAPONS / EQUIPMENT

STR / STA
DEH / RS
INT / LOG
PER / LDR



INITIATIVE MODIFIER + _____
PUNCH SCORE + _____
RANGED WEAPONS _____ %
MELEE WEAPONS _____ %

SKILLS

NOTES

NAME _____
RACE _____
GENDER _____
SPECIAL ABILITIES

STORY

npc

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3: ABDOMEN

5: R. HAND 7: L. HAND

8: R. LEG 9: L. LEG

DEFENSES: _____

WEAPONS / EQUIPMENT

CLASSIFIEDS

Wartech Industries Heavy Gyrojet Rifle

Are you tired of the bad guys taking cover while you waste ammo? Do you want the accuracy of a gyrojet rifle and the blast radius of a grenade? Do you want to have an anti-personnel weapon and a tank killer all in one handy package? If you thought all this was too much to ask for, the Heavy Gyrojet Rifle is for you. No job is too big or too small.



Warning: Not for civilian use. To be used against Sathar only. Not for sale on Morgaine's World, Minotaur, or Clarion. *Always point barrel in safe direction.*

Subspace relay #
44588759621000458755

End Game

Groko,

Never send a blob to do a man's work. Next time you send goons to jump an unarmed girl you'd better send more than four. By the way, they seem to have dropped some unused ammunition. I'll be returning it to you personally. See you soon,

- Tordia

WORK FROM HOME

Make thousands of credits each month, working part time from your own home!

Eversafe Enterprises is looking for work-at-home assemblers of a new product line. Interested parties should contact Maraa or Sh'ssta at the number listed below.

Special non-disclosure agreement is mandatory. Competitors please do not apply.

Subspace Relay#
67675654342343545324

RiskCo

High-Risk
Paramilitary Operations

Now hiring:

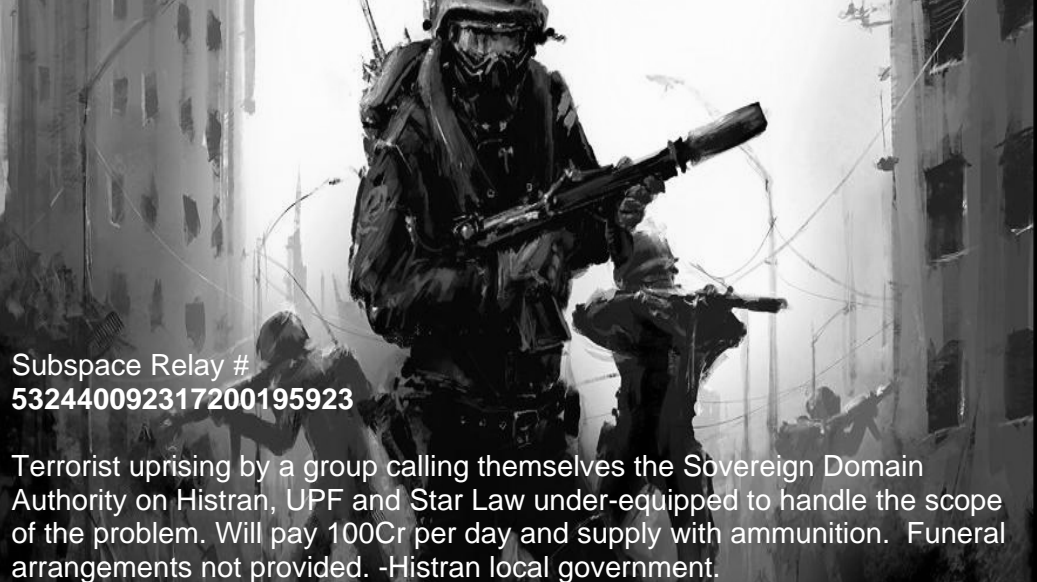
- deep cover operatives
- disguise experts
- drop-jumpers
- demolitions experts

Must be willing to relocate and change your identity. Imprisonment records OK

RiskCo – A subsidiary of MercCo

Subspace Relay#
22321001002001088293

Veteran Mercenaries Needed!



Subspace Relay #
532440092317200195923

Terrorist uprising by a group calling themselves the Sovereign Domain Authority on Histran, UPF and Star Law under-equipped to handle the scope of the problem. Will pay 100Cr per day and supply with ammunition. Funeral arrangements not provided. -Histran local government.