

DARKTEK™

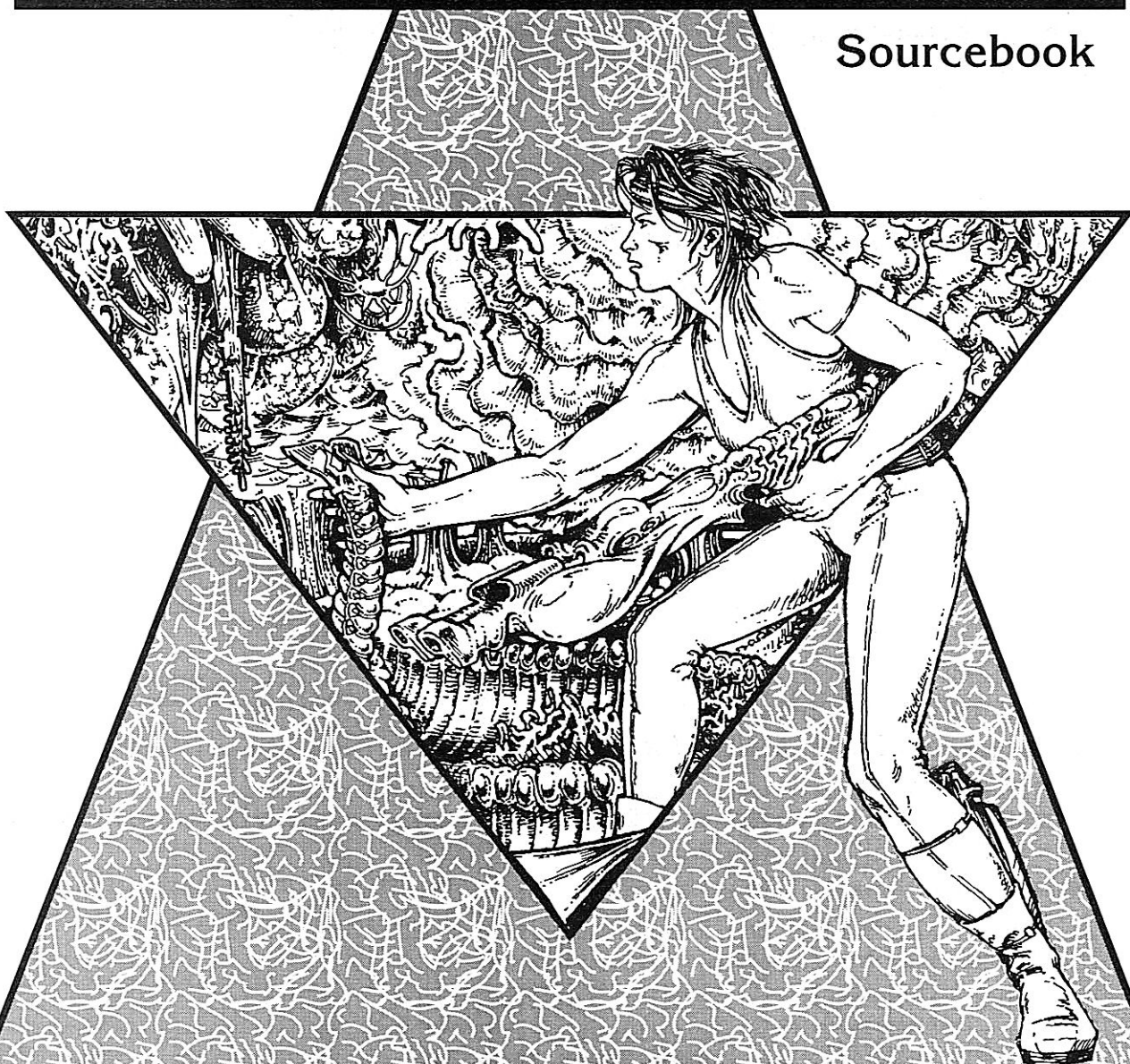
Charles E.
Gannon

Sourcebook



DARKTEKTM

Sourcebook



Charles E. Gannon



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DarkTek

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Dark Conspiracy is GDW's trademark for its roleplaying game of unearthly horror in a modern world.



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WHY DARKTEK?



With all the equipment lists that can be used with *Dark Conspiracy*—those within the game, as well as those found in *Twilight: 2000*, *Merc: 2000*, and their supplements—it might seem that the technology of the 21st century's first decades is pretty well defined. Absolutely. But "pretty well" is not good enough for the reality postulated in *Dark Conspiracy*. The very nature of the game and its environment dictates that the unknown is lurking behind every corner, waiting to be discovered. Consequently, this volume focuses on the unusual devices that *Dark Conspiracy* players could run across as they navigate that dark and dangerous world.

For the most part, everyday items in *Dark Conspiracy* are pretty much the same as their present-day counterparts and are not, therefore, covered herein. Prices and technical data for most common items can be found by consulting the consumer section of any current newspaper or magazine for their contemporary equivalents. Necessities will be approximately the same price as their current counterparts, but of slightly lower quality than is presently the case; luxuries will be two to four times as expensive as current and will be more rare, but will tend to be of higher quality as well, with more glitz

and chrome. Following these guidelines, referees should be able to provide their players with standard items to supplement those listed in the game itself.

But in the dark and dangerous world that underlies the declining biosphere and festering cities of *Dark Conspiracy*, there is much more to be encountered than just standard items. The Dark Ones are at work just beneath the surface, bringing with them strange new sciences and even stranger devices. Government agencies capture what they can of these technologies, striving to find weapons that will allow them to combat the Dark Minions effectively. In some secret locations, they are aided by the few extraterrestrials who have managed to remain free of the Dark Ones' control. Meanwhile, megacorporations are busy trying to find ways to appeal to the tastes and the imaginations of the wealthy. HiTech is the symbol of high status. Worn like a coat of arms, its appearance distinguishes the movers and the shakers from the increasingly disenfranchised and disempowered horde that are only now wondering where the American dream went.

In this volume, then, you will find items ranging from the gruesomely twisted biologic devices of the most

hideous Dark Minions, to the incredibly futuristic constructs of the untainted ETs, to the most advanced in human technology. But all belong to the world of Dark Conspiracy, a world that is, itself, ever more a product of DarkTek.

A NOTE CONCERNING ORGANIZATION

This book is divided into chapters primarily according to the function of the devices. Marginal icons identify the chapters by type (weapon, vehicle, etc.). Within each chapter, items are alphabetized for easiest reference. Each item also includes an icon to identify the "racial" source of the item (Dark Minion, ET, human, or joint ET/human). The table at right identifies the icons used.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF DARKTEK

Player characters are the investigators of the plots and perfidies of the Dark Minions and as such will be seeing people, places, and things that 99 percent of the everyday populace never suspects, much less experiences. Much of the truly DarkTek looks like black magic. Many of the government's ultra-high-tech toys look like props from a science-fiction film. Whether of human or Darkling origin, the items are new, different, compelling, and—quite possibly—fraught with danger. Which is, after all, what gives them their appeal. These devices are the jarring splashes of color which contrast with the otherwise graying, decaying world of Dark Conspiracy. The unusual bits of high—or Darkling—technology provided herein remind PCs that there are two worlds and that the real battle is not being fought in the one that everyone can see. These devices are primarily culled from that unseen battlefield which the PCs are moving into more deeply—and irrevocably—with each passing adventure.

Furthermore, while each of these devices can be used as an indirect method of informing PCs of what is *really* going on in the world, each device can (and should) initially come to the PCs' attention as a puzzlement. What was that strange, car-like vehicle that jumped straight up into the air? How did those Dark Minions know that their lair had been found, even when they were miles away at the time? By inspiring such questions, each of these items can be the beginning of a mystery in which finding the answer is the greatest reward. After all, such knowledge distinguishes the seasoned professionals from the

Chapter Icons	
Icon	Meaning
	Biologics
	Electronics
	Weapons
	Vehicles
	Robots
	Miscellaneous Equipment
	Consumer Goods
Racial Icons	
Icon	Meaning
	Dark Minion
	Humanoid ET
	Human
	ET/Human

neophytes. And investigators with that level of knowledge are more likely to receive the trust of government agents, empaths, and others who are working against the Dark Ones. Consequently, referees might want to consider each item as the inspiration for a new adventure. Pursuant to this, many of the item descriptions contain tidbits of information that can suggest such a plot: rumors about the item, who's making it, who wants to know about it, and the like.

The pages of this book, then, will serve referees well in keeping Dark Conspiracy adventures the mysterious, constantly surprising experiences they are intended to be.

THE NATURE OF DARKTEK



The Dark Ones perceive the universe “organically,” without empirical dissection of it. They are not analytical—they are empathic. Ideas and epistemological philosophies such as logical positivism are absolute anathema to them. The Dark Ones see things in wholes, as integrated cause-effect chains, a sort of black zen. They “feel” the laws of probability, but would recoil from the human discipline most dedicated to it: statistics. Consequently, the Dark Ones are not really machine-oriented creatures. Their minions (particularly the newly conquered ET races) are the technical artificers. The Dark Ones find such tasks to be impossibly boring.

While characters will no doubt want to get their hands on DarkTek (for curiosity’s sake, if noth-

ing else), referees are reminded that much, if not most, DarkTek is best used to enhance the mood of mystery and horror that surrounds the Dark Minions. The devices are often more hideous than their makers, being comprised of various animal parts and organs gleaned from a dozen different dimensions. If PCs do decide to hazard using DarkTek, the referee *must* apply the full user costs of the device (see the following rules for details on user costs). To do otherwise would be to make the DarkTek effective without drawback, and this would undercut its major purpose, which is to face the PCs with difficult choices. Some will want to use DarkTek because it is effective. Others will shun it because of its nature, particularly if it invades the user’s being.

Still others will struggle with indecision. The world of Dark Conspiracy is intentionally a world of dichotomies, paradox, difficult choices, and imperfect alternatives; that's the environment the Dark Ones are looking to create. And while their "technology" is certainly intended to help their own minions, it is also intended as bait for humans, as a temptation to corruption. To the Dark Ones, a single corrupted human is worth 100 dead ones, and the use of DarkTek—unless carefully controlled—is one of the primary means whereby people may begin to veer down the shadowy path that leads to Darkling enslavement.

DARKTEK PRICES AND AVAILABILITY

Many DarkTek items are simply not available to PCs for purchase. In this book, the price listing and availability code for such items are given as "N/A" (not applicable). The only way PCs can come into possession of such items is if they are bold (or foolish) enough to grab them away from their original owners.

DARKTEK USER COSTS

Much (if not most) DarkTek is designed for use by Dark Minions, since the Dark Ones themselves have little or no use for such primitive implements. Therefore, many of these implements have certain "costs" connected with their usage or possession. One of the more horrific of these costs is that users may find themselves more involved with the Dark Ones as a result of using such a device. The Dark Ones crave control over their lessers; therefore, they promote the use of devices that, while empowering their minions with enhanced abilities, also assure their continued obedience and deepening dependency.

Four basic types of cost are associated with the use of DarkTek: Feed, Control, Detection, and Recharge.

Feed

Some DarkTek equipment operates by draining the user's own life energy, causing an intense craving for meat to restore the energy that has been lost. The Feed rating of such an item indicates the kilograms of fresh, raw meat (dead less than two hours) that the user is compelled to consume for

each minute (or fraction thereof) the item is used. The total feeding requirement is found by multiplying the Feed rating by the number of combat turns (30-second periods) the DarkTek device was used. This result equals the number of kilograms of normal meat that must be consumed before the device is sated and the user is free of the feeding compulsion.

Dark Minions who use such devices tend not to be picky about where they acquire the meat; the first living creature that comes their way will do, provided that it is big enough to satisfy the craving. As a rule of thumb, the amount of usable meat to be found on a creature is equal to half its estimated body weight. Heart, liver, kidneys, and brain count as 10 times their actual weight for purposes of determining their Feed value, and the referee can estimate the total weight of these organs as 10 percent that of the other meat.

For instance, a 600-kilogram cow would yield 300 kilograms of meat, plus 30 kilograms of key organs, which—in terms of Feed value—would be the equivalent of 300 kilograms of regular meat.

Feeding (this is not anything nearly so pleasant and genteel as eating, much less dining) can take place at a rate of up to one kilogram per combat turn. A creature may only consume up to 10 percent of its own mass before having to cease feeding for at least one hour. Note that this feeding rate is quite extraordinary, not only in terms of aggregate food capacity (close to twice the norm), but also in terms of speed. This reflects the body's preternatural need for the food and the accelerated processing of the nutrients. To a bystander, such creatures will seem quite bestial, since they are devouring more food than they should be capable of holding within their stomachs at one time.

Note that once the user has ceased using the device, feeding should take place immediately. If no feeding has been undertaken within an hour, the feeding requirement doubles. At the end of each hour thereafter, if there has *still* been no feeding, the requirement doubles again. Furthermore, for every hour in which the total feeding requirement (in kilograms) exceeds the user's CON \times 3, the user will suffer physical damage, reflecting the fact that the user's body is suffering damage. One point of

damage is applied to the chest for each point by which the feeding requirement exceeds CON×3 (and the feeding requirement is reduced by a like amount).

All devices with a Feed cost graft themselves to the user and can only be removed surgically (see Removing DarkTek, below). Unfortunately, there is no way for a character to know in advance which DarkTek devices confer a Feed cost.

Control

A device with this user cost makes the user more susceptible to Dark Minion empathic attacks by acting as a negative modifier to the individual's Willpower. This modifier does not apply to *all* cases in which the user is under empathic attack, only those involving Dark Minions. This means, for instance, that the reduction does not apply when the user is confronting normal humans, even those who are servitors of the Dark Minions. By definition, however, a human who has learned *any* Darkling empathic talents is no longer a "normal human" and thereby causes the user to have the stated Willpower reduction.

It is a Difficult test of Empathy for a non-Darkling empath to discern the user's increased susceptibility. For Dark Minions, the test is Average difficulty.

Detection

A device with this user cost makes the user more empathically "visible." First, it makes users who are normally detectable only to Human Empathy detectable to Darkling Empathy, as well. Second, it enhances the distance at which the user may be empathically perceived. The device's Detection rating operates as a basic radius (in meters) at which the user is automatically perceivable. For each stage of power level beyond the first that an empathic searcher scores with either Human or Darkling Empathy, the device's radius is doubled. Searchers who have both skills may roll each and use the one which scores the higher power level.

For example, imagine that a morlock is empathically searching an area in which a human with a device that has a Detection rating of 100 is hiding, and that the morlock scores a Stage Two with Human Empathy and a Stage Three with Darkling

Empathy. The Stage Three is the higher of the two and allows the morlock to double the Detection rating twice, for a final result of 400 meters.

Recharge

Two types of Recharge costs are possible. One is a watt per minute charge (represented as "W/Min"). The other is a life force charge.

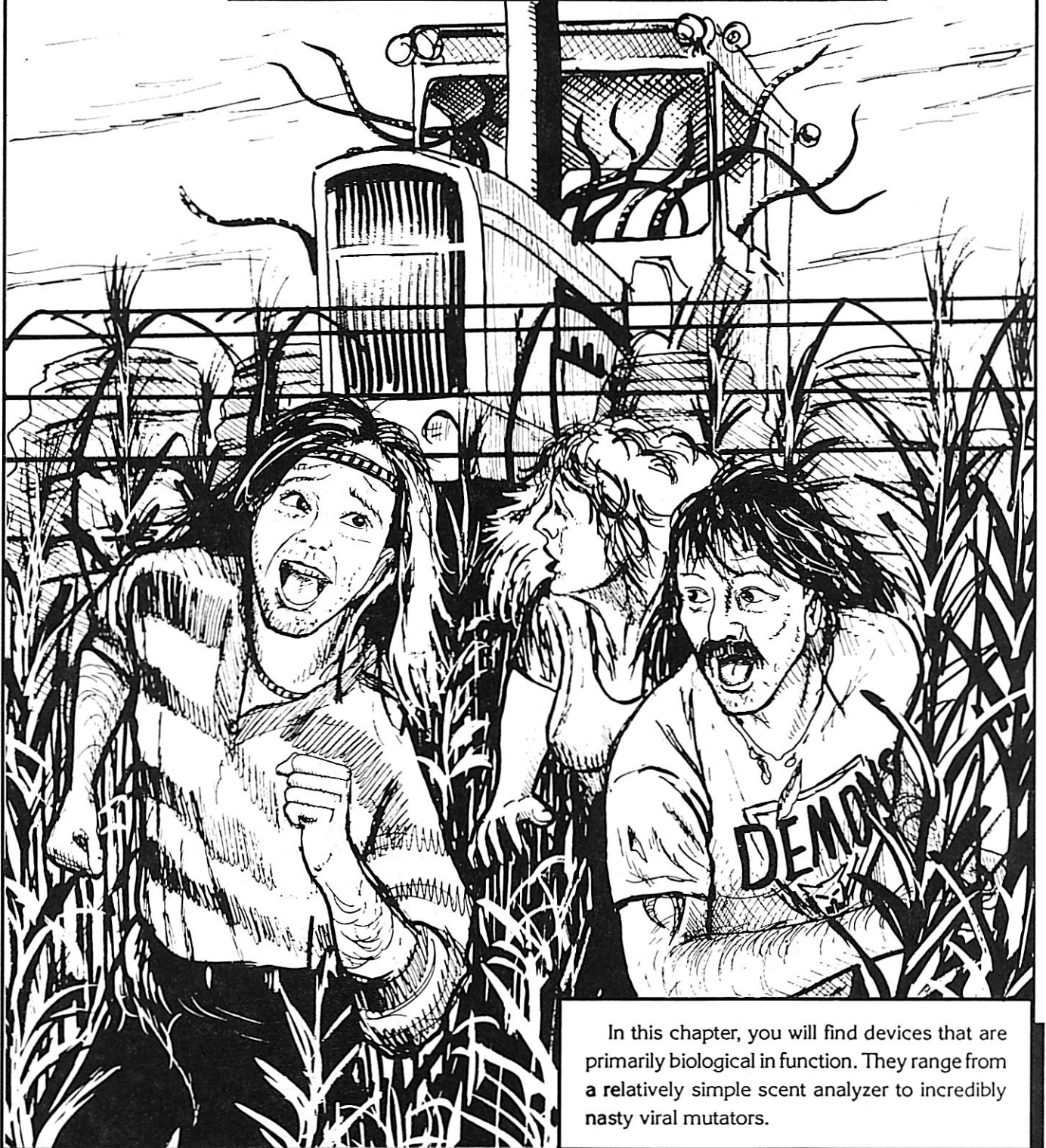
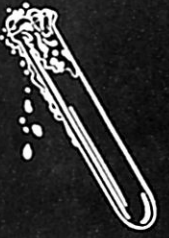
The W/Min charge indicates the number of watts per minute for each usage the device consumes. For instance, a user cost of 10,000 would indicate that the device could be recharged *for one use* by hooking it up to a one-watt source for 10,000 minutes, or a 10-kilowatt source for one minute. Such W/Min devices are generally easy to recharge because instead of having a fixed-size receptacle, most have a clear membrane which becomes penetrable in the presence of an electric current. The lead from any electrical source can be advanced through the membrane into a conductive biogelatin. Upon reaching full charge, the biomechanism releases a chemical into the gel that renders it nonconductive, thereby ending the recharge session. Typically, a small bioluminescent indicator shows the current level of charge.

The life force charge requirement is much less pleasant. The device draws energy directly from the user. The energy drain is represented as lost hit points, which are to be subtracted from randomly determined body locations. Recovery of these lost hit points is per the normal healing rules.

REMOVING DARKTEK

Some DarkTek devices can be as easily discarded as any normal human devices. Others (including all devices with a Feed cost) graft themselves to the user and can only be removed by surgery. Surgically removing such a device is equivalent to attempting to reduce a critical wound to serious (see page 106 of the basic rules). If the surgery is successful, the device has been removed and the patient is considered to have a serious wound to the appropriate body location—the result of the surgery itself. If the surgery fails, the device is still attached *and* the patient suffers a serious wound from the surgery. No further surgery may be attempted until this serious wound has healed completely.

BIOLOGIC DEVICES



In this chapter, you will find devices that are primarily biological in function. They range from a relatively simple scent analyzer to incredibly nasty viral mutators.



Antidoter

ANTIDOTER

Given a host organisms' tissue and blood, as well as a little analysis time, this biomechanism can produce antidotes to virtually any toxins. The antidoter is an insectoid creature that is approximately the size and color of a large cockroach. It is intended to be affixed to its user and worn continually as an automatic defense against poisons. The device attaches to its host with a ring of small barbs and invasive tendrils (the latter are used to collect samples and inject antidotes).

Within its chitinous shell, the antidoter contains a number of small organisms and glands from a variety of creatures, all integrated into a tiny chemical laboratory that is capable of both determining when a toxin has entered the host organism and determining an antidote. The antidoter then synthesizes that antidote and releases it into the host's bloodstream until the toxin is fully counteracted.

The time required to devise an antidote is based on the number of poison dice inflicted by the toxin: One combat phase is required per poison die. As soon as the antidote is deter-

mined, the antidoter begins to secrete it, and further poison damage to the host is diminished by one die each phase until the poison has been completely neutralized.

For example, suppose that a character had been stung three times in one phase by a medusa, which has a poison rating of 1. The antidoter would require one phase to devise an antidote (because of the poison rating of 1). During the second phase, the poison would begin to take effect, normally doing 3D6 damage because of the three hits. But the antidoter will have reduced this damage to 2D6 (it has had one phase to secrete the antidote). On the next phase, the character will suffer only 1D6 damage from the poison. After that, the level of antidote in the character's blood stream will completely negate any further damage. If the character continues to be stung by the medusa in the same combat phase, each additional dice of damage will require a phase to be neutralized, but the antidoter will not need a phase in which to identify the poison. On the other hand, if the character is stung in a later phase, the antidoter will have to start over again, first identifying the poison and then neutralizing it.

Referees may decide that some poisons are so rare as to be more difficult to analyze, in which case the antidoter may require more than one phase to identify the toxin and produce an antidote before any poison dice can be neutralized.

User Cost: Feed: 2

Wt: 0.01 kg

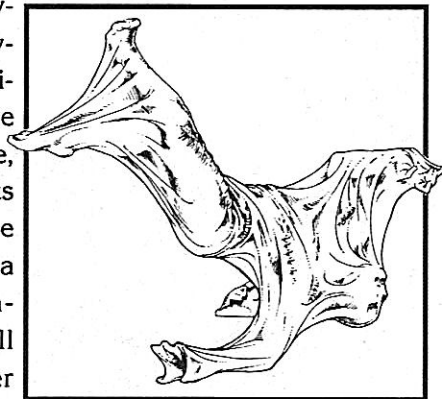
Price: \$250,000 (—/R)



Body Bag

BODY BAG

This euphemism for the Darkling answer to the all-environment suit is indeed apt: When a user first slides into this oozing sheath, it resembles nothing more than a living bag. However, immediately after the user gets inside, the bag starts providing the occupant with a safe environment. Small probes enter



the occupant's body in order to determine atmospheric, barometric, and thermal needs. The bag immediately begins to alter itself to meet those needs, hardening its exterior for protection, and creating a biochemical environment that generates the occupant's needs via a reprocessing of its wastes (which is handled by a self-emplacing catheter system that causes no small amount of alarm in many first-time wearers).

The bag can withstand up to 20 atmospheres of pressure, as well as total vacuum. It can protect its user from outside temperatures ranging from -100°C to $+100^{\circ}\text{C}$, with a \pm range of 50°C at double the listed user cost.

When characters first encounter a Darkling body bag, they will have no way of knowing what it does by simply looking at it. Its appearance resembles nothing so much as a recently emptied stomach about the size of a sleeping roll.

User Cost: Recharge, Life Force: 2 (per day)

Wt: 20 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)

CLONER

The cloner is a very rare device which is an extension and extrapolation of the rejuvenator (see page 17). The cloner creates beings that are genetically identical to whatever biosample is placed inside it. Cloners are very complex, very easily damaged, and extremely dangerous to the future of humanity since the creatures produced

by them have an effective Willpower rating of 0 when attempting to resist the empathic influence of Dark Minions. Consequently, cloners represent the ultimate achievement in Dark Minion infiltration strategy.

Like the rejuvenator, the cloner looks like a weird cross between a peapod and a casket. It contains a number of mechanical interfaces, including a power connection (since it runs on electricity).

Clones can be created at any biological age, from infant to elderly. They have no memories or knowledge that belonged to the parent organism, but some Darkling computers can be programmed to empathically store the thoughts and memories of an individual, making it possible for these to be imprinted upon a clone. It is therefore possible for individuals to make a younger version of themselves and then to have their consciousness replaced into the new body. This gives Dark Minions the ability to offer select humans effective immortality.

Cloners also allow Dark Minions to create physical duplicates of any human from whom they can get a living tissue sample, making agents that, while not having the knowledge of the original person, are physically indistinguishable from them. These duplicates will pass any security test that does not require informational questioning.



Rumors of these devices have begun to filter through to the very highest levels of governments and megacorporations, creating something of a clone-panic amongst the highest-placed officials. A few of the boldest have spoken of trying to seize a cloner and modify it so as to eliminate or at least reduce the terrible Control cost of the device.

User Cost: Control: 10

Wt: 900 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)



Empathic Beacon

EMPATHIC BEACON

An empathic beacon (sometimes called a *dog whistle*) summons Dark Ones and Minions if activated. Activation can be conditionally determined, or the device can be set to operate constantly (creating a permanent spot of black upon the empathic brightness of the normal universe). The beacon is a simple device, often used as a “bug” planted upon creatures to be tracked, or as an alarm or an emergency signal. Examples of conditional activation include situations when a particular door is opened, someone picks the beacon up, an occupant of a room leaves or is killed, and the like.

The beacon is a small, immobile creature with a shiny black carapace. It is smaller than a dime and has no



Erector



visible appendages. The beacon is quite stupid and must be given its instructions with Thought Projection (although it also responds to more direct stimuli, such as when it is struck).

While it might seem that there are no immediately wonderful PC uses for such a device, a little thought might provide some interesting possibilities. For instance, if one could be captured and given new instructions (an Easy test of Darkling Empathy and Thought Projection), it could be secreted on an individual suspected of being an agent of the Dark Minions. If the bug's instructions were to activate when it next sensed the use of Darkling Empathy in its vicinity, the device could lead PCs to the agent's master.

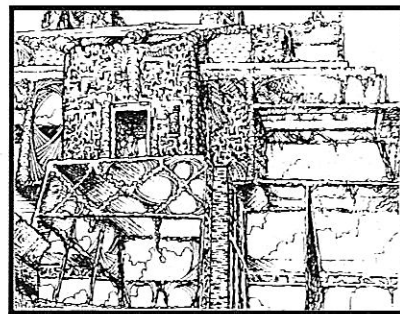
User Cost: Detection: 100 (at all times)/10,000 (when activated)

Wt: 0.01 kg

Price: \$210,000 (—/R)

ERECTOR

The erector is a growing, fibroid lattice that creates quick, structural frames for Darkling buildings (the walls of which can then be “fleshed out” with a viner—see page 24).



The device exemplifies the Dark Minions' disdain for productive work; they are raiders and hunters by nature, not builders or creators. Therefore, when they cannot have human slaves do such work for them, they use an erector.

An erector must be given its pattern instructions via Darkling Empathy and Thought Projection. It is a very primitive life form that patterns easily. Once given instructions, it needs only to be fed in order for it to start growing into the specified pattern. Feeding is a bit gruesome, however. The erector creates a fibroid web around its victims in 60 seconds, during which time a Difficult test of Strength will allow a victim to free itself or be freed by someone else. After securing its victims, it invades their bodies with tendrils and slowly begins to convert their flesh into nutrients for its own growth, leaving only withered husks over skeletons. Bodies are reduced at the rate

of 1 point of Strength per hour until Strength reaches 0, followed by 1 point of Constitution per hour until that attribute reaches 0 as well, at which point death occurs. (If a character is somehow rescued before dying, surgery can remove the invading tendrils—see the Removing DarkTek rules, page 8—and lost Strength and Constitution points can be restored by hospitalization and intensive physical therapy at a rate of 1 point each per month.)

The amount of space that an erector can grow to enclose is dependent upon the amount of body mass it consumes. For every point of attribute absorbed, the erector can construct enough framework for one cubic meter of internal building space. So 70 kilograms of living flesh would enable the erector to create a fibroid matrix that would be a sufficient framework for a building with an internal volume of 70 cubic meters.

Wt: 3.2 kg (beginning mass)

Price: N/A (—/—)

ESPERLINK

The Esperlink does just what the name indicates: It links minds via empathic power, allowing the joined parties to share visual and aural experiences, along with thought exchange. Transmission of tactile and olfactory perceptions is also possible, but less precise.

The Esperlink is another of the Dark Minions' patchwork biomachines. This one provides the user with a slightly altered form of Thought Projection at a practical

skill level of 20. This particular variety of Thought Projection allows an absolute sharing of sensory information and thoughts, but does not enable the user to plant suggestions or imperatives in the linked being's mind. Nor can the user send (or receive) falsified data; the sensory link is absolute. Note that neither the user nor the contacted creature will be directly affected by the sensory experiences of the other. The user might experience tremendous, incapacitating pain, but the contacted creature would not suffer also; it would merely be aware of the pain, its intensity, nature, etc.

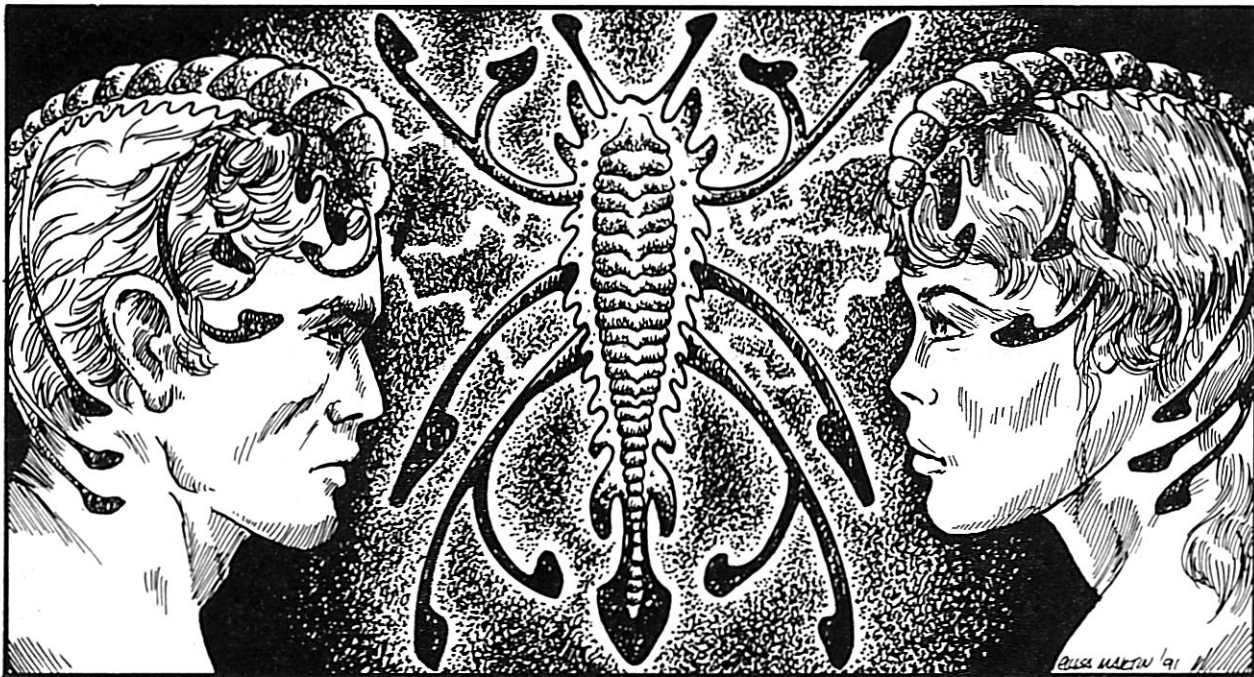
The Esperlink connects directly, physically, to the user, and must do so at a point that is fairly close to the user's brain (within 10 centimeters). If it is not attached directly over the brain itself, it will extend a tendril (up to 12 centimeters in length) to lay along that region. Note that by using these tendrils, the Esperlink can also be interfaced with a spectral eye (see page 21), thereby making that individual the ultimate living recon drone.

In the event that a human begins using an Esperlink, there is a strong possibility that the use will be detected. If the use is detected, it requires an Average test of Human or Darkling Empathy for a Minion to "eavesdrop" on the "conversation," or a Difficult test of Thought Projection for the Minion to "jam" the transmission.

User Cost: Detection: 3000, Control: 2, Feed: 0.5

Wt: 0.05 kg

Price: \$450,000 (—/R)





Graftables



Facedancer

FACEDANCER

The facedancer is a bioconstruct that overlays a user's face and melds with the tissue there, creating the equivalent of a living mask. This mask can mimic the features of other individuals with considerable ease and startling accuracy.

The facedancer appears as a fleshy, veined pancake, somewhat sticky to the touch. A user places it on his or her face, then stimulates it with a mild electric charge in order to activate the device. While the charge is applied, the facedancer will attempt to mimic the features of the nearest face in view. The time required for the device to reconfigure itself varies with the amount of visual data it has to work with, as indicated below:

<i>Object to Mimic</i>	<i>Minutes Required</i>
1 photo	30
2 photos (different views)	25
3 photos (different views)	20
"Flat" hologram (less than 360°)	15
Multiple/rotational views	10
Rotational hologram	5

The facedancer is able to perfectly mimic virtually any face belonging to the same species as the user, including alterations of cheekbones, nose, lips, etc. However, alien races with radically different cranial or facial structures are likely to diminish the effectiveness of the device.

Applying the facedancer is a spooky process, since it can be felt moving about on the user's face, exuding bonding gelatins, and so on (sort of like wearing an octopus).

User Cost: Recharge, Life Force: 1 for every 30 minutes the device is worn

Wt: 0.3 kg

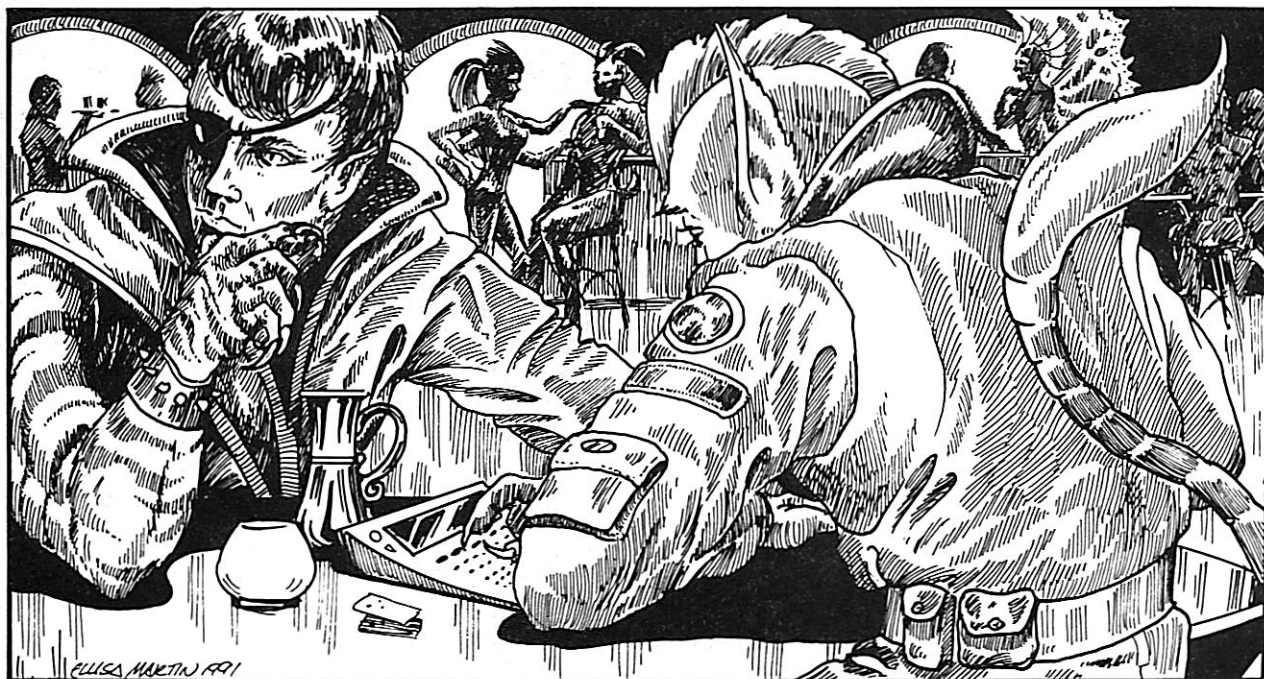
Price: \$350,000 (—/R)

GRAFTABLES

Graftables are body parts that adapt to the biology/physiology of the recipient organism, replacing lost body parts and/or giving the user improved capabilities, such as enhanced strength, wide-spectrum vision, etc. However, they also tend to increase the recipient's susceptibility to Dark Minion control and detection.

Graftables are actually symbiotic organisms that revise their shape and function to replace a part lost by a host organism. This includes limbs, viscera, and sensory organs, but not the brain. But they can also be designed to allow for "customized" replacements: arms that are stronger or more dextrous than the user's original, hands that have a "feel" for surgery or weapons, etc. They can also be encoded with other fixed values, such as gender, race, and—on odd occasion—species. For example, an otherwise normal human being could be invested with the arm of a tiger. With inhuman graftables such as these, it is completely possible to exceed human norms for Strength, Agility, damage resistance, and the like. (On the other hand, a human with the arm of a tiger would still not have all the Strength, Agility, and mass of a tiger, nor would that character do the damage of a tiger in unarmed combat.)

As should be obvious, the tremendous diversity that is possible with such items precludes any easy listing of attributes specific to each. Instead, referees should consider the statistics for the creature whose extremity the graftable is emulating and modify those statistics as seems reason-



able. In the example above, let us assume that the human has a normal Strength of 6 and a Melee Combat (Unarmed) skill of 7. For the purposes of attacks from the tiger arm, the referee might average the character's Strength and Melee Combat (Unarmed) skill with a tiger's Strength and Skill ratings: 18 and 8. Strengths 6 and 18 average to 12; Skills 7 and 8 average to 7. Unarmed Combat Damage rating for the limb would be 8 (Skill 7 times Strength 12, the result divided by 10—see the basic rules page 25). The referee might decide to toss in a 1D6 roll for the claws, as well. Note that the arm would have increased hit points due to its higher Strength and Constitution. We have figured its effective Strength as 12. If the user has a normal Constitution of 5 and we average that with a tiger's Constitution of 18, we come up with a Constitution of 11 for the limb. That gives the limb a total of 46 hit points, compared to a 22 for the completely human limbs.

Of course, there would be other side effects of having such a limb. For one thing, any skills that require two hands to complete would be more difficult, due to the fact that the tiger paw has no thumb. On the other hand (literally), the user might have an insectoid graftable that would be considered to have a natural armor value of 1, but that still had opposable digits to allow for fine

manipulation.

Prices for graftables vary according to the exact effects of the devices. As a general rule, the referee should consider a graftable to cost the base price below, multiplied by the number of points by which the device exceeds the user's norms in Strength, Constitution, Agility, and/or armor value.

User Cost: Control: 1, Detection: 200 (multiply each by the number of graftables)

Wt: Varies

Price: \$20,000 base (—/V)

INHABITOR

The inhibitor is another modification of the brain/computer technology of the Dark Ones. This small pseudo-organism has a protosentience, along with the ability to insinuate itself into electronic and mechanical systems by a combination of biological and mechanical processes. Once insinuated (like a parasite) it can operate the machine. In effect, the inhibitor becomes the machine.

Inhabitants are programmed either when they are constructed or, more frequently, when they are activated for purposes of insinuation. In general, the nature of the programming/instructions will be highly dependent upon what kind of device they take over. Note that the device need not be



electronic to come under the control of an inhabit; tendrils insinuate into mechanisms without difficulty, allowing the pseudocreature full physical control over any device. The larger and more complex the device invaded, the more time it takes to gain full control. In general, each kilogram of device requires 10 minutes to gain control of. This is modified by the following cumulative factors:

Device	Time Required Multiplier
Electronic	2
Computer-assisted	5
Computer	10
Aerospace	10
Active when invaded	2

Even if a device has no on-board sensors, the inhabit always has visual and aural capacities roughly equivalent to those of an average human being. Common missions for inhabitants include guard duty, assassinations, or surveillance/tailing. Although in many ways an inhabit is like

an animator, there are two important distinctions. For one thing, inhabitants are not empathic: They have no telekinetic powers

and cannot make something move that has no power plant or means of moving. They could not, for instance, make a knife attack, but *could* keep cocking and firing a loaded gun (although once the bullets were used, they would have no way of reloading). Second, inhabitants are intelligent, and last much longer than and can coordinate many more activities/mechanical options than an animator can.

Prior to insinuation, the inhabit appears as a cluster of tendrils and filaments all growing out of a biomechanical baseplate.

Wt: 0.5 kg

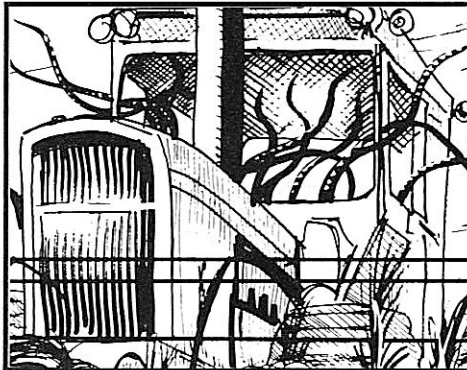
Price: N/A (—/—)



OBEDIENCE BUG

This small insect is used by the insectoid ETs to link individuals into their hive mind and thereby control their actions. The obedience bug is insinuated into the host/slave's ear. From there it makes its way to the cerebral cortex, where it can combat the host's Willpower, send and receive information to its masters, and—if necessary—inflict blinding pain upon the host as punishment for disobedience.

The bug has an Empathy rating of 20 and a communication-only version of Thought Projection. Any insectoid ETs who are aware (via Darkling Empathy) of the presence of the bug can communicate with it and give it instructions, which are then passed along to the host. If the host manages to resist the commands (see the user cost, below), the bug will attempt to use pain as a persuader. For each phase that the bug does so, the subject must make a Difficult test of Willpower to keep from complying, and a Difficult test of Constitution to keep from passing out as a result of the pain. Since the bug can simultaneously attempt to use empathic control and pain, it is very likely that obedience or unconsciousness will occur within the first phase. It has



limited use to PCs, other than as a means of threat (possibly to the insectoid ETs' Dark Minion rivals).

User (Slave) Cost: Control: 6, Detection: 500

Wt: Negligible

Price: N/A (—/—)

REJUVENATOR

The rejuvenator is a biotechnological healing/rebuilding unit that looks like a weird cross between a peapod and a casket (like a cloner, but shorter and stubbier). The device has a drawback, however: In rebuilding a damaged individual, it also increases the character's susceptibility to Darkling control.

The rejuvenator itself requires the same kind of power that people do: food. Its needs are fairly modest, considering the healing miracles it is capable of. This is largely due to the fact that it mostly serves to accelerate the body's own healing process; special rebuilding help is provided only where necessary.

The effects of a rejuvenator are as follows:

- It automatically stabilizes critical wounds;
- It reduces by 50 percent the amount of time needed for a wound to heal under medical care (i.e., scratch and slight wounds take 12 hours, serious wounds take one day, and critical wounds take two

and a half days);

- It can stabilize a critical wound for 20 minutes after it has been inflicted, rather than the normal 10;
- If a body part has been completely destroyed (referee determination), the rejuvenator can cause a replacement to grow in its place.

The rejuvenator requires 800 calories per hour of operation (roughly the equivalent of a full meal for an average human male). If it runs out of energy, it will offer the users (both external and internal) the option to either end the remaking session and release the subject, or to go into a "hold" mode that will maintain the wounded individual in stasis for up to one week, with a significantly reduced metabolism. If the rejuvenator is fed 2400 calories a day, this stasis can be maintained indefinitely.

For each 12-hour period that a patient spends in a rebuilder, that character suffers a user cost of Control: 1. Such rebuilding penalties are cumulative in the event that a character uses a rebuilder several times. There is no limit to how high the final total may run (the more of you that has been rejuvenated by DarkTek, the more of you they "own").

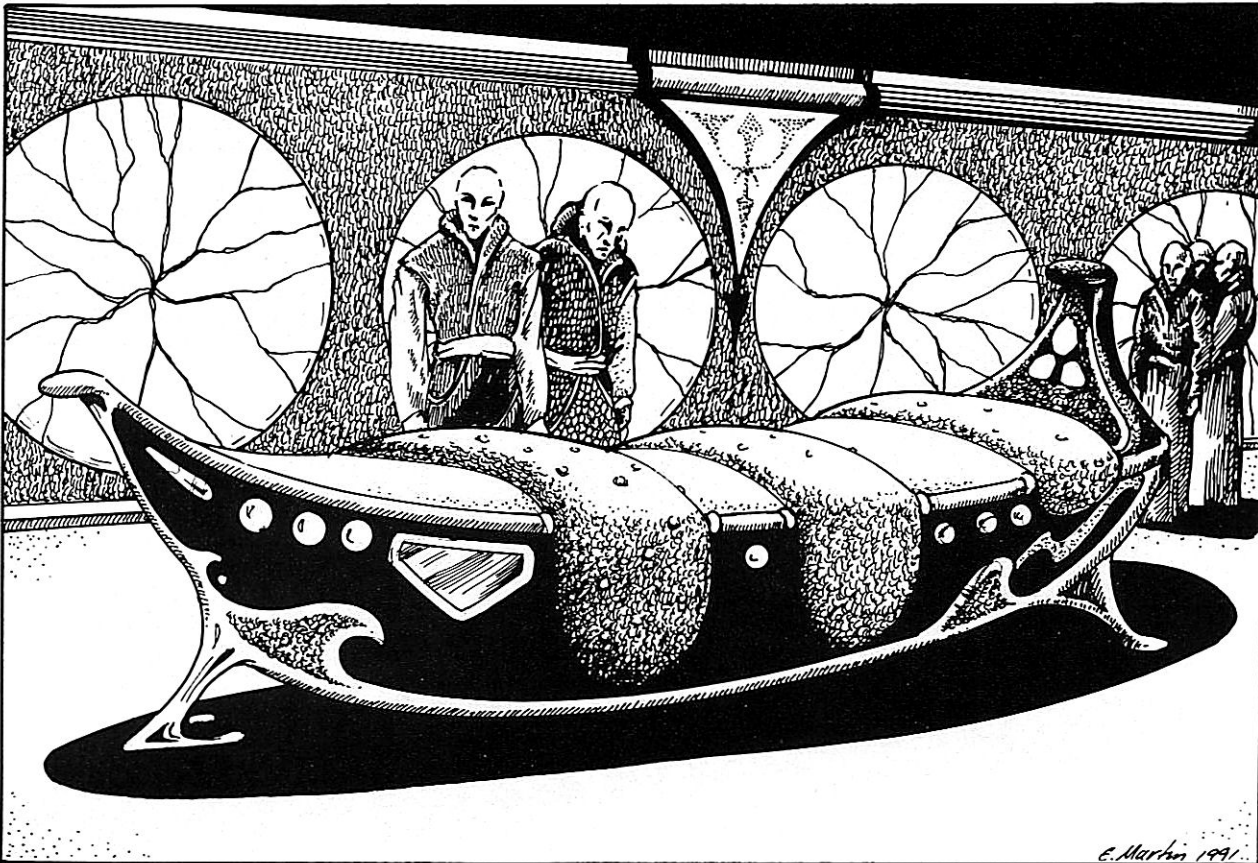
User Cost: Control: 1 per 12 hours of treatment

Wt: 320 kg

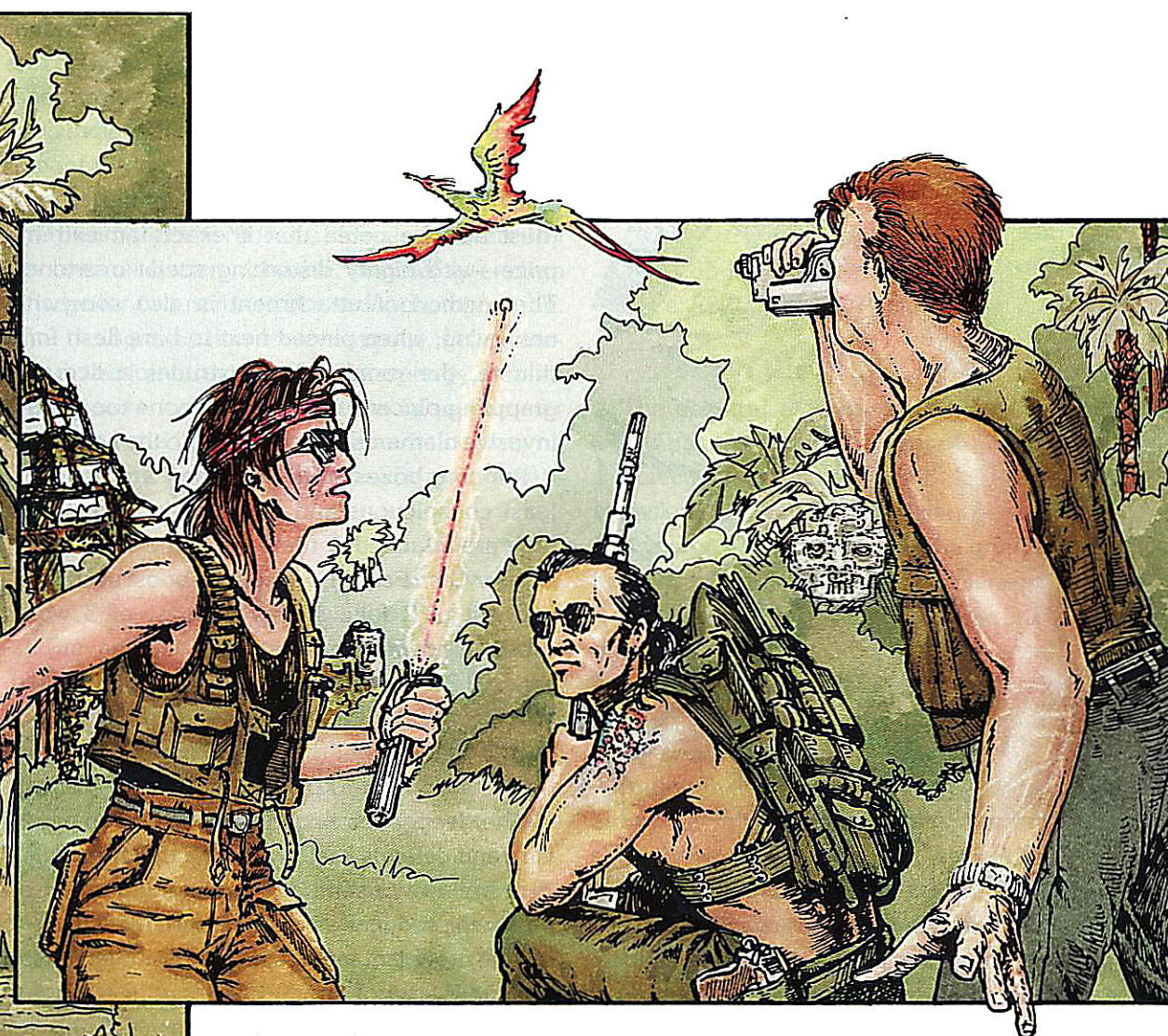
Price: N/A (—/—)




Rejuvenator



E. Martin 1991



A trio of investigators discusses exactly how close to approach a secret jungle complex under construction. None of them have ever encountered an erector or viner before, and the twitching remains of humans being consumed to feed these biological builders have convinced the woman with the microfilament machete that a closer view would be unwise. Her companion carrying the survival kit on his back listens impassively, while the third member of the party films the site with a microcam.



Sleeper



Running Box



RUNNING BOX

This small, block-like biomechanism can dramatically boost the physical attributes of the wearer/host organism. The running box (so named because of the marathon sprints that users can accomplish when fleeing from something) is actually a symbiotic organism that attaches to its host, determines what chemicals allow that host to boost its own (predominantly) physical capabilities, then sets about producing these chemicals. Consequently, the wearer/host of the running box is able to voluntarily summon a surge of adrenaline and other chemicals, some of which are predominantly mental-affective neurohumors.

Each time a user decides to draw on this "boost," the controlling player must first state how many "points" of boost he wants to draw, up to a maximum of five. Any physical attribute, and all skills the character has that are based upon that physical attribute, are then increased by the "boosted" number for a period of one minute (two full combat turns). If a nonphysical attribute is chosen instead, the attribute and its associated

skills are only increased by one-half this amount (rounding fractions down). Note that only one boost may be in effect at a time; no new boost may be initiated until the effects of the previous one are exhausted.

While the device may sound very desirable, it must also be noted that it exacts an extreme price—with highly disturbing social overtones. The method of attachment is also somewhat unnerving; when placed next to bare flesh for a minute, the running box extrudes a score of grappling pincers, and pushes (none too gently) invasive filaments and tubules into the host body.

Running boxes work best (and are generally least conspicuous and most easily worn) when they are attached at the base of the spine.

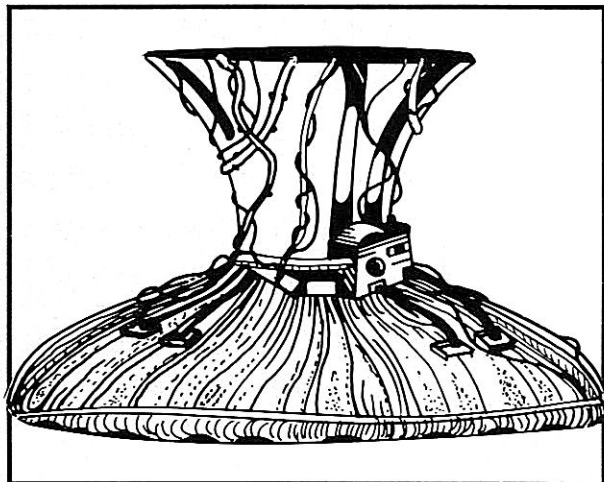
User Cost: Feed: 1 per point of boost used (e.g., a boost of 2 followed by a boost of 3 would produce a total Feed cost of 5)

Wt: 0.375 kg

Price: \$950,000 (—/R)

SLEEPER

The sleeper ties a sound amplifier to an organism, and defends itself by finding the most quiescent brainwave state of a threatening organism and then produces an aural pattern most likely to lull the organism into a state of lassitude. It has a 25-meter area of effect. Resisting its effects requires an Average test of Willpower. If this roll results in an outstanding success, the character is completely unaffected. A normal success means the character suffers a -1 to Initiative, and all tasks become one level difficulty greater than normal. A catastrophic failure results in the char-



acter being unable to undertake any activities successfully—but don't tell this to the players! Their characters should be allowed to try things, only to find themselves forgetting what it was they meant to do, nodding off as they try to reload a gun, etc.

The amplifier portion of a sleeper is powered by an internal battery capable of holding enough charge for two minutes of continuous operation. The biologic portion is carnivorous. In appearance, the joint device is a pale, spongy disk 75 centimeters in diameter, with a 50-centimeter metallic cone flaring upward from its center.

User Cost: Recharge, W/Min: 25 (per phase)

Wt: 3.2 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)

SNIFFER

The sniffer is one of the simpler DarkTek biomechanisms. It can tell if someone is frightened, amorous, fearful, or asleep simply by the scent mixture exuded by the individual. The organism which forms the primary basis of the sniffer is also one of the major components of the tracker (see page 81).

The sniffer has an effective short range of 20 meters. Within that range, an Easy test versus the device's olfactory detection skill rating of 4 will reveal the target's state. For each 10 meters beyond that range, the test's difficulty increases

one level. Referees should also consider variables affecting scent transmission when determining range. These variables include difficulties of discerning a single being's olfactory traces in a crowded environment, upwind/downwind position, etc.

User Cost: Recharge, W/Min: 10

Wt: 1.65 kg

Price: \$225,000 (—/R)

SPECTRAL EYE

The spectral eye is a biomechanical sensor which has full-range sensitivity to the entirety of the electromagnetic spectrum. It analyzes these emissions by intensity, frequency, wavelength, and vector. The spectral eye is a ghastly looking item, comprised of a melange of sensory organs. It can be hand-held or clipped (more like "stuck") on the user's shoulder or wrist. However, it must be able to make direct flesh-to-flesh contact with the user since it transmits its findings via a very simple form of Thought Projection.

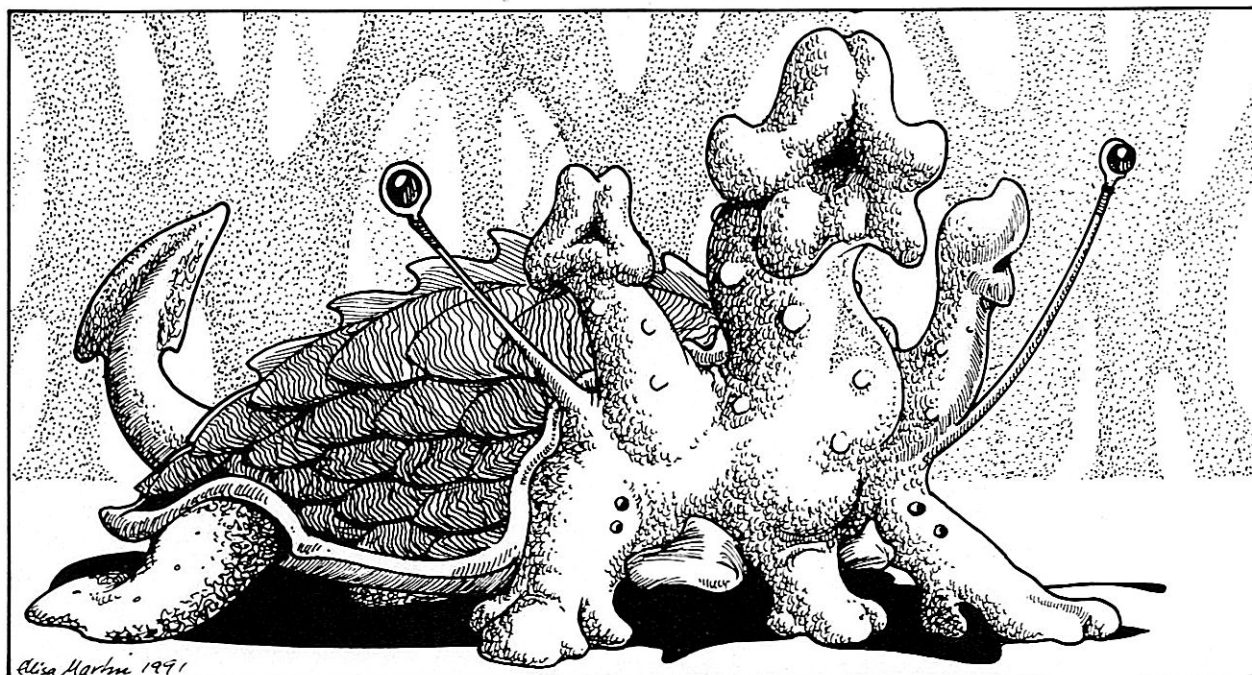
Although the eye can report the smallest trace emissions, this is generally not a useful setting, since the world is pervaded by emissions of every frequency and wavelength, and the resulting image is a confusing welter of information. Instead, users can select certain wavelengths (radio, visual light, gamma ray, etc) or can opt to see strong signatures only. The latter setting will



Spectral Eye



Sniffer



Olisa Martin 1991



A pair of ETs coolly watch as their warbot and inhabitant-controlled machineguns quell an inmate riot at an experimental facility. The ETs can afford to be cool, of course: Their floater holds them safe above the carnage, and both are armed with stun guns.



produce a visual representation of the surrounding area (differentiated by color), as well as any other emissions that are "strong" (i.e., significantly above the anticipated background level of emissions at that wavelength).



The eye superimposes its results directly over the user's own visual perceptions—sort of a heads-up display within the brain. While

the range of the eye is actually mostly dependent upon the strength of the emissions, referees can use the following rule of thumb: The higher the frequency of the emission, the closer the eye must be to detect it. Therefore (for instance), gamma rays could be detected at 100 meters, visible light at one kilometer, and radio waves at 10 kilometers. Referees must, of course, temper this rule of thumb with considerations of the strength of the source (walkie-talkies will still pale in comparison to a melt-down in progress).

User Cost: Feed: 3

Wt: 0.8 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)



VINER

The viner is the natural complement to the erector (see page 12). In its original form, it looks like a smallish smear of melted, black-brown plastic, but as it grows, it leaves behind resinous strands that



can be used to form solid surfaces (walls, floors, roofs) of considerable durability

and resilience. It is therefore used along with erectors to create Dark Minion "buildings." The viner tends to stretch itself across open spaces and eventually close them off. If it follows a framework in an undesired fashion, users need only crack away the errant growth once or twice, and the viner learns to avoid that area. The viner is also used to seal passages, mend breaches, encyst prisoners, etc. Its secretions are the most frequently encountered form of "solder" used by the Dark Minions in the construction of their various items.

The viner's feeding habits are identical to those of the erector. For every point of Strength or Constitution consumed, a viner is able to construct one square meter of "sheeting." This material has an armor value of 1.

Wt: 2.7 kg (beginning)

Price: N/A (—/—)

VIROPHAGE

Virophage is a new biogeneered drug (influenced by humanoid ET science) that is a no-fail antidote to all empathic viruses (see next entry) and a general immunobooster of extraordinary power.



Virophage is the first example of a new generation of "smart drugs" that vary in operation, depending upon genetic and chemical information they receive once injected into a body.

Virophage is, as the name suggests, related to viruses. However, whereas other viruses look to exploit the body, Virophage is a beneficial symbiot that functions much like a versatile defensive pharmaceutical laboratory within the bloodstream. If the host is attacked by viruses, Virophage analyzes the attackers, designs a "tailor-made" phage with which to defeat them, and then stimulates the host's own immune system to produce and release those phages into the bloodstream. In the event of radiation poisoning, Virophage supercharges the leukocytic factors of the immune system, and promotes accelerated healing of crucial organs and tissues. Consequently, Virophage can ensure almost 100-percent survival rates in individuals who have been exposed to doses of up to 250 rem of radiation.

Virophage is produced only in secure laboratories and is available only to—or from—authorized government agents. A single treatment (which is typically all that is required) is about 15-18 ccs, depending upon the patient's condition and weight.

Wt: 20-cc vials

Price: \$50,000 per vial (—/R)

VIRUS, EMPATHIC

An empathic virus is actually a community organism which has an empathic link with an individual Dark One or Dark Minion. The nature of that link is such that it increases the range at which the Dark One or Dark Minion can exert an empathic influence over an infected individual.

But this heading actually covers a whole family of viruses, all of which are activated upon empathic command. The viruses are differentiated not only in terms of their pathogenic structure (although all are clearly related), but also in their effects upon host organisms. Some of these viruses simply make the host ill, whereas others kill, incapacitate, subjugate, or even mutate the organism.

Empathic viruses are not contagious: They must be purposely introduced into the host body in considerable quantity and over a very short period of time; otherwise, the host's leukocytic defenses are able to get rid of the invading pathogens. Therefore, the most common

method of insinuating the empathic virus into the host is by injection, preferably intravenous, although intramuscular will also work.

Once invested with the required dose (see individual stats on the following pages), the host organism is sure to become infected. However, the virus will lay dormant until its specific master activates it empathically (with Thought Projection). Blood tests will not detect the virus since it has a very small presence in the bloodstream (less than one part per billion). Instead, most of the virus encysts itself in the cell walls of muscle tissue. Upon activation, it cracks out of the cysts and invades the bloodstream and lymphatic system. Note that the viral cysts are both submicroscopic and well dispersed, and are therefore *extremely* unlikely to be discovered by a random biopsy.

There are a few ways to cure infected hosts. The easiest method is a complete blood transfusion before the infection time has expired (i.e., change the blood of the host before the virus has completely taken root). If this is achieved, then the body's own defenses can take care of the rest. The other method is to find a dose of Virophage serum (see above), which will eliminate any empathic virus almost immediately. Once the host is injected with Virophage serum, the master of the empathic virus can no longer activate it.

Note that no host can withstand infection by two empathic viruses at the same time. The entry of a second strain will cause the two to "go to war" for possession of the host, thereby killing the hapless creature. The manner of death resembles a sudden, violent case of anaphylactic shock. Once a strain has been fully activated, the host is no longer susceptible to further empathic virus infections (until and unless he is cured).

Each virus is rated for infection time, activation time, and host (user) cost, in addition to normal ratings. Infection time measures the time it takes for the virus to fully invest itself into the host organism and be ready for activation. Activation time indicates how long it takes for the virus to achieve its full effect, after it has been activated. Host cost is identical to user cost, although the Detection rating applies *only* to the Dark One or Dark Minion which created this virus and has imprinted its mastership upon the pathogen. Five frequently encountered strains are presented on the following pages.





Empathic Viral Assassin

This is one of the simpler strains, with a very straightforward action. From the moment it is activated, the individual is effectively incapacitated. When the virus bursts through its encystation, it immediately begins tricking the white blood cells and other phagocytes into believing that every other cell in the body—particularly neurons—are hostile. The manner of death resembles an extended demise via cyanide—not at all pretty.

Infection Time: 1 day

Activation Time: 30 seconds

Host Cost: Detection: 100

Wt: 0.03 (30ccs)

Price: \$125,000 (—/R)

Empathic Viral Incapacitator

An empathic viral incapacitator is basically just a particularly vicious case of Montezuma's revenge, the Asian flu, and several other such lovelies, all rolled into one, big, miserable mess. The virus causes its host to begin feeling faint

immediately upon its activation. Within one minute after that initial symptom, a general malaise sets in. As a result, the host finds that all task attempts, whatever the type, are conducted at one level of difficulty greater than normal, due to difficulty concentrating. After another four minutes, the host performs any task attempts at two levels of difficulty greater than normal. After 10 minutes, the subject becomes almost completely incapacitated due to feverishness, dizziness, vomiting, etc., and remains in that condition for a period of three to six days. On day three, the host will recover on a Difficult test of Constitution. Failing that, the test becomes Average on day four, and it drops to Easy on day five. On day six the victim recovers automatically. (Insufficient food and/or water increases the difficulty of each of these tests of Constitution by one level.)

Infection Time: 12 hours

Activation Time: 10 minutes

Host Cost: Detection: 100

Wt: 0.015 (15ccs)

Price: \$15,000 (—/S)



Empathic
Viral Assassin



Empathic
Viral
Incapacitator

Empathic Viral Mutator

Perhaps the most bizarre—and terrifying—of all the strains, the empathic viral mutator does not actually prey upon the host; rather, it *changes* the host into a different organism.

Using a highly advanced form of recombinant viral gene mutation, this strain begins changing the DNA coding of the host, resulting in physical mutation to suit the new coding. The change is both painful to experience and hideous to observe. The process takes place over the course of a full 48 hours, during which time the victim experiences a progressively gruesome distortion in both physiology and psyche. Madness of one form or another is often a side effect.

The final form of the host depends upon the type of DNA that was encoded into the virus. Common mutated forms include cobra people, fuathas, harpies, morlocks, and (particularly) moreau weres (some experts estimate that nearly half of all such weres are the result of an empathic viral mutator).

Once the mutation is complete, the virus dies. It is conceivable, therefore, that mutated individuals could be changed back into human form if they were once again infected with the virus, but this time around the empathic viral mutator must be encoded with the person's original DNA. Acquiring such a version of this strain is certainly a long shot (what Dark Minion would ever cooperate?), but at least the scientific community knows the possibility exists. (Note that it is also theoretically possible to infect an individual with the DNA of another human in this manner, creating some sort of synthesis of the two persons.)

Infection Time: 1 week

Activation Time: 1 day

Host Cost: Detection: 100

Wt: 0.075 (75ccs)

Price: N/A (—/—)

Empathic Viral Ravenizer

This strain creates an almost insatiable need for *very* fresh meat. And this need is *constant*. The infected individual needs 0.1 kilograms of meat per minute, which adds up to six kilograms

per hour, or 144 kilograms per day. In short, it is unlikely that the individual so infected can survive on normal tissue, but will probably have to resort to the key organs of the heart, brain, and liver.

Many “vampires” and “ghouls” of legend were simply poor unfortunate people who were infected with this particular strain (which borrows some of its heritage from the same organism which forms the basis of the running box—see page 20).

Infection Time: 1 day

Activation Time: 1 hour

Host Cost: Detection: 100, Feed: 1 (when fully activated)

Wt: 0.03 (30ccs)

Price: N/A (—/—)

Empathic Viral Subjugator

The empathic viral subjugator predominantly affects the brain and central nervous system, making the host highly susceptible to Darkling control by means of projected emotions and/or thoughts.

Any Dark Minion (not necessarily the one who engineered the infection) can take advantage of the host's lowered Willpower level, though humans cannot: This virus changes the mindset of the target so as to optimize it *specifically* for Dark Minion domination. There are rumors circulating that bloodkin and pale frequently use this virus (when it is available) to keep their “flocks” quiescent.

Infection Time: 3 days

Activation Time: 1 minute

Host Cost: Detection: 100, Control: 4 (when fully activated)

Wt: 0.05 (50ccs)

Price: N/A (—/—)

Other Empathic Viruses

Referees are encouraged to develop more examples of these sorts of viruses as they see fit. After all, it's not as though Dark Minions are buying them from wholesale outlets; the viruses are almost always “individualized” to suit a specific occasion or plot (making them a sort of designer hell bug).



Empathic
Viral
Ravenizer



Empathic
Viral
Mutator



Empathic
Viral
Subjugator

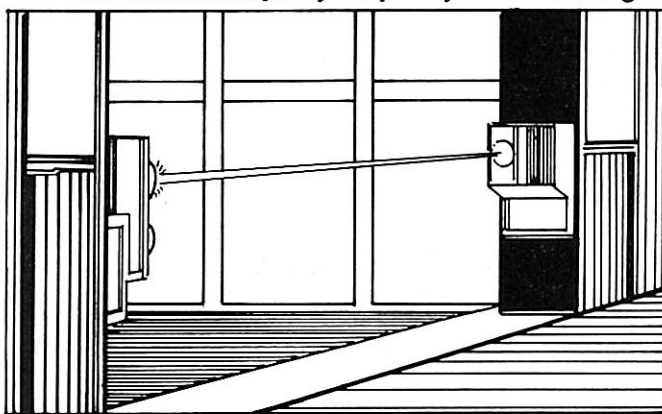
ELECTRONIC DEVICES



Much of the equipment in this chapter is the result of human high technology and may be available to player characters, especially if they have large amounts of money to spend. A good deal of the equipment, however, is the creation of humanoid ETs, or is at least partly shaped by their knowledge.



Cable Tap



BEAM ALARM

The beam alarm is a two-piece system incorporating a beam generator and receiver. Interruption of

the beam (e.g., a person walking through it) triggers the alarm.

Wt: 7 kg (Generator: 5 kg, Receiver: 2 kg)

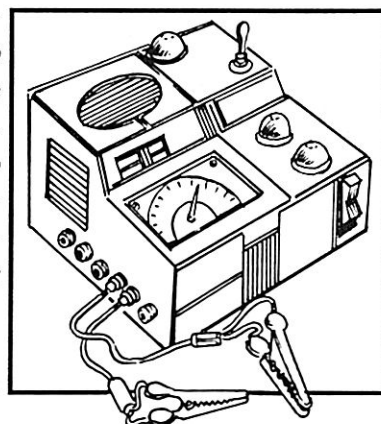
Price: \$700 (C/V)

CABLE TAP

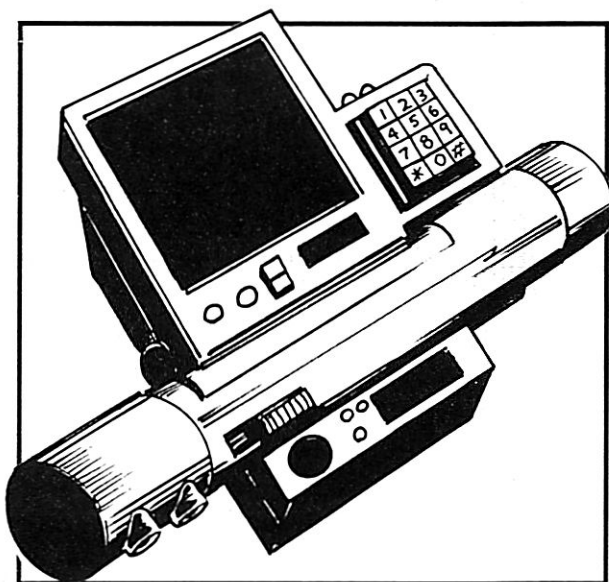
This device, when attached to a cable carrying electronic signals, can detect those signals. In some cases, the connection must be physical (using clips and/or plugs); in others, it can be merely proximity (reading the magnetic and/or radio effects of a cable carrying current). Typically, the tap is used in conjunction with a recording device or a computer.

Wt: 0.5 kg

Price: \$325 (S/C)



Beam Alarm



COMMUNICATION SCRAMBLER/ DECODER, DETACHABLE

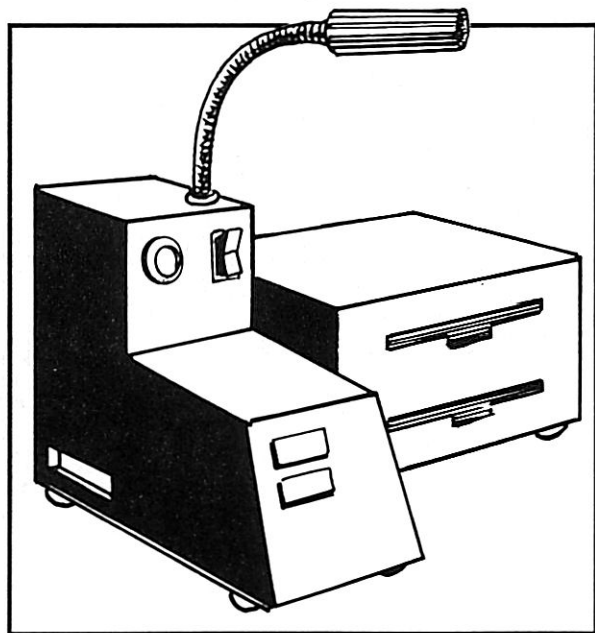
This device can be placed at any point in an electronic data flow and will scramble the communications in such a fashion that they are only decipherable by another individual with a properly programmed decoder.

Wt: 0.4 kg

Price: \$500 (S/C)

COMPUAID

A CompuAID (*computer audio input device*) is an "add-on," expert-system package that in-



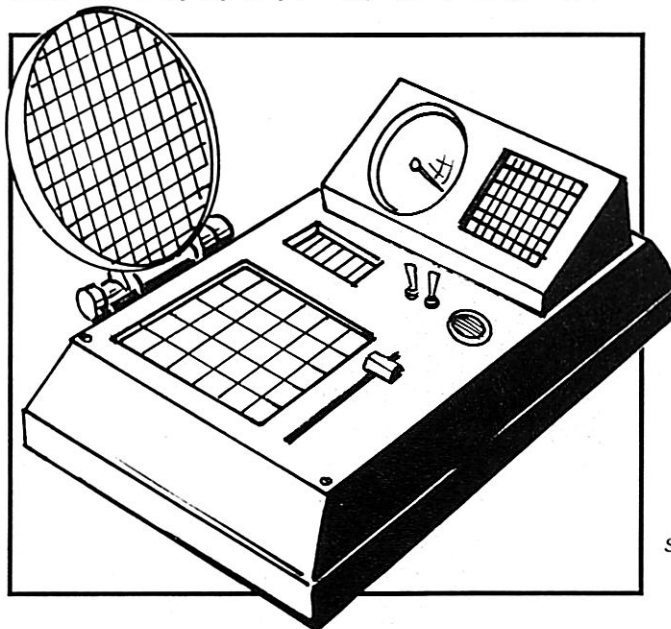
cludes the hardware and software necessary to allow a user to input computer data vocally, rather than with a keyboard. CompuAID requires at least 2.5 megabytes of dedicated RAM to function, and it takes a few days to set up properly (as it "learns" the user's vocabulary and pronunciation).

Wt: 1.8 kg

Price: \$14,200 (S/V)

COMPUNAV

CompuNav (*computer navigation*) is an inertial location system that continually updates the user's position on a mapping program (usually used with a laptop or palmtop computer). If up/



CompuNav



Communication
Scrambler/Decoder,
Detachable



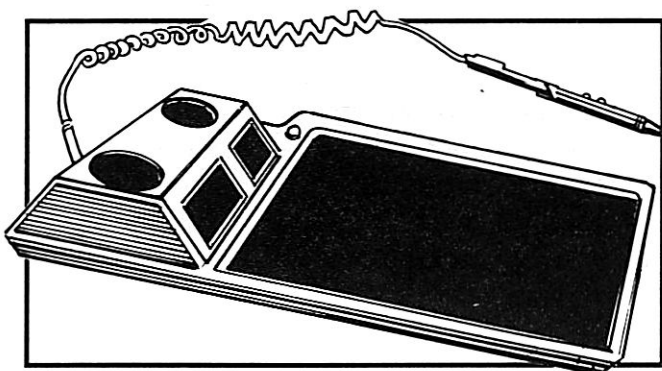
CompuAID

downlink capabilities are possessed, satellite crosschecks are possible to keep the system perfectly accurate (a small service fee is charged by the communication company owning the satellite). Update chips are available as cartographic actualities change (which is quite frequent in the world of Dark Conspiracy). The same information revisions can be downloaded via various on-line data services.

Consequently, CompuNav is a must for the wary traveller. Note, however, that while downloaded data offers immediate access to developing needs, the data can also be tampered with—if someone wants the downloader to take a wrong turn somewhere.

Wt: 5 kg

Price: \$21,500 (R/S)



CompuPad

COMPUPAD

An increasingly common office convenience, the CompuPad is simply a writing pad and electronic stylus that stores handwritten data as graphics files. These graphics files are then analyzed by scanners (which have been "taught" the user's handwriting) and the information is converted into computer text.

Wt: 0.35 kg

Price: \$750 (S/C)



Controller

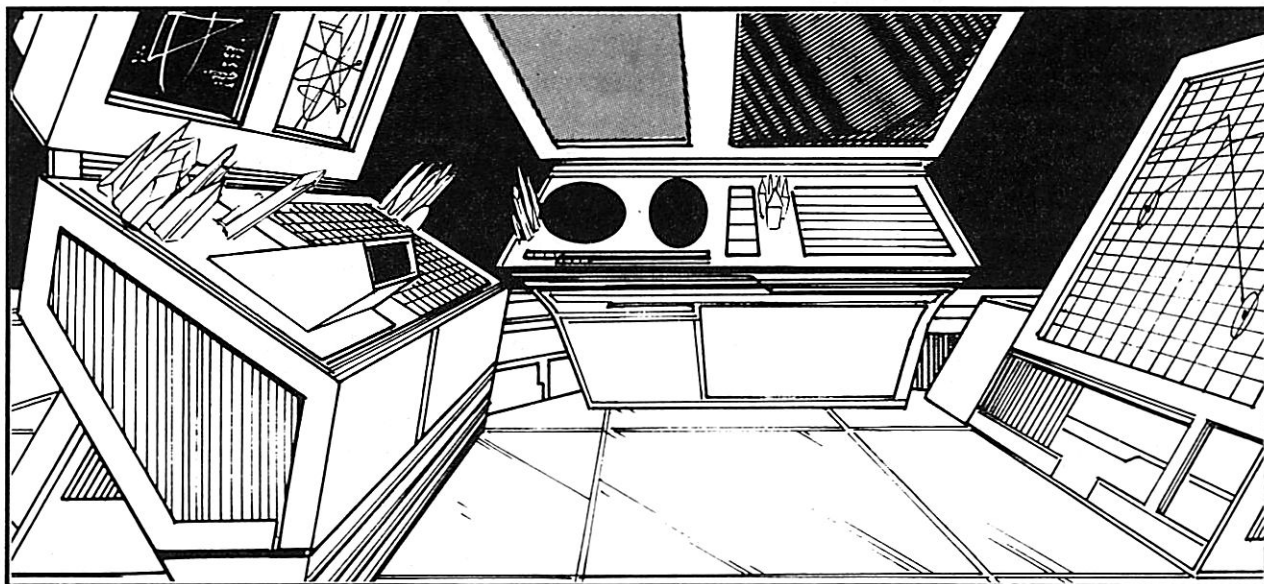
CONTROLLER

The controller is one of the most important—and rare—humanoid ET technologies. It is a 100-percent cybernetic (totally electronic; no organic components) artificial intelligence that is capable of single-handedly directing the operations of an almost unlimited number of remote devices. Furthermore, it can plan their activities itself, as long as it is given objectives by an authorized user. This means that it can fully coordinate the activities of various expert-system robots and slave/cyborg units.

The controller is very user-friendly, programming itself in accordance with common language commands. Where it is unsure of an objective, or confused regarding an apparent contradiction or uncertain definition, it will ask the user to clarify. While the machine's interface with organic users is not foolproof, it has been refined to the point where error is very unlikely.

Part of the controller's programming is a sophisticated recognition procedure for confirming user identity before allowing the user access to the system. This requires DNA checks, various scans, and even randomized personal knowledge tests. Therefore, if PCs should stumble across an active controller, they will not be able to commandeer it. Likewise, even a powered-down controller will resist unauthorized control; the data that drives its user-recognition programming is crystal encoded as fixed data (not subject to erasure or loss by power outage) in dozens of hidden "data granules" scattered throughout the system. Therefore, even if power is lost, upon repowering, the controller will have this information immediately dumped into memory. Only by removing *all* these data granules and then rebooting the system could PCs begin to bring a controller to the point where it might be made to recognize them as authorized users.

Due to its size and unwieldiness, the controller is almost never encountered outside of major ET bases. Most often, controllers are kept aboard ET UFOs, which (due to their mobility, speed, and armament) make formidable targets. This is an



important consideration for the humanoid ETs, since both the insectoid and tentacular ETs are quite eager to acquire as many of these controllers as possible.

Referees should note that although the controller is considered an artificial intelligence in terms of its abilities to learn and to adapt to changing situations, it has no true personality. It is, quite simply, an intelligent machine.

Wt: 12 tons (6 cubic meters)

Price: N/A (—/—)

DATA SERVICES

Phone-accessible data services are not an item per se, but are an important "tool" of the **Dark Conspiracy** world (particularly for fast-moving investigators). As long as the user has access to a phone or modem, and an active telecommunications account, all manner of information is available. Examples and costs are listed in the sidebar at right.

The cost is a general benchmark. Generally, referees can assume that this is what it will cost to gather complete information on a given topic, to send a long letter, etc. Short uses can be ignored as representing insignificant costs. The point of all this is that investigators can conduct a lot of their fact-finding searches just by tapping into the world's on-line communication services.

DISTORTER

This device is a product of joint human and renegade humanoid ET technologies. The distorter creates a tiny time-space disruption, which causes attempts at Dimension Walking to fail automatically. It is also likely (1-7 on 1D10) to disrupt the operation of DarkTek devices which

Various Data Services and Costs

<i>Information Type</i>	<i>Cost (US\$/hour)</i>
Weather (local, regional, global)	1
Transportation (scheduling/booking)	10
Business internet (bills, accounts, stocks, etc.)	35 (per month)
Electronic mailboxes	2
News items (general or sorted by subject)	5
Mail order electronic malls	Free
SIGs (special-interest groups)	2
Entertainment (various)	3-30
Professional publications (electronic or hard copy)	20
Academic publications	30
General libraries	15
Special-topic encyclopedias	25
Corporate (or government) reports	5
Help-wanted compendiums	10
Dating, personals, escort services	15
Shareware software	1-100 (per program)
Bootleg/pirated software	5-1000 (per program)
CompuNav global locational satellite	50 services
Real-time information services	35
Coded SIGs	Free*

*By invitation or discovery, typically with ever-changing decoding requirements. You'll find anything from "secret clubs" of 11-year-olds to organized-crime links to Dark Minion-hunter communiques—if only you can tell which is which!

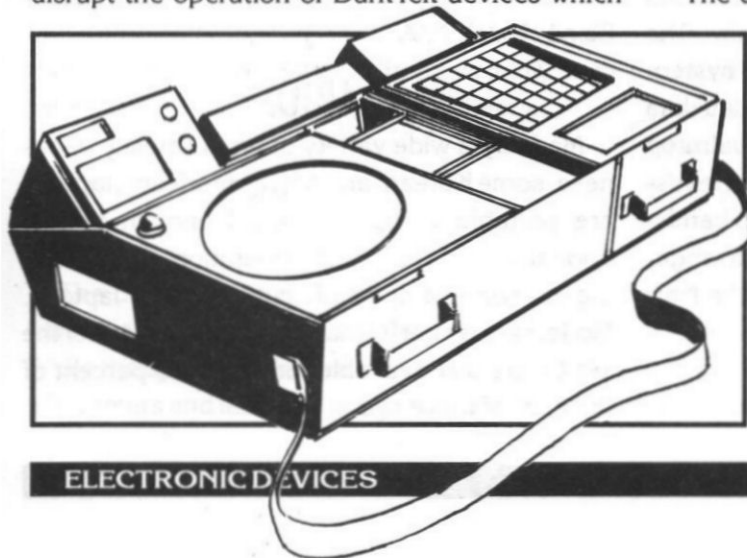
depend upon contact with another dimension or proto-dimension.

The device is powered by a huge electric cell (equivalent in size to a car battery). When activated, it has an effective radius of 20 meters and will cause existing transplanar gateways to close, as well as preventing any Dimension Walking activities.

The distorter is the size of a large suitcase, and is equipped with shoulder and hand-carry straps.

Wt: 9.5 kg

Price: \$2,300,000 (—/—)



ELECTRONIC DEVICES



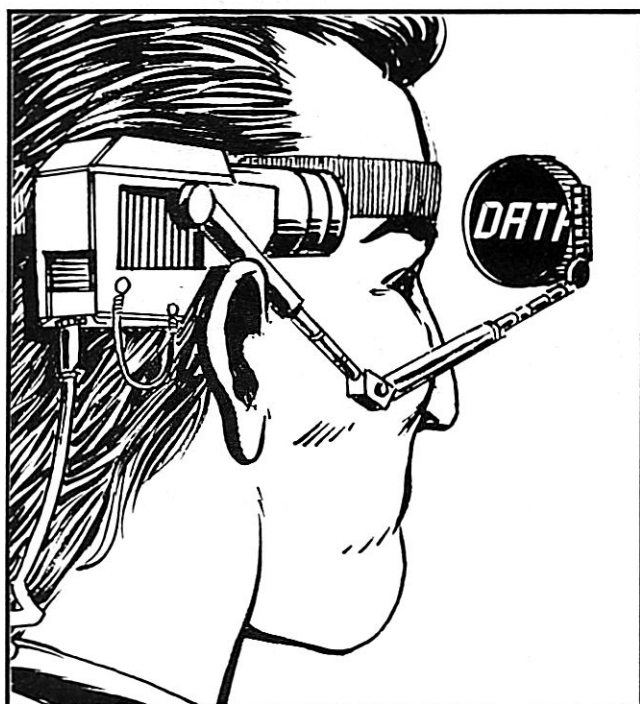
Data Services



Distorter



Holoweb

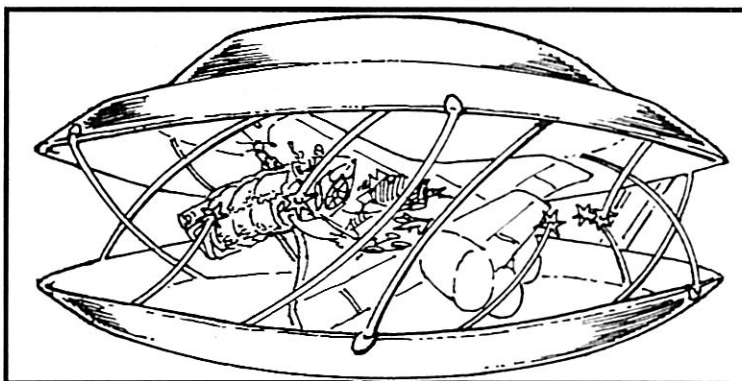


HLOWEB

The holoweb is a dynamic holographic communication technology made possible by renegade humanoid ET assistance to human technology. A holoweb is comprised of two disks—one above and one below the viewing area—each of which sprouts four long and four short projection wands toward the open space in between them. (From some angles, this cluster of wands gives the device a web-like appearance.)

The disks and wands can generate a 3-D, moving, holographic image. Holographic communication is possible, but each speaker must be inside what is referred to as a surround-booth or a surround-studio (since 360° data is required in order to produce a full, 3-D hologram). Because the data required for the projection of a holoweb image is so tremendous, very few holoweb units exist thus far. Those that do are reserved for use by clandestine government agencies.

The holoweb currently comes in two sizes. The first is a portable, table-top unit; the second is a room-sized, permanent construct.



Wt: Tabletop Model: 18 kg, Room-Sized Model: 340 kg

Price: Tabletop Model: \$780,000 (—/R), Room-Sized Model: N/A (—/—)

HEADS-UP EYEPiece

This data-screening device is handy when a standard computer (or television) monitor isn't practical (or feasible). It consists of a projection unit and a small, monocle-sized panel upon which the projected images are displayed. The eyepiece's projector must be mounted on a headband and worn back near the ear. The eyepiece itself can be mounted on the edge of eyeglasses, goggles, or a rigid armature linked to the projector.

Text data generally has to be presented in a revised form since a standard screen reduced to matchbook size is both difficult to read and conducive to tremendous eye strain. The projector can be linked to any data-feed system by jack. Many real-time data users download data into a radio modem within a belt-worn palmtop computer, which in turn is jacked into the Heads-Up Eyepiece. This gives them portable, hands-free access to real-time data feeds. This arrangement is a frequent sight on the floors of the New York and Tokyo stock exchanges.

Wt: 0.3 kg

Price: \$525 (S/C)

LAPTOP

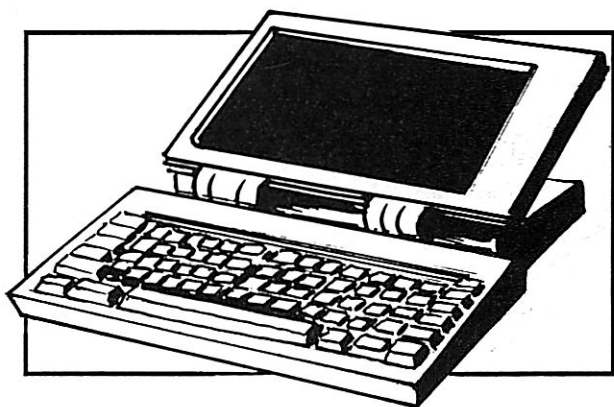
Made by a wide variety of firms (mostly Japanese, some Korean, and a few American), laptops are portable computers small enough to rest upon the user's lap during operation. The following are two examples of "cutting edge" laptops. Models whose performance emulates those of the 1990s are still available for about 60 percent of the cost of these two.



Heads-Up Eyepiece



Laptop



Featherlite (NEC 686sx)

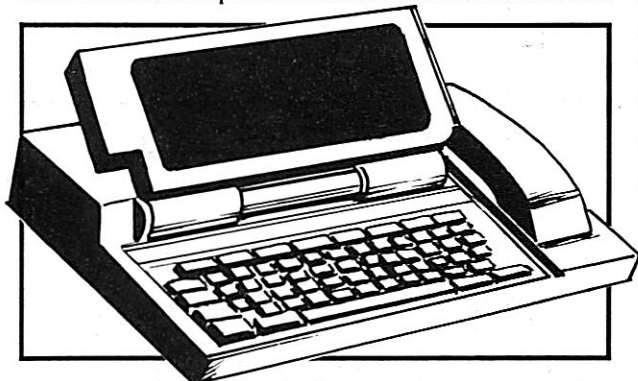
Almost a palmtop computer, the Featherlite is almost all keypad and plasma screen. With eight MB of RAM, a single disk drive, a CD-ROM interface, and a 40-MB hard drive, it is nonetheless a powerful computing device.

Wt: 0.9 kg

Price: \$2100 (S/C)

Notebook (Toshiba T12886sx)

Factory-equipped with 20 megabytes of RAM, a 200-MB hard-disk, a CD-ROM interface port and two disk drives, this computer represents the state of the art in portables. It also has an attached



(recessed) cellular phone (performance is the same as the model described on page 36) that is integrated with an internal modem, allowing remote access of information from virtually anywhere. Processing speed is extraordinary.

Wt: 1.6 kg

Price: \$4200 (R/S)

LEAP FROG

The Leap Frog is a device that measures distance using ultrasound in a sonar-like capacity. While the system is limited to detection ranges of 100 meters and less, this is a good way to achieve



range-finding tasks without giving away one's position with a laser range finder. It can also be set to "see" through objects, passing its waves through the first object it encounters and "pinging" off the second. (It is from this ability that the device garners its name.)

Wt: 0.8 kg

Price: \$220 (C/V)

MAGLOCK

Maglocks (*magnetic locks*) are in some ways superior to mechanical locks in that there is no weak point to cut through and no keyhole to pick. The two plates of the lock are bonded by magnetism. The only weakness of the maglock is its dependence upon electric current to maintain its magnetism. Therefore, the lock usually has a physical interlock component as well, which remains shut if power is lost to the magnet. This physical lock can typically only be unlocked if current is restored.

Another advantage of the maglock is its portability: It can be attached to any door or gate. If metal surfaces are available, the lock can be



Maglock



Leap Frog

self-attaching via a magnetizable back-plate. Maglocks come in small and large varieties (for personal-sized and vehicle-sized portals, respectively). If the large variety is emplaced upon a personal-sized portal, such a lock may well be impossible to break through, short of demolition work.

Wt: Small Version: 18 kg, Large Version: 7 kg

Price: Small Version: \$2300 (R/S), Large Version: \$550 (S/C)



Microcam



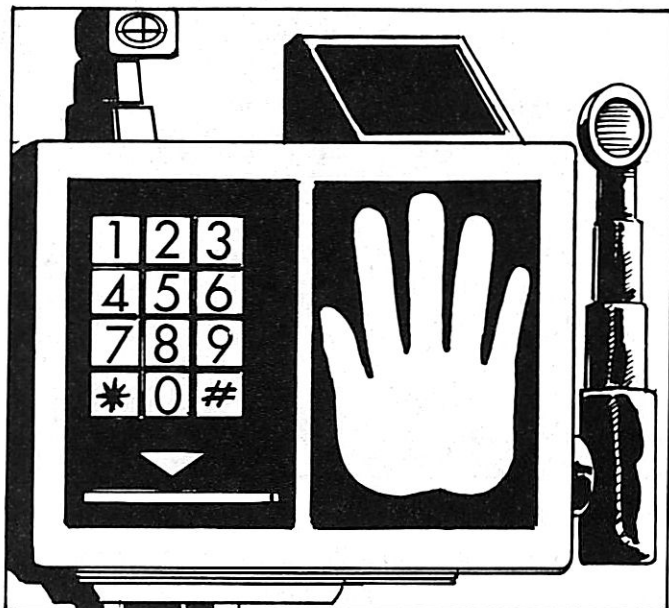
Microwave
communicator,
Personal



MaxiGard
Multilock



Microwave
communicator,
Large

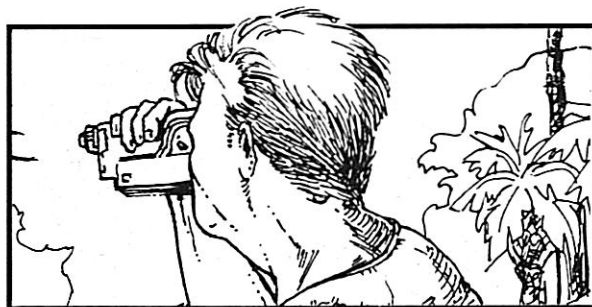


MAXIGARD MULTILOCK

The MaxiGard Multilock is a security system designed to accept a variety of modular upgrades. The system integrates an adjustable, physical-locking device (usually mounted at ground level on the opposite side of the portal in question) and a bypass system that can be adjusted to handle a variety of clearance criteria. The MaxiGard has a numeric keypad, keycard port, and hand/fingerprint analyzer built in. However, modular interfaces allow the addition of tissue (genetic) sampling and retinal scan regimens as well. (Although voice analysis is still used in some places, this is considered a "backward" security measure since voice duplication techniques have advanced to the point where they can fool such machines at least 50 percent of the time.)

Wt: 7.6 kg (*Lock:* 4.2 kg, *Clearance Monitor:* 3.4 kg (before add-ons))

Price: \$2675 (S/C)



MICROCAM

This portable video camera is about the size of a paperback novel, and is designed to be rugged and user-friendly. The videotape cartridge is about the size of an audio cassette tape and can record up to four hours of footage.

Wt: 0.5 kg

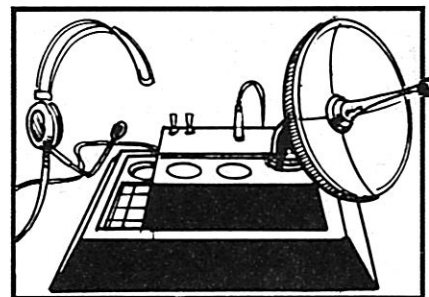
Price: \$450 (\$25 per tape cartridge) (C/V)

MICROWAVE COMMUNICATOR, PERSONAL

Distinguishable by a large dish that resembles an overgrown wok, this microwave communication system is large, line-of-sight only, and of limited range. However, it allows users to communicate without fear of jamming or signal interception.

The device must remain stationary during communication.

Situations that affect visibility (smoke, fog, rain, etc.—but not darkness) can obstruct or pre-



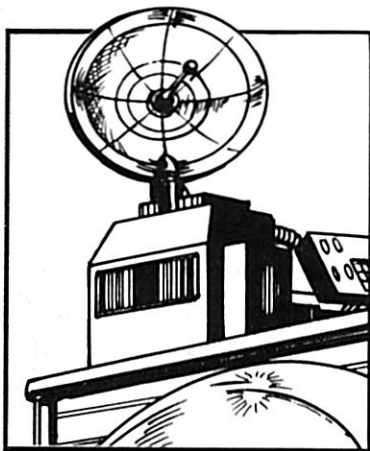
clude communications. Maximum range is three kilometers under perfect conditions. Referees may reduce this range to reflect current conditions.

Wt: 6 kg

Price: \$1600 (R/C)

MICROWAVE COMMUNICATOR, LARGE

Simply a larger version of the personal model, the large microwave communicator has increased range and (if computer-coordinated and slaved to an



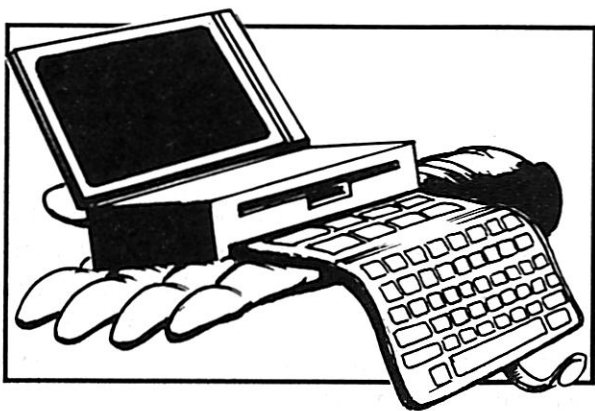
automated attitude adjustment system) can remain in communication with other similar units even if sender and/or receiver are moving. At speeds up to 30 kph, an Easy test of the moving

user's Intelligence maintains communication. At 60 kph, the test becomes Average. At 90 kph it becomes Difficult. Note that if both sender and receiver are moving, each must make this test (at his or her own speed) to maintain contact. Failure by either user disrupts the communication. Once communication is lost, both units must stop to reestablish contact.

Maximum range under perfect conditions is 10 kilometers. As with the personal communicator, certain low-visibility conditions can disturb communications, and referees should adjust this range to reflect such conditions.

Wt: 23 kg

Price: \$5800 (—/S)



PALMTOP COMPUTER (HEWLETT-ZENITH)

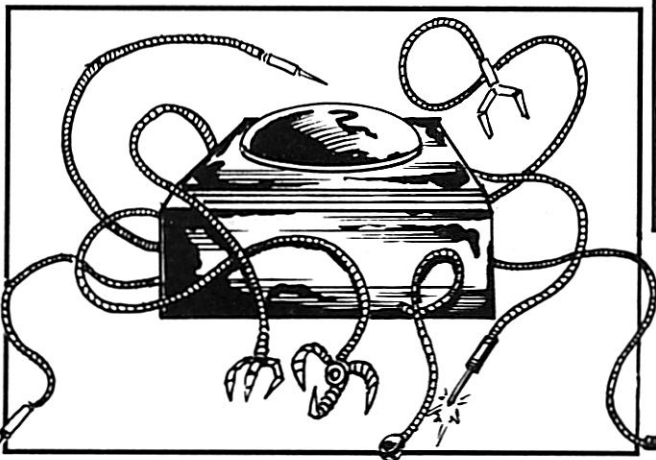
Hewlett-Packard and Zenith were conjointly contracted to create a belt-carried computer for the US armed forces in 1999. Their model proved to be not only a military success, but a commercial hit as well.

The HZ palmtop features a roll-up, touch-sensi-

tive "tap pad" instead of a keyboard, a single disk drive, a 20-MB hard drive, an internal modem, and two MB of RAM. It is about the size of a large paperback novel and is primarily screen.

Wt: 0.65 kg

Price: \$2800 (C/V)



PARASITE, EXPERT SYSTEM, ADVANCED

The advanced, expert system Parasite is a small, weighty, metal box which is used by ETs to "roboticize" any electronic device that they wish to control, but which isn't set up for cybernetic interface. The AES Parasite accomplishes this by being hooked up to what passes for the primary control circuits of the "host" mechanism. It then analyzes the programming of the device, cracking codes where necessary, or completely substituting its own programming if the indigenous security measures prove too formidable. The "smarter" the system being cracked and the more centralized its control, the easier it is for the Parasite to take over. For example, the most modern cars in *Dark Conspiracy* are very vulnerable to AES Parasites, whereas some of the old American gas-guzzlers of the 1960s—which have no real cybernetic elements—are all but immune to the device.

When activated, the Parasite extrudes a number of tiny manipulators and begins searching for electronic circuitry and probable connection points in the system being infiltrated. It will secure access to circuitry even if it has to burn small holes in protec-



Parasite, Expert
System,
Advanced



Palmtop
Computer
(Hewlett-Zenith)



RASL

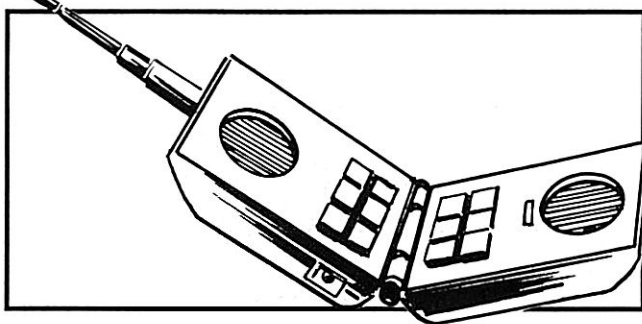
tive casing (a small, integral laser is included for this purpose). Once connected, the Parasite's very sophisticated programming kicks in, usurping control of the device, and awaiting instructions from either an on-site or a remote operator.

The most common use of the Parasite is to invest apparently mundane objects with a means of direct control, as well as a limited independent response capability. Cars become sentries and chase vehicles, modern jet fighters become supersonic killer robots, etc. But since all these devices *look* normal up to the moment they are activated, this allows the ETs to have a number of assets "hidden in plain sight."

Note that if PCs can get their hands on one of these Parasites, a Difficult test of Computer Operation would allow them to reprogram it.

Wt: 4 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)



PORTAPHONE

An even more lightweight, compact version of the cellular phone, the portaphone is about the size of a pack of cigarettes and folds out into an ultraslimline phone with a two-foot-long aerial. Within civilized areas it is never out of communication range since portaphone transceivers have been mounted on phone lines throughout most cities. However, in more rural or abandoned areas, the portaphone may be outside the range of any transceiver (about 100 kilometers). However, public jack connections have been mounted in some rural areas (instead of phone booths). Note, though, that when out of the cities or the 'burbs, users of portaphones should stick close to telephone lines if they want to remain in contact.

The portaphone has a jack interface, which also allows it to be integrated with a laptop modem for "wireless-datanetting" purposes (see page 33).

Wt: 0.35 kg

Price: \$425 (C/V)

RASL

Also known as the Laser Ear, the RASL (reflective audio sensor, laser) is the ultimate in shotgun-type eavesdropping devices. Instead of attempting to amplify sonic emissions, the RASL measures the vibratory effect of those sounds upon nearby physical objects. Hard but flexible surfaces generally offer the best reception opportunities (things such as wood planking, metal sheeting, or glass). Hard but inflexible surfaces and porous materials (slate, for instance, or cinder blocks) are somewhat problematical, while soft, absorptive surfaces (such as foam) may fail to give any coherent reading at all.

The RASL is a big device, having a Bulk rating of 6. Since it is also fairly heavy, it has the drawback of being rather cumbersome, leading to the predictable user jokes about "RASLing" the thing into position. However, it is the premier line-of-sight eavesdropping device, providing clean reception at ranges up to 800 meters. It takes one minute to set up and runs off internal batteries (six hours of duration).

Wt: 9.2 kg

Price: \$11,500 (R/S)

SCANNER, EXPERT

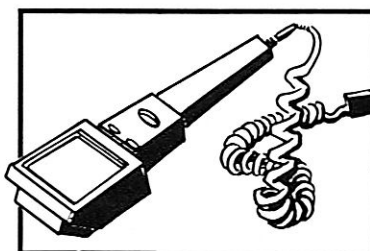
This combination of visual input hardware and "self-teaching" software allows computers to decipher handwriting and turn it into text data. In order to function, the system must receive about four hours of samples and user guidance as it learns how to distinguish the handwriting of a given individual.

The expert scanner must be connected to (and driven by) a computer with at least two MB of RAM

in order to work. This device can also be used for handwriting identification.

Wt: 0.6 kg

Price: \$600 (C/V)



Portaphone



Scanner, Expert

SHREEK'N'SHOK

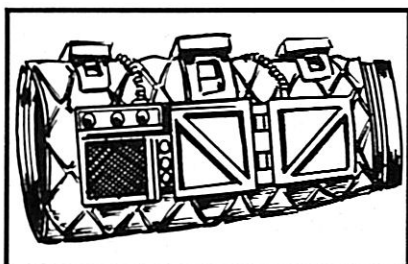
The Shreek'n'Shok is a common piece of equipment for employees of some large corporations and inmates of many low-security penitentiaries. It is a heavy bracer to be worn around the right wrist to ward the wearer away from restricted areas. The Shreek'n'Shok's green LED remains lit as long as the wearer remains in areas for which he/she has clearance. However, when approaching within 20 meters of a secure area, a red LED comes on in place of the green. This is simply to alert wearers that they are approaching a secure zone.

If the wearer actually enters the outer perimeter of a secure area, the Shreek'n'Shok emits a piercing screech. If the wearer continues to proceed to the inner security perimeter, the device will then impart a powerful shock. (An Average test of Constitution is required for the wearer to remain conscious; even if successful, the individual suffers a penalty of -1 Initiative and -1 on all AGL- and STR-based skills for one combat turn).

The Shreek'n'Shok also works as a transponder, allowing security coordination centers to keep a constant fix on each wearer.

Wt: 0.75 kg

Price: \$260 (C/V)

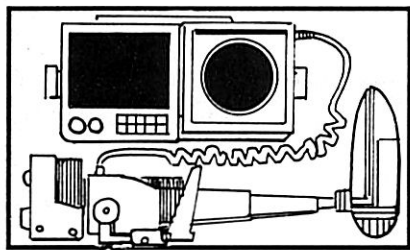


SONAR, PORTABLE

This man-portable sonar system can easily be deployed over the side of a watercraft, and comes with a variety of adjustable braces and straps for securing purposes. It has a reliable range of 70 meters; farther away than that, readings become suspect. The system can also be mounted on submersibles for navigational assistance.

Wt: 15.5 kg

Price: \$3750 (S/S)



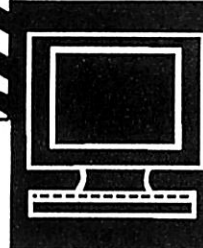
TALK PROGRAMMER

The Talk Programmer is a special computer program, which, when used with CompuAID (see page 29), allows users who are not familiar with programming languages to create programs by describing what they want, then waiting for the computer to create that effect with machine codes.

There are a number of drawbacks to the system. For one thing, it is brand new and is therefore prone to errors (often hilarious, sometimes disastrous). It is also fantastically expensive. Finally, it is a ravenous consumer of RAM (40 dedicated megabytes are required) and is (by the standards of modern computing) a slow worker. However, for those people who need a program written and can't—or won't—get a human expert, the Talk Programmer software is the only way to go.

Wt: 0.1 kg

Price: \$16,000 (R/S)



Shreek'n'Shok



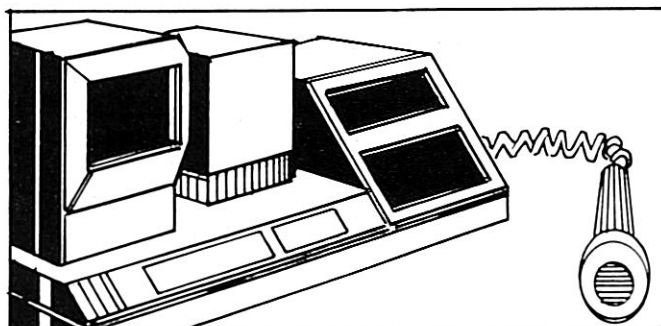
Talk Programmer

TRANSLATOR, ET

The ET translator is a computerized device that can translate both text and audio with extreme ease since it has a full codex of every known human language (and many others) in its resident database. New written languages take between one and seven days to decode, assuming that at least 2000



Translator, ET



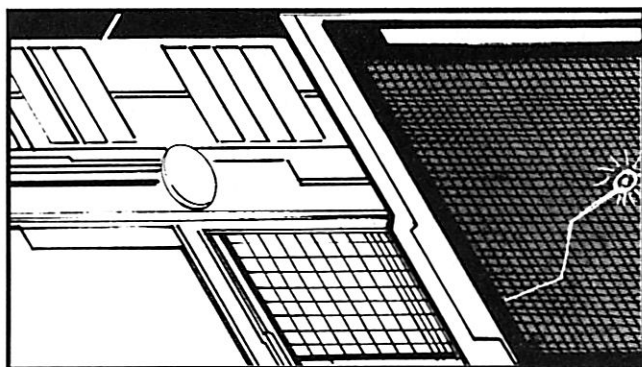
Sonar, Portable

words of common use are available for analysis. Twice that time is required when only audio samples are available.

The translator can also analyze other communicative media (light, sign language) if the unit is integrated with a Snoopbot (see page 80). However, decoding tasks may take considerably longer, depending upon the subtlety of the language.

Wt: 3.2 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)



VISMAT

A VISMAT (visual sensor, mosaic assessment polling) is basically an automated watchdog. It integrates expert-system programming with a grid-based visual data processor, and is preprogrammed by the user to recognize and identify motions by type, vector, etc., in a given scene. The scene is established by "showing" the VISMAT what it should expect to see (i.e., the default visual values). Then the device monitors the assigned area for any divergences from this default. It does so by breaking the scene into a grid of 1200 sectors (30x40 cells, usually), and then conducting a rapid sampling loop. It generally checks about 300 cells per second, which means that it cycles through the entire scene four times per second. This translates into an effective absolute reaction time of a little less than 0.25 seconds.

Any changes to the scene are automatically flagged for user attention. The parameters that constitute a "flaggable" change are user defined so as to eliminate objects smaller than human-sized (for instance) or to include everything down to the size of mice. Only visual resolution limits detection abilities.

A single VISMAT unit can handle up to 10 such

scenes simultaneously. Memory-expansion kits (along with additional datafeed input buses) are available to increase the capacities of a basic VISMAT unit (each expansion kit allows the VISMAT to handle an additional 10 scenes).

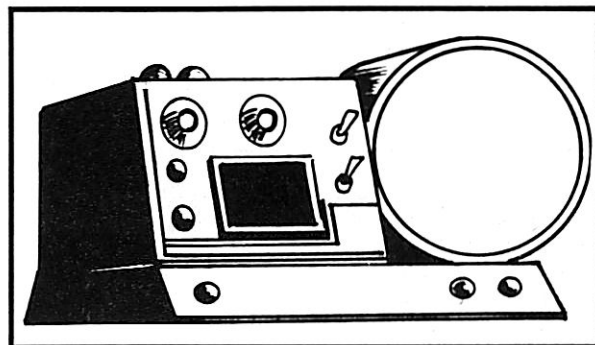
While the VISMAT is a rather expensive system that cannot be set up too rapidly, it offers security-conscious installations (and individuals) a number of distinct advantages. It is a constant and customizable watchman that never gets tired, never demands a salary, and never has to answer the call of nature. It can be cross-indexed with robots, security beacons, transponder carriers, and other security locational systems (e.g., the Shreek'n'Shok—see page 37). Although it is more reliable and sharp-eyed than human watchmen in terms of detection, it is also "twitchier" if improperly employed (e.g., assigned a perimeter full of wildlife) or programmed (not set to distinguish blowing debris from a running person, for instance). Usually, therefore, VISMATs are used as an inner, secure-perimeter devices, and they are very effective in that role.

Wt: 8.2 kg (Expansion Kit: 0.2 kg)

Price: \$4800 (Expansion Kit: \$1150) (S/V)

WHITE NOISE GENERATOR

The white noise generator creates sound ranging from a gentle hiss to a heavy static, which serves to "wash out" other audio emissions and makes eavesdropping a difficult (or impossible) proposition. Also, white noise is of considerable usefulness in



long-term prisoner interrogation; its constant presence tends to unnerve confined individuals and (if set loud enough) can aid attempts to cause sleep deprivation in such subjects.

Wt: 2.4 kg

Price: \$450 (R/S)

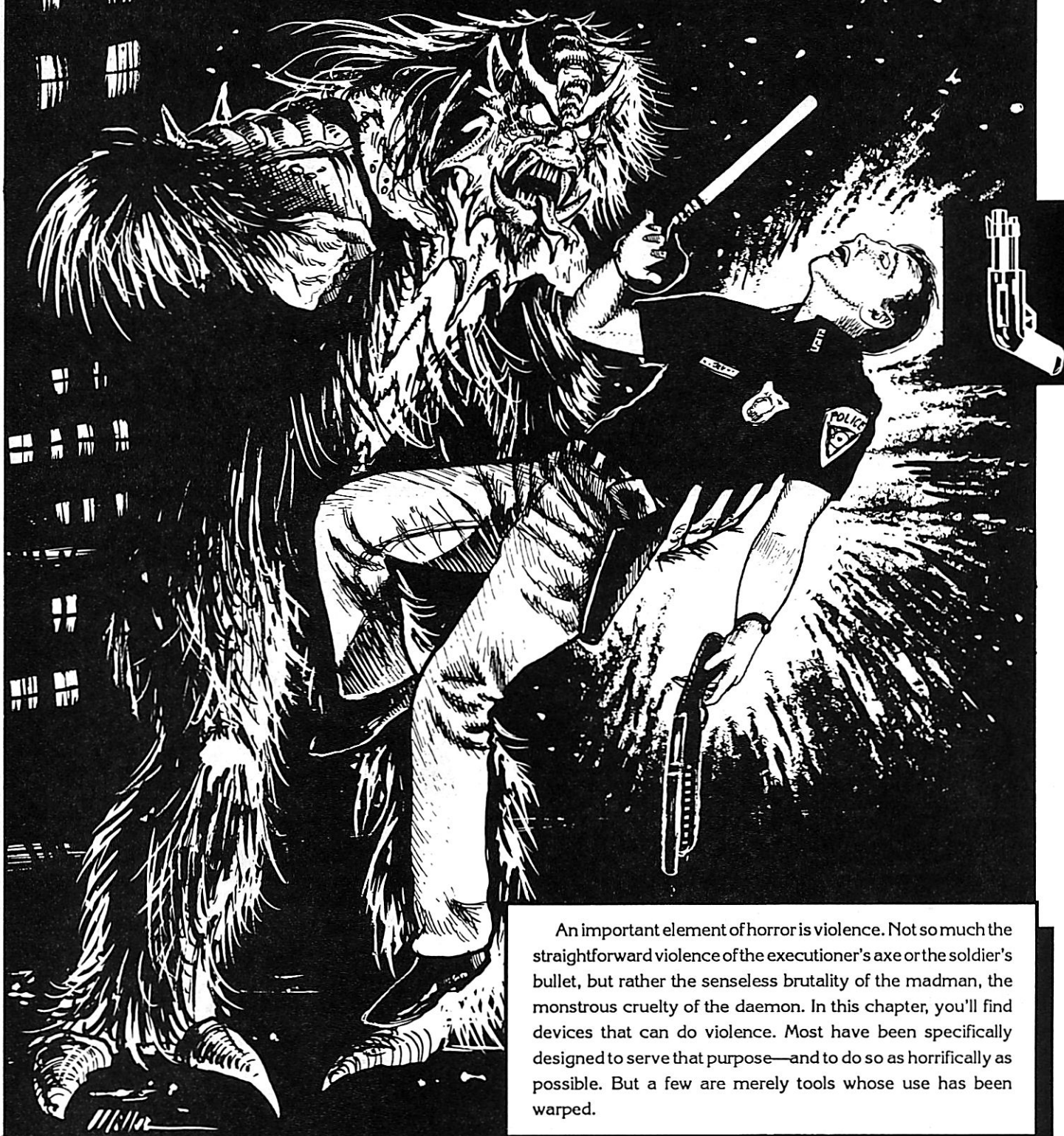


VISMAT



White Noise
Generator

WEAPONS



An important element of horror is violence. Not so much the straightforward violence of the executioner's axe or the soldier's bullet, but rather the senseless brutality of the madman, the monstrous cruelty of the daemon. In this chapter, you'll find devices that can do violence. Most have been specifically designed to serve that purpose—and to do so as horrifically as possible. But a few are merely tools whose use has been warped.



Bolter

Bolter: This comparatively new Dark Minion weapon is quite popular among the dark elves. It slaves together two creatures that feed upon electricity and produce chemicals as a byproduct, chemicals that when mixed produce an explosion of flame. Those in the know say that operating the firing mechanism feels more like tugging a finger than squeezing a trigger, and the device gurgles as it operates. The bladders on either side of the "barrel" hold enough material for five shots. Recharging the weapon requires 60 W/Min per shot, and shots must be recharged one at a time.

User Cost: Recharge, W/Min: 60

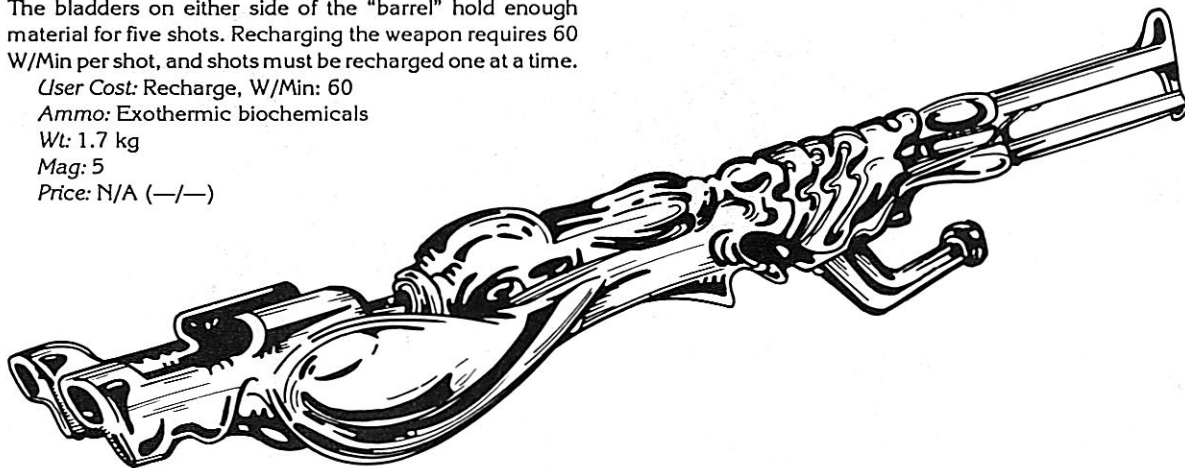
Ammo: Exothermic biochemicals

Wt: 1.7 kg

Mag: 5

Price: N/A (—/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Bolter	SA	6	2-Nil	3	5	1	—	8



CES IIb

CES IIb: The CES (combat environment suit) IIb is essentially a head-to-toe, multipiece Kevlar garment with joint and seam seals, and micropore filter masks for use in contaminated environments. Only a relatively few such suits exist, and the majority of them belong to special operations units of national governments.

The suit is fairly heavy, although it represents a vast increase in agility and dexterity over its predecessors, CES I, Ib, and IIa. These prototypes never caught on due to their being impossibly cumbersome. The CES IIb causes a -1 modifier to its wearer's Initiative (to a minimum of 1) and prevents the user from moving faster than at a trot. Its armor value is 1 (over the entire body), and it has an attachment for an ice box (see page 45).

Wt: 10 kg

Price: \$2700 (—/S)



Deliquescer

Deliquescer: By using the empathic skill of Dissolution, some Dark Minions can convert themselves to a gelatinous form and then restructure afterward. This device projects that same effect onto a target creature, and *can leave it* in that state or restore it later, at the user's whim. A target can survive Dissolution for a number of phases equal to its Constitution; after that period of time it dies.

The deliquescer incorporates just enough empathic biological elements to operate in tandem with a mechanical powering and targeting system. It is aimed like any other weapon and, when fired, envelops its target in a shimmering empathic field that dissolves the creature one phase later. Because this is a type of empathic attack, living creatures may make an Easy test of Willpower to avoid the effects. If this test is successful, the field dissipates after one phase, without dissolving the target.

Note that once disincorporated, only Dark Minions that already have the Dissolution skill can recover.

The size of the field generated by the deliquescer is one-meter in radius (i.e., slightly more than human-sized).

User Cost: Recharge, Life Force: 2 (per shot)

Ammo: See user cost

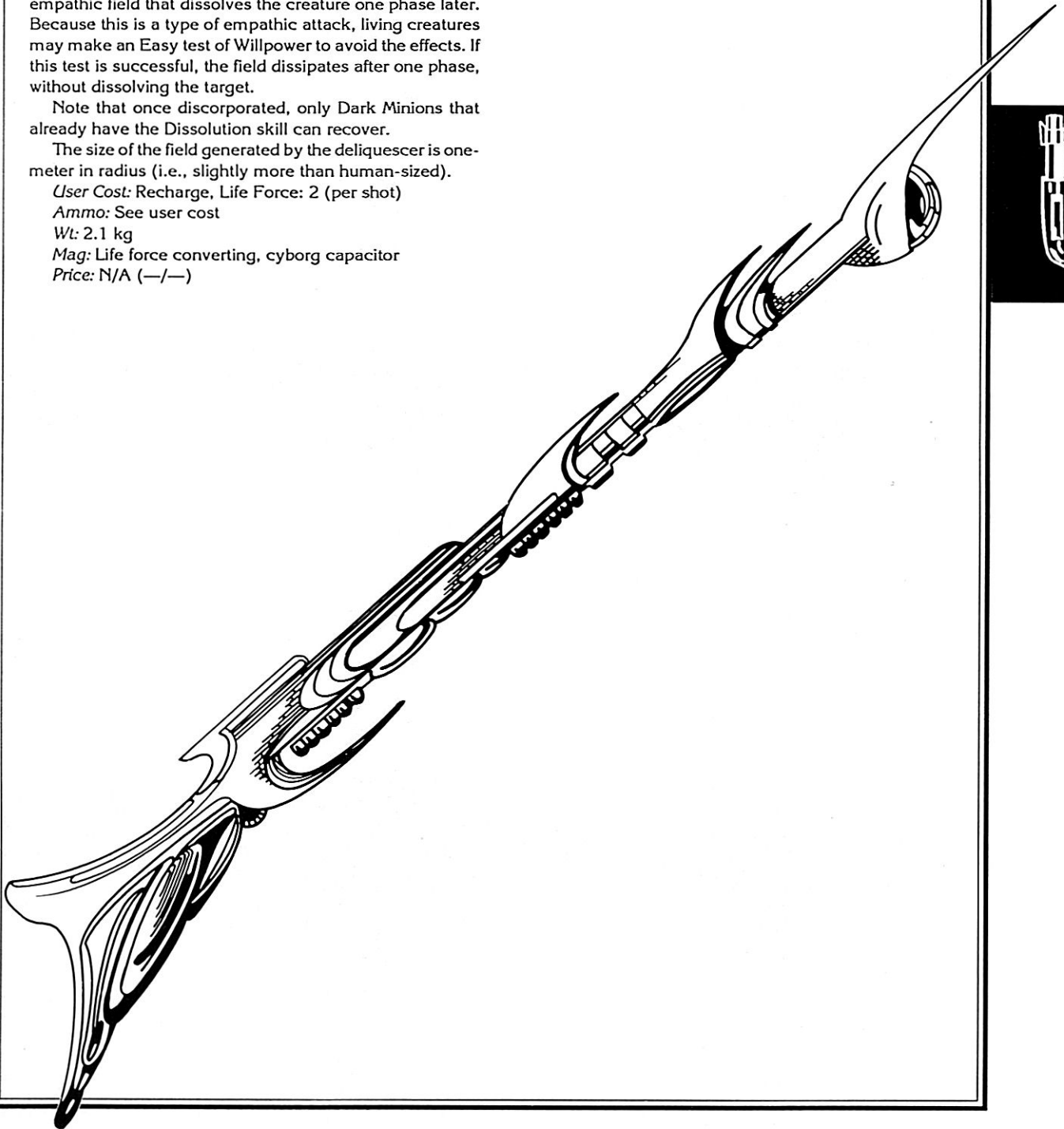
Wt: 2.1 kg

Mag: Life force converting, cyborg capacitor

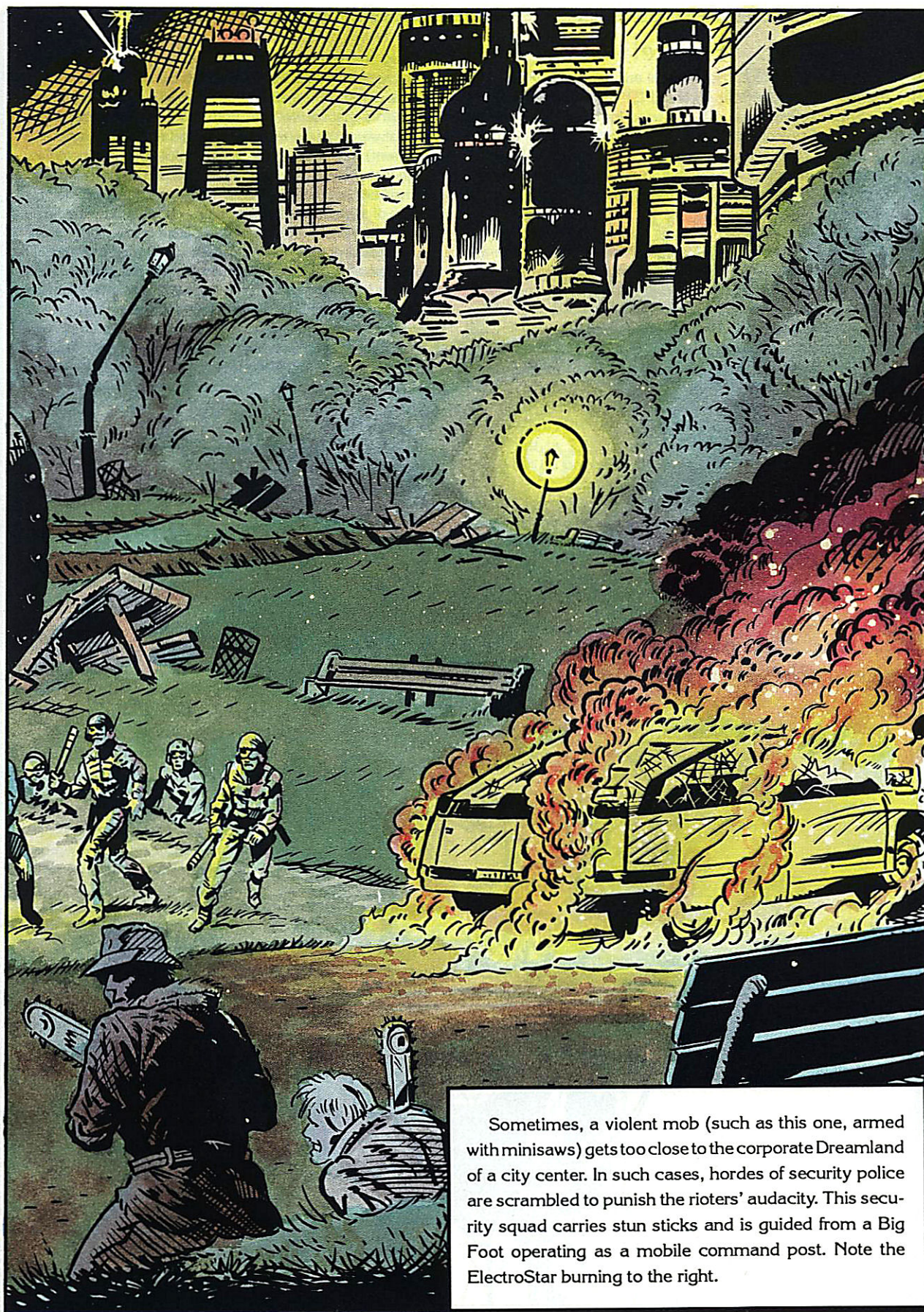
Price: N/A (—/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Deliquescer	1	*	*	N/A	*	—	—	10

*See text description at left.







Sometimes, a violent mob (such as this one, armed with minisaws) gets too close to the corporate Dreamland of a city center. In such cases, hordes of security police are scrambled to punish the rioters' audacity. This security squad carries stun sticks and is guided from a Big Foot operating as a mobile command post. Note the ElectroStar burning to the right.



ExoSkel

ExoSkel

ExoSkel: ExoSkel (exoskeletal armor), or ExoArmor, is the latest joint human/humanoid ET development in personal protective wear. It is designed for small-team use in high-intensity conflict (commando units, special assault forces, etc.) for the assurance of maximum survivability and offensive impact. It is available in a vacuum-rated model (including life-support systems) at 1.5 times the normal mass.

ExoSkel has a general armor value of 3, except for the rear, which is rated at 2. It incorporates state-of-the-art alloys, ceramics, and plastics in an overlapping mesh arrangement. An inner lining is designed for more generalized kinetic shock absorption (reduces all concussion damage by 4 points) and for optimized heat retention, allowing limited control of personal IR signature.

The helmet is a high-threat evolution of the US Kevlar helmet, featuring a detachable, solid chin guard and flexible gorget, a transparent flip-up facial blast shield, and a "ducktail" extension to offer further neck protection from the rear (all head hits strike the helmet, which is AV 2 at the rear). Recessed slots are available for the addition of individual tactical radios and other electronic gear.

While some people call ExoSkel "powered armor," this is an exaggeration. Servos are present to offer a power-assist for leg and upper arm movements, primarily as a means of

offsetting the otherwise oppressive weight of the armor. Internal active battery life for these servos is 12 hours, and the batteries can be taken off-line at will, allowing waiting troops to conserve their servotime. With the servos activated, the apparent weight of the armor (for purposes of maneuver and movement) is 15 kilograms: All tasks are conducted as though they were one difficulty level greater, Initiative suffers a -1 modifier, and the user can move no faster than a trot. In the case of a vacuum-rated ExoSkel, the Initiative modifier is -2, and movement is restricted to a walk.

One should not make the mistake of believing the ExoSkel vacuum model to be the equal of a true space suit. It allows short excursions (two hours maximum) in vacuum, assuming nominal conditions, but endurance, versatility, and maneuverability are all substandard by comparison to regular vacuum suits.

ExoSkel is possessed by only the most wealthy mega-corporations, and their technology is guarded extremely carefully to prevent other organizations from acquiring it.

ExoSkel

Wt: 23 kg (15 kg apparent, with servos)

Price: \$775,000 (—/—)

Vacuum ExoSkel

Wt: 35 kg (20 kg apparent, with servos)

Price: \$1,150,000 (—/—)



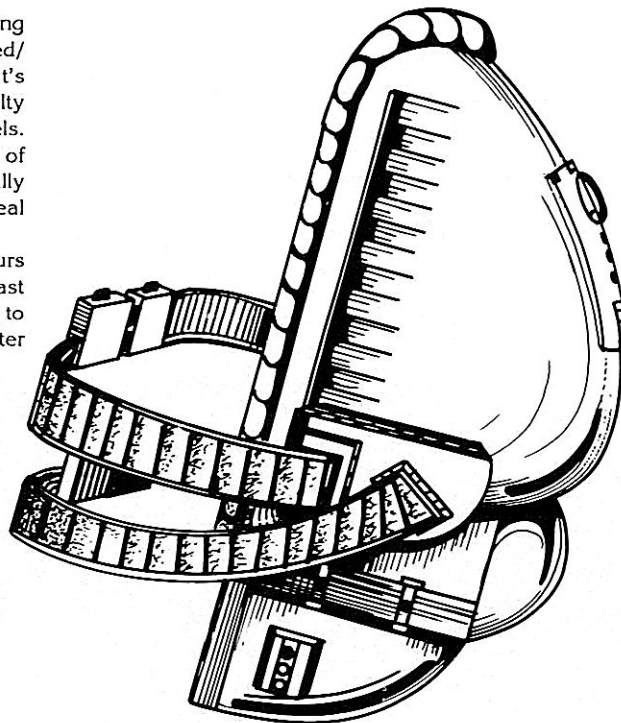
Ice Box

Ice Box: The Ice Box is a small waste-heat processing unit that is an add-on for various kinds of pressurized/sealed armors. Depending upon the quality of the suit's environmental seal, the Ice Box can increase the difficulty of IR-spotting tasks against the user by up to two levels. (Generally, only customized ExoSkel suits have seals of this quality, unless the armor is being used in thermally invariant, temperate environments, in which case seal quality becomes less critical.)

The Ice Box needs a new coolant packet after four hours of constant use. It must vent its waste heat as steam at least once every 20 minutes. Careful users are always trying to find a place to vent the accumulated heat, even if only after a minute or two of usage.

Wt: 2.3 kg

Price: \$1550, Coolant Packet: \$120 (—/—)



Ice Box



Laser, High-Cycle

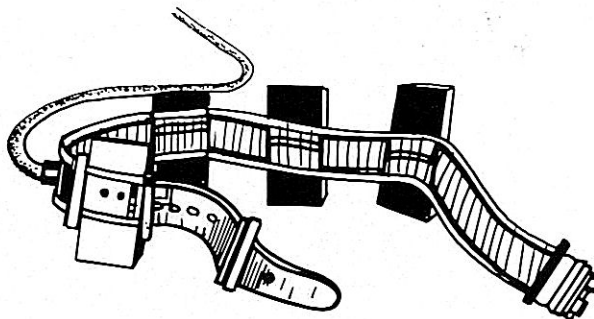
Laser, High-Cycle: Utilizing advanced materials technology and hydrogen fuel cell designs of humanoid ET origin, DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) laboratories have been able to produce a limited number of improved hand-laser systems. The battery pack is now capable of powering 30 shots between recharges, and, even more importantly, the weapon has vastly improved internal components that allow one shot per phase without suffering heat damage. These weapons are not available for private purchase, although very occasionally one might show up on the black market.

Wt: 4.5 kg (Pistol: 1.25 kg, Belt Battery Pack/Capacitor: 3.25 kg)

Mag: Belt pack provides energy for 30 shots

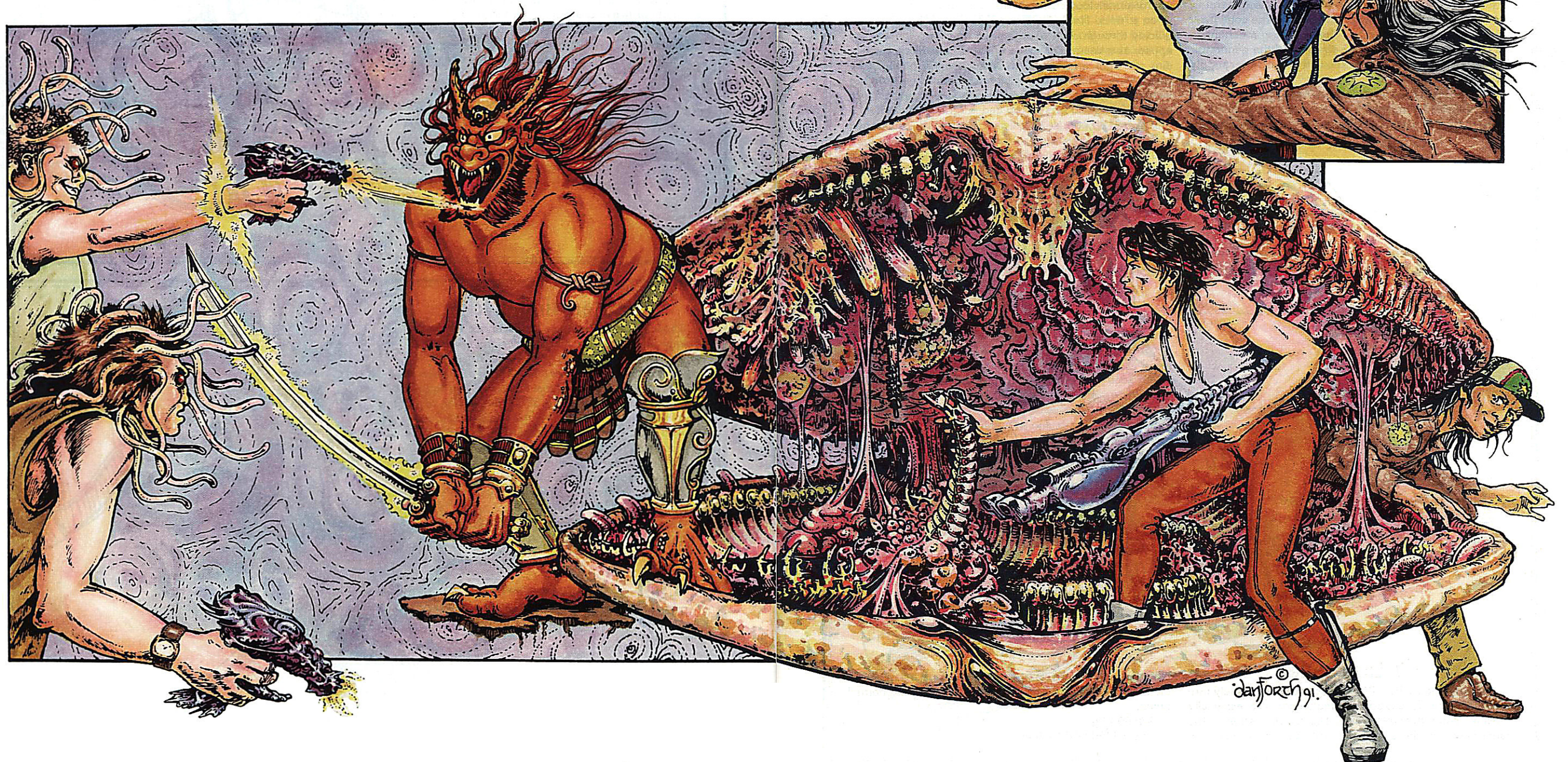
Price: \$350,000 (—/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
HC Laser	1	4	2	3	—	—	—	30



Laser, High-Cycle

This unfortunate woman has grown familiar enough with DarkTek to have become careless of its dangers. While an oni wielding a vampiric sword battles two medusas armed with spectral gatherers, she prepares to steal the oni's folder pod and bolter, unmindful of the slaughterbot-controlled figure stalking her. Even if she manages to escape, however, the use of DarkTek will leave its stain upon her soul.





LazBlinder
and
UV LazBlinder

LazBlinder

LazBlinder: The LazBlinder (laser blinder) is arguably the last (if brutal) word in controlling large, violent crowds. Whereas the generation of a lethal laser beam requires tremendous amounts of power, it is considerably easier to construct a laser that only sears skin tissue slightly. However, given the narrow beam of the laser and its ability to play across a large area with great thoroughness (like the raster in a television tube), this makes the laser a particularly good blinding device since it can hit and burn the retinæ of approaching individuals.

The LazBlinder is little more than a medium-power ruby laser hooked up to a ladar sweeping system. It appears as a large, black-faced and smooth-ended solid cone, mounted above a squat platform (the generator, which is often wreathed in coolant mists). The cone itself does not move; the laser and the sweeping mechanism are contained within it. In the absence of the generator, the weapon can run off of any kilowatt-rated power supply via cable connection.

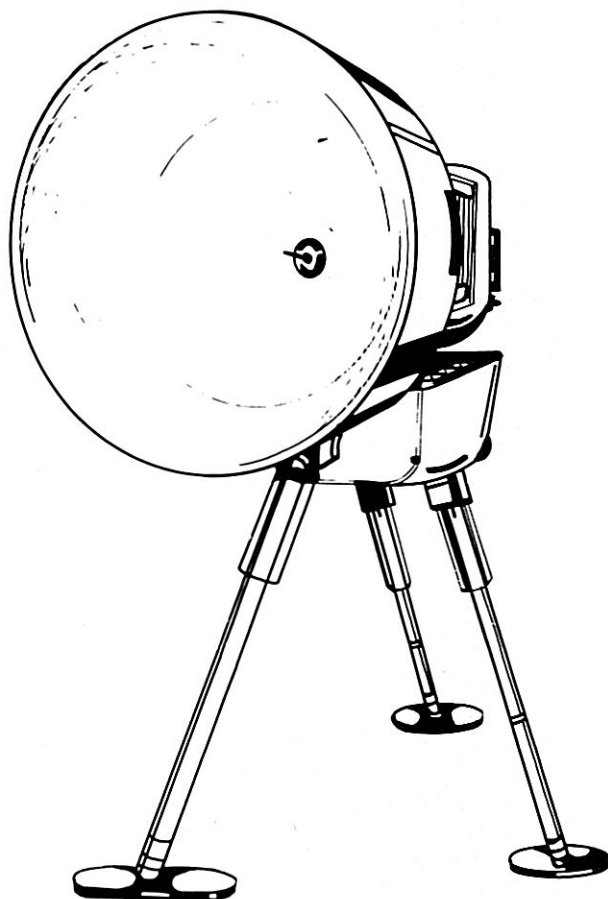
The LazBlinder has an effective range of 100 meters and a long range of 300 meters. It has a triangular area of effect, in which the side opposite the laser itself is always one-half

the length of the legs (so at 10 meters, the area swept is five meters wide; at 50 meters, it is 25 wide, etc.). All targets within the effective-range area must make a Difficult test of Agility to avoid retinal damage; those at long range must make an Easy test. Targets that avoid retinal damage are still blinded for one combat turn (and will have a whopper of a headache for the next hour), unless they roll an outstanding success, in which case they avoid all effects. Individuals who fail their roll must make an Easy test of Constitution to avoid permanent blindness.

Note that there is no to-hit roll necessary when firing the LazBlinder; if people are looking the right direction, they will get hit. In the case of approaching crowds, this means anyone who does not specifically say that they are closing or covering their eyes. If a milling crowd is the target, one-third of all individuals are assumed to be facing the LazBlinder when it fires. Note, however, that the beam moves so quickly through such a large area, that it does not really appear as a beam: The visual effect is more like a wash of dim red light and a sudden, mild heating of the skin. Unknowing individuals may, therefore, actually turn to see where the light is coming from.

Wt: 800 kg

Price: \$135,000 (—/R)



UV LazBlinder

UV LazBlinder: The UV LazBlinder is an extremely rare device designed for use against creatures who are especially sensitive to the effects of ultraviolet light. It affects them in the same way that the standard LazBlinder affects humans,

though at only half the range. Against humans, it has exactly the same effects as a normal LazBlinder, including normal range.

Wt: 800 kg

Price: \$380,000 (—/—)

Machete, Microfilament

Machete, Microfilament: Also erroneously referred to as a monomolecular blade, the microfilament machete—an ET cutting tool—is actually about three to four molecules wide. The machete is one meter in length and is made of a carbon-fiber/advanced plastic compound that holds its shape well even under stress. The blade itself is invisible to the naked eye, and users gauge their swings with a small, spherical, red marker that caps its end. (Some grimly fey users have dubbed the machete the “bouncing ball.”)

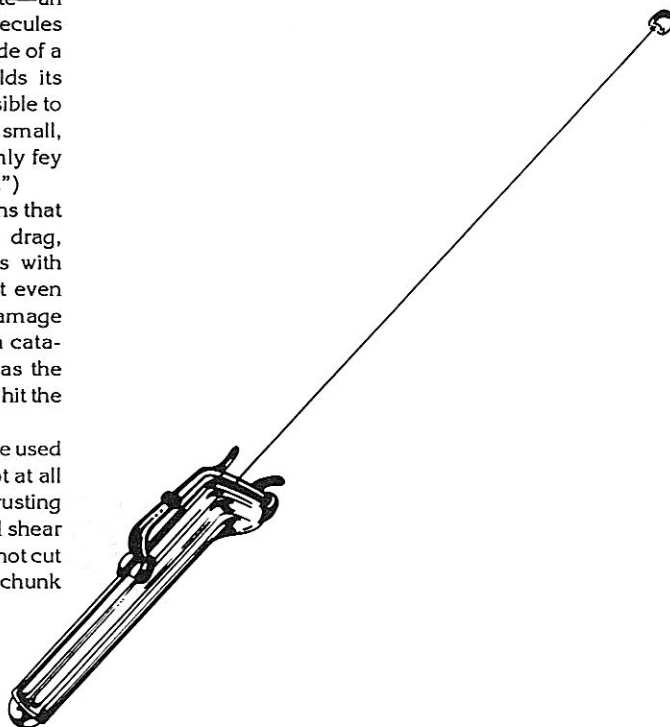
The machete’s incredible thinness not only means that it is terribly sharp, but also that it has very little drag, allowing it to pass through very hard substances with considerable ease. This gives it the capacity to cut even through heavy armor, although this reduces the damage significantly. The machete’s one drawback is that a catastrophic failure by a user indicates that not only has the blade missed its target, it has also whipped around to hit the user.

Note that a microfilament machete is too light to be used as a blocking weapon in melee combat. Also, it is not at all a piercing weapon; the ball on the end prevents thrusting penetration. Rather, it is a swinging weapon. It could shear through the trunk of a sapling, for instance, but could not cut a flat surface such as a wall (although it could cut a chunk from an edge or corner).

Wt: 0.5 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod	Damage
Machete, microfilament	L	+2	9D6



Machete,
Microfilament



Minisaw

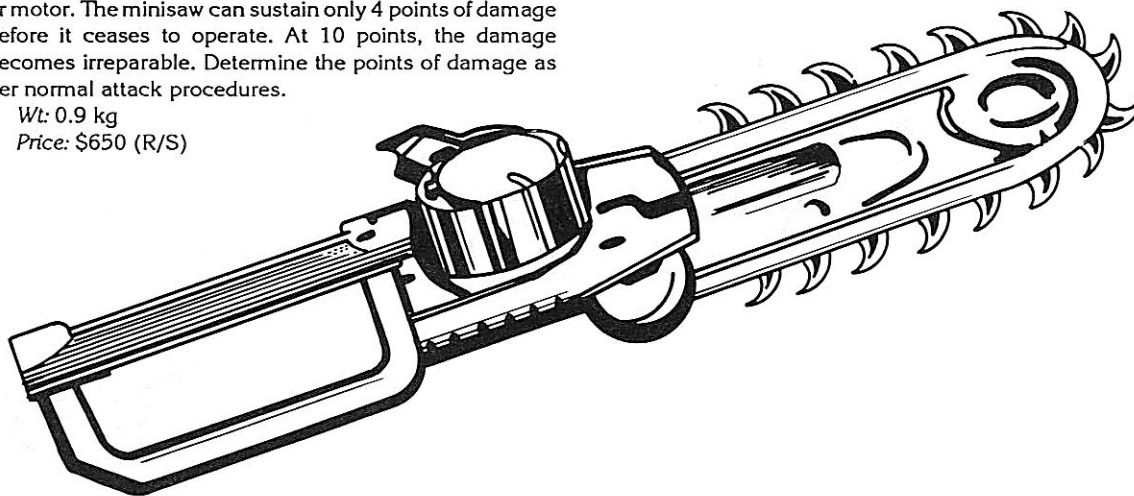
Minisaw: The minisaw is a small chainsaw that is a gruesome gang weapon, popular in some European metroplexes. Sporting a pistol grip and wrist brace, the minisaw creates its mayhem with a six-inch circular blade made from carbon composites bonded and an alloy mesh.

The minisaw has an internal battery giving it one minute (12 phases) of use, or it can be powered from a belt pack that has a life of 15 minutes. The only drawback is that any attack blocked by the minisaw is likely to damage its blade or motor. The minisaw can sustain only 4 points of damage before it ceases to operate. At 10 points, the damage becomes irreparable. Determine the points of damage as per normal attack procedures.

Wt: 0.9 kg

Price: \$650 (R/S)

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod	Damage
Minisaw	S	-1	4D6



Minisaw



Resonator

Resonator

Resonator: This device employs harmonic resonance to shatter inanimate objects (the larger and more rigid, the easier) and to cause neural disorder in biots. The operation of this device depends upon a "cyborg" revision of the same creature that makes the sleeper possible (see page 20). In this case, the Dark Minions use their version of this creature to establish the harmonic resonance and vibratory characteristics of the target object. This determined, harmonically disruptive sound waves are emitted to shatter or perturb the target.

In the case of rigid objects, this results in an explosive effect. A rigid object is defined as anything which displays minimal or no plasticity (i.e., no imprint can be made by pressure; the material is unyielding. In the case of nonrigid—or essentially plastic—objects, the outcome depends upon the target). Inanimate objects experience a slight increase in molecular activity, but not much. In living creatures, however, this can produce an effect similar to an epileptic seizure, due to the disruption and disordering of neural transmissions.

User Cost: Recharge, W/Min: 100 (per shot)

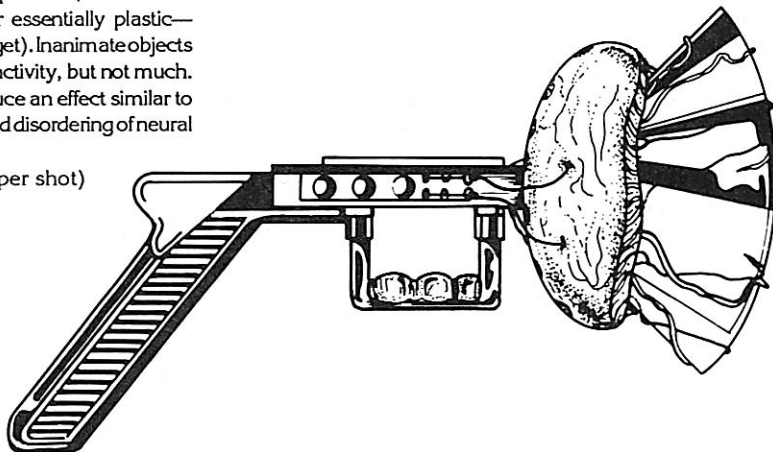
Wt: 1.8 kg

Mag: 10 shots

Price: N/A (—/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Resonator	SA			2	10	1	—	.18
Rigid target		C3 B:12	4C					
Plastic target		*	*					

*A living target that is hit by this weapon is rendered helpless and unable to take any actions in its next phase. Each phase in which the target would act thereafter, a Difficult test of Constitution should be rolled, and if successful, the target recovers. Catastrophic failure means the target is rendered unconscious for the duration of combat.



Shotgun Derringer (S&W Handcannon)

Shotgun Derringer (S&W Handcannon): The Smith & Wesson Handcannon is a shotgun Derringer optimized for right-handed users. This optimization is achieved by a slightly skewed barrel that compensates for the inevitable out-and-up thrust of the recoil. The Handcannon is a favorite with unskilled individuals who need a concealable, lethal weapon that is very likely to score a hit in close quarters.

Ammo: 12 gauge

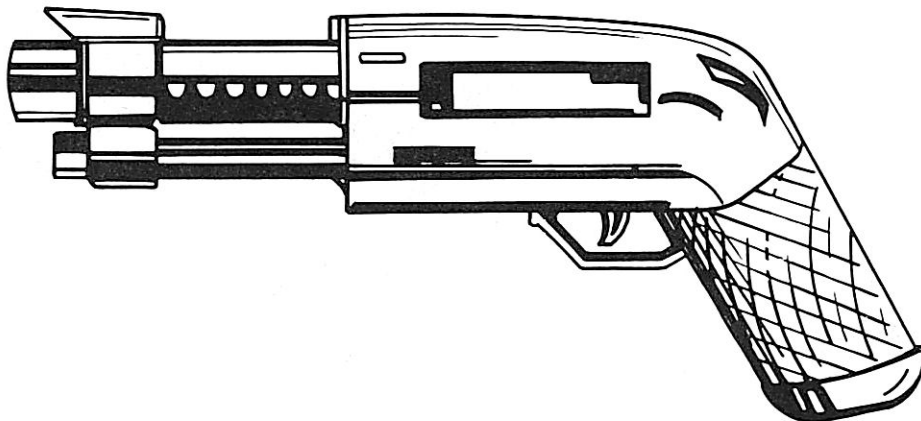
Wt: 0.68 kg

Mag: 1 individual

Price: \$325 (R/S)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Handcannon	SS	5	3-4-Nil	1	1i	9	—	2
Short	SS	9	Nil					
w/buckshot*								
Medium	5x10	1	Nil					
w/buckshot*								

*See Shotguns on page 91 of Dark Conspiracy.



Shotgun Derringer
(S&W
Handcannon)

Shotgun, Sawed-Off

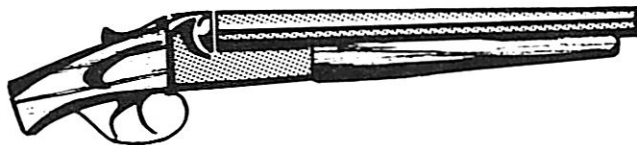
Shotgun, Sawed-Off: Also known as “whippit guns”—because of the ease with which you can “whip it out” from under a raincoat or long jacket—sawed-off shotguns are not normally sold on the open market. This is because they are highly illegal under most jurisdictions. Consequently, the weapons are usually made by buying a standard shotgun, and cutting the barrel and stock off with a hacksaw (the price and availability given below are for a weapon purchased on the black market). Their advantage is their ease of concealment and devastating firepower at close range; their disadvantages are that their range is so short and that they are almost uncontrollable, even when fired with both hands.

Ammo: 12 gauge

Wt: 2.5 kg

Mag: 2 individual

Price: \$475 (—/S)



Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Sawed-off	SA	4	3-4-Nil	3	2i	7	—	6
Short	SA	9	Nil					
w/buckshot*								
Medium	5x10	1	Nil					
w/buckshot*								

*See Shotguns on page 91 of Dark Conspiracy.



Shotgun, Sawed-Off



SOCCM

SOCCM: The SOCCM (sonic crowd control machine) is a powerful (if harsh) crowd control device. A larger version of the sonic stunner (see page 52), it is less potent against individuals, but capable of covering a much wider area. This weapon causes targets to experience headache, disorientation, and irritability, though not unconsciousness. The effects last as long as the SOCCM is active and for 30 seconds thereafter.

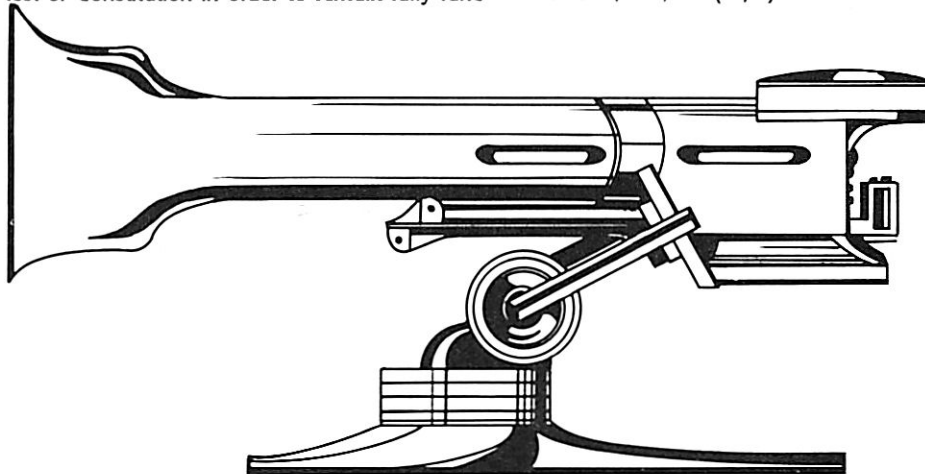
The device's area of effect is a forward-projecting cone 100 meters in length and 50 meters wide at the terminus. Individuals in the machine's area of effect must succeed at a Difficult test of Constitution in order to remain fully func-

tional. (Any sound-protective headgear reduces this test to Average difficulty, and sound-protective headgear that fully encloses the head makes it an Easy test.) Any targets that do not succeed at this roll suffer a penalty of -2 to their Initiative, AGL, STR, and all related skills for the duration of the SOCCM's operation and for 30 seconds thereafter.

Individuals who have been repeatedly “socked” tend to become jittery and/or violent (medical experts are trying to pin down the precise reason for this reaction), as do SOCCM operators after a period of time. But many megacorps continue to use the system freely for dispersing crowds.

Wt: 175 kg

Price: \$372,500 (—/S)



SOCCM



Sonic Stunner

Sonic Stunner

Sonic Stunner: This weapon does not cause unconsciousness, but generates a nonlethal level of neurological disorder in its targets, lasting for approximately 30 seconds. Individuals who have been hit must roll a Difficult test of Constitution in order to remain functional. Even if they succeed, they suffer a penalty of -2 to their Initiative, AGL, STR, and all related skills for 30 seconds, unless they rolled an outstanding success, in which case they suffer only a -1. Even the device's operator must make an Easy test of Constitution to avoid its effects.

The stunner's muzzle is comprised of a long, bell-shaped device that focuses sound waves, giving the weapon a distinctive and decidedly futuristic-looking appearance. The magazine is a battery pack worn on the belt and connected to the stunner by a power cable. It holds power enough for 10 shots and can be recharged from any standard electrical outlet at a rate of five minutes per shot.

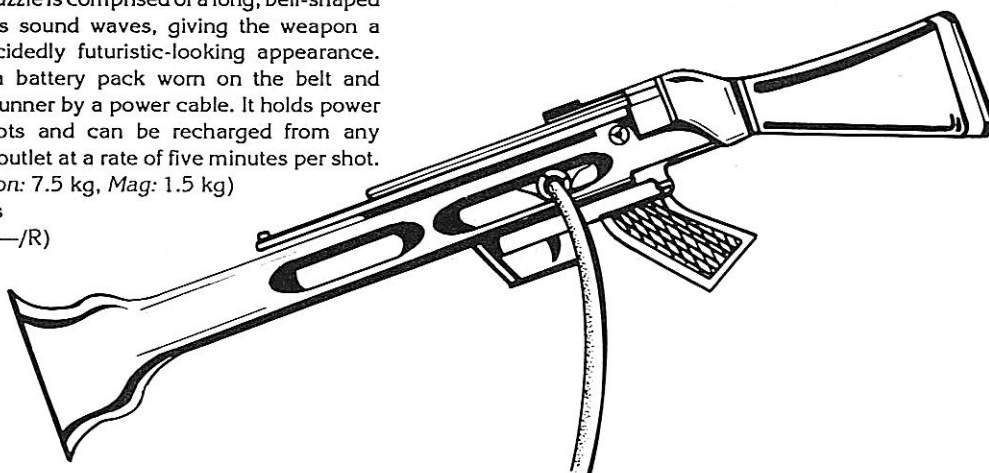
Wt: 9 kg (Weapon: 7.5 kg, Mag: 1.5 kg)

Mag: 10 charges

Price: \$23,000 (—/R)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Sonic stunner	1	*	*	5	10	—	—	25

*See text description.



Speargun

Speargun: This weapon is used for spear fishing and, occasionally, self-defense. The cartridge is good for three shots.

Ammo: Light underwater spear

Wt: 1.75 kg (0.4 kg per spear)

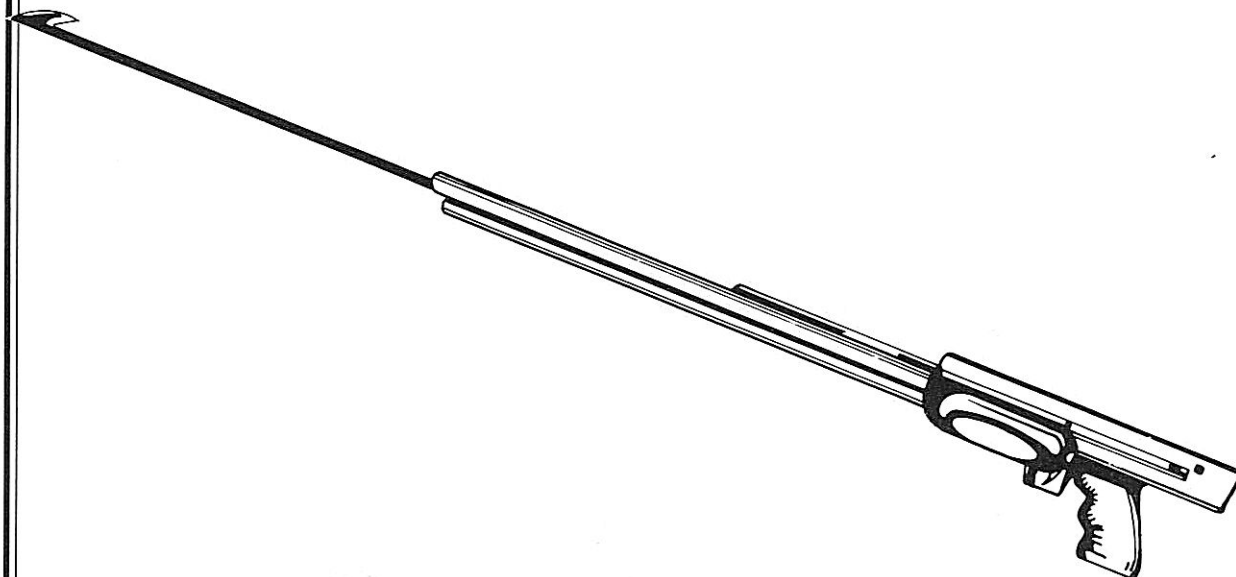
Mag: 1 integral

Price: \$275 (\$22 per spear) (C/V)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Speargun	SS	-1*	Nil	4	1i	2	—	6**

*1 if used out of water.

**8 if used out of water.



Speargun



Spectral Gatherer

Spectral Gatherer: A bulbous and vaguely pistol-like biomechanism, the spectral gatherer is designed to gather all available energy emissions from any part of the electromagnetic spectrum when activated, then store that energy for later release as a focused beam, usually laser or heat rays. This highly destructive energy release likely forms the basis of many myths that portray human wizards as casting bolts of energy or lightning.

Charging the gatherer initiates a distinctive effect: Intense darkness and cold suddenly pervade its area of operation (six-meter diameter). The humidity content of the air immediately converts to snow, and the dramatic thermal differential causes wind to rush into the area of effect. Note that the user can easily see out of the sphere, since the visible light is still heading *into* the sphere, but electromagnetic emissions passing out of or through the sphere are dimmed to the point of absolute blackness at the device's primary intake port.

Firing the gatherer releases a destructive beam. The device cannot both charge and fire within the same phase.

The gatherer powers itself with two essential forms of energy: thermal and light. Therefore, its actual performance will depend upon current environmental conditions. Listed at right are a number of sample conditions and the number of charges that a gatherer would draw in from them per five-second phase.

Fortunately for individuals who are proximal to the user, the gatherer does not steal heat directly from their bodies; it can only gather radiant energy. However, the intense cold of the device's area of effect will obviously be felt.

Ammo: Ambient electromagnetic energy

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
						SS	Brst	Rng
SG	SA			2	10*			
Laser		8	2		1**	—	—	50
Heat bolt		22	3		5**	—	—	20

*Magazine charge capacity—how many charges (maximum) this weapon can store.

**Charges consumed per shot.

Sample Conditions and Charges per Combat Phase

Ambient Light Energy Levels	Charges Gained per Phase
High-power spotlight/summer sun	3
Bright/noon	2
Normal interior/late afternoon	1
Dim/dusk	0.5
Dark/night	0

Ambient Thermal Energy Levels	Charges Gained per Phase
30° C	2
21–25° C	1.5
10–20° C	1
5–9° C	0.5
0–4° C	0



Stun Gun, ET

Stun Gun, ET

Stun Gun, ET: This two-barreled gun, which looks like some strange hybrid between a bizarre tail pipe and an enigmatic tool, is a highly efficient stunning weapon. When activated, one barrel fires a small IR laser; the low heat it generates is used both to plasmate the column of air between the weapon and the target, and to act as an aiming beam. Immediately afterward (less than 0.0001 seconds), the second barrel fires a focused bolt of electricity, which follows the plasmated air column to the target (the path of least resistance).

If hit by an ET stun gun, the victim must make a Difficult test of CON to remain conscious. If this is not successful, the target is rendered unconscious for five minutes. Targets who do succeed with the CON roll suffer a -2 to their Initiative and Agility for six phases (30 seconds), unless they make an outstanding success, in which case the reduction is merely -1. If a target who is still suffering the effects of one stun is hit again, a catastrophic failure indicates that the individual has gone into cardiac arrest.

The weapon's accuracy is severely degraded in vacuum, its range being reduced to 10 percent of normal. In water, the weapon creates a globe effect with a radius of 10 meters.

Humanoid ETs make frequent use of stun guns when acquiring live test subjects or conducting missions that require a very low profile. (Stun guns don't leave victims with any evidence of ET involvement: The only mark left on the target looks more like the result of contact with a hot stove than with ETs.)

User Cost: Recharge, W/Min: 1000 (per shot)

Ammo: —

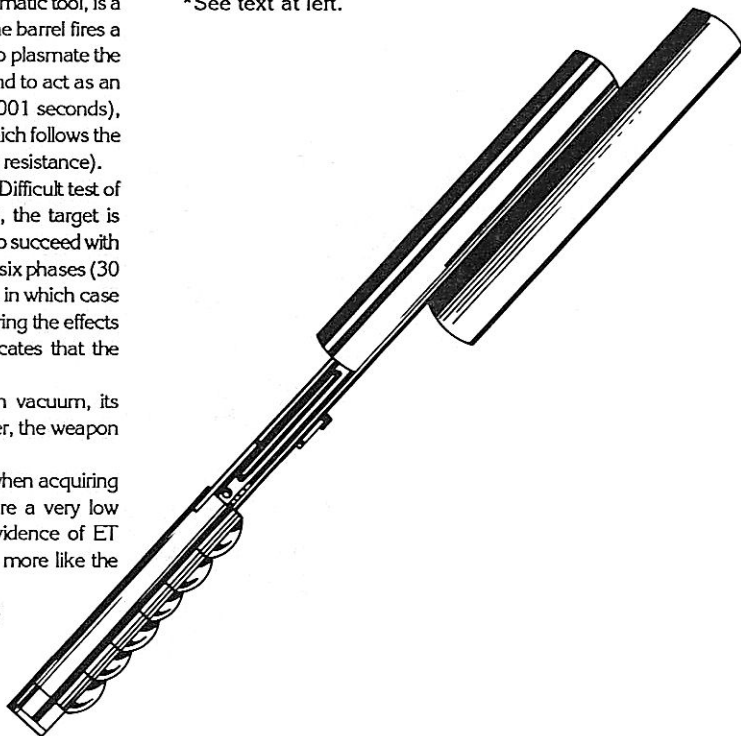
Wt: 2.2 kg

Mag: 40 shots (40,000 W/Min)

Price: N/A (—/—)

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	—Recoil—		
ET stun gun	SA	*	Nil	2	40i	SS	Brst	Rng
						—	—	35

*See text at left.



Stun Stick

Stun Stick: The stun stick is an increasingly common sight in the hands of law enforcement officials throughout the US. Its weapon characteristics are equivalent to a normal club, but with the addition of a stunning charge of electricity, one that represents a major advancement over previous hand-held electric stunners. The stun stick resembles a police nightstick that is covered by a grid of small metal studs along its striking surface. These studs serve as both contact sensors and conduction points. When the stick is activated and strikes an object, a microprocessor registers pressure on the studs and sends a jolt of electricity through those making the best contact.

The resulting shock can be set from mild discomfort to incapacitation (which can also cause cardiac arrest in susceptible individuals). The club has an internal battery sufficient for two heavy charges (called "zaps") or as many as 20 light taps ("zips"). But most frequently, the weapon is powered by a belt pack and cable unit (providing 10 times the capacity of the internal battery).

An individual hit by a full-power zap (zips merely cause pain) must succeed at a Difficult test of Constitution in order to remain conscious. Individuals who fail the roll can make another Difficult test of CON at the beginning of each new combat turn to regain consciousness. Characters who remain conscious (or regain consciousness) suffer a -2 penalty to Initiative and Agility for one combat turn (outstanding success at the roll reduces the penalty to -1).

Note that while stun sticks were originally restricted for police use, some locales are now allowing civilian ownership.

Wt: 1.2 kg

Price: \$250 (—/R)

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod	Damage
Stun stick	S	0	*

*See text at left for stun effects. If used as a club, see club stats, page 323 of Dark Conspiracy.



Stun Stick

Vampiric Sword

Vampiric Sword: Also known as IceBlade or LifeDrinker, the vampiric sword is a favorite melee weapon of the oldest pale. The swords are living entities in their own right, metallic creatures garnered by the pale from some distant dimension and forged into blades by humans kept captive for specifically that purpose.

The sword entity itself survives by absorbing heat from living creatures. In its native dimension, it resembles a porous, metallic "walking stick" insect a meter in length. The creature feeds by impaling its victim's body with its needle-sharp head, then soaking up heat from the blood that spills over it. Like the pale, these creatures can only feed on heat from living creatures; unlike the pale, they can survive intense environmental heat without damage.

To prepare a vampiric sword, a pale must first capture one of the walking stick creatures (a dangerous proposition) and empathically enslave it. This forms a bond that holds the creature in a state of stasis, keeping it alive during forging. This same bond allows the pale to absorb living heat from the sword after forging, even as the sword draws heat from its victims.

When a vampiric sword strikes a living target, calculate the melee damage normally (i.e., a pale's Strength of 8, plus 1D6). *In addition*, the sword drains from the victim a number of degrees Centigrade equal to one-fourth the melee damage done (or degrees Fahrenheit equal to one-half the damage done) each phase that the sword remains in contact with the victim. (The sword can automatically remain in contact with a prone or helpless victim; active victims automatically break contact.) One half this heat (rounded down) is transmitted to the pale; the remainder feeds the sword. Effects of heat loss on humans and the benefits a pale gains from absorbed heat are explained on pages 226-27 of the Dark Conspiracy rules.

In appearance, vampiric swords are of one contiguous piece (blade, crossguard, and hilt), in which the lines of the walking stick creature's limbs, eyes, and antennae can still be vaguely seen.

Occasionally, creatures other than the pale may capture and wield a vampiric sword. If such wielders succeed at a test of one-fourth their Empathy rating, they can empathically control the sword. As a result, they can prevent the sword from draining their own body heat as they hold it. Otherwise, bare-handed contact with the sword will drain body heat from the wielder at a rate of 1° C (2° F) per phase. (Of course, gloves could be worn to prevent this.) Also, wielders who fail to control the sword will themselves suffer a Control cost, representing the fact that whenever they encounter Dark Minions, the sword works empathically to weaken their Willpower.

User Cost: Detection 10, Control 2*, Heat Loss*

Wt: 2.5 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)

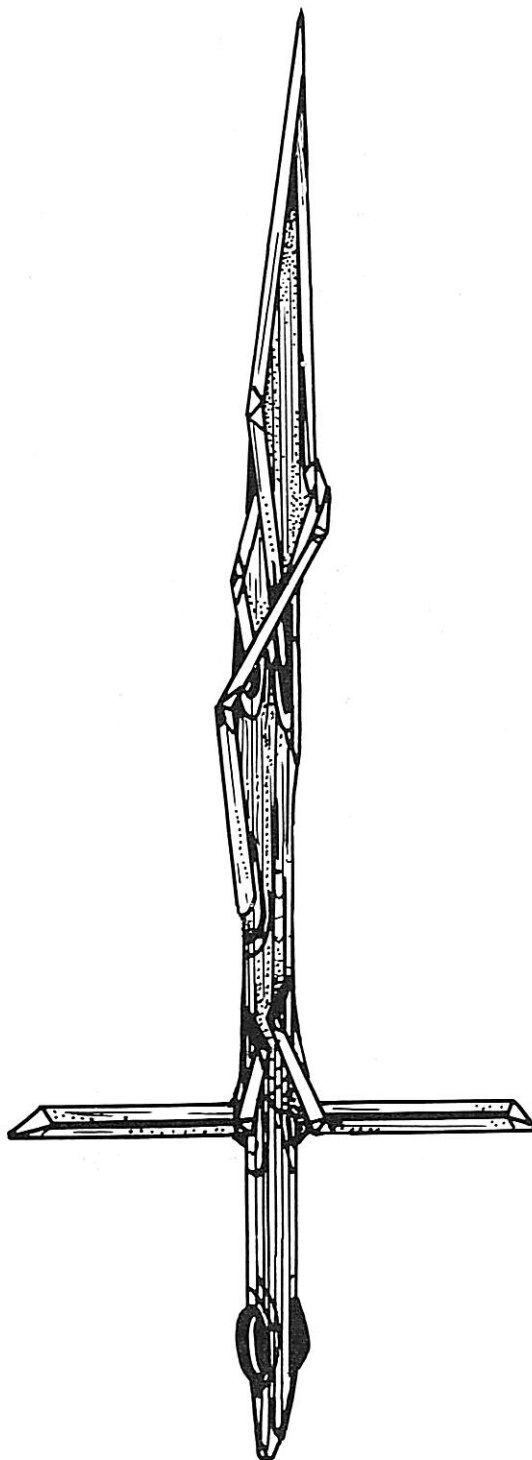
*These are special costs that result if the user fails to empathically control the sword. See the text above for an explanation.

Weapon	Range	Hit Mod	Damage
Vampiric sword	L	+2	1D6+STR*

*Plus body heat drain—see text at left.



Vampiric Sword

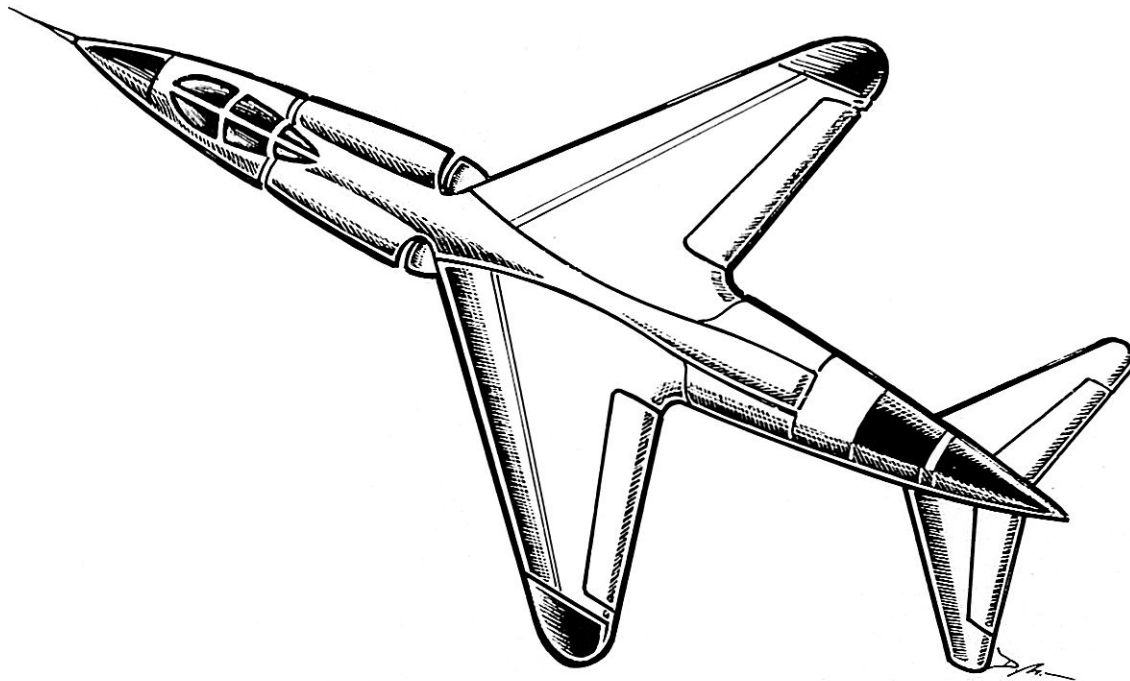


VEHICLES



There is nothing on Earth that has not been affected, whether directly or indirectly, by the Dark Minion invasion. This is as true for transportation as for anything else. In this chapter, you will find vehicles that range from luxury planes for the gnomes who prosper from the Greater Depression, to creatures the Dark Minions themselves use to travel space and the proto-dimensions.

Ild



Price: \$1,100,000 (—/S)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: AvG

Load: 500 kg

Veh Wt: 5.6 tons

Crew: 2 (2+3 if no load)

Night Vision: None

Min. Runway, Takeoff: 24 m

Min. Runway, Land: 24 m

Ild: The Petrel Ild is one of the smallest of the VTOL aircraft and it is finding its way into the hands of a number of private owners. The craft is a commercial outgrowth of one of the earliest VTOL craft—the larger Osprey—and is known for its maneuverability, reliability and lamentably cramped crew appointments.

A common addition to the Ild's basic configuration are 250-liter, external fuel tanks to extend the craft's flight duration (\$250 each).

Cruise Speed: 525

Com Move: 60

Fuel Cap: 2400

Fuel Cons: 400

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐

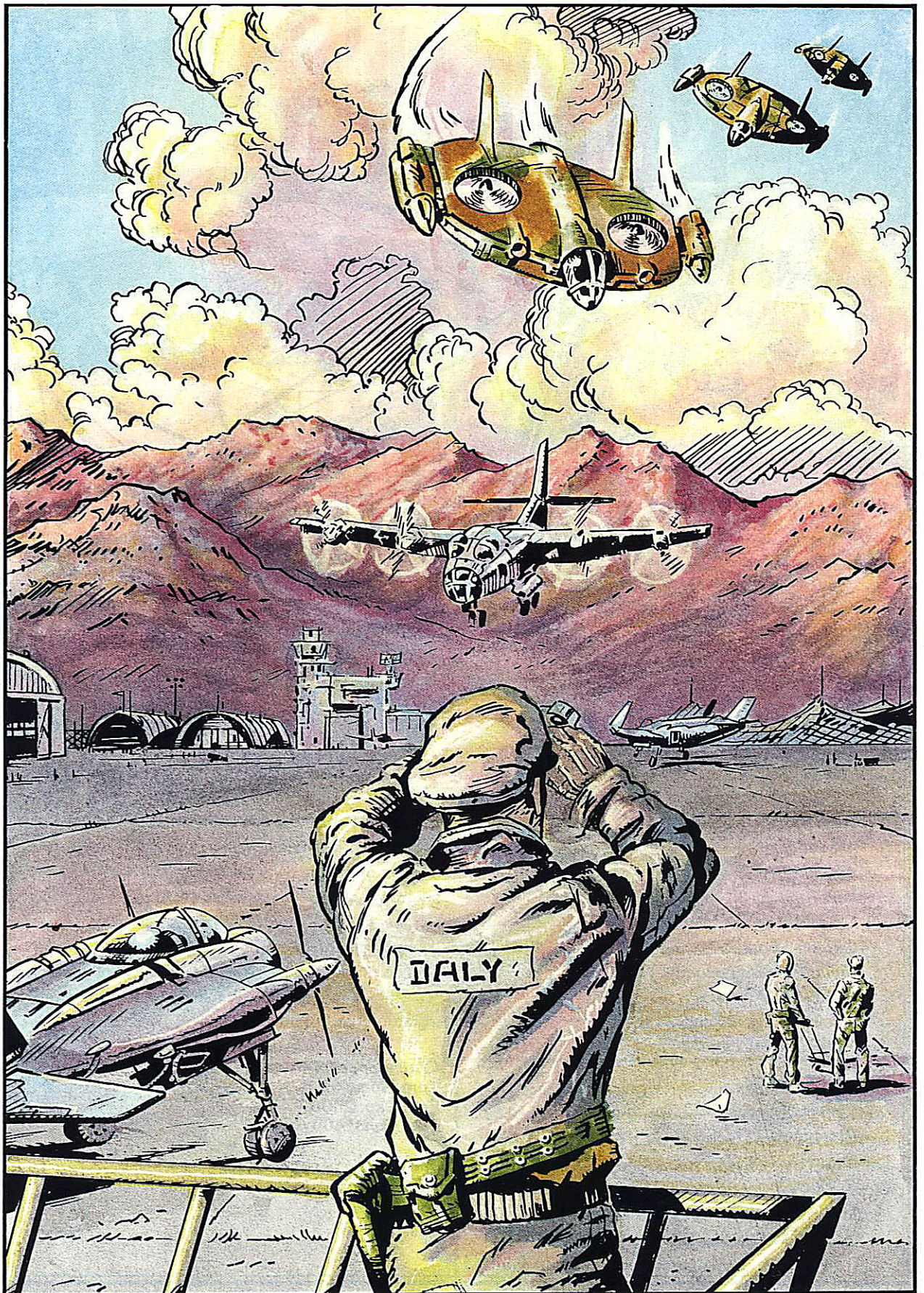
Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐

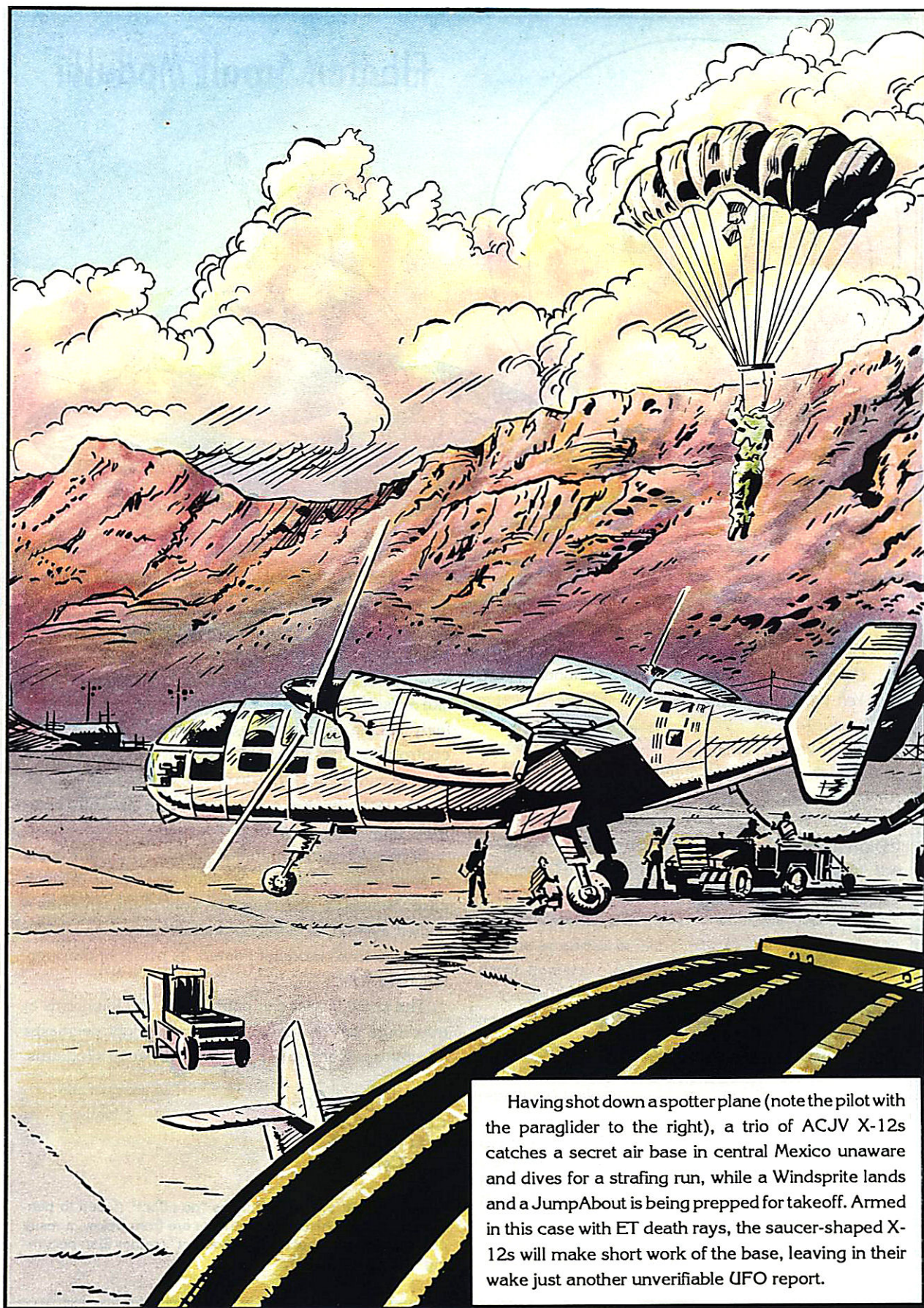
Radio: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Wings: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

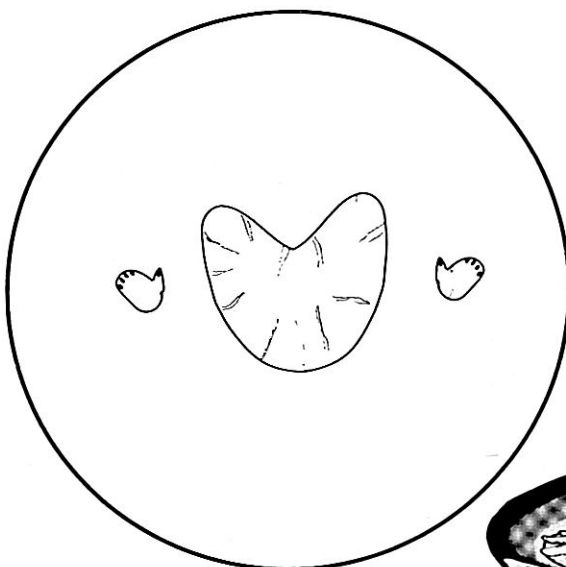




Having shot down a spotter plane (note the pilot with the paraglider to the right), a trio of ACJV X-12s catches a secret air base in central Mexico unaware and dives for a strafing run, while a Windsprite lands and a JumpAbout is being prepped for takeoff. Armed in this case with ET death rays, the saucer-shaped X-12s will make short work of the base, leaving in their wake just another unverifiable UFO report.



Floater, Small Modular



Overhead View



Floater, Small Modular

Price: N/A (—/—)
 Armament: None
 Ammo: N/A
 Fuel Type: Unknown
 Load: 150 kg (~10% speed per additional 15 kg)
 Veh Wt: 100 kg
 Crew: 1
 Night Vision: None
 Min. Runway, Takeoff: 0 m
 Min. Runway, Land: 0 m

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐
 Engine: ☐

Floater, Small Modular: The small modular floater is a common device among ETs, particularly those of the humanoid variety. It is a small, antigravity device that can provide air mobility to a variety of automated devices, as well as individual ETs. The craft is shaped like a disc. Controlling the floater is accomplished via a fairly simple touchpad arrangement. The right hand controls compass heading; the left governs altitude change and speed. When in operation, the floater emits a high-pitched whine, and the underside gives off a blue-white glow that is slightly radioactive.

Some remotely controlled robots (see the Robots chapter, page 76) can be mounted on a floater, in which case the remote operators can control the whole as a unified system. In addition, individual humanoid ETs often use small modular floaters as personal transportation devices.

The small floater can carry up to 150 kilograms at maximum performance. Additional weight decreases the craft's performance by 10 percent per 15 kilograms.

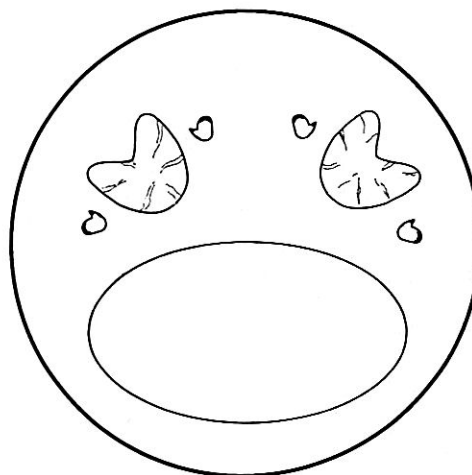
Cruise Speed: 105
 Com Move: 12
 Fuel Cap: N/A
 Fuel Cons: N/A

Note: Treat all "wing" hits as "no effect" (failed to penetrate the hull). Also, when attacks are from below, a result of "2 passengers" becomes "no effect" (rather than becoming "1 crewmember").

Floater, Large Modular



Floater, Large Modular



Overhead View



Price: N/A (—/—)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: Unknown

Load: 600 kg (–10% speed per additional 60 kg)

Veh Wt: 250 kg

Crew: 2+7

Night Vision: None

Min. Runway, Takeoff: 0 m

Min. Runway, Land: 0 m

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐

Engine: ☐

Floater, Large Modular: This device is simply a larger version of the small floater (see previous page). It can accommodate up to 600 kilograms. For every 60 kilograms over this limit, performance drops by 10 percent. The large floater is generally used as the propulsion module for warbots and buildbots (see the Robots chapter, page 76). In addition, these floaters can be arranged in 2x2 clusters to create extra-large cargo floaters.

Large floaters come equipped with a very simple, internal, artificial intelligence system which is only useful to provide remote operators with a control link or to program the vehicle to perform very basic (and repetitive) tasks.

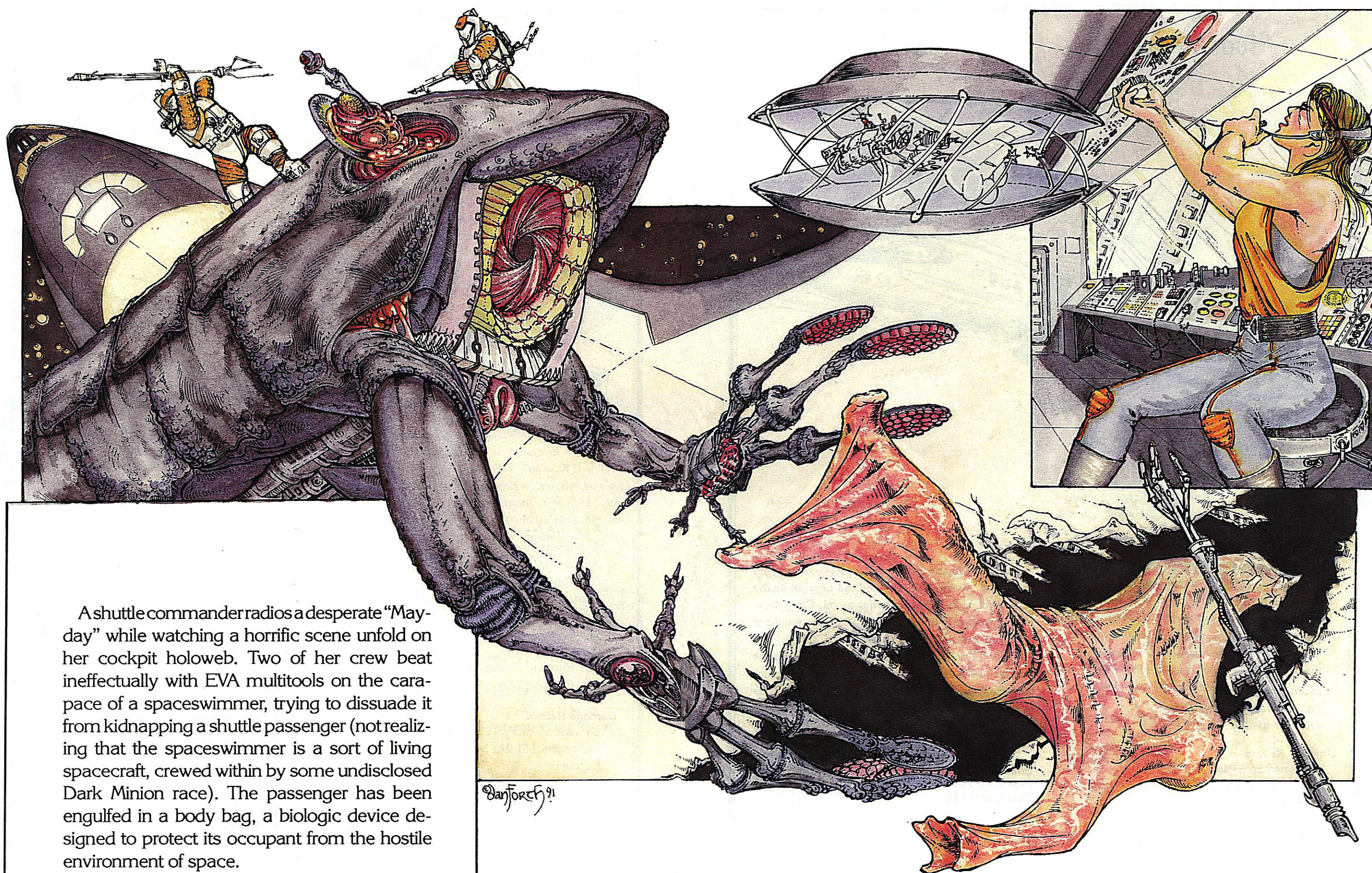
Cruise Speed: 75

Com Move: 10

Fuel Cap: N/A

Fuel Cons: N/A

Note: Treat all “wing” hits as “no effect” (failed to penetrate the hull).

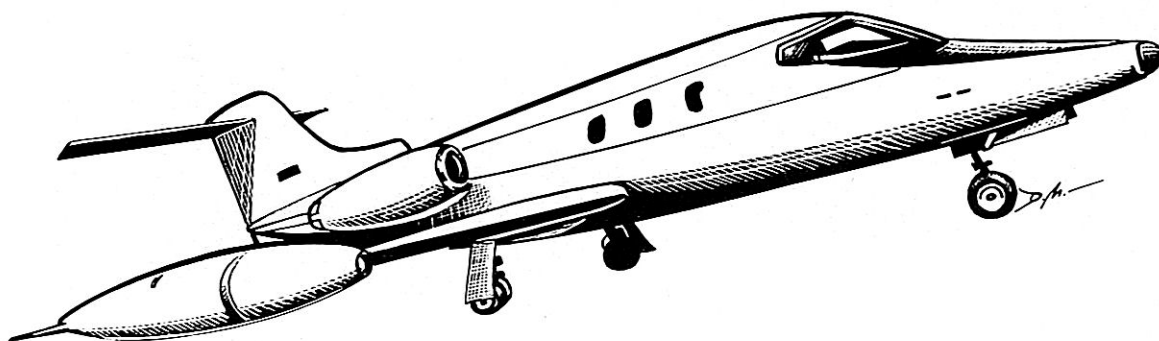


A shuttle command radios a desperate "May-day" while watching a horrific scene unfold on her cockpit holoweb. Two of her crew beat ineffectually with EVA multitools on the carapace of a spaceswimmer, trying to dissuade it from kidnapping a shuttle passenger (not realizing that the spaceswimmer is a sort of living spacecraft, crewed within by some undisclosed Dark Minion race). The passenger has been engulfed in a body bag, a biologic device designed to protect its occupant from the hostile environment of space.

DanForech 91



Javelin



Price: \$3,250,000 (—/R)
 Armament: None
 Ammo: N/A
 Fuel Type: AvG
 Load: 300 kg and 8 passengers
 Veh Wt: 14 tons
 Crew: 2+8
 Night Vision: None
 Min. Runway, Takeoff: 475 m
 Min. Runway, Land: 530 m

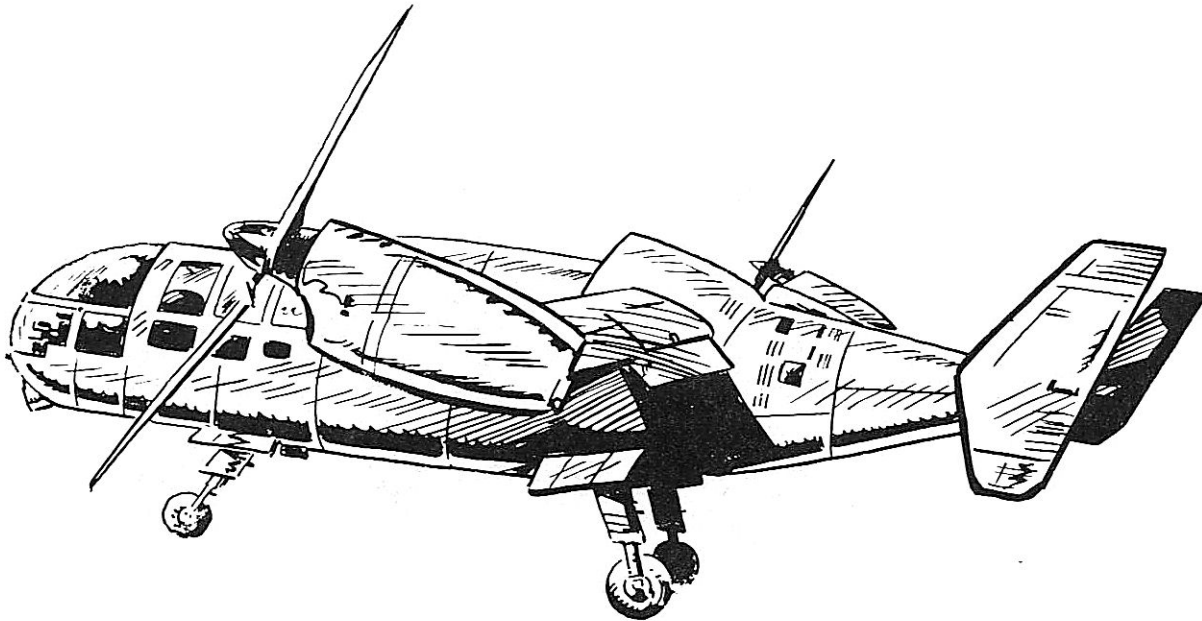
Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐
 Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐
 Radio: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
 Wings: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

Javelin: With the dawning of the 21st century, the Lockheed Javelin has replaced the Lear jet as the symbol of high-class, personal travel. Capable of attaining speeds in excess of 1500 kilometers per hour, the Javelin is lavishly appointed, surprisingly agile, and dependable. However, it is an expensive aircraft—both in terms of purchase price and maintenance fees. While not prone to in-flight failure, its systems are quite sophisticated and require constant care.

Cruise Speed: 1125
 Com Move: 155
 Fuel Cap: 7000
 Fuel Cons: 1400

JumpAbout



Price: \$1,750,000 (—/S)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: AvG

Load: 3000 kg

Veh Wt: 20 tons

Crew: 2 (+15, if no load)

Night Vision: None

Min. Runway, Takeoff: 40 m

Min. Runway, Land: 40 m

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐
10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐

Radio: ☐

Waist Gun 1: ☐

Waist Gun 2: ☐

Ammo: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐☐

Wings: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

JumpAbout: Another example of a VTOL craft, the Sikorsky-Fleetcraft JumpAbout has become a ubiquitous sight in metroplexes and vertiports throughout America, and is becoming increasingly common in Europe and Japan. While not offering much in the way of amenities, the JumpAbout can be easily reconfigured for either passenger or cargo hauling, and a number of nations and megacorporations have adopted it as a troop carrier. Its reputation for sturdiness and reliability have stood up to the rigors of combat without fail. Mounting slots for pintels (equivalent to NHT) are provided at the waist doors on either side.

Cruise Speed: 410

Com Move: 55

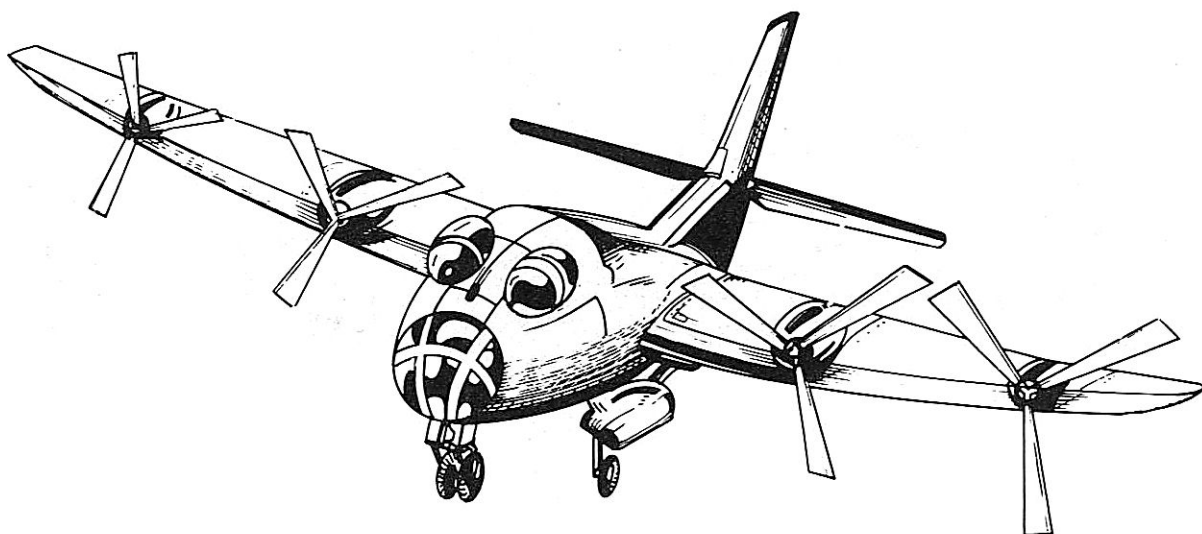
Fuel Cap: 8000

Fuel Cons: 615





Windsprite



Price: \$6,000,000 (—/S)
 Armament: None
 Ammo: N/A
 Fuel Type: AvG
 Load: 750 kg
 Veh Wt: 38 tons
 Crew: 3+30
 Night Vision: None
 Min. Runway, Takeoff: 1010 m
 Min. Runway, Land: 600 m

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Pilot ☐ Copilot ☐ Navigator ☐
 Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐
 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12 ☐ 13 ☐ 14 ☐ 15 ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐
 18 ☐ 19 ☐ 20 ☐ 21 ☐ 22 ☐ 23 ☐ 24 ☐ 25 ☐
 26 ☐ 27 ☐ 28 ☐ 29 ☐ 30 ☐
 Radio: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐
 Wings: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

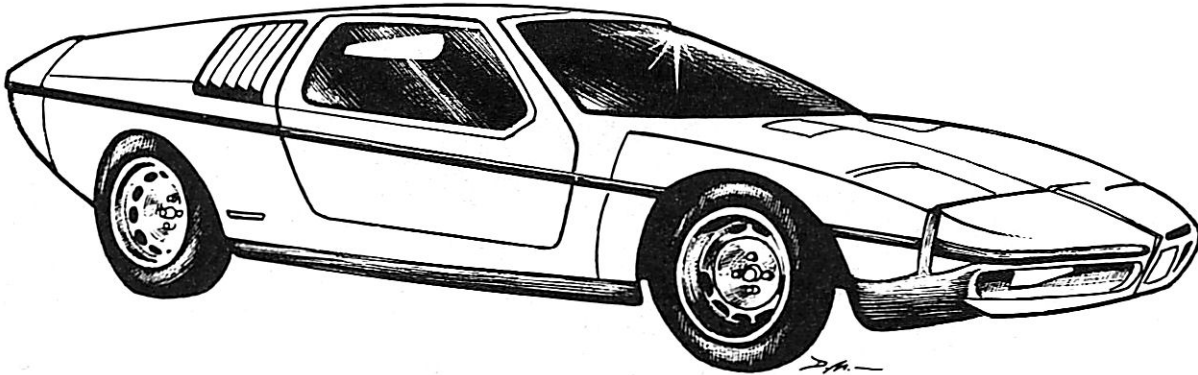
Windsprite: A low-end passenger model, the Boeing Windsprite is a 30-seater that offers a smooth ride, amenities equivalent to coach class in an airliner, and a less expensive price tag than its upscale VTOL competition (such as the Lockheed Javelin (see page 64). It also comes in a seaplane version (which is reported to be quite popular with smugglers).

Cruise Speed: 450
 Com Move: 60
 Fuel Cap: 15,000
 Fuel Cons: 1365

1700xhi



1700xhi



Price: \$190,000 (—/R)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: Liquid hydrogen

Load: 250 kg

Veh Wt: 1.4 tons

Crew: 1+3

Night Vision: Headlights

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐

Sight/Vision: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel(% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

1700xhi: The BMW 1700xhi (or "17-shy," as many auto enthusiasts refer to it) is a radical automotive design, incorporating a liquid hydrogen-burning, mid-body engine. The cryofuel tank is mounted in the rear, well-protected by heavy plating—and baffled for upward-directed explosive blowout in the event of an accident. However, in general, the 1700xhi has proven to be a safe—as well as luxurious—car. Performance certainly does not match that of top-shelf sports cars of conventional design, and the liquid hydrogen fuel is a rarity (available only from special facilities). But the 1700xhi represents a tremendous step forward in terms of reducing dependence upon petroleum products. It also affords users vastly increased range on a single tank of fuel, which is known as "lide" (from "L-Hyd," for liquid hydrogen).

Cruise Speed: 260/25

Com Move: 65/5

Fuel Cap: 60

Fuel Cons: 8

Combat Statistics

Config: Stnd HF: 1

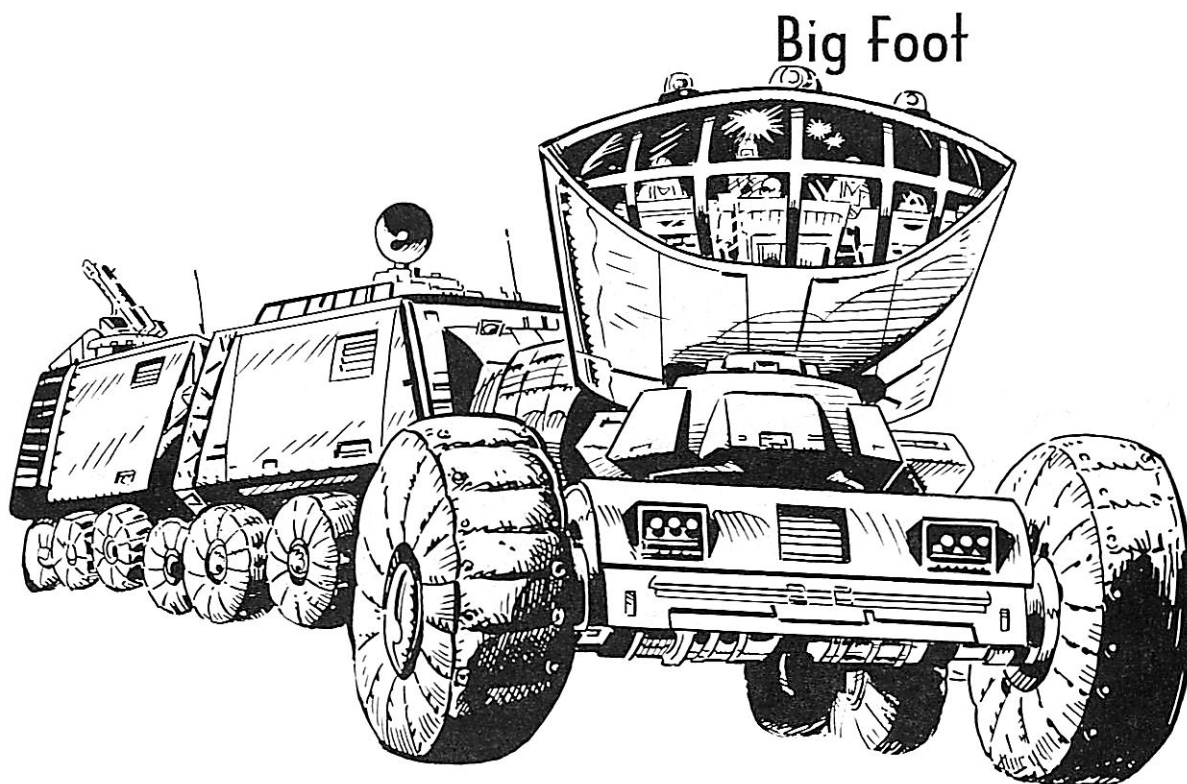
Susp: W (3) HS: 1

HR: 1





Big Foot



Price: \$1,470,000 (—/S)
 Armament: None
 Ammo: N/A
 Fuel Type: G, D
 Load: 6 tons
 Veh Wt: 38 tons
 Crew: 1+4
 Night Vision: Passive IR, floodlights

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver ☐
 Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐
 Sight/Vision: ☐
 Engine: ☐
 Fuel(%ConsumedorDestroyed): ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
 Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Big Foot: The Ingersoll-Rand Big Foot is a six-wheel ATV (all-terrain vehicle) with an articulated chassis (built as three semidiscrete sections), vast self-sealing tires, an advanced hydraulic variable-suspension system, and a powerful hydrojet propulsion system for water operations. The vehicle carries up to five people comfortably, and offers a pressurized environment in segments one (operations) and two (habitation). Segment three is the fuel and power plant section.

Although the vehicle is rated for up to 50 atmospheres of external pressure, it is not designed for use in vacuum (internal structures are not designed to resist outward equalization stresses).

The Big Foot is most noted for its ability to successfully navigate extremely uneven terrain, due to its segmented chassis, which conforms to match the contours of the land.

Cruise Speed: 80/70
 Com Move: 60/55
 Fuel Cap: 7500
 Fuel Cons: 550

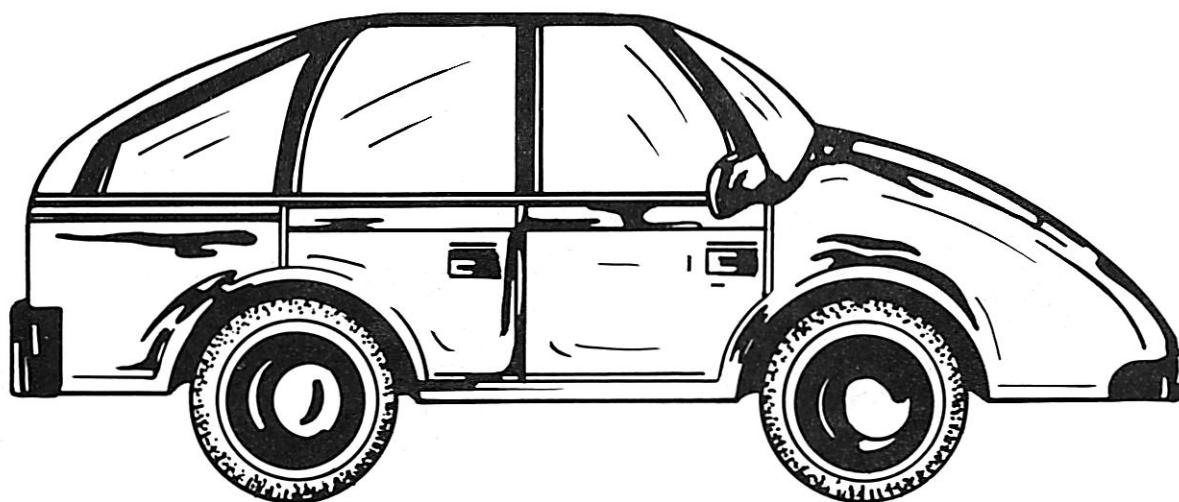
Combat Statistics

Config: Std	HF: 50
Susp: W (3)	HS: 50
	HR: 50

ElectroStar



ElectroStar



Price: \$4600 (S/C)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: AvG

Load: 200 kg

Veh Wt: 0.8 tons

Crew: 1+1 (1+3 if no load)

Night Vision: Headlights

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐

Sight/Vision: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

ElectroStar: With the prices of gasoline-powered automobiles always rising and the requirement for long-distance, commuting vehicles continually dropping, a number of low-end automobile manufacturers have begun to aggressively market electric vehicles. Usually small and without many luxuries, these vehicles nonetheless attract buyers who could not otherwise afford personal transportation.

Lacking the gas costs (an overnight charge with a standard extension cord is all that's needed) and other expenses of a vehicle with a combustion engine, the Subaru ElectroStar is a good example of an average electric "econocar." Two cramped rear seats can be folded down for extra cargo space, which is also accessible by a rear hatch. The greatest drawback is the time it takes to charge the batteries.

Cruise Speed: 160/20

Com Move: 40/5

Fuel Cap: 5-hour charge

Fuel Cons: Special: range 100 km per charge

Combat Statistics

Config: Std HF: 1

Susp: W (2) HS: 1

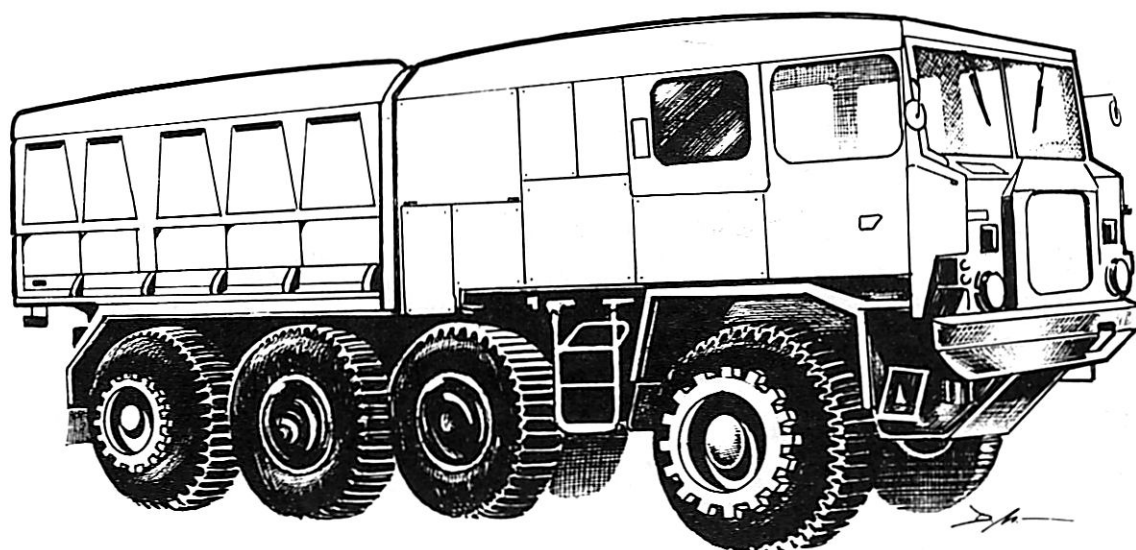
HR: 1





Travelmaster

Travelmaster



Price: \$6,100,000 (—/—)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: G, D

Load: 6500 kg

Veh Wt: 47 tons

Crew: 1+5

Night Vision: Spotlights

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Sight/Vision: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Travelmaster: The Ford Travelmaster is a less unusual design than the Big Foot in all but one regard—it is rated for work in vacuum as well as in up to 60 atmospheres of external pressure. A squat, decidedly ugly unibody chassis surmounts eight roadwheels which contain retractable tires (inflation/deflation is controlled via on-board air tanks). When the tires are deflated and retracted, the first and fourth roadwheels on each side of the vehicle have sprockets that can accept tank-like treads. The middle two wheels (two and three) work as stabilizing, powered rollers.

An EVA chamber at the front of the vehicle can be used as either an airlock or a hyperbaric chamber. The Travelmaster can maintain a crew of up to six and is equipped with special radiation shielding (although long-term exposure at high levels is still not recommended). Rumors have it that a new, hydrogen-burning version of the vehicle—dubbed the Far Travelmaster—is currently being developed by NASA and (oddly enough) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Cruise Speed: 80/30 (60/50 tracked)

Com Move: 60/20 (45/35 tracked)

Fuel Cap: 6000

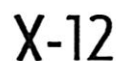
Fuel Cons: 600

Combat Statistics

Config: Stnd HF: 60

Susp: W (6) or T: 4 HS: 60

HR: 60



Night Vision: Spotlights, passive IR, thermal imaging

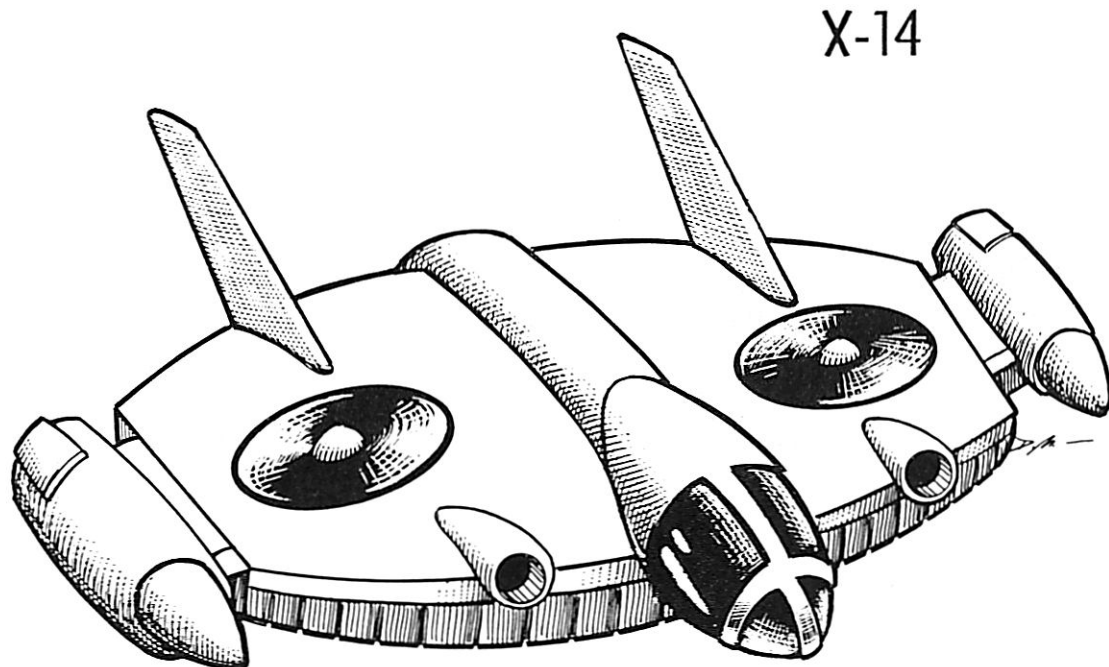
Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

* *Plenum*: Damage as Wheeled.





X-14



X-14

Price: \$2,250,000 (—/—)

Armament: Variable

Ammo: Variable

Fuel Type: Liquid hydrogen

Load: 400 kg

Veh Wt: 6.6 tons

Crew: 2+2

Night Vision: Spotlights, passive IR, thermal imaging

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver ☐ Navigator ☐

Passengers: 1 ☐ 2 ☐

Sight/Vision: ☐

Radio: ☐

Engine: ☐

Fuel(% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

X-14: Beyond certain federal agencies—notably DARPA and NASA—almost no one knows that a more advanced ACJV exists. On the surface, the X-14 appears to be identical to the X-12. Inside, however, it is much different.

The major difference is in its power plant and propulsion system, the first ever to incorporate a hydrogen fuel cell. This technology, long under development by the government, gained a considerable boost with the help of the few humanoid ETs who escaped possession by the Dark Ones.

Although slightly heavier (and, therefore, slightly slower) than the X-12, the X-14 is vastly more fuel efficient in ACV mode. Additionally, the "wingtip" VTOL turbofans are configured to burn hydrogen rather than avgas, allowing for uniform fuel requirements. And although the hydrogen fuel does not directly give the X-14 more time in the air, the on-ground fuel economy means extended operations overall. The X-14 also incorporates a number of ET-designed, pilot-assisting computer systems that allow top-speed flight even in high-wind conditions. Additional computers also regulate the fuel tankage, fuel distribution, and jet injection systems.

The X-14 is otherwise identical to the X-12, including provisions for weapon mounts, etc.

Cruise Speed: 220 (ACV mode); 1780 (jump mode)

Com Move: 70 (ACV mode); 235 (jump mode)

Fuel Cap: 1000

Fuel Cons: 200 (ACV mode); 3350 (jump mode)

Combat Statistics

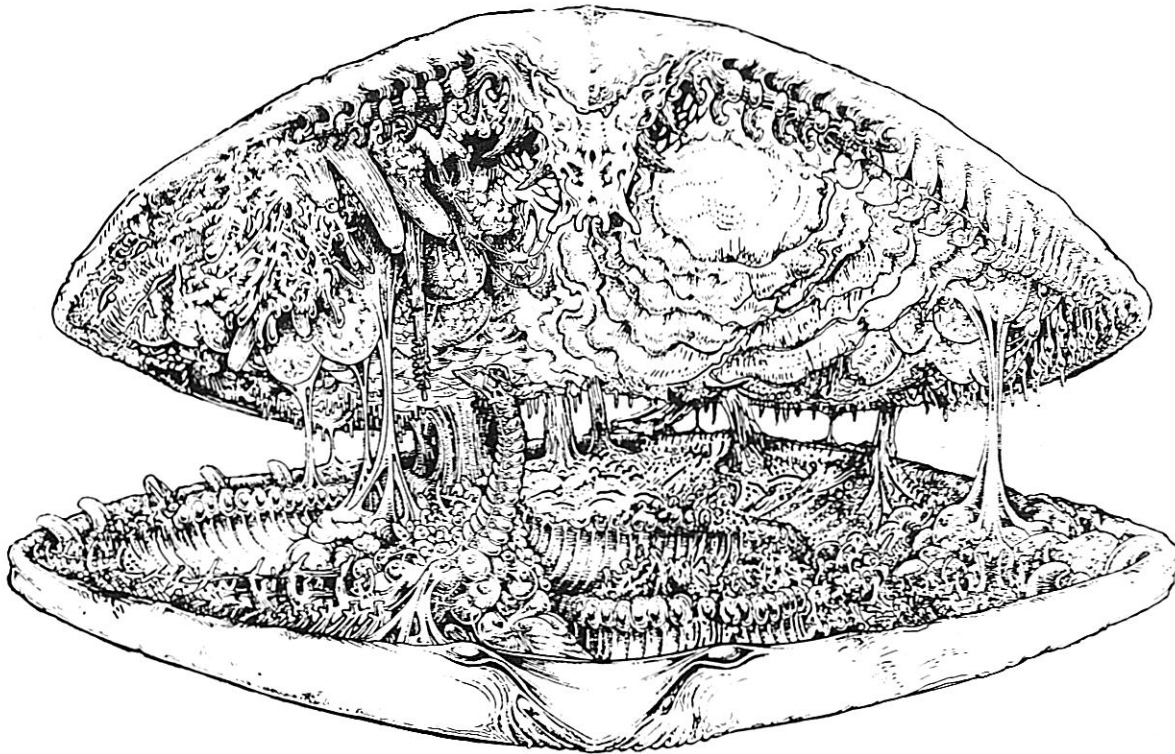
Config: Std HF: 3

Susp: P* (5) HS: 3

HR: 2

*Plenum: Damage as Wheeled.

Folder Pod



Veh Wt: 800 kg
Price: N/A (—/—)
User Cost: None

Appear: 1 Initiative: 4 Agility: 5
Attack: 2 Strength: 25 Skill/Dam.: 6/5D6
Move: 5/10/20 Constitution: 40 Hits: 50/100

Folder Pod: An innocuous-looking biomechanism, the folder pod has one important function: It can employ Dimension Walking to carry its users to proto-dimensions. While inside the pod, the occupants can perceive these proto-dimensions through the empathic senses of the pod itself, making it unnecessary for them to have such abilities. The pod can travel to any proto-dimension its inhabitants know of or to any proto-dimension it has been to itself.

Pods are always equipped with empathic beacons (see page 12) and the Dark Ones will not simply allow humans to seize a pod and start jaunting about the cosmos. If humans discover a pod, the Dark Ones will go to extreme lengths in order to get it back.

The folder pod is basically egg-shaped, four meters long by three meters wide by one meter tall, and is capable of holding up to four human-sized occupants. The exterior is dull black, and one narrow section of the shell opens mollusk-style to admit passengers (though the pod will only open and operate in response to commands delivered via Thought Projection). The interior of the pod is not a sight for the squeamish and will certainly dispose most observers to avoid entering the device. It has a decidedly organic aspect, resembling the inside of some heavily veined and noded organ. Various parts seem to pulse; others make dim gurgling sounds. The smell is primarily musky, with faint suggestions of a sharp, acidic aroma.



Spaceswimmer

Spaceswimmer: The spaceswimmer is a hermetically sealed organism that some Dark Minions use as a small space vehicle. The creature has an extremely rugged exoskeleton about the size of a van, with internal "bays" for six heavy, crab-like "legs," arranged three to a side. In addition, the spaceswimmer has two forward arms, each tipped with six manipulator digits with retractable claws, arranged as three opposable pairs. At the center of each hand is a mouth, which resembles that of a remora.

The spaceswimmer has keen "eyes," endowing it with full electromagnetic spectrum analyses (up through to cosmic rays). Resolution is quite extraordinary (as much as 10,000x), allowing "by eye" navigation. While normally held in a recessed binocular mode, the creature's eyes are actually located on the end of two rugged stalks, which can be extruded to give the creature a wider range of vision. The spaceswimmer has no audio or olfactory senses, but it has a very crude sense of taste.

The internal space of the creature is mostly open area, lined with various organs and collapsible bladders (for retention and release of gases or liquids). The creature can be directed from inside by use of a touch panel. The interior can accommodate a maximum of three human-sized occupants, although various small spaces are available for additional cargo. Entry to the passenger area is achieved through a large, ventral sphincter that opens directly to the outside.

But the spaceswimmer's most important feature is its ability to telekinetically "swim" through space at fantastic rates of speed. Although the creature is barely intelligent, it has an incredibly developed skill at self-telekinesis, allowing it to reach speeds up to 20,000 kph.

Note that operating the spaceswimmer is actually a great deal more simple than operating mechanical craft. Guidance is by eyeball,

instructions are by simple touch, and environment is automatically controlled. However, the spaceswimmer is not a particularly good long-range traveller. While it is fine in cis-lunar space (where distances seldom exceed 385,000 kilometers—or about 19 hours of travel time), interplanetary distances are a great deal more daunting. Even nearby Venus is rarely closer than 40 million kilometers—or about 83 days of travel—and Jupiter rarely gets as close as 600 million kilometers, which would be nearly three and one-half years away.

The spaceswimmer "feeds" in a number of ways. One constant source is sunlight, which it converts to thermal energy in its multiple layers of smoky-black chitin, where a process similar to photosynthesis takes place. However, the spaceswimmer is an enthusiastic eater of any and all organic molecules (since even plastic/synthetic spacesuits are petroleum-derived, astronauts might well start calling the spaceswimmer the spaceshark). And if the swimmer cannot find food *outside* itself, it will certainly make a meal of what is already *inside*.

Type: Combination system

Source: N/A

Price: N/A (—/—)

Size: 0

Payload: 0.4 kg

Launch: 4

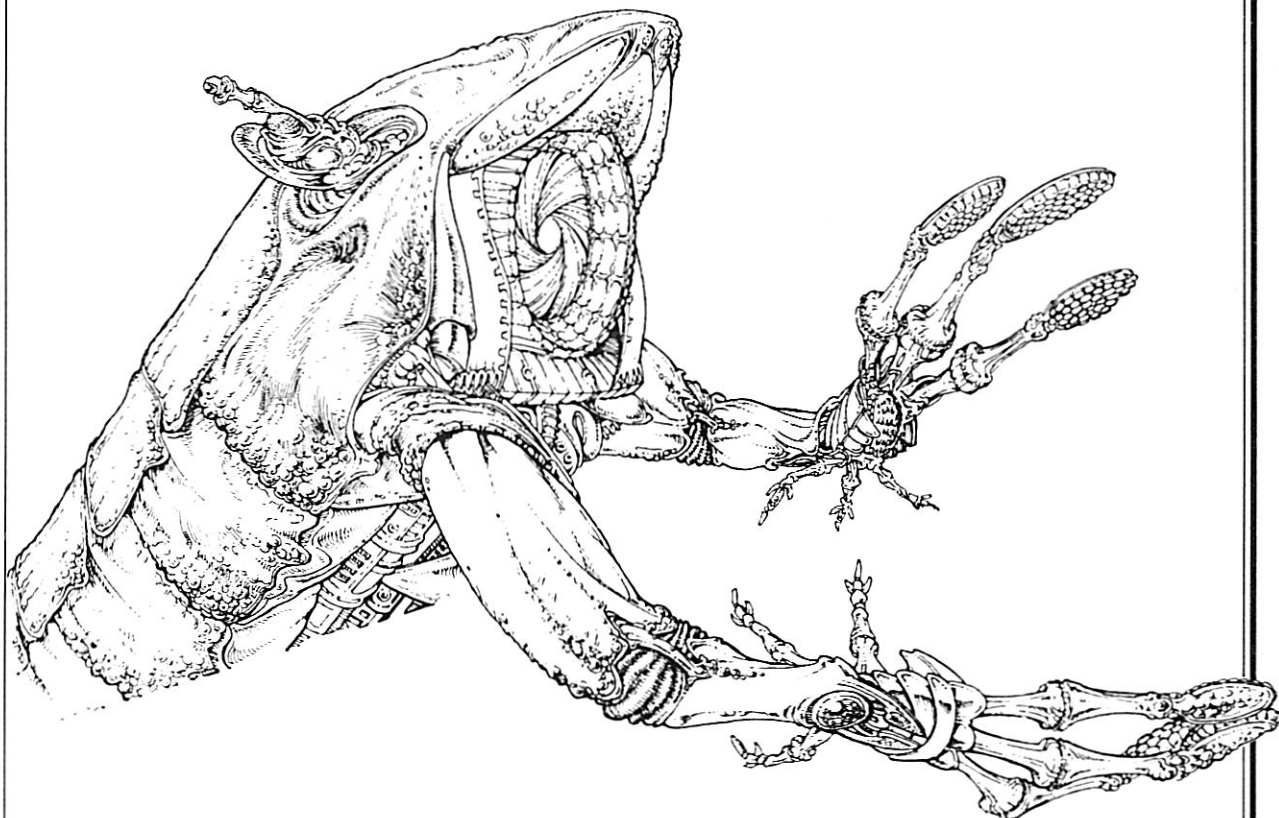
Reentry: 4

Transfer: 2

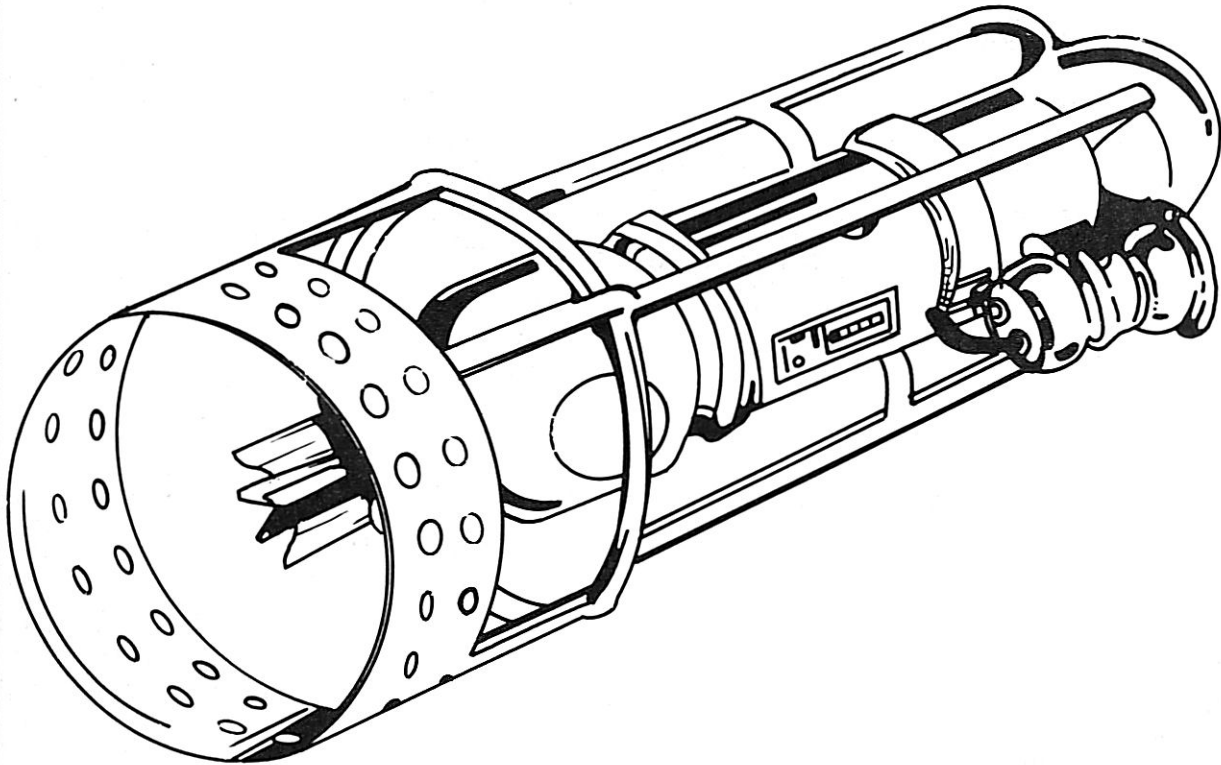
Crew: 2-3

Duration: Only limitation is food stores

User Cost: Detection: 2000



Underwater Sled



Price: \$675 (S/C)

Armament: None

Fuel Type: Battery

Config: N/A—operator is fired at as mounted target
(see Special Cases on page 88 of Dark Conspiracy).

Veh Wt: 50 kg

Armor: 0

Propulsion: Electric motor

Length: 1 m

Draft: 0.5 m

Speed: 1

Turn: 5

Acceleration: 1

Crew: 1

Night Vision: Headlight

Damage Record

Crewmembers: Driver: ☐

Full Speed: ☐

Dead in Water: ☐

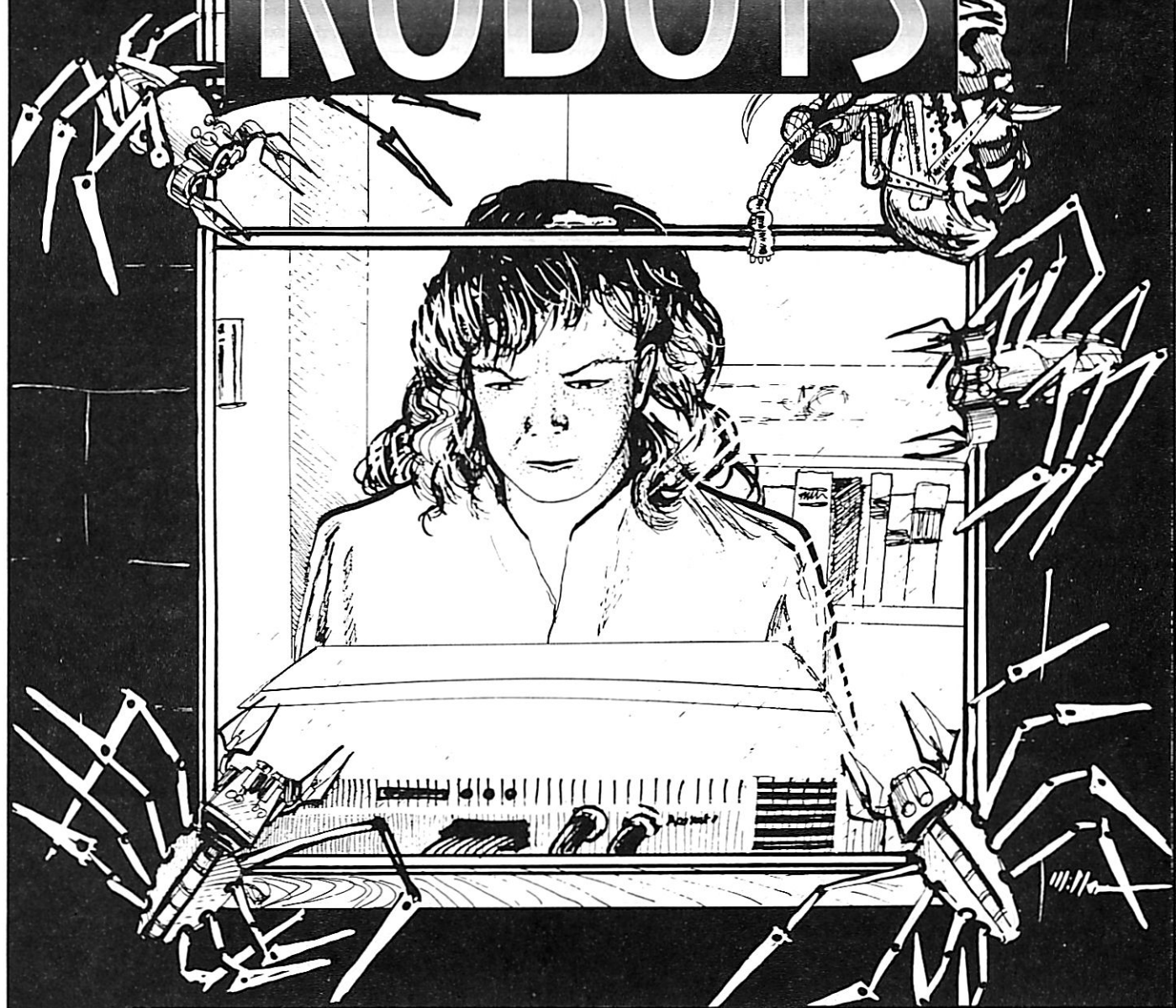
Sunk: ☐

Underwater Sled: With the Dark Minion invasion, the Earth's seas have become, more than ever before, realms of deadly mystery. As a result, equipment which once served explorers now serves investigators. Such is the case with the Neko underwater sled.

The Neko sled is basically nothing more than a streamlined personal propeller unit, used by divers for faster movement. It is extremely easy to operate. Its internal battery provides up to three hours of continuous use, four if the headlight is turned off.

Cruise Speed: 1.5/1.5

ROBOTS

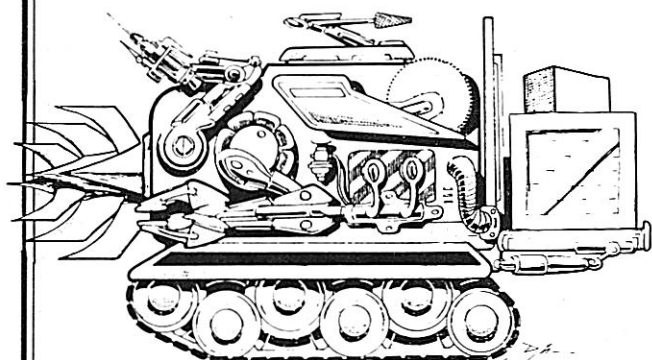


Although the term “robot” loosely refers to any automated worker (meaning, therefore, that even a hand calculator could be considered a robot), the vernacular definition of the word in *Dark Conspiracy* generally assumes a machine with at least limited autonomy. But in this world, there are few devices which could truly be called robots. Most that do exist are enigmatic, ET constructs. A few human-built devices qualify, although these are expensive and prone to bouts of bizarre behavior due to the yet inexperienced programming that drives them.

Related to robots are remote-controlled devices sometimes called “waldoes.” This chapter divides them into two major types: TORs (tele-operated robots) and TPDs (tele-presence drones). The first are, quite simply, remotely

controlled machines with a video camera by which operators can see the device’s environment. TPDs are more sophisticated devices with much more feedback to the operator. Through the use of sophisticated computer technology and a complicated array of sensors, TPD operators receive visual, audio, and tactile feedback that simulates the remote device’s environment to a remarkable degree, establishing what is often called a “virtual reality.”

In effect, TPD operators feel as if they are the remote machine, and the machine reacts to their slightest movement. Obviously, the technology required for such a link-up is tremendous, and, as a result, very few such devices exist. But for those people wealthy enough, virtual reality can be a reality.



Buildbot

Buildbot (Nonvehicular Robot): The buildbot is a robot used by various ETs for heavy labor and remote construction tasks. Such tasks include tunneling, cargo loading, and assembly of large apparatus. The typical buildbot can work underwater, in atmosphere, or in space. Most are gangly structures composed of multiple modules and capable of being reconfigured for any type of task. The most prevalent modular extremities are manipulator claws and laser welders, but buildbots can also be outfitted with grinders, saws, and other types of interesting (and potentially lethal) hardware.

A buildbot is controlled by a very simple expert system, which allows it to shift back and forth between tasks and handle unexpected problems. However, it has no combat program. Combat use would require direct commands from a remote operator (either an AI system or an ET).

Buildbots are sometimes mounted on large floaters (see page 61) for enhanced mobility. It uses the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.



Buildbot

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Right Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Left Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Right Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Left Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Armor Values

Head:	1
Chest/Abdomen:	1
Arms/Legs:	1

Com Move: 24/12

Initiative: 2

Agility: 4

Strength: 25

Constitution: 3

Skills: Mechanic 5, Unarmed

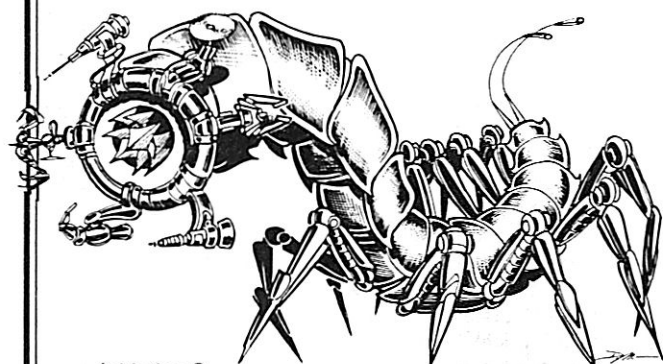
Combat Damage 2

Armament: None

Wt: 1200 kg

Price: N/A

Night Vision: White light spotlight



Craftbot

Craftbot (Nonvehicular Robot): The ETs' craftbot performs detailed construction and repair tasks, working as the "artisan" to the buildbot's "construction worker." Capable of all forms of electronic work and microassembly, the craftbot is a small, multisegmented machine that can access narrow, twisting spaces. Swarms of them are typically to be found in most humanoid ET complexes, following predetermined maintenance checks. While they normally move by crawling, these multilegged devices can also be mounted on a small floater (see page 60).

The craftbot is equipped with half a dozen micromanipulators with various attachment options (drill, splicer, laser welder, etc.). Other modular attachments can be included for unusual jobs. As with the buildbot, the expert system that drives the craftbot is limited to task-related activities, but a craftbot can be pressed into combat by an overseeing operator. Given the tendency of these 'bots to pervade ET complexes, it is not unusual for them to start "coming out of the woodwork" once intruders have been detected.

This robot uses the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table (with adaptations for the additional legs—the multiple legs are treated as one collective hit location).



Craftbot

Initiative: 2

Agility: 8

Strength: 2

Constitution: 3

Skills: Mechanics 2, Electronics 6, Unarmed Combat Damage 1

Armament: None

Wt: 15 kg

Price: N/A

Night Vision: White light spotlights

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Arms:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legs:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Armor Values

Head:	0
Chest/Abdomen:	0
Arms/Legs:	0

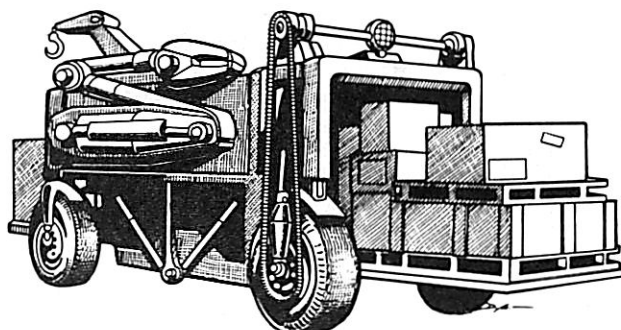
Com Move: 20/10



Craftbot



Loadmaster



Loadmaster

Loadmaster (Vehicular Robot): A purely human design, the Ingersoll-Rand Loadmaster is probably the most successful—and most simple—of all robots. It is designed to identify priority-ordered shipping and to move it to a given area, then load it in a balanced and space-efficient fashion.

Although the Loadmaster is not usually programmed for attack, it can be. This attack consists of an attempt to collide with a target in order to cause damage (see "Vehicle Collisions With Creatures," page 119 of the basic rules).

The Loadmaster is basically a large-wheeled chassis equipped with two extra-large, robotic arms, a forklift, and a winch. It can easily lift and manipulate loads up to 700 kilograms. The robot can be left idling in a "wait" mode at 1/20th its normal fuel consumption rate.

Cruise Speed: 50
Com Move: 24/12
Fuel Cap: 60
Fuel Cons: 20

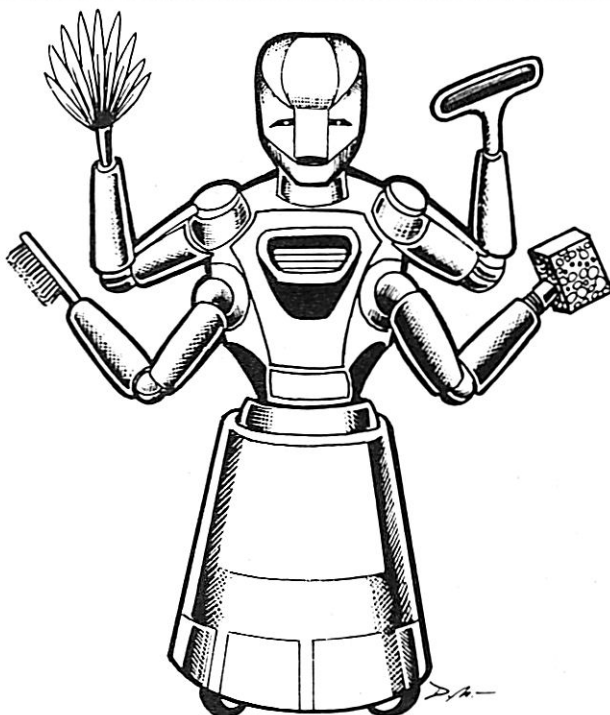
Combat Statistics
Config: Std *HF:* 1
Susp: W: 2 *HS:* 1
 HR: 1

Damage Record

CPU: ☐
Other Electronics: ☐
Power Plant: ☐
Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Skills: Unarmed Combat Damage 3

Wt: 1 ton
Price: \$1,380,000
Fuel Type: D
Crew: 0 (Robot Initiative: 1)
Night Vision: Headlights



Maid4U

Maid4U (Nonvehicular Robot): It is hard to know whether the Mitsubishi Maid4U has succeeded commercially because it is a great help 95 percent of the time or because of its hilarious foul-ups the remaining five percent. The Maid4U is a strongly marketed, domestic-service robot that does very well with area-related tasks such as vacuuming, dusting, window and floor washing, etc. It mixes precise (if uninspired) drinks and does a fair job as a waitress/hostess. However, as a cook it is a dismal failure, and its phone-answering antics (unintentional, of course) are legendary. But owners tend to grow quite fond of the robots.

The Maid4U is a boxy but vaguely anthropomorphic unit propelled by small wheels. It is powered by an internal battery that can be recharged from a wall socket over the course of eight hours. The robot uses the Biped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table (allocating arm hits randomly).

Armor Values
Head: 0
Chest/Abdomen: 0
Arms/Legs: 0

Com Move: 21/10

Initiative: 4
Agility: 4
Strength: 6
Constitution: 7
Skills: Unarmed Combat Damage 1
Armament: None
Sensors: Voice/pattern recognition software (audio/visual)
Wt: 135 kg
Price: \$6,920,000

Damage Record

Head: ☐ *Chest:* ☐ *Abdomen:* ☐
Right Arm: ☐ *Right Leg:* ☐
Left Arm: ☐ *Left Leg:* ☐



Maid4U

Armor Values

Head: 1
Chest/Abdomen: 1
Arms/Legs: 0

Com Move: 16/12

Initiative: 6
Agility: 4
Strength: 1
Constitution: 1
Skills: Unarmed Combat Damage 1
Armament: None
Wt: 1.5 kg
Price: N/A

Damage Record

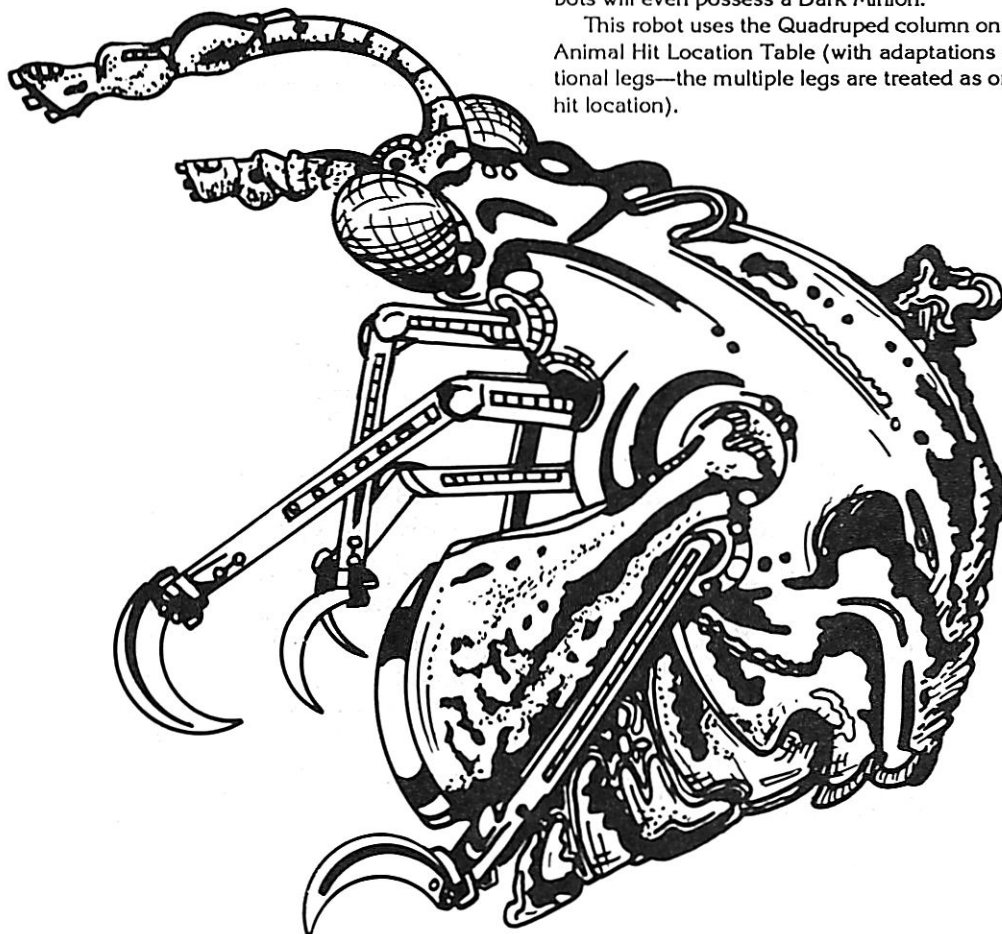
Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Right Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Left Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Legs:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Slaughterbot

Slaughterbot (Nonvehicular Robot): A horrific example of ET technology turned fully to evil, the Slaughterbot is a highly specialized robot devoted to terrorization. It is a crab-like robot roughly five centimeters long, designed to take control of a human brain and drive that individual to mass homicide. The Slaughterbot has small, mechanical legs on which it can move about in search of prey. It prefers leaping attacks since it needs to latch onto the target's head. Once there, the Slaughterbot maneuvers itself to the rear of the skull, then begins drilling a hole (1 point of damage per round, till a slight wound is created, signifying that the skull is breached), through which it extends a probe and takes control of the brain inside. Obviously, no normal human would sit still for this, so slaughterbots have a tendency to frequent hospitals, nursing homes, places where the homeless gather, drug-using subcultures, or anywhere else that bodies can be found lying around with their brains mostly disengaged. Once installed, a Slaughterbot can control its victim's behavior completely. In effect, the Slaughterbot becomes the body's new personality.

Slaughterbot-ridden humans are rarely to be found without a hat (which covers up the Slaughterbot itself). But the choice of haberdashery is always something easy to remove, so that if threatened, the Slaughterbot can bail out of the victim's head and flee. However, slaughterbots don't like to be without bodies. Without a human "chassis," their capabilities are severely reduced. Occasionally, slaughterbots will even possess a Dark Minion.

This robot uses the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table (with adaptations for the additional legs—the multiple legs are treated as one collective hit location).



Slaughterbot





Armor Values

Head: 2
Chest/Abdomen: 2
Legs: 1

Com Move: 40/20

Initiative: 3
Agility: 7
Strength: 8
Constitution: 7
Skills: Observation 9
Armament: None

Sensors: EMS scanner, olfactory analysis, reflective texture analysis, chemical analysis (with gas, liquid, and solid samplers), and gravity measurer*

Wt: 200 kg

Price: N/A

*See text at right for details.

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Leg 1:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leg 2:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leg 3:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

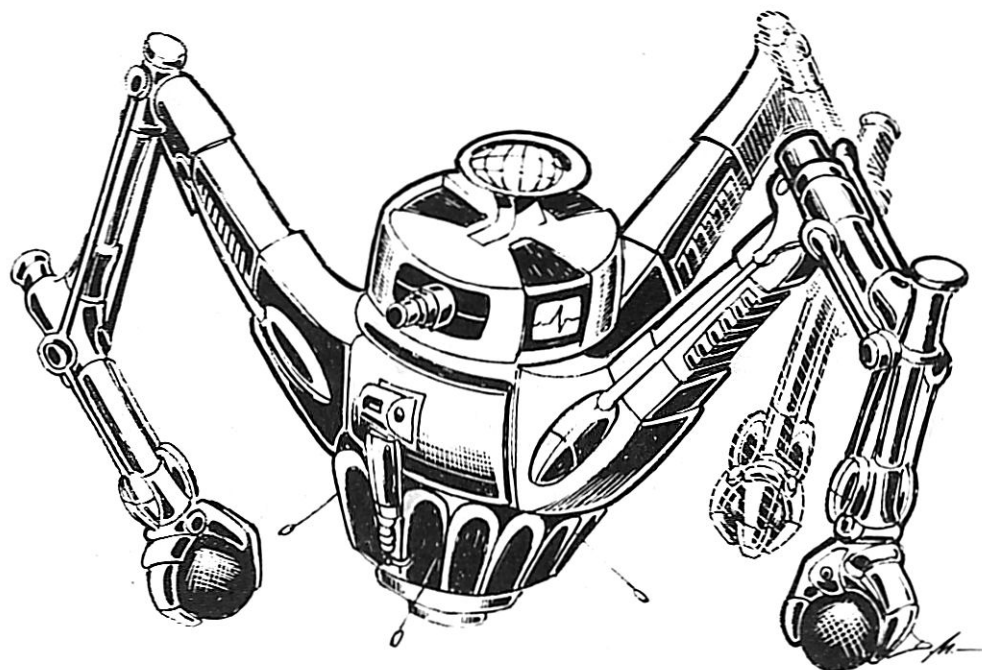
Snoopbot

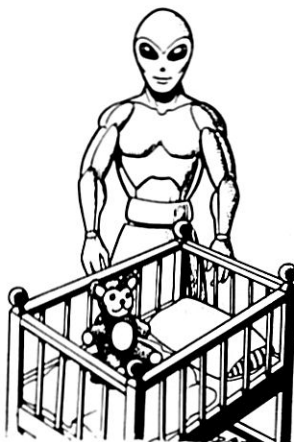
Snoopbot (Nonvehicular Robot): This ET-produced robot incorporates a very advanced, expert system and a complete net of sensors. The primary sensors include active electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) scanning, passive EMS scanning, olfactory analysis, reflective texture analysis, chemical analysis (with gas, liquid, and solid samplers), remote chemical analysis (enabled by laser vaporization and spectroanalysis of the resulting gas), and gravity-measuring devices capable of determining the mass of remote objects and of creating 3-D representations of internal schematics by differentiating material densities. The on-board, expert system can measure intensity of an emission and probable range from the source, and can correlate various readings into situational hypotheses, ranked in order of probability.

The Snoopbot is fairly squat, resembling a rounded trash-can. It has three retractable legs, evenly spaced at intervals of 120°. Each leg is quite rugged, has large, retractable, multi-jointed pincers for manipulating objects, for walking, or for "bipoding" (standing on two legs while the third is in use). On the bottom of each leg is a retractable, heavily treaded ball, which the Snoopbot can use for high-speed mobility. The Snoopbot is also capable of changing its external color scheme and IR signature so as to make it a fair chameleon. ETs are fond of using these robots in recon roles and also as remote-contact devices.

While snoopbots do not have full artificial intelligence, their expert programs allow them to deal with most situations in a fairly effective (if straightforward) manner. ETs can control them from up to one light-second away, regardless of apparent obstructions.

Snoopbots can be mounted on small floaters for enhanced mobility (see page 60). They use the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table (randomizing arm and leg hits among those available).





Spasmacher 4+

Spasmacher 4+ (Nonvehicular Robot): The Spasmacher 4+ is a human-built, robot baby-sitter for children aged four and older. Produced by a consortium of German firms, the Spasmacher is unquestionably the most sophisticated human-produced robot currently in existence. The robot is a fair cook, somewhat lenient (and oft-fooled) disciplinarian, fair playmate, good tutor, and marvelous disaster alarm. By the time a child reaches age seven, however, the Spasmacher's practical utility has largely diminished; as a consequence, the units tend to be resold through several owners before being retired.

Many people have criticized the whole concept of a robotic baby-sitter, some going so far as to claim that it is part of a plot to distance children from their parents. But many wealthy owners find the device so obedient, and so obviously high-status as to have become a "necessity."

The Spasmacher comes in a number of cheery colors and is highly anthropomorphized. It is propelled by wheels and an internal battery. The robot uses the Biped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.



Spasmacher 4+

Initiative: 4

Agility: 4

Strength: 6

Constitution: 4

Skills: Computer operation
3, Instruction 1, Observation 8,
Unarmed Combat Value 1

Armament: None

Sensors: Voice/pattern recognition software (audio/visual)

Wt: 135 kg

Price: \$13,660,000

Damage Record

Head: ☐



Chest: ☐



Abdomen: ☐



Right Arm: ☐



Right Leg: ☐



Left Arm: ☐



Left Leg: ☐



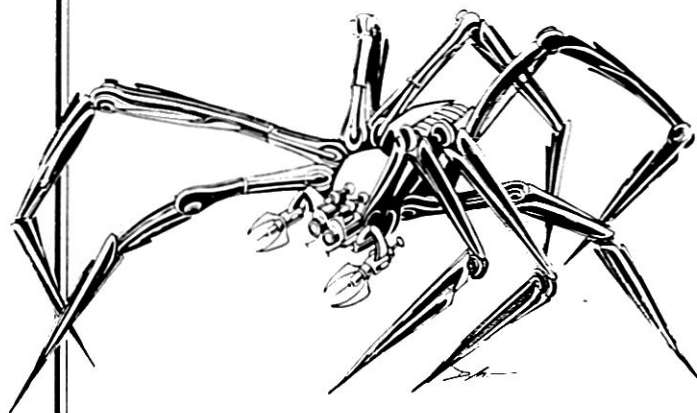
Armor Values

Head: 1

Chest/Abdomen: 1

Arms/Legs: 1

Com Move: 21/9



Tracker

Tracker (Nonvehicular Robot): The tracker is a fairly small (less than five centimeters long) "cyberspider" designed to track selected targets by olfactory means. Any being—or object—that has a characteristic olfactory signature can be followed by the tracker, but referees should bear in mind two important variables: how strong the olfactory signature is to begin with, and how old or muddled the trail has become. In general, the tracker can follow any human trail that is a day old or less. However, areas with a high level of human traffic will muddle the olfactory trail, particularly if that area contains strong organic odors (a fish market, gymnasium, coroner's office).

Trackers are typically equipped with empathic beacons (see page 12), for signaling their masters once the target has been found. They use the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.



Armor Values

Head: 0

Chest/Abdomen: 0

Arms/Legs: 0

Com Move: 35/17

Damage Record

Head: ☐



Abdomen: ☐



Chest: ☐



Legs: ☐



Initiative: 5

Agility: 6

Strength: 1

Constitution: 1

Skills: Stealth 8

Armament: None

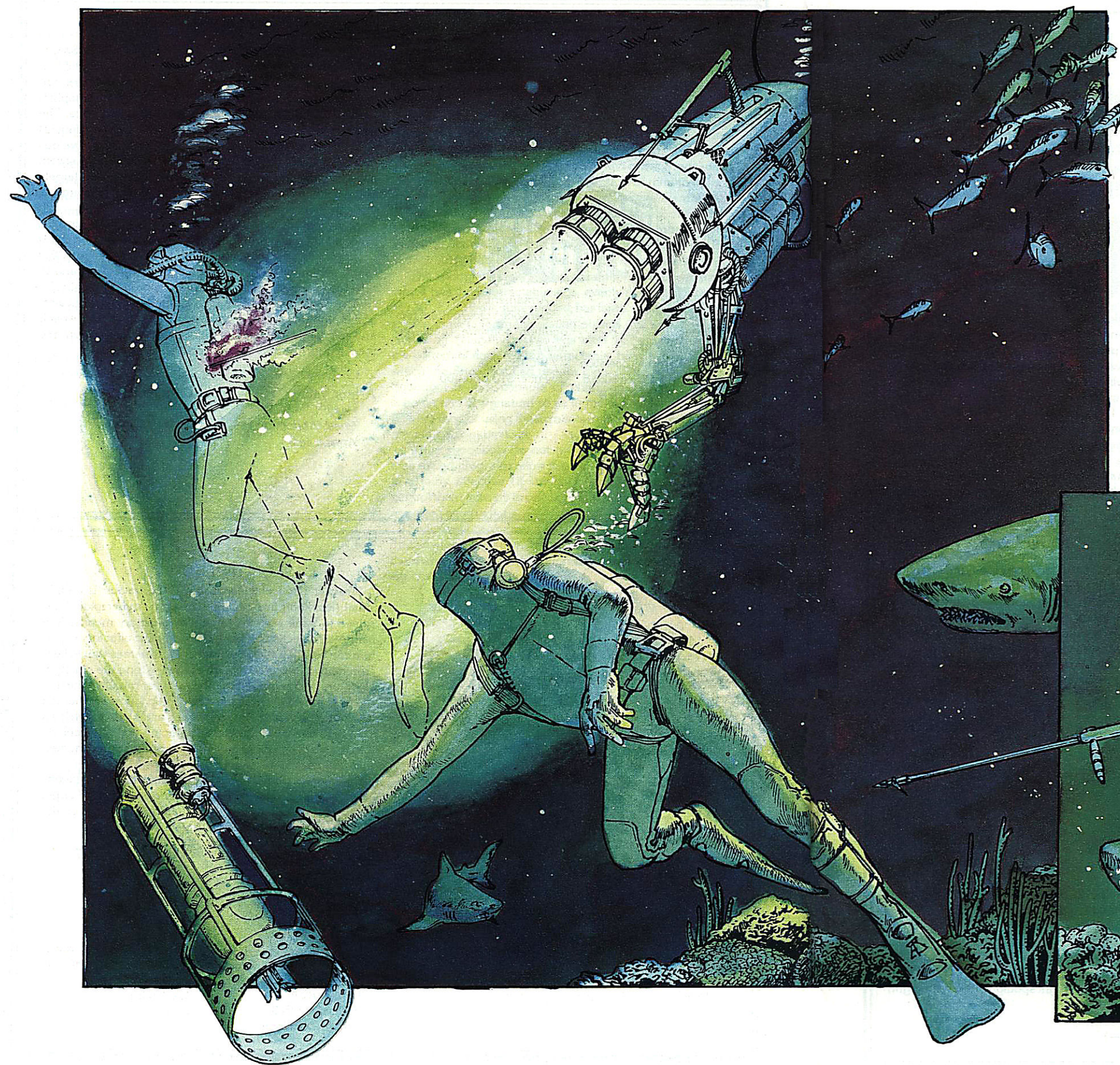
Sensors: Olfactory, voice/pattern recognition software (audio/video)

Wt: 1.5 kg

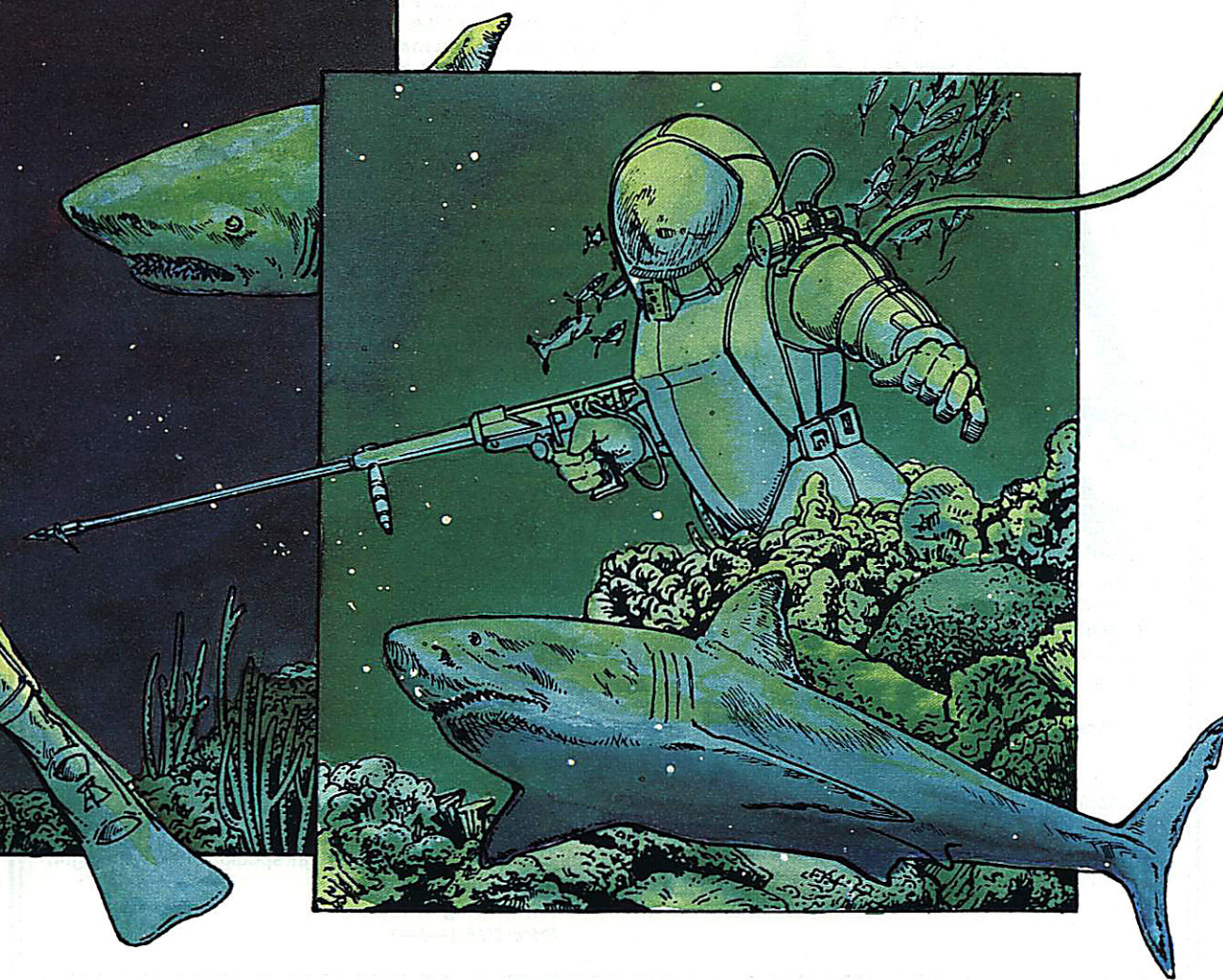
Price: N/A



Tracker



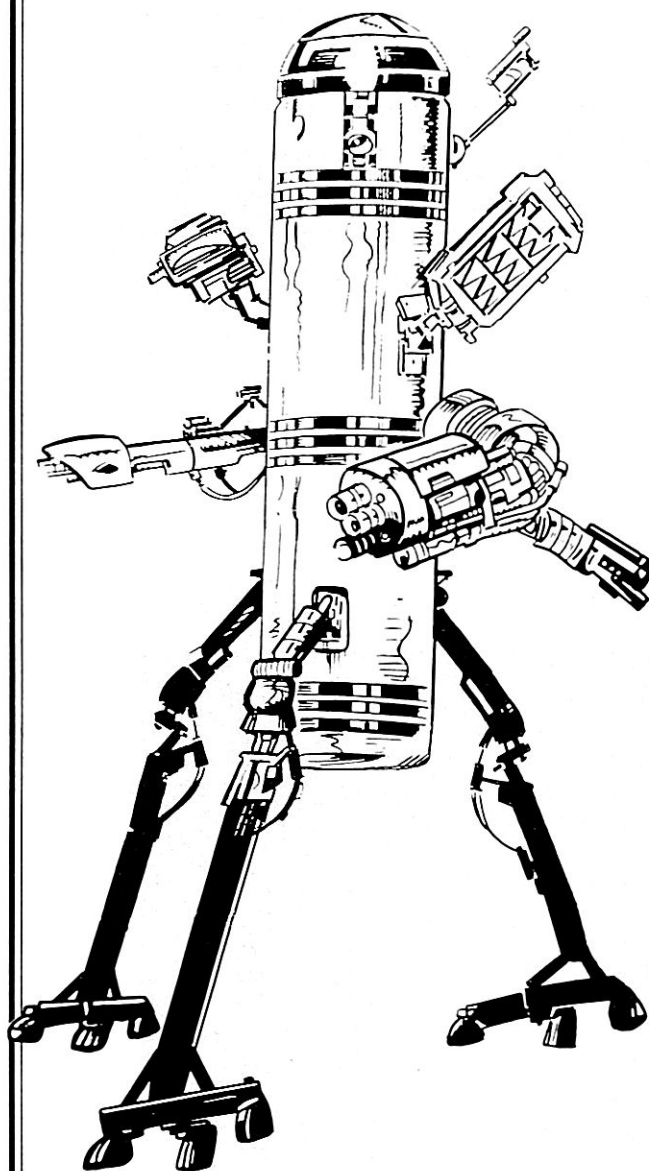
A figure in a deep-sea hardsuit, carrying an obviously ineffectual speargun, watches helplessly as a patrol/attack TOR (tele-operated robot) attacks two men in scuba gear. In their panic, the scuba divers have abandoned their undersea sled and split up, but to no avail. Having speared one of the divers, the remotely controlled TOR begins to turn its attention to the other. Meanwhile, sharks start to appear, drawn by the growing haze of spilled blood.





Warbot

Warbot



Warbot (Nonvehicular Robot): The humanoid ETs are certainly not renowned for their willingness to engage in close combat; they prefer to use mechanical surrogates in such roles. If they want to assassinate a target, they send warbots to do the job.

The warbot is, at first glance, a machine of unimpressive aspect. It resembles a long, featureless, oval casket mounted on a heavy-duty tripod. Three black sensor strips ring the capsule at top, bottom, and middle. However, when the warbot goes into action, its appearance changes dramatically. Previously unnoticeable panels open all along its length, revealing sensor clusters, firearms, and a trio of metal tentacles with claws and manipulator digits. The tripod is a larger, armored version of the Snoopbot. The warbot is equipped with impressive expert systems that allow it to behave with sophistication and foresight in combat situations. However, unless it has been left as an automated guard, it is most likely that ET remote operators are in direct control of the robot's activities, which makes it even deadlier. For enhanced mobility, warbots are sometimes mounted on large floaters (see page 61). The warbot uses the Biped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table (randomizing arm and leg hits among those available).

Armor Values

Head: 6
Chest/Abdomen: 6
Arms/Legs: 4

Com Move: 45/28

Damage Record

Head: ☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
Chest: ☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐
Abdomen: ☐ ☐
☐ ☐
☐ ☐

Arm 1: ☐
Arm 2: ☐
Arm 3: ☐
Leg 1: ☐
☐ ☐
Leg 2: ☐
☐ ☐
Leg 3: ☐
☐ ☐

Initiative: 6

Agility: 8

Strength: 20

Constitution: 26

Skills: Observation 12, Small Arms (Rifle) 10, Heavy Weapons 10, Unarmed Combat Damage 3

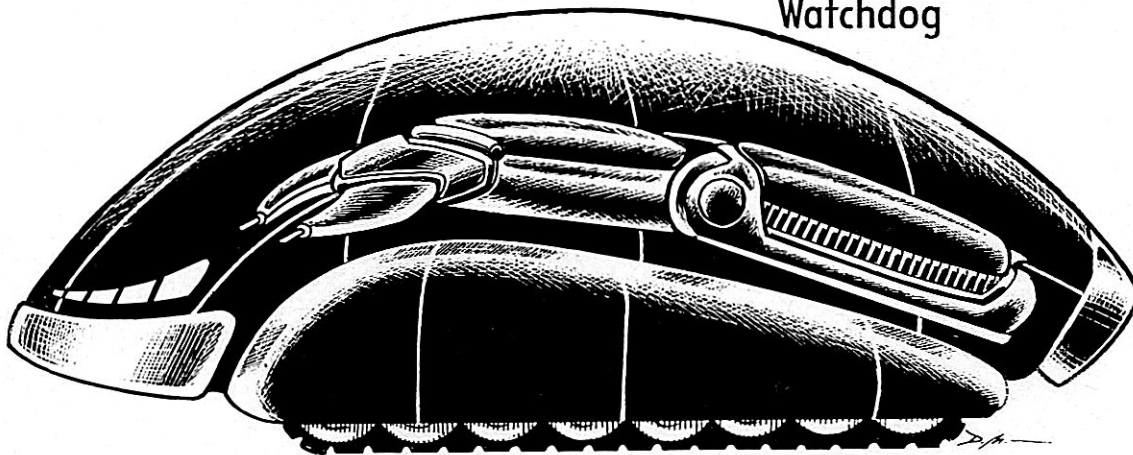
Armament: Small death ray (as hand portable, see Dark Conspiracy, page 243), ET stun gun (page 54)

Sensors: IR motion detector, voice/pattern recognition software (audio/video, UV included), ultrasonic and subsonic sound detectors, white light spotlight, IR/UV spotlight, ultrasonic motion detector

Wt: 1000 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)

Watchdog



Initiative: 6

Agility: 5

Strength: 12

Constitution: 13

Skills: Observation 6, Small Arms (Rifle) 9, Unarmed Combat Damage 3

Armament: M2-HB machinegun pod, Mk-19 AGL pod

Sensors: IR motion detector, voice/pattern recognition software (audio/video), ultrasonic and subsonic sound detectors, white light spotlight

Wt: 375 kg

Price: \$448,360,000

Damage Record

Head:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chest:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Abdomen:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Right Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Left Arm:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
Right Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Left Leg:	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

Weapon	ROF	Mag	Rng	IFR	Rnd	Dmg	Pen
M2-HB pod	5	105B	150	—	.50 BMG	8	2-2-3*
Mk-19 AGL pod	SA	24 (2x12)	100**	400**			
Restraint load					Stun	**	Nil
					Chem	C:1, B:4	Nil
Lethal load					HE	C:3, B:12	Nil
					HEDP	C:3, B:12	4C
					ILLUM	B:100	Nil

*.50 SLAP ammunition has a penetration value of 1-1-2.

**For range and damage of stun grenades, see page 262 of Dark Conspiracy.

Watchdog (Nonvehicular Robot): A totally human-produced robot, the Honeywell-Breyer Watchdog is a highly controversial machine designed for patrol and restraint duties. Many corporate facilities mount lethal weapons on them. Some have even modified the Watchdog to accept lethal weaponry additions. The Watchdog is a nonreflective black egg on a high-speed tread suspension, giving it a low profile, sloped armor, and an aspect that is both sinister and bizarre. It mounts two medium robot arms with integral tasers, and extendable weapons pods. In the original design, these pods were intended to hold either a 40mm grenade launcher with two drums (one for crowd-control munitions) or a semiautomatic tranquilizer rifle. Once an intruder was incapacitated, the robot arms would be used for disarming and restraint. However, as modified (first) by Tojicorp, the grenade launcher is now frequently loaded with lethal munitions, and the tranquilizer rifle pod now carries an M2-HB machinegun. Considering that from the outset the Watchdog was always a bit "twitchy," the addition of lethal weapons touched off a storm of protest, so far to no avail.

The Watchdog is a highly effective (if overly zealous) robot, powered by a highly advanced microwave energy transmission system when in close environments that are predominantly controlled via automation. Otherwise, it has a small, efficient, and relatively silent diesel engine. If on guard rather than patrol, it will fall back upon a "wait" mode that allows it to remain alert while idling at 1/20th of its normal fuel consumption rate. It is equipped with a 10x scope, image enhancement, passive IR, and a remote-operator override option. However, during automated operations, it is capable of conducting up to three attacks per round (one each from any three different systems). Statistics for the 40mm pod are given below. Optionally, the robot can be mounted with other weapon pods (pretty much anything the referee desires). The robot uses the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.

Armor Values

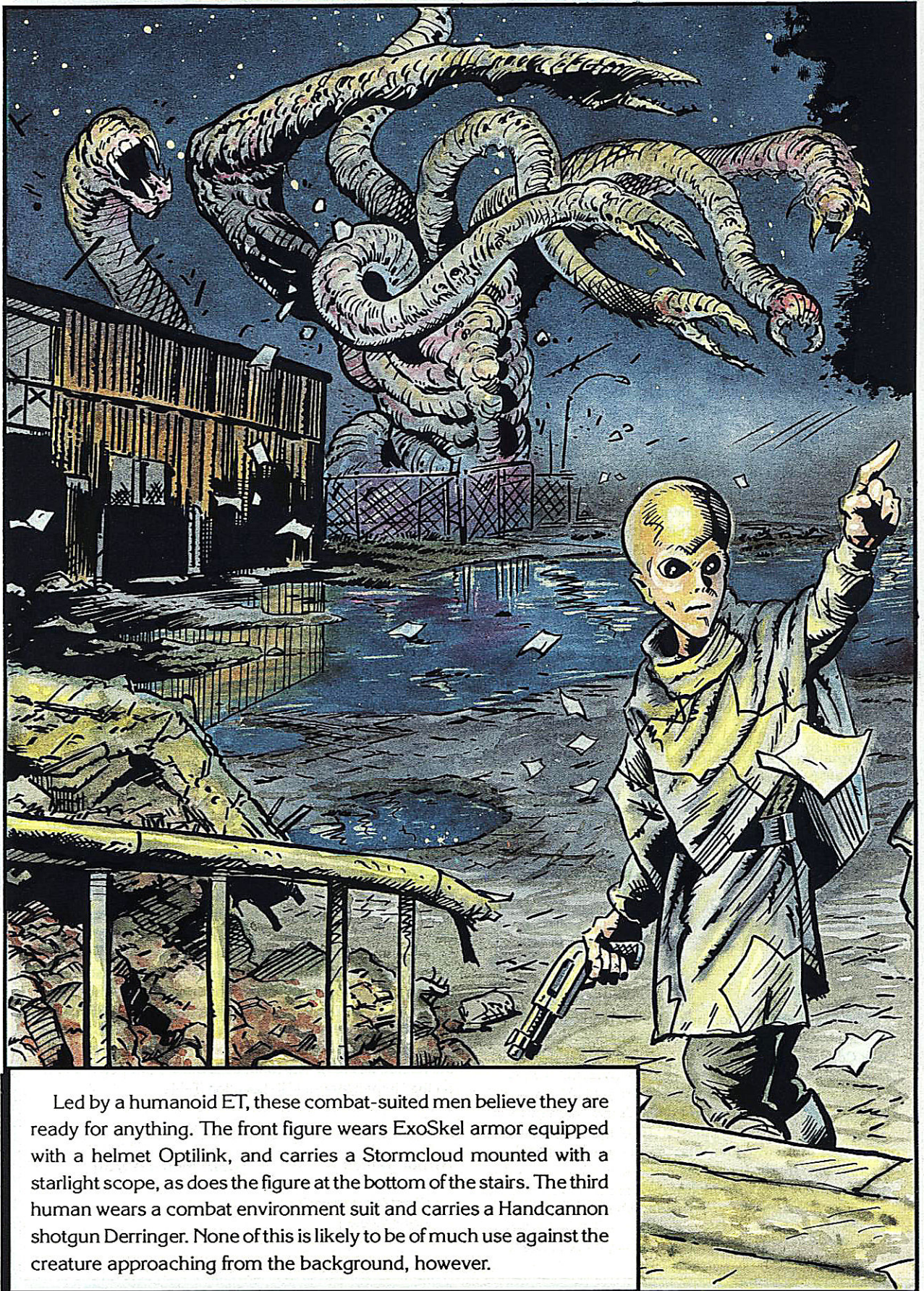
Head: 2

Chest/Abdomen: 2

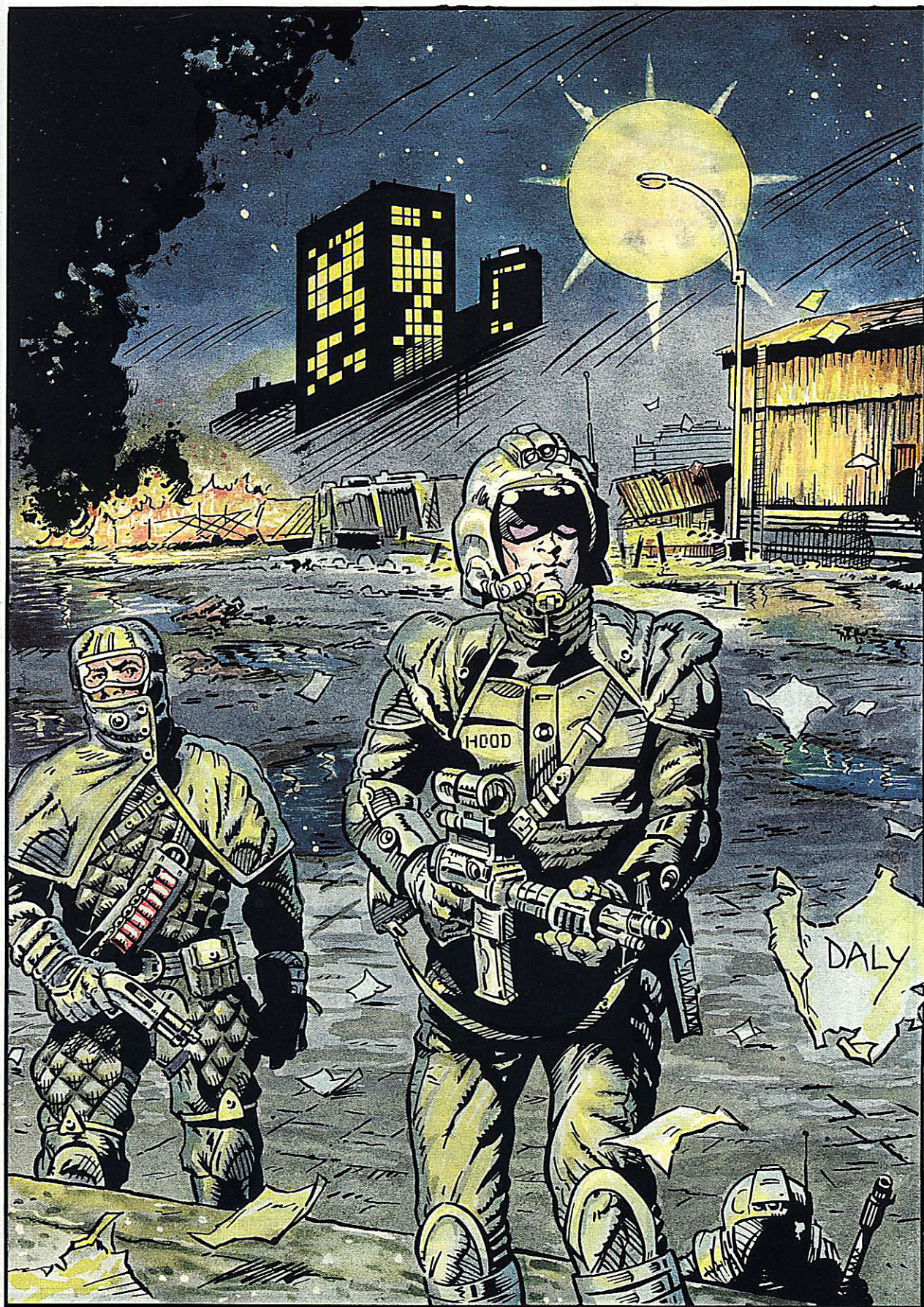
Arms/Legs: 1

Com Move: 45/30



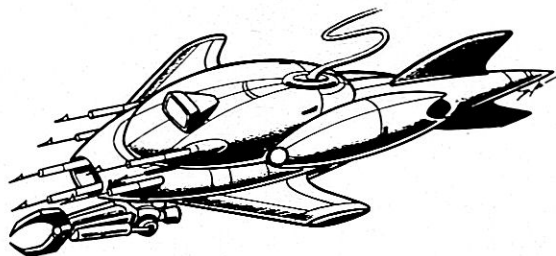


Led by a humanoid ET, these combat-suited men believe they are ready for anything. The front figure wears ExoSkel armor equipped with a helmet Optilink, and carries a Stormcloud mounted with a starlight scope, as does the figure at the bottom of the stairs. The third human wears a combat environment suit and carries a Handcannon shotgun Derringer. None of this is likely to be of much use against the creature approaching from the background, however.





Patrol/Attack TOR



Price: \$810,000 (—/R)
 Armament: Speargun (six)
 Length: 2
 Draft: 0.5 m
 Speed: 3 surface/1 sub-merged
 Turn: 2

Acceleration: 1
 Pumps: None
 Night Vision: White light spotlight
 Load: None
 Minimum/Optimum Crew: 0

Damage Record

Engine: ☐
 Battery: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

Full Speed ☐
 Dead in Water ☐
 Sunk ☐

Weapon Data

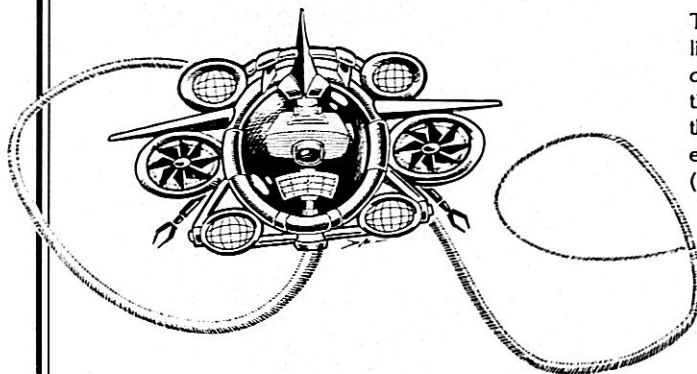
Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	Rng
Speargun	SS	-1	Nil	4	1i	6**

Patrol/Attack TOR

Patrol/Attack TOR (Vehicular Robot): While their use on land has been a fairly recent phenomenon (with the exception of bomb-removal units and as debris-removal systems in contaminated areas), TORs were quite common as underwater equipment during the last two decades of the 20th century. Their ability to withstand pressure made them an attractive alternative to live divers in 200+ meters of depth. Although radio link is the normal method of control, hard-wire control is at least maintained as an auxiliary system. Operators must be careful to avoid tangling their TOR up in the control cable. Sensors include high-intensity white lights, IR, and navigational sonar.

The patrol/attack TOR is a fast, small model, easily recognized by its single medium manipulator arm (capable of lifting 100 kilograms maximum with articulated claws) and six integral heavy spearguns. It mounts a large cluster of lights, as well as a sophisticated omnidirectional sonar which functions in the dual role of a target-acquisition and navigation system. The unit is powered either by a cable (only for close perimeter security work) or by on-board batteries. Fully charged, the robot is capable of 20 hours of continuous operation.

Fuel Type: Battery (or cable) **Cruise Speed: 8/8**
 Config: Flush deck
 Tonnage: 1
 Hull Armor: 1
 Propulsion: Electric motor
 Size: 1



Probe/Repair TOR

Probe/Repair TOR (Vehicular Robot): The probe/repair TOR is equipped with small manipulator arms (capable of lifting 20 kilograms maximum, and possessing excellent dexterity) and modular couplings for sensor gear and additional robotic arms, samplers, etc. The price below indicates the cost of the basic unit; sensor and sampling modules are extra. Power is provided through a cable or a modular battery (four hours duration).

Fuel Type: Battery **Cruise Speed: 4/4**
 Config: Flush deck
 Tonnage: 1
 Hull Armor: 0
 Propulsion: Electric motor
 Size: 1

Damage Record

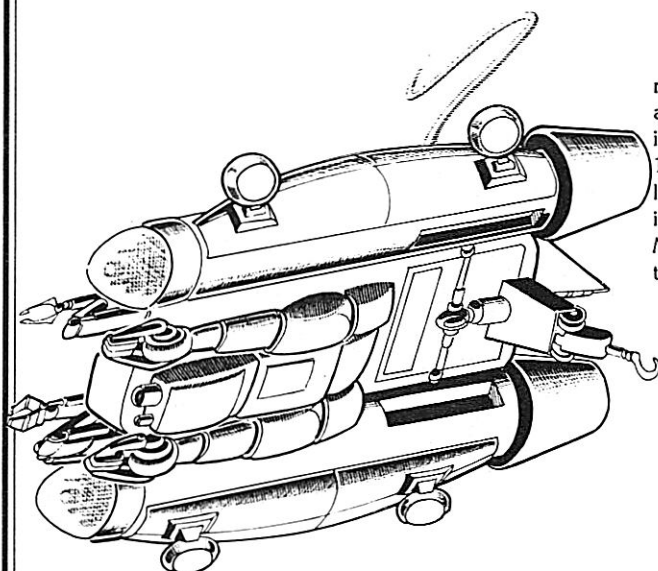
Engine: ☐
 Battery: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

Full Speed ☐
 Dead in Water ☐
 Sunk ☐

Price: \$145,000 (—/S)
 Armament: None
 Length: 1
 Draft: 0.25 m
 Speed: 1
 Turn: 4
 Acceleration: 1
 Night Vision: White light spotlight
 Load: 500 kg
 Minimum Crew: 0



Probe/Repair TOR



Recovery/Construction TOR

Recovery/Construction TOR (Vehicular Robot): The recovery/construction TOR sports one small manipulator arm (capable of lifting 20 kilograms maximum, but possessing excellent dexterity), one medium arm (capable of lifting 100 kilograms maximum with articulated claws), and two large arms (capable of lifting up to 500 kilograms with large, imprecise claws). It is a frequent sight on salvage missions. Mobility is provided by a battery-powered motor which gives the unit up to 16 hours of independent operations.

Fuel Type: Battery
Config: Flush deck
Tonnage: 1
Hull Armor: 0
Propulsion: Electric motor
Size: 1

Cruise Speed: 3/3

Damage Record

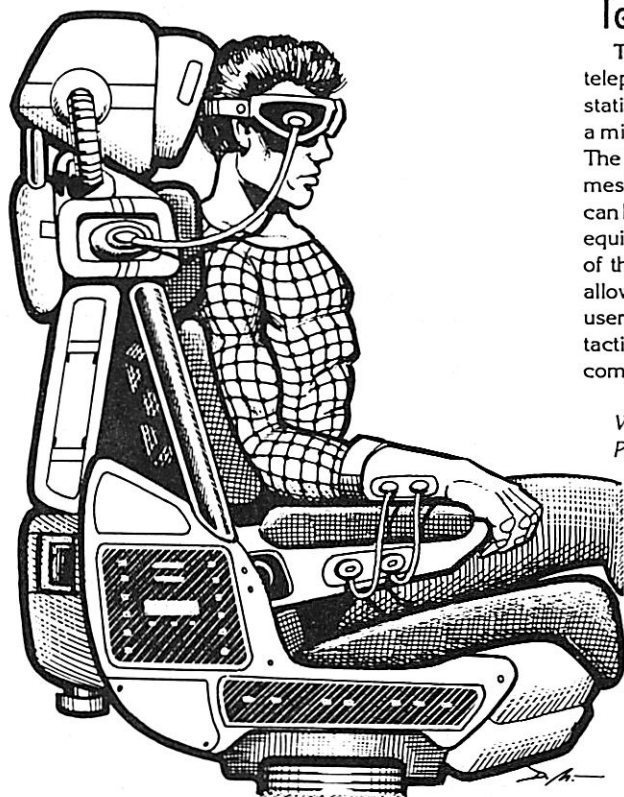
Engine: ☐
Battery: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐

Full Speed ☐
 Dead in Water ☐
 Sunk ☐

Price: \$760,000 (—/S)
Armament: None
Length: 2
Draft: 1 m
Speed: 2 surface/1 submerged
Turn: 2
Acceleration: 1
Night Vision: White light spotlight
Minimum Crew: 0



Recovery/
Construction TOR



Telepresence Operation Station

Telepresence Operation Station: Controlling a telepresence drone requires a telepresence operator work station (or tele-op). This device resembles a cross between a military flight simulator, electric chair, and straight jacket. The user's hands and upper torso are slipped into a sensor mesh. A video relay unit is fastened over the eyes. Images can be via direct feed from the drone, or computer-generated equivalents that substitute an image of a human hand for that of the robot and add depth to the elements in the scene, allowing for better, more accurate physical operations by the user. This visual feedback loop is enhanced with audio and tactile relays and is controlled by a highly sophisticated computer system (integral to the tele-op).

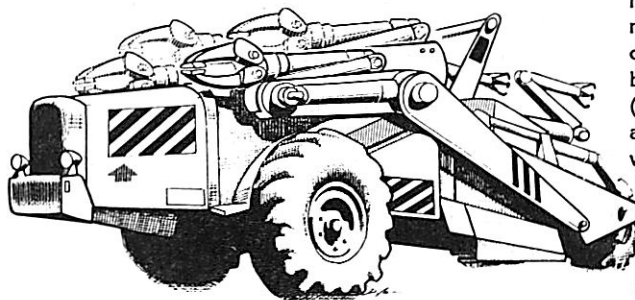
Wt: 200 kg
Price: \$2,550,000 (—/R)



Telepresence
Operation Station



Construction Drone



Construction Drone

Construction Drone (Vehicular Robot): The largest of the drones described here, this wheeled machine is slow but powerful. It is equipped with four heavy robot arms and two medium robot arms that are designed to accept specialty modules (such as drills, welding equipment, etc.). The construction drone comes equipped for broadcast control, but can be modified for either hard-wire (\$300) or narrowcast (\$2400) data reception. It is powered by a diesel engine, and although it is not fast, it has an excellent power-to-weight ratio, allowing it to tow very heavy objects.

Cruise Speed: 45/23
Com Move: 12/6
Fuel Cap: 36
Fuel Cons: 12

Combat Statistics
Config: Std HF: 1
Susp: W: 2 HS: 1
 HR: 0

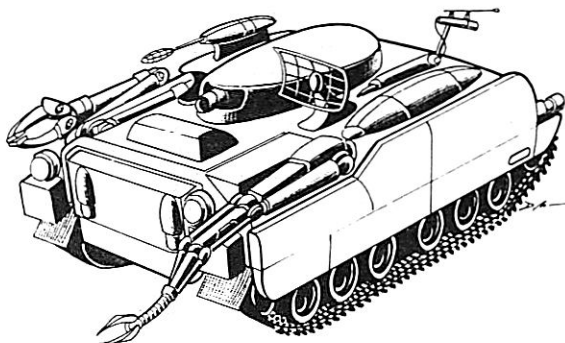
Damage Record

Power Plant: ☐
Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐
Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Price: \$742,500 (—/S)
Fuel Type: D
Skills: Per operator
Wt: 800 kg
Crew: 1 (remote)
Night Vision: White light spotlight



Probe Drone



Probe Drone

Probe Drone (Nonvehicular Robot): A probe drone is a small, treaded device with one small robot arm and one medium robot arm. Not designed for combat service, it is predominantly used for surveying dangerous areas (partially collapsed buildings, radioactive containment areas, sites of chemical contamination, etc.) and for picking up samples for later analysis.

The drone has a number of modular brackets (and electronic connectors) for additional sensors (such as Geiger counters, chemical analyzers, etc.). It is equipped for hard-wire, broadcast, and narrowcast control, and is powered by a small diesel engine. The device uses the Biped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.

Armor Values

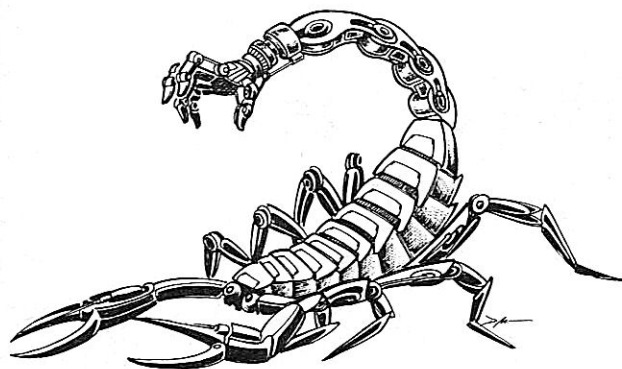
Head: 1
Chest/Abdomen: 1
Arms/Legs: 1

Com Move: 24/18

Damage Record

Head: ☐ **Chest:** ☐ **Abdomen:** ☐
☐ ☐ ☐
Right Arm: ☐ **Left Arm:** ☐ **Legs:** ☐ ☐
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Price: \$255,000 (—/S)
Initiative: Per operator
Agility: 10
Strength: 6
Constitution: 8
Skills: Per operator, Unarmed Combat Damage 2
Wt: 190 kg
Night Vision: White light spotlight, IR sensor



Repair Drone

Repair Drone (Nonvehicular Robot): Mounted on a segmented chassis sporting eight legs, this small telepresence drone can reach areas not easily accessible by human repairmen. It can also operate in extremely adverse environmental conditions, including heat up to 300°C, vacuum, and over eight atmospheres of pressure. It is equipped with one telescoping, small robot arm and a pair of retractable pincers (useful only for steadying and manipulating lightweight objects). The repair drone can be controlled either by wire or broadcast, and is powered by an internal battery good for six hours of operation. It uses the Quadruped column on the Human/Animal Hit Location Table.



Repair Drone

Armor Values

Head: 0
Chest/Abdomen: 0
Arms/Legs: 0

Com Move: 15/10

Price: \$102,000 (—/S)

Initiative: Per operator

Agility: 7

Strength: 2

Constitution: 4

Skills: Per operator, Magnification 100x, Unarmed Com-

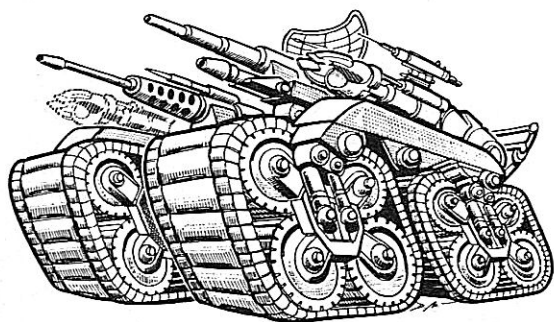
bat Damage 1

Wt: 12 kg

Night Vision: White light spotlight

Damage Record

Head: ☐ Arm: ☐ Abdomen: ☐
Chest: ☐ Legs: ☐



War Drone

War Drone (Vehicular Robot): A rather ominous-looking machine, the war drone utilizes a heavily muffled diesel engine for combat use, with a small battery for silent approaches (two-minute duration before the battery is exhausted). It has both broadcast and narrowcast control options built in, and is propelled by a quad ("four-footed") tread system that can adjust attitude and elevation to allow superior steadiness in uneven terrain. This system also allows the drone to remain mobile (although much less steady) if one of the tracks is blown off or rendered inoperable.

The war drone sports a special weapons arm with a front brace, butt brace, ammo hopper for belt-fed weapons, and integral targeting system that includes passive IR, thermal imaging, laser target designator, and 10x scope. The weapons arm can accept virtually any small arm designed for two-handed human use, with the following exceptions: Weapons with backblast are prohibited, as they will do damage to the drone, and preferred weapons are usually belt-fed since the drone cannot reload.

The drone also has two medium robot arms for carrying items (such as unconscious prisoners). Rumors have it that the US government is working on a hover/VTOL variety.



Price: \$11,750,000 (—/R)

Fuel Type: D

Skills: Per operator

Wt: 300 kg

Crew: Remote operator

Night Vision: Headlights

Damage Record

Electronics: ☐

Weapon: ☐

Power Plant: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Suspension: Minor damage ☐ Immobilized ☐

Cruise Speed: 200/120

Com Move: 35/21

Fuel Cap: 32

Fuel Cons: 8

Combat Statistics

Config: Std HF: 2

Susp: T: 3 HS: 2

HR: 1



War Drone

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT



Life in general has become much more dangerous since the coming of the Dark Minions. The equipment in this chapter reflects that fact, ranging from emergency medical aid to high-security measures.

any portal. Emplacing it takes from one to eight hours of work, depending upon the relative compatibility of the airlock connector and the portal.

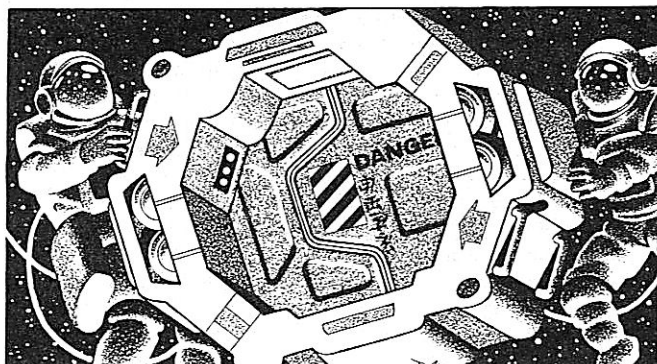
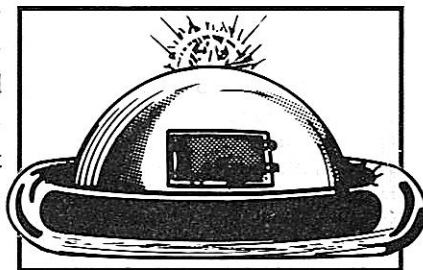
It takes 30 seconds to cycle the airlock from vacuum to 1.0 standard atmospheres.

Wt: 2.8 tons

Price: \$8,000,000 (—/—)

AUTOBEACON, EMERGENCY

An emergency autobeacon is a battery-powered radio device designed to signal for help during an emergency. To save its batteries, the beacon incorporates a channel scanner, preset to sequentially monitor all standard rescue and emergency bands and burst into full signal only when it detects radio traffic on a channel.



AIRLOCK, EXTERNAL

Adapted from modular airlocks developed for the NASA shuttle orbiter, this is a one-person airlock (two in a pinch) for use in space. It can be connected to almost



Autobeacon,
Emergency



Airlock,
External

The beacon contains a prerecorded SOS message (in Morse code), but it is possible for users to add to that message in order to include more detailed information to rescuers. The signal has a maximum range of 100 kilometers.

Most emergency autobeacons also include a self-inflating flotation belt to keep them afloat and a flashing red light that can be activated by the user. The internal batteries provide the system with 48 hours of power in monitor mode. Each minute of actual broadcast counts as 10 minutes of battery use, and each minute the light is powered counts as five.

Wt: 3.2 kg

Price: \$1825 (S/C)

BALL, EMERGENCY

The emergency ball is a rescue device for space personnel who do not have spacesuits and must be transported through vacuum. The ball is 76 centimeters in diameter and comes with a portable oxygen system that the individual straps on. Getting into the ball unassisted takes one minute. With assistance, it takes about 15 seconds.

The air supply in the ball can sustain an individual at full awareness for one hour. If the user is willing to risk hypoxia, this can be extended to two and one-half hours.

Wt: 2.2 kg

Price: \$65,000 (—/R)

CHAMELEON SUIT

A popular item among humanoid ETs, the chameleon suit is an extremely effective camouflage outfit. It is a long, poncho-like drape equipped with an incredibly



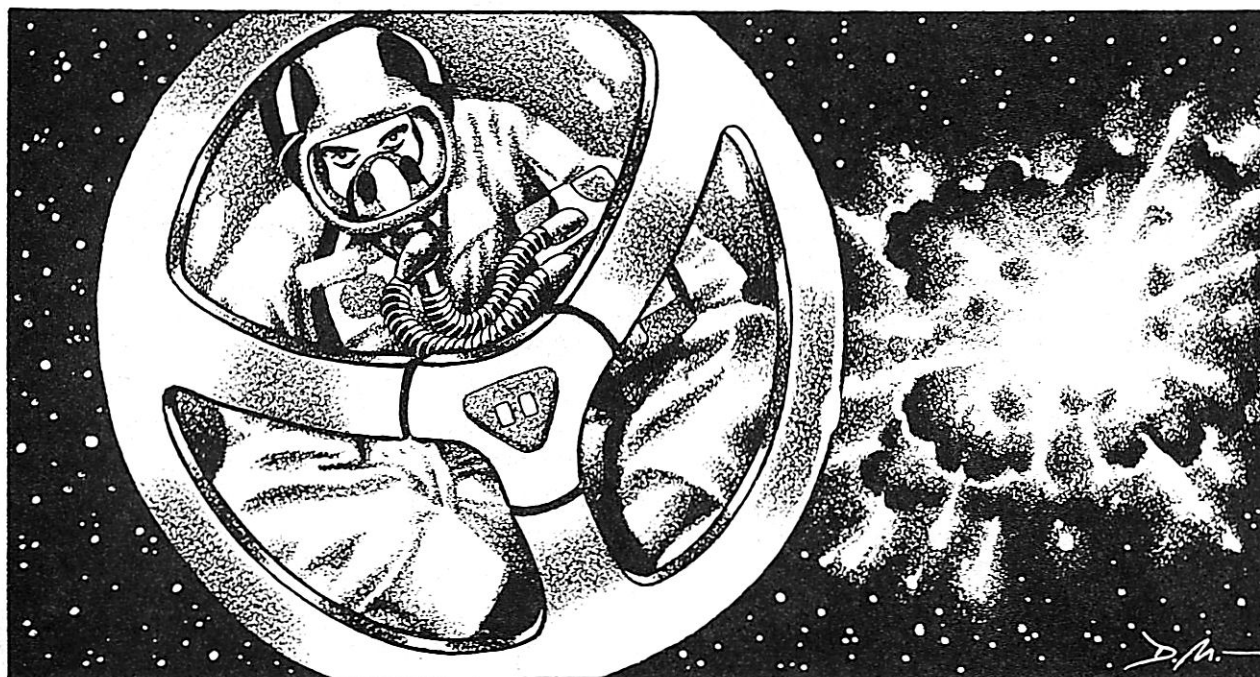
Chameleon Suit



Ball, Emergency

sophisticated visual-processing net. This is integrated with a highly advanced outer sheath which contains a fluid mix that can be electronically stimulated to produce changes in color and pattern. The ET microprocessor that coordinates the effect is mounted on a belt and is linked to the suit by a single power and command cable.

When in motion, chameleoned individuals make all Stealth tests at one level lower difficulty than normal. When motionless, these tests become an

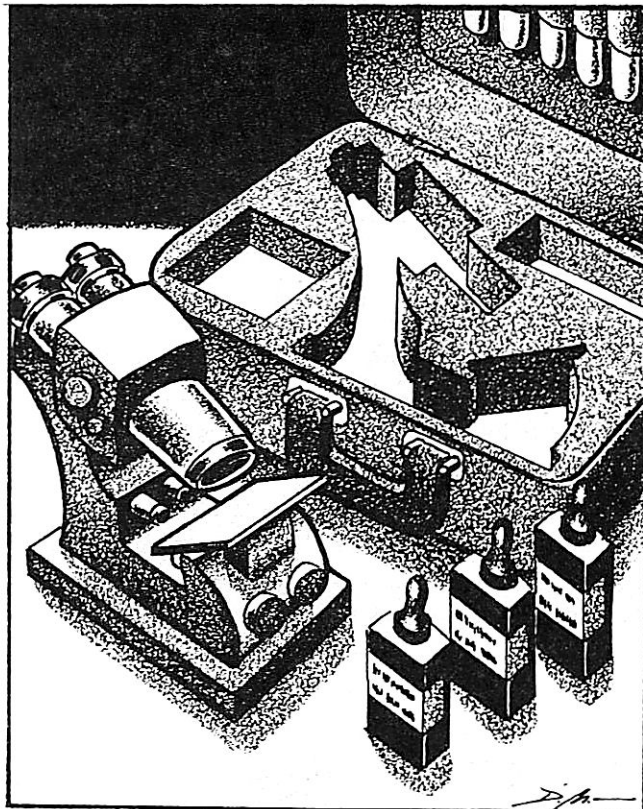


additional stage easier. The suit can take 20 points of damage before it is destroyed, but at 5 points its effectiveness drops one stage, and at 10 it is rendered functionless (though repairable).

The suits can be worn over other types of armor or clothing with ease. But users can get tangled in the long folds of this overgarment if they are not careful.

Wt: 3.8 kg

Price: N/A (—/—)



CHEMICAL ANALYSIS KIT

This kit has a spectroanalyzer which enables chemical analysis of substances. It includes a small laser for vaporizing samples in order to study the reflective properties of the gases, as well as a collection of reagents for more mundane analyses of their overt chemical composition.

Wt: 3.5 kg

Price: \$2100 (S/C)

DOC IN THE BOX

The automated medical resource, known euphemistically as "Doc in the Box," is a medical kit that includes a diagnostic program for any computer with at least two megabytes of RAM. With this program, a user can

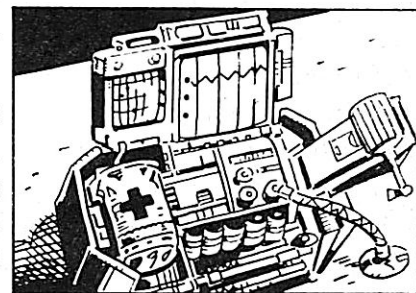
quickly receive a diagnosis and suggested treatment course for a wide range of injuries and illnesses. The most recent Doc in the Box—version 8.32—has had a very good track record, though earlier versions were somewhat "rougher" in diagnostic accuracy.

Besides the software itself, the Doc in the Box includes a large case filled with simple diagnostic tools. Also in that case are miniature versions of a number of key medical technologies: blood sampler/analyzer, oxygen mask, IV kit with fluids (including blood plasma), cardiac shock pads, portable X-ray unit, autosuturer (crude and painful, but effective), EKG (cardiac monitor), EEG (brainwave monitor), simple surgical tools, and basic drugs (including local anesthetics and antibiotics).

A Doc in the Box is an excellent resource for both first aid and general illness treatment (the kit gives a +3 bonus to effective Medical skill level). But it won't give a complete novice the hands of a surgeon (minimum skill level of Medical 1 is required to use the kit).

Wt: 30 kg

Price: \$34,500 (R/S)



FAXMASTER

A refinement of the Hydra technology pioneered in the early 1990s, the Hydra II FaxMaster is a portable unit that combines the functions of a fax machine, laser printer, and desktop copier all in one unit. It is the size of a briefcase and can be interfaced with any contemporary computer data systems.

Wt: 4.6 kg

Price: \$2650 (R/S)



Chemical Analysis Kit



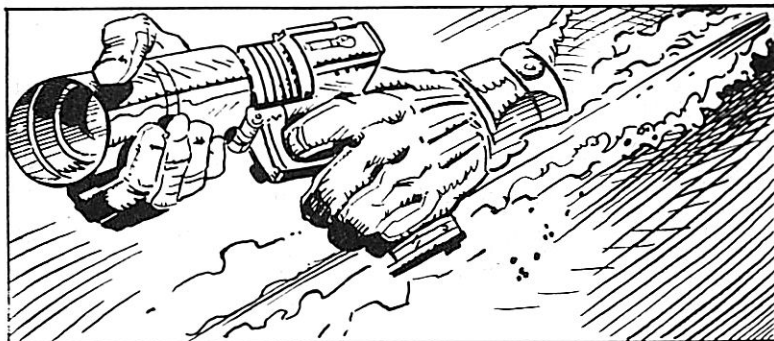
Doc in the Box



FaxMaster

FLARE GUN

This pistol-like device is capable of launching



both signal and illumination flares. In an emergency, it can also be pressed into service as a weapon, if necessary. Note that flares can be launched as either direct or indirect fire.

Ammo: Flare

Wt: 1.2 kg (*Pistol:* 1.0 kg, *Flare:* 0.2 kg)

Mag: 1 integral

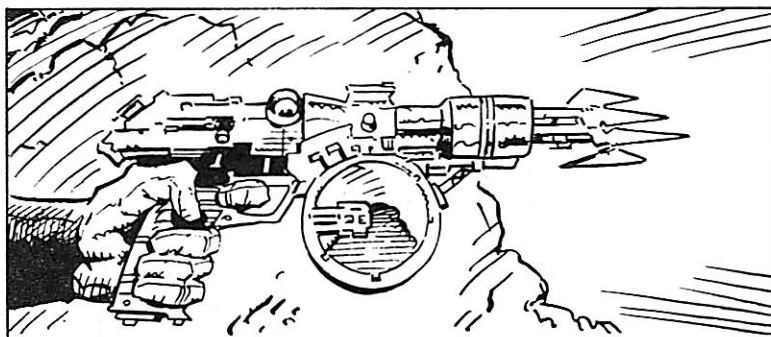
Price: \$165 (*Illum Flare:* \$2, *Signal Flare:* \$1) (C/C)

as self-driving pitons). Magnetic and penetrator grapnels are both more likely to come loose under tension than are hook grapnels, however.

During each phase in which a magnetic or penetrator grapnel is supporting more than 100 kilograms, there is a five percent chance that it will come loose from the surface it is affixed to.

Each grapnel trails 25 meters of climbing line behind itself when it is launched.

Combat stats are listed below, for those cases in which a grapnel gun must be used in a fight.



GRAPNEL GUN

Although usually used with hook grapnels as a means of scaling buildings, ship-sides, etc., a grapnel gun may also fire magnetic or penetrator grapnels (the latter having heads which function

Ammo: Grapnel

Wt: 2.5 kg (*Gun:* 2 kg, *Grapnel:* 0.5 kg)

Mag: 1 integral

Price: \$175 (*Hook:* \$7, *Magnetic:* \$25, *Penetrator:* \$105) (S/C)

Flare Gun and Grapnel Gun Weapon Data

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Mag</i>	<i>ROF</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>IFR</i>	<i>Recoil</i>	<i>Rnd</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>Pen</i>
Flare gun	1i	SS	20	150	1	Illum	B: 60*	Nil
						Signal	-1	Nil

*Burn damage

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Mag</i>	<i>ROF</i>	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Recoil</i>	<i>Rnd</i>	<i>Dam</i>	<i>Pen</i>
Grapnel gun	1i	SS	20	4	Hook	1	Nil
					Magnet	1	Nil
					Penetrator	2	2

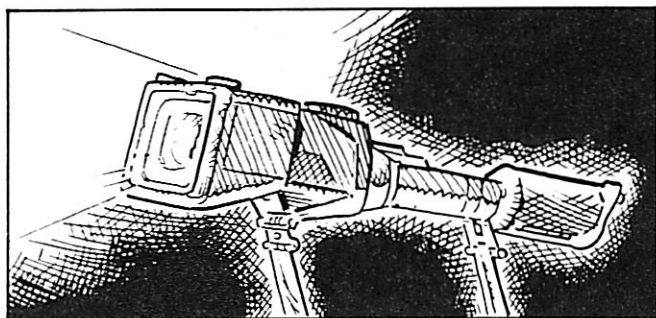


Flare Gun



Grapnel Gun





Lantern,
Solar-Powered

LANTERN, SOLAR-POWERED

This fluorescent lantern can be charged to full battery capacity over the course of eight hours of direct sunlight. Twice that time is required in overcast conditions. A full charge provides five hours of light.

Wt: 2.1 kg

Price: \$180 (S/C)

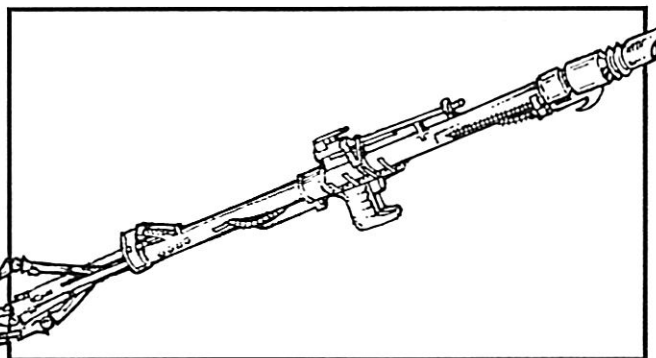


Multitool, EVA

MULTITOOL, EVA

This recently developed multipurpose space tool is rapidly becoming standard equipment for all space personnel.

The multitool is a tube 1.35 meters in length and 10 centimeters in diameter. It includes the following system: maneuver jets (at one end), vacuum-rated



Optilink

grapnel gun (at the other end), radio booster module (for increased range and enhanced reception), magnetic mooring pad (for easy attachment to

metallic surfaces), laser range finder, and Geiger counter. The multitool is also equipped with white locator lights (which can be set for steady or strobe, and can be changed to red to indicate emergency/distress).

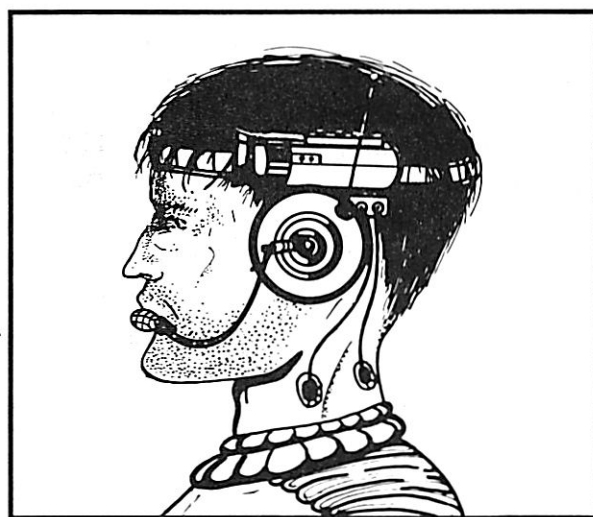
In addition, the grapnel gun end is also a gas-recoil shock absorber with variable resistance (user-determined), allowing persons to soften their contact with objects that they're intercepting at high speeds.

The maneuver jets have about two minutes of total endurance. Most EVA maneuvers (other than high-speed intercepts) take only three seconds of jet fuel.

The grapnel gun statistics appear below (each grapnel has 100 meters of line). Note that two types of grapnel are detailed.

Wt: 8.2 kg

Price: \$63,000 (Penetrator: \$175, Magnet: \$45) (—/S)



OPTILINK

Optilink is a video/audio/vital-sign relay package that can be mounted on individual soldiers, optimizing unit control and guaranteeing up-to-the-second battle data. It can be mounted easily on most types of helmets, with biosensor leads affixed to the

wearer's neck by tape or gel. (In terribly hot or dirty environments, however, making the leads stick may be difficult.)

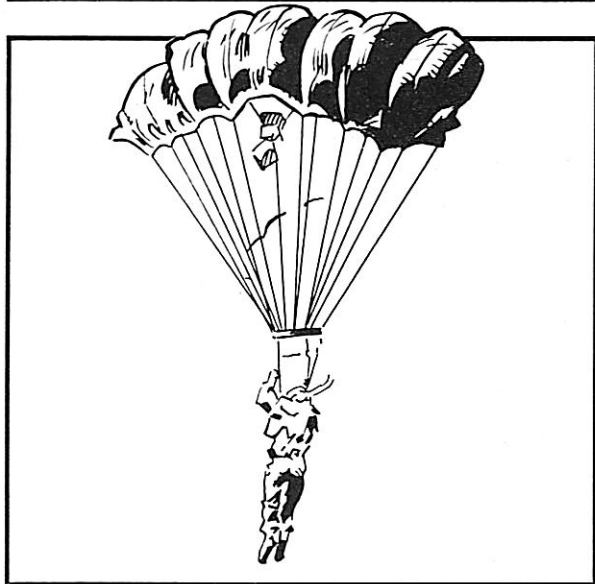
Wt: 0.6 kg

Price: \$1925 (R/S)

Multitool Weapon Data

Weapon	Mag	ROF	Rng	Recoil	Rnd	Dam	Pen
Grapnel gun	1i	SS	100*	4	Magnet	1	Nil
					Penetrator	2	2

*Only 25 if in an environment with more than 0.3 G.



PARAGLIDER

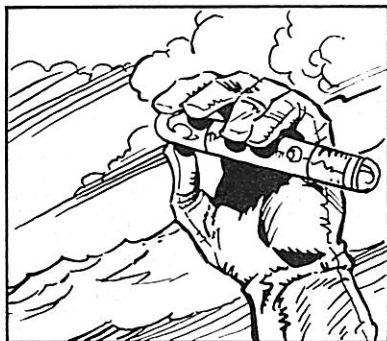
This steerable parachute permits a passenger to direct his or her descent more than is possible with a normal parachute. If recovered, the paraglider can be repacked and reused.

Wt: 16 kg

Price: \$650 (S/C)

RESCUE MARKERS

Phosphor dye markers are used for night-time



water rescues, since their glow guides emergency units to the parties in distress. The phosphorescence lasts for four hours, but water currents may dis-

perse the dye beyond usefulness long before that.

Wt: 0.2 kg

Price: \$80 (S/V)

RPV

While RPVs (remote-piloted vehicles) come in many sizes and shapes, the following one is a frequently encountered variety. It is essentially a tiny, skeletal VTOL aircraft that is used to provide aerial reconnaissance. The craft is equipped with a video camera and a frequency-hopping transceiver

(which can send scrambled video signals and/or craft-guidance commands). The camera can be upgraded with vision enhancements, and there are

RPV Statistics

Price: \$3500 (S/C)

Armament: None

Ammo: N/A

Fuel Type: G

Load: 8 kg

Veh Wt: 32 kg

Crew: 0

Night Vision: None

Min. Runway, Takeoff: 1 m

Min. Runway, Land: 1 m

Cruise Speed: 135

Com Move: 18

Fuel Cap: 2

Fuel Cons: 1.6

Damage Record

Engine: ☐

Fuel (% Consumed or Destroyed): ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Wings: Damaged ☐ Destroyed ☐



Paraglider



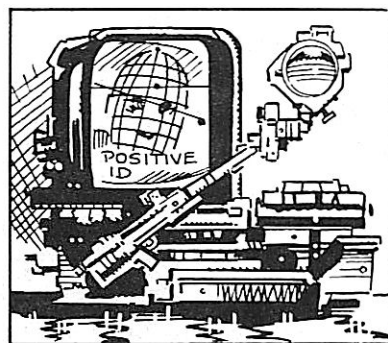
Rescue Markers



RPV

SCANNER, GENETIC

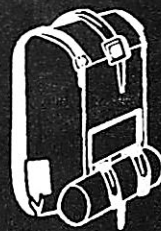
The Zeiss-Krupp ZK-90 genetic scanner is a high-priced personnel-screening system which conducts chemical and electron microscopy assessment of genetic material to establish a subject's identity. The genetic scan requires a small skin



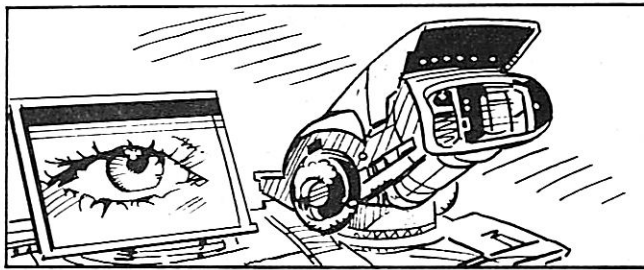
scraping (accomplished by a rasp resembling very fine sandpaper) and takes about 15 minutes. There is no known 100 percent reliable method of fooling this system (although a clone could fool it).

Wt: 13 kg

Price: 223,600 (—/R)



Scanner, Genetic



SCANNER, RETINAL

Like the genetic scanner described earlier, the ZK-32 retinal scanner is often integrated into general security systems to provide high-confidence personnel screening. Persons to be identified put their eyes to a visor mounted on the scanner, and it takes an electronic "snapshot" of their retinas, then compares them to records on file.

Wt: 8 kg

Price: \$24,100 (—/S)

SOLAR STILL

The Bezubovo Ventures Solex solar still is a device used to gather drinkable water from the atmosphere by condensation. It is powered by small solar panels, which collect enough excess energy to run the unit throughout the night, allowing around-the-clock operation. The solar still can collect 1.6 liters of water per full 24 hours (of which 1.2 liters are gathered during the night). The still takes approxi-

mately 30 minutes to set up and break down.

A solar still (which is actually a misnomer, since no real distillation takes place) is a specialty item, generally used only by explorers of the high-desert, or as a shipboard emergency device. Only if

a user is anticipating the possibility of being isolated from standing water and plentiful combustibles is the solar still a preferable option to a normal still. However, the solar still is increasing in popularity, particularly amongst environmental subculture groups.

Wt: 7.1 kg

Price: \$2800 (—/S)

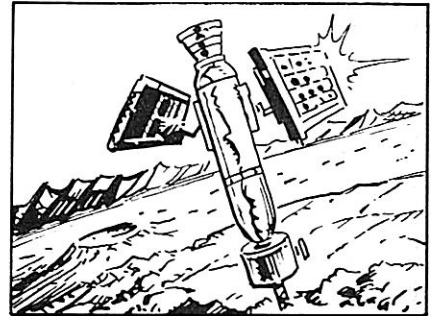
SPACESUIT, STANDARD

This is a slightly modified version of the NASA spacesuit designed for use with the shuttle program. All physical skill attempts by the wearer are at one level of increased difficulty.

Duration: 7 hours

Wt: 29 kg

Price: \$1,250,000



Scanner, Retinal



Solar Still



Spacesuit, Standard

SURVIVAL KIT

This Bezubovo Ventures Desert Fox survival kit includes lightweight versions of a number of



helpful implements: a reflective shelter half, collapsible one-liter canteen, two packages of combat rations, salt tablets, folding shovel, survival knife (with matches and sewing kit in a hollow handle, compass in the pommel cap), mirror/flasher for day or night signaling, and personal medical kit.

Wt: 2.5 kg

Price: \$470 (C/V)

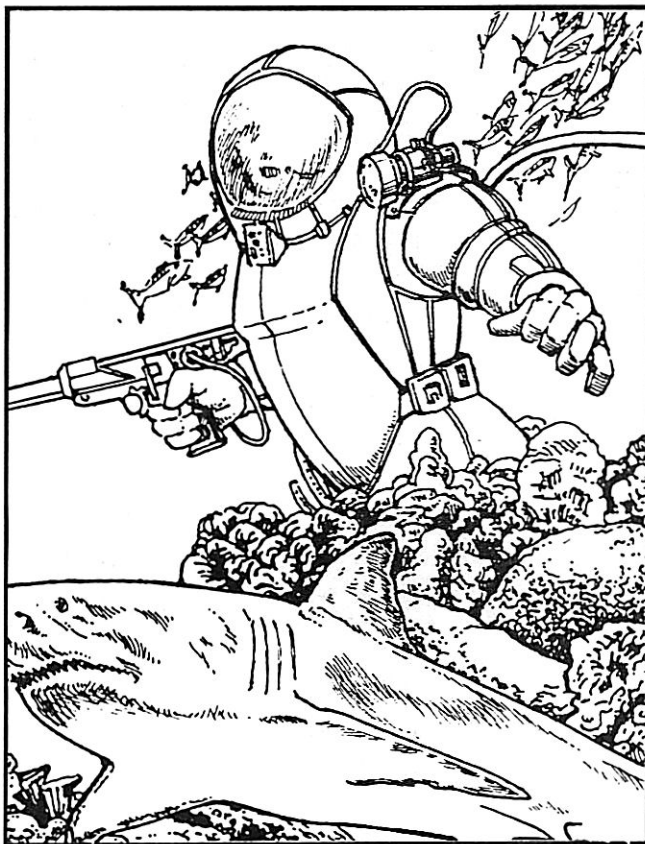
THERMAL SUIT

A thermal suit is used for sub-zero conditions and has been popularized by Antarctic explorers of the late 1990s. The Miltech Ltd. thermal suit is a prime example, combining heat-retaining fabrics with an internal matrix of Mylar lining and thermal filaments. When powered by its integral battery (or other power source), these filaments produce heat. (The battery is good for 12 hours of operation down to -45°C .) A system of small

heat-bleed flaps are available for the user as a means of cooling off should things get too warm. The suit includes a face shield and integral utility harness.

Wt: 3.8 kg

Price: \$970 (—/S)



Survival Kit



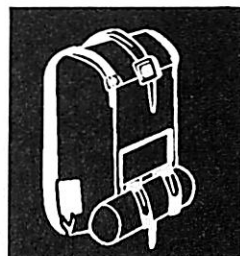
Thermal Suit

UNDERSEA HARDSUIT

This hardsuit is a hardened diving suit for use at extreme depths (200+ meters). It includes a complete, self-contained life-support system, robotic hands slaved to sensor gloves worn by the user, integral distress beacon and 50-kilometer radio, and tool harness. External lights are shoulder mounted. The hardsuit is, however, cumbersome and exhausting for wearers (minutes of operation before exhaustion equal user's CON \times 20). All AGL- and STR-based tasks are increased one level in difficulty while using the hardsuit.

Wt: 42 kg

Price: \$28,000 (—/R)



Undersea Hardsuit



UV GOGGLES

UV goggles allow a wearer to see light in the ultraviolet spectrum (including, for example, UV targeting beams).

Wt: 0.3 kg

Price: \$450 (S/C)



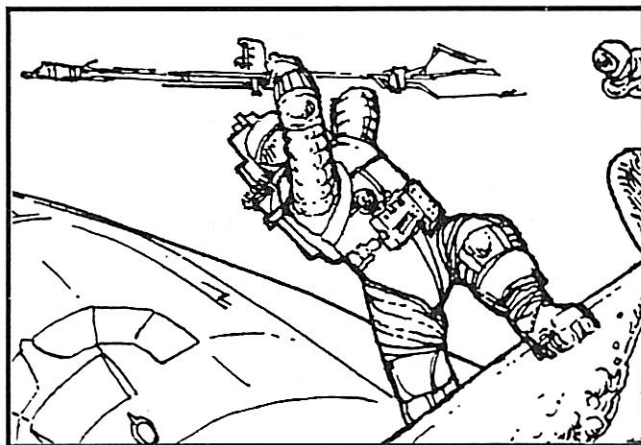
UV Goggles



Vacuum Hardsuit



Vacuum Patch



resistant to damage and radiation, and is designed to accept various electronic/modular add-

ons. It provides the wearer with the equivalent of 2 points of armor (1 point to the helmet front, unless the outermost impact shield has been slid down over the faceplate, reducing vision to a narrow slit).

All physical skill attempts by the wearer of a vacuum hardsuit are at two levels of increased difficulty (which is why space agencies try to make the tasks so easy in the first place).

Duration: 24 hours

Wt: 38 kg

Price: \$2,150,000



VACUUM PATCH

Emergency patches come in packs of 10 and are used to seal any spacesuit breaches that might occur during EVA operations. They can also be used to temporarily seal small vehicle breaches, but generally need to be triple-layered. Even so, they do not retain pressure integrity for very long. Each patch is 20x20 centimeters.

Wt: 0.75 kg (entire pack)

Price: \$400 (R/S)

ZERO-G TRANSFER SYSTEM

The zero-G transfer system (ZTS) is a device that is used to establish transfer lines between spacecraft (once the craft have matched vectors). The ZTS is similar in appearance to a small recoilless rifle. Loaded with a rocket-assisted grapnel, the device sends electronic data from its integrated laser designator/range finder to the warhead during its flight. This allows the rocket to be guided accurately to the target (the target being acquired through a 10x scope with both passive IR and image enhancement). In the event of electronic failure, the operator can use the grapnel line to direct the rocket via fly-by-wire techniques.

Once the rocket has reached its target and the magnetic grapnel head has made connection, the firing end is then connected to the user's craft by means of a grounding cable (contained in the rear of the system). With the guide cable unwound from the ZTS's launching tube, the user is now ready to perform a craft-to-craft transfer. This is

initiated by squeezing a second trigger, which engages an electronic pulley within the ZTS. The pulley elevates into contact with the guide cable and begins to tow the user forward. Direction of



Zero-G Transfer System Weapon Data

Weapon	Mag	ROF	Rng	Recoil	Rnd	Dam	Pen
ZTS	1i	SS	100*	4	Magnet	1	Nil
					Penetrator	2	2

*Only 50 if in an environment with more than 0.3 G.

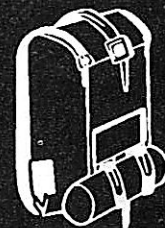
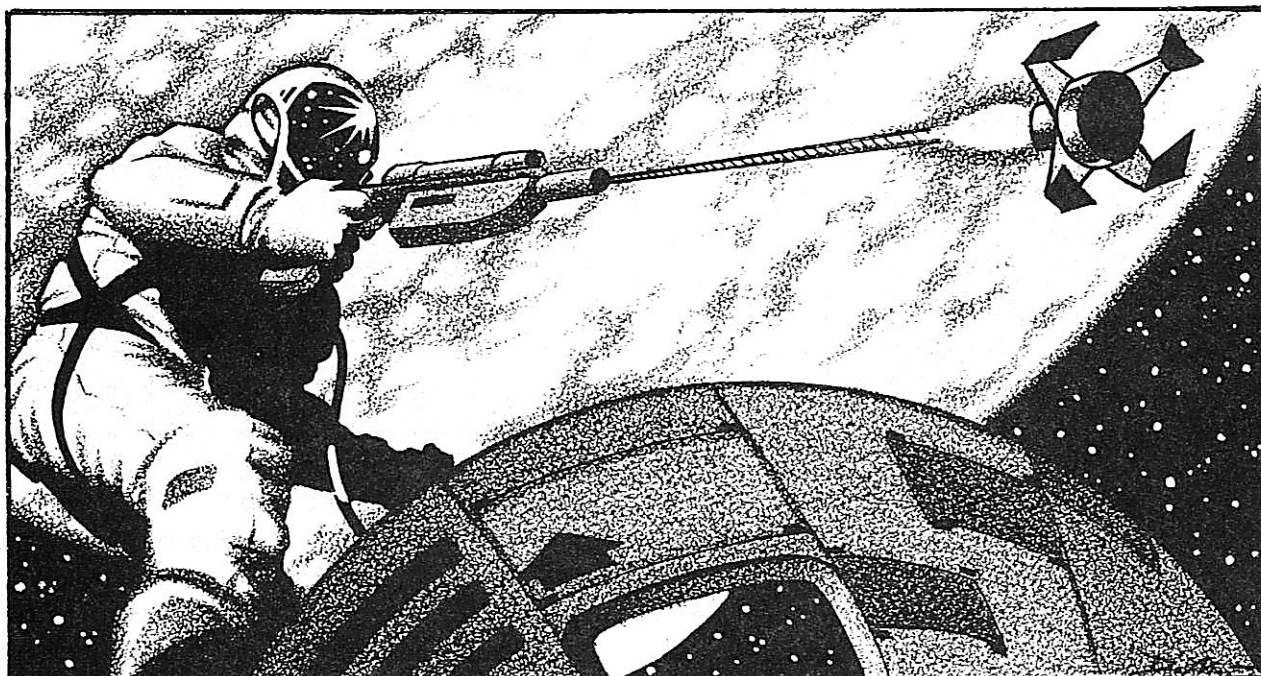
transfer can be reversed by clicking this second trigger again.

The ZTS can tow two individuals at a greatly reduced rate, but the pulley will not function properly when saddled with the inertial resistance of three or more persons.

The zero-G transfer system's grapnel is reusable and travels at relatively slow, controllable speeds. It draws on a spool of 2000 meters of wire (which remains within the ZTS unit itself).

Wt: 8.7 kg (loaded)

Price: \$17,400 (R/S)



CONSUMER GOODS



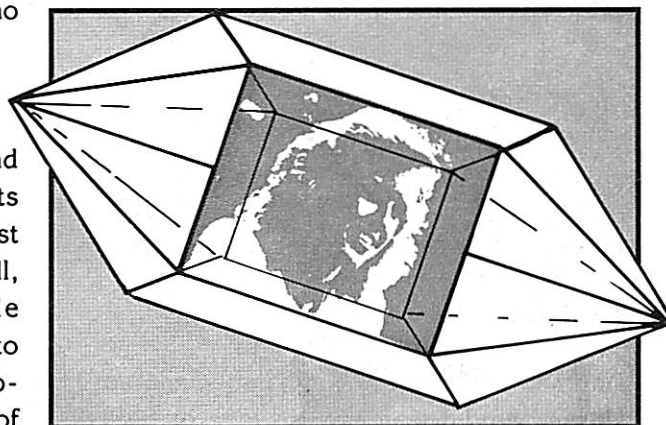
In this chapter, you will find items available to wealthy consumers in *Dark Conspiracy*. While most are unworthy of the truly rich, they are quite popular among the merely rich and people who like to put on airs.



Holostars

HOLOSTARS

Holostars are artificially star-shaped gems that



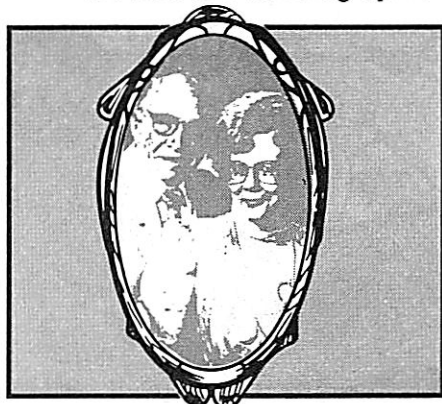
hold holographic scenes at their centers. Typically, the image is of a loved one—making the object something of a combination between a piece of jewelry and a locket. Some are tastefully done, but a very many are rather tacky.

Wt: 0.05 kg or less

Price: \$20-5000 (C/V)

HOLOGRAPHIC ART

In some circles, holographic wall still-lives and



family portraits are the latest rage. As well, many people have taken to having holograms made of deceased loved ones before interment in order to maintain

a feeling of "remaining close" to them.

Wt: 0.1-20 kg

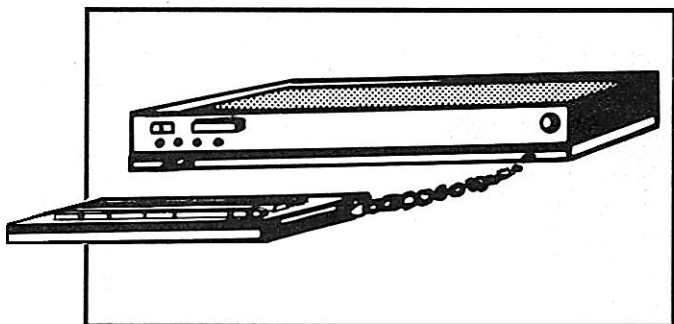
Price: \$250-70,000 (S/C)



Holographic
Art

INTERACTIVE TV

Interactive TV is a service option available to cable users. It costs about \$100 extra per month but allows a



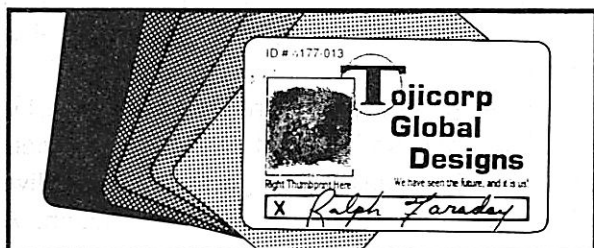
subscriber to conduct almost all forms of business by television, much the way computer users do with the business internet service (see Data Services, page 31). Interactive TV also allows users to participate in real-time, at-home, audience-involvement programming, which ranges from game shows to call-in video conferences (for those users with telexes—see below).

Wt: 0.1 kg (connection box with keypad)

Price: \$350 start-up fee, plus \$100 per month (C/V)

OPTICARDS

Opticards are the newest financial "convenience" in North America, currently being offered by the new conglomerate Visamericard Credit Corporation. Each Opticard contains a datachip with the individual's complete transaction record. This record includes not only the amount of money of every transaction, but the time, place, and vendor with whom the business was conducted. For individuals who subscribe to interactive TV or who use the business internet computer services, the card activity is integrated with those services.



The Opticard credit line is always set at one-half the user's net worth (all assets integrated). This credit can be drawn as cash or applied to purchases. The cards are color-coded to indicate credit levels, which means they also serve as indicators of income and general status.

The list below ranks the cards in descending order of importance/credit.

Opticard Types

Color	Credit Line	Falsification*
Black	\$5M+	Not possible
Platinum	\$500K-5M	One-eighth skill
Gold	\$10K-500K	One-fourth skill
Blue	\$1K-10K	Difficult
Yellow	\$500-1K	Average
Grey	\$0-500	Easy

Abbreviations: K=thousand, M=million

*Test versus lower of Forgery and Electronics. Assumes the availability of an electronics kit.

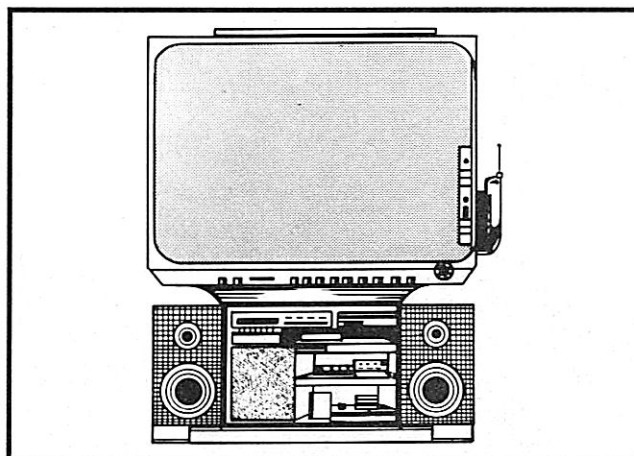
Currently, most individuals with Opticards receive them through a sponsoring megacorporation. Many consider the cards to be the ultimate financial convenience. Others see them as an insidious megacorporate strategy to ensure control of their employees.

Wt: 0.01 kg

Price: None (S/V)

TELEPLEX

The teleplex is a multipurpose communications/data station common to the houses of the wealthy and the intelligentsia. It is a combination TV, VCR, modem, video



telephone, and answering machine. Computers can be added to the system by modem or dataport connection.

Individuals with teleplexes do not need newspapers; they download them onto digital video disks or straight onto a data disk.

Wt: 26.5 kg

Price: 17,300 (R/S)



Interactive TV

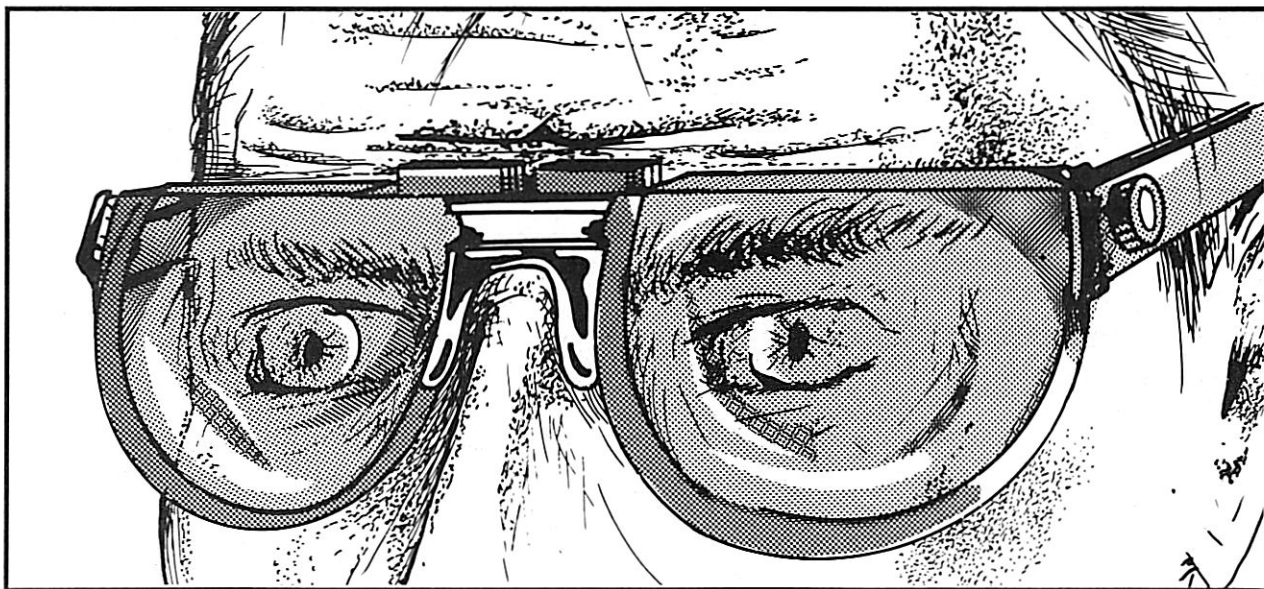


Opticards



Teleplex





Variable Glasses

VARIABLE GLASSES

Variable glasses have dynamic oil lenses whose curvature can be adjusted by the user, allowing for prescription changes as needed, as well as for temporary magnification. The oil is contained between two thin, semirigid membranes; adjusting the tension on these membranes is what changes the lens' curvature.

While the spectacles are currently experienc-

ing great popularity, there are several consumer reports connecting the lenses to accelerated eye degradation, apparently as a result of eye strain due to improper settings.

Wt: Negligible

Price: \$550 (C/C)



Wall Screens

WALL SCREENS

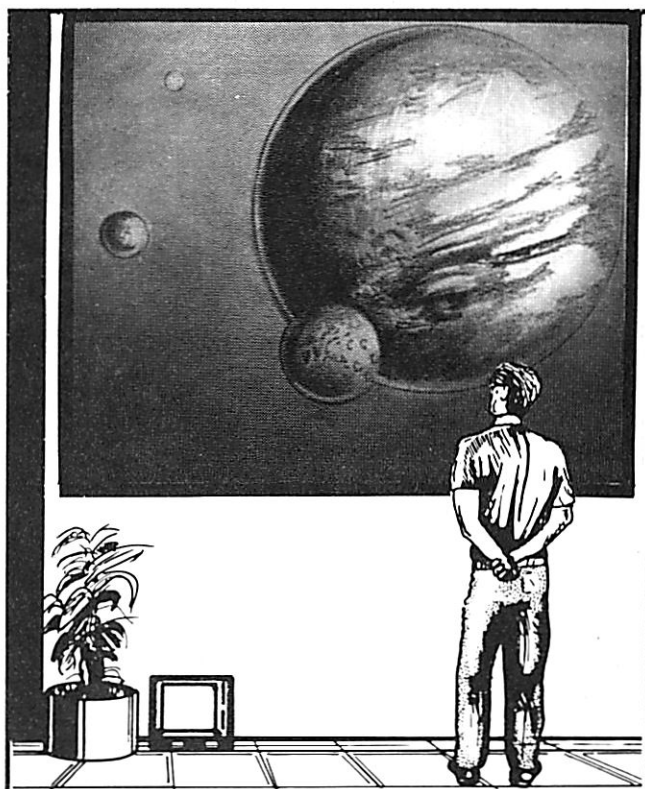
Wall screens are color, LCD screens that can be used as computer displays or television screens. A popular basic setting for wall screens are landscapes—most of which are live scenes, transmitted via cable or direct broadcast (satellite) channels. Some are unchanging views of a certain part of the world (coastlines, coral reefs, city centers, and views from orbit are all popular). Others offer a changing number of such scenes, usually nature-oriented "beauty shots" from around the globe. Also offered are animation, fractals, and computer-generated interplanetary or interstellar voyages.

Among gnomes, the screens are plasma instead of LCD. And instead of computer-generated space voyages, the biggest recent fad is live views of Jupiter and its moons in motion. A broadcast satellite was recently inserted into Jupiter orbit specifically for this purpose.

The weight and prices below are per square meter of visual surface.

Wt: 13 kg

Price: LCD: \$5500 (S/C), Plasma: \$26,000 (—/R)



DARKTEK™

Behind the shadows of our world, the Dark Ones lurk, plotting humanity's ruin. Their Dark Minions stalk us, armed with horrific devices, the products of strange and hideous sciences.

Human agents capture what they can, hoping for weapons that will aid them in their fight. And in some secret strongholds, individual ETs who have escaped the darkness labor side by side with human scientists, creating items to hold the Dark Ones off.

Meanwhile, the megacorporate sector pursues technologies that pander to the wealthy. For many, HiTek is the truest symbol of high status. Worn like a coat of arms, it distinguishes the movers and shakers from the increasingly disenfranchised hordes of "commoners" below.

In this volume, you will find items ranging from the gruesome biologic weapons of the Dark Minions, to the futuristic constructs of the ETs, to the most advanced in human technology. But all belong to the world of Dark Conspiracy, a world that is itself ever more a product of DarkTek.

2102 12.00



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DARK
CONSPIRACY

