

AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
VARIANT RULES FOR SILCORE AND BLITZ!
JOVIAN CHRONICLES CAMPAIGN
OFFICIAL SNEAK PEAK!
GEAR KRIEG & HEAVY GEAR FICTION



DREAM POD 9

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AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

Five point ten dee, top rope, grigri, sticky shoes. If you understand what I just said, chances are you are a rock climber. Nothing like being off the ground, hanging on almost literally for dear life, to focus your attention. Ok, natch, you have ropes and other means of protection so your life isn't in danger, but it still is a thrill. It's just you, and the rock. Nothing else. It is almost poetic in its simplicity.

Rock climbing is one of those activities that combines many aspects of the human entity: physical prowess, strategy, mental fortitude and calmness, mechanics, adaptability, perception, and more. While gaming may be missing out on the physical side of things (though it depends on how into dice tossing you get) it too runs the gamut. Perhaps that is what makes it so engaging.

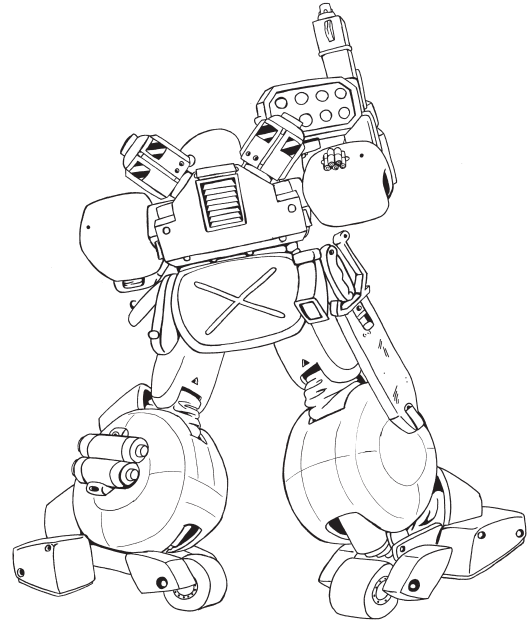
And so variable too. Every opponent you take on, or every different GM and even the other players in your team, is an opportunity for something new. Some may be weaker in the strategy sense, but their perception is top notch, allowing them to take advantage of every opening. Others are a master of bending the rules to their will – until such time as something goes wrong and in their stress they stop being able to engage. Every player has a different play style and a different approach. What works against one may not work against the other, certainly strategy wise, but also attitude and demeanour wise as well.

If nothing else, this keeps it interesting! Beyond simply being fun, though, is engagement, taking it to a depth of interaction and involvement that tickles so many of the things that can be satisfying and fulfilling to us. Not to mention the possibility of triumph and the sharing of stories. Ohhh the great stories...

So light up a campfire and gather around. Welcome to this issue of the Silhouette Magazine.

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

PS – The deadline for the Pimp Your Gear contest announced last issue has been EXTENDED! See the next page!



OFFICIAL-DP9

Only articles stamped "Official" are considered to be from Dream Pod 9 for Tournament or similar reasons. Some official material will be noted as optional, and are therefore treated as "Officially Optional". Said another way, consider the material in Official articles the same though published in a DP9 book.

TEST DRIVE

Articles stamped Test Drive indicates that the rules being presented are in testing. The rules are not official -- yet -- and being considered for later publication as Errata or are products in development. DP9 would appreciate feedback on their use, but they are not to be considered official. Note that they may change at any time or never be seen again.

Anything not so marked is a fan submitted rule not regarded as official and does not change the games or the DP9 game-universes as written in the books. Optional rules should only be used if all players agree upon their inclusion before play.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE CONTESTS



Looks like this will be an annual contest, guys! This year, your challenge is to take a DP9 Heavy Gear miniature (or group of miniatures) and "Pimp" it out with a theme of Tailgate parties.

The Entrants:

Any person not affiliated with Dream Pod 9 in an official manner. This means John, Phil and Greg cannot enter.* By entering, you agree to let us use your photos on the web page, in Aurora and for promotional purposes. But mostly to show that you guys rock.

The Prizes:

First place gets \$55 credit at the web store, second gets \$35 credit at the web store and third gets \$25 credit at the Web store.

The Materials:

Use any DP9 figure or figures currently available from the Heavy Gear Blitz Store. No other figures may be used, but you may alter them as much as you want! And yes, this does include non-Gear Models. You may pimp out a Badger or Coyote as long as it fits the theme. While you are not required to use multiple figures, it would definitely enhance the "party" feel.

*Greg, John and Phil may create something, but cannot win prizes. Try to show us up, here!

The Pimp:

In this case, we mean trick the vehicles out, not make them look like actual Pimps. Seriously, no pimp hats on the models. If you've seen the show Pimp my Ride, you'll have an idea, but for those not in the know, make the figures look all "shiny" like a person with too much money spent it all on visibly modding their vehicle.

The Tailgate:

For people outside of North America, a Tailgate Party is where sports fans get together outside of a sporting event and before the game, hold a party out the back of their vehicles. Often by dropping the tailgate on their pickup trucks and using that as a table. Note that Tailgate Party is now a generic term and does not actually require a Tailgate, all it requires is a vehicle and people willing to barbeque and have a good time. And quite often, showing off their pimped rides. All entries should have Tailgate Party as a theme, but it is up to the Entrants to interpret this while crafting their entries.

The Deadline: **UPDATED**

9 AM, Pacific Standard Time, March 31, 2009. Entries should be submitted via e-mail to dp9.rules.support@gmail.com with a title of "Pimp my Gear '09 submission." Include your name, your location, the piece's title and any "in progress" Photos you wish along with the final Photos. Please make them web-resolution and do not send more than 5 per entry. If you have trouble e-mailing submissions, please contact John at the above address and he will work on arranging alternate methods of submission, within reason (John is not flying to Venezuela just to get some photos that might win you \$55, unless you somehow think that a few thousand in airfare and lodging is worth it and pay him, although john would much prefer Scotland or Japan).

The Judging:

All entries will be judged on Originality, Theme, Composition and Painting with priority given to Theme, Composition and Originality. Judging will be done by the DP9 staff and winners will be announce by the end of February

Good luck!



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Beth Porter (thelieutenant@gmail.com) -- Illustration: Pimp my Gear

Beth Porter is an artist. She's done a lot of Heavy Gear fan art, and has pieces in the Hammers of Faith, Shields of Freedom and Swords of Pride books. She has an unnatural fondness for Ferrets.

Brad Bellows (bradley.bellows@3web.net) -- Black Talon Sneak Peak

A former nuclear engineer who now works with sewage; Brad lives in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada with his wife, three kids, mortgage and car loan. A fan of Heavy Gear and Jovian Chronicles since the days of Mekton and Mecha Press, he currently spends his spare time playtesting new tactics and building new and improved army lists for Heavy Gear Blitz!

Dimitri Achminov (achminov@hotmail.com) -- Northern Armies Enhancements

Greg Perkins (gregoryperkins@gmail.com) -- Logo: Pimp my Gear

Greg Perkins occasionally works freelance for Dreampod 9 on top of the plethora of other things that consume his time and interests from architecture, to graphic design, painting, illustration, photography, and layout.

John Bell (jakarnilson@magma.ca) -- Alfie's Tanners and Cover Illustration

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

John Buckmaster (dp9.rules.support@gmail.com) -- Messages from the Pod

John Buckmaster is DP9's head rules monkey and line developer. He's one of the masterminds behind the whole Blitz thing, and has been a Heavy Gear fan forever.

Oliver Bollmann (kannikcat@hotmail.com) -- EDF: Foundation

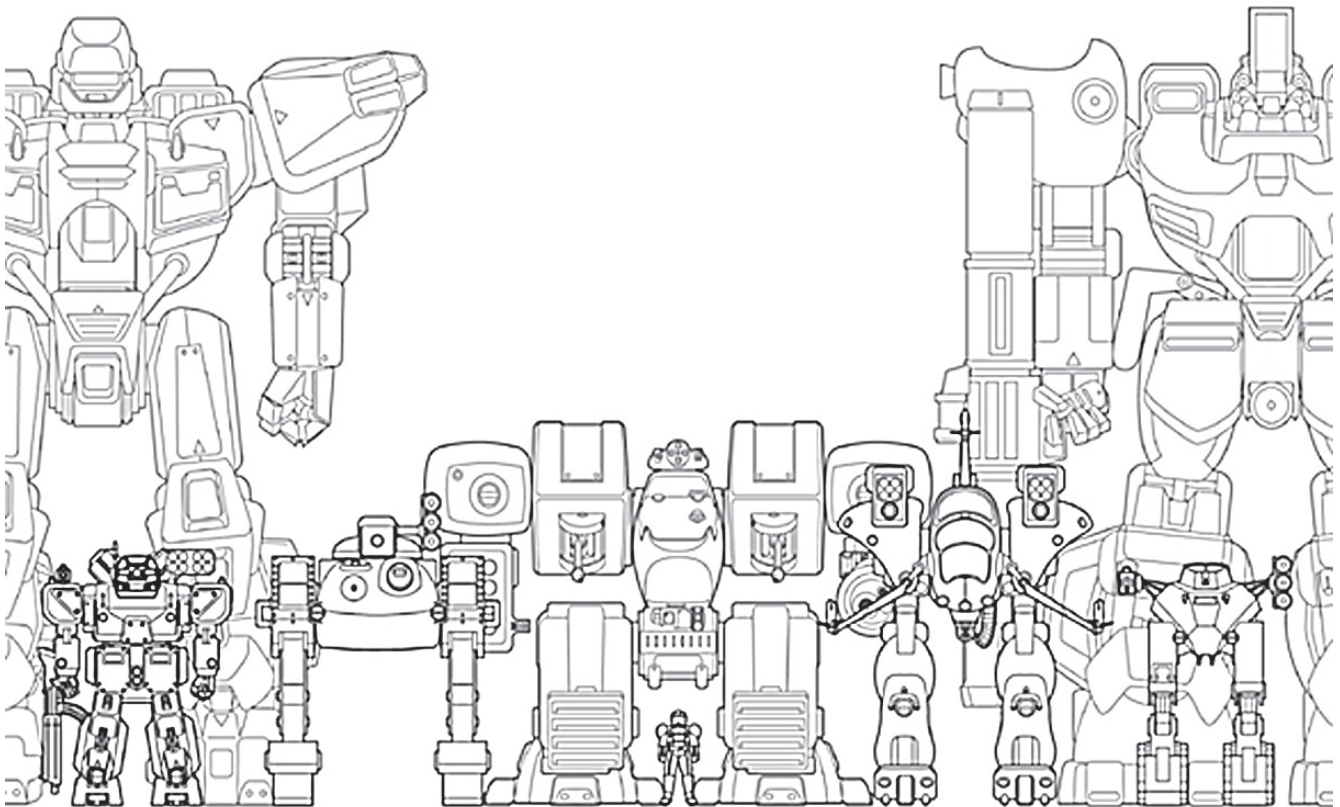
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Almost as soon as he began gaming he began writing, tinkering and adding for and to them, which led to self-publishing and e-publishing several supplements. In the times he's not playing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

Patrick St-Amand (patrickstamand@yahoo.ca) -- Shellshock

Patrick St-Amand has been gaming on and off for seventeen years. He currently lives in Taiwan but longs to return to his native Canada. This is his first contribution to Aurora, though he has long lurked on the forum as Commando Zero.

Thomas "Kyorou" Vanstraelen (vanstraelen_thomas@hotmail.com) -- Heatstroke

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Aurora Magazine, Volume 3, Issue 2, Published March 1st, 2009

After a gruelling selection process and seasons of brutal training, you and your team-mates are finally declared ready for action. Strapped into your state-of-the-art stealth gear, you slip between the shadows, prepared to exact Terra Novan vengeance on the aggressors threatening your planet.

It's go time.

Here is a sneak peak at two of the Combat Groups from *Black Talon - Return to Cat's Eye* book for Heavy Gear Blitz. These Combat Groups are legal for use in Blitz games

Availability

One of the following teams can be added to the listed armies with the following restrictions:

Northern Guard (Priority Level 4, Member States rule may not be used)

PRDF (Priority Level 4, no Leagueless squads allowed)

SRA (Priority Level 4, no MILICIA cadres allowed)

Any number of the following teams can be added to a pure Black Talon army built at Priority Level 3. Look for additional rules specific to Black Talon Squads included in BT:RTCE.

Refer to www.dp9.com for datacard releases for these models in the near future. See Messages from the Pod, this issue, for a sneak peak of the model releases!

Unit Data

Dark Jaguar: As per base Jaguar, but increase armour to 17, sensors to +1, and add Rugged Movement and Stealth R3. Weapon Loadout: HRF (F, Reloads, Sniper), CS (F, Melee). The standard Talon Trooper Gear designed for the grunt work.

Dark Mamba: As per base Black Mamba, but decrease Detect to 2 and Autocomm to 3, remove Autopilot and Weak Facing, and add Rugged Movement and Stealth R5. Weapon Loadout: SLC (F, Reloads, Sniper), CS (F, Melee), 2 x APGL (FF, FRr, No Reloads). The standard Talon Commando Gear, tasked with stealthily terminating objectives.

Dark Cobra: As per base Spitting Cobra, but increase Sensors, Comm, and all Defensive Modifiers by +1. Add Airdroppable, Rugged Movement and Stealth R2. Weapon Loadout: HAAC (F, Reloads), HRP/48 (F, No Reloads), VA (F, Melee). The standard Talon Fire Support Gear, capable of massive saturation of the battle area.

Dark Kodiak: As per base Kodiak, but remove Rf3, and increase Amour to 23 and all Defensive Modifiers by +1. Add a Sturdy Box, Airdroppable, Rugged Movement and Stealth R2. Weapon Loadout: LPA (F, Reloads), AGM (FF, No Reloads), VA (F, Melee), 2 x HMG (FF, No Reloads). The standard Talon Heavy Assault Gear, more than adequate for punching through enemy lines.



TACTICAL INSERTION TEAM

Black Talon Tactical Insertion Team

<Specialist, Veteran> 360TV

Base Squad:

- 1 x Dark Jaguar,
Skills: Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr2 <Combat Group Leader>
- 1 x Dark Jaguar
Skills Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr1
- 2 x Dark Mamba
Skills Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr1

Material Requirements:

Jaguar 2-pack
Black Mamba 2-pack
Dark Series Upgrade Pack

Options:

- Add an additional Dark Jaguar for +75 TV.
- The Combat Group Leader may add the Smoke (10) Perk for +5 TV.
- The Combat Group Leader may add a Satellite Uplink for +10 TV.
- Any Gear may upgrade to Level 3 Attack and Defense skill for +10 TV
- Add a MRP/18 (FF, no reloads, RoF 3) to any Model for +15 TV
- Any Dark Mamba may swap its SLC for a HGL (F, Reloads) for +10 TV or a HGLC (F, Reloads, Sniper) for +0 TV.
- Any Dark Jaguar may swap its HRF for a MAC and FGC (F, reloads for both) for +5 TV or a MAC and LGL (F, Reloads for both) for +15 TV or a MBZK (F, Reloads, Sniper) for +15 TV.
- The Command Gear may upgrade its Ld Skill to 3 for +10 TV, and up to two other Gears may upgrade their Ld Skill to Level 2 for +10TV

Tactics:

This team can act in several roles. HGL, HGLC and MBZK units can close in at top speed to assault objectives. HRF and SLC units can provide covering fire by sniping from long range. The leadership trait on all units makes them useful for calling Airstrikes and Artillery.

TACTICAL ASSAULT TEAM

Black Talon Tactical Assault Team

<Specialist, Veteran> 360TV

Base Squad:

- 1 x Dark Jaguar
Skills Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr2 <Combat Group Leader>
- 1 x Dark Cobra
Skills Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr1
- 2 x Dark Kodiak
Skills Att2/Def2/EW2/Ldr1

Material Requirements:

Jaguar 2-pack
Dark Cobra Pack
2 x Dark Kodiak Pack
Dark Series Upgrade Pack

Options:

- Add an additional Dark Cobra for +85 TV.
- The Combat Group Leader may add the Smoke (10) Perk for +5 TV.
- The Combat Group Leader may add a Satellite Uplink for +10 TV.
- Any Gear may upgrade to Level 3 Attack and Defense skill for +10 TV
- Add a MRP/18 (FF, no reloads, RoF 3) to any Model for +10TV or +15 TV for the Dark Jaguar
- Dark Cobra may swap its HAAC for a LPA (F, Reloads) for +0 TV.
- Dark Cobra may swap its HRP for a VLFG (F, Reloads) for -5 TV or HGM (F, No Reloads) for +0 TV.
- Any Dark Kodiak may swap its LPA for a HBZK (F, Reloads, Sniper) for +15 TV.
- Any Dark Kodiak may swap its AGM for a HRP (F, No Reloads) for -5 TV or an ATM (FF, Limited Ammo 4) for +20 TV.
- Dark Jaguar may swap its HRF for a MAC and FGC (F, reloads for both) for +5 TV or a MAC and LGL (F, Reloads for both) for +15 TV or a MBZK (F, Reloads, Sniper) for +15 TV.
- The Command Gear may upgrade its Ld Skill to 3 for +10 TV, and up to two other Gears may upgrade their Ld Skill to Level 2 for +10TV

Tactics:

This team can be configured either for Fire Support or Heavy Assault depending on the mission requirements. HAAC, HGM, VLFG and HRP units can saturate an area from long range, while LPA, HBZK, AGM, and ATM units can eliminate whatever the enemy throws at them.

ALFIE'S TENNERS

ART & STORY: JACK BELL

ARRAS, FRANCE, MAY 21ST, 1940. AS BRITISH FORCES ARE PUSHING ELEMENTS OF THE SS AROUND, THE 23RD FLAK REGIMENT SITS BACK WATCHING THE SKIES.

LOOK HEINZ! THAT MUST BE GENERAL ROMMEL. I THOUGHT HE WOULD BE CLOSER TO THE FRONT!

HAUPTMAN, GET THOSE 88 GUNS DEPLOYED QUICKLY!

DEPLOYED? I DON'T UNDERSTAND, HERR GENERAL...

BRITISH HEAVY TANKS ARE ADVANCING IN THIS DIRECTION AND I FEAR THAT YOUR GUNS ARE THE ONLY ONES THAT CAN STOP THEM.

JAWHOL, MEIN GENERAL. I WILL SEE TO IT IMMEDIATELY!

LOWER THE GUNS AND SET THEM ALONG THE RIDGE! SCHNELL! SCHNELL!

DANKE. SORRY IF I CANNOT STAY, BUT I DO HAVE A FEW OTHER CALLS TO MAKE...

MEANWHILE, 2/LT. ALPHONSE MARCH AND HIS WALKER TROOP ARE MOVING UP..

LET'S GO, BOYS! WE'LL BE HAVING TEA WITH THE BULK OF THE FRENCH ARMY TONIGHT!

IRVINGS! FAGIN! TRY TO FIND SOME WEAK POINTS WHERE WE CAN PUSH THROUGH.

YES, SIR!

YES, SIR!

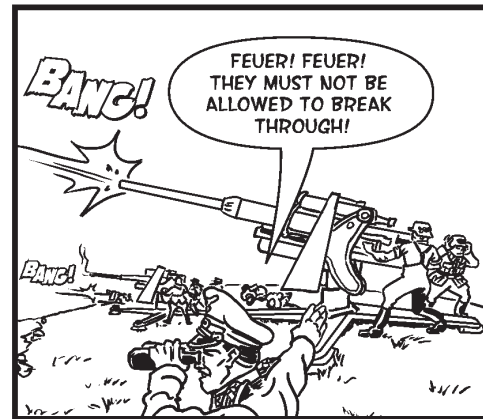
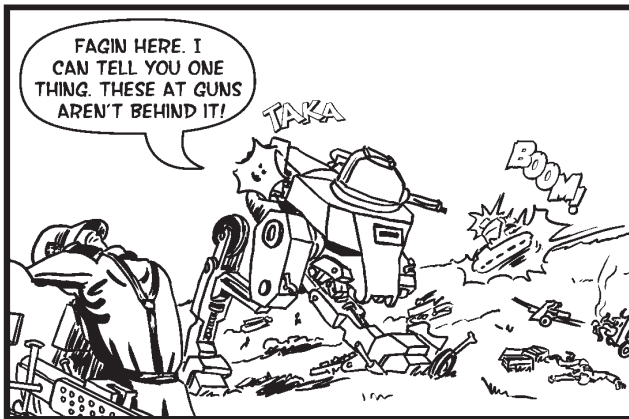
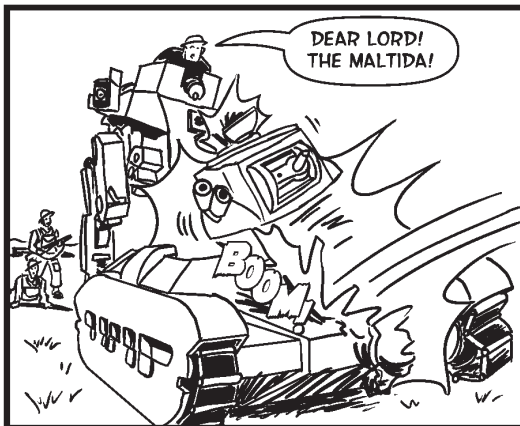
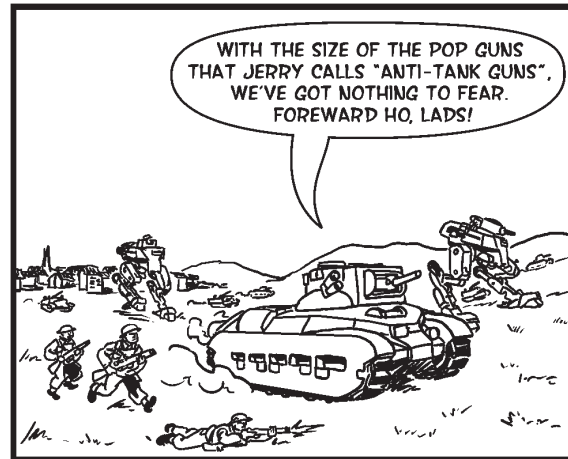
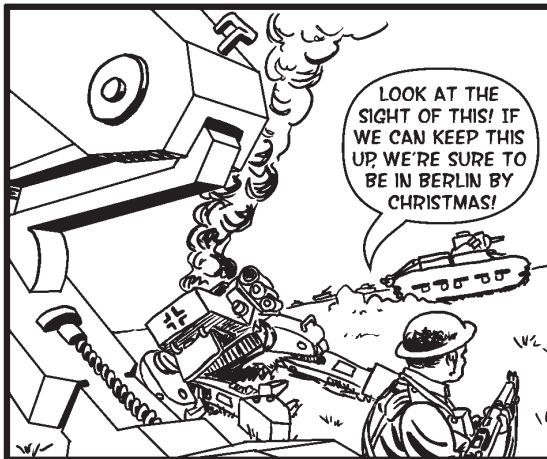
HA! HA! TAKE THAT, YOU ROLLING TIN-CAN! WHERE'S YOUR SUPERIOR ENGINEERING NOW?

KLANK!

HIMMEL!

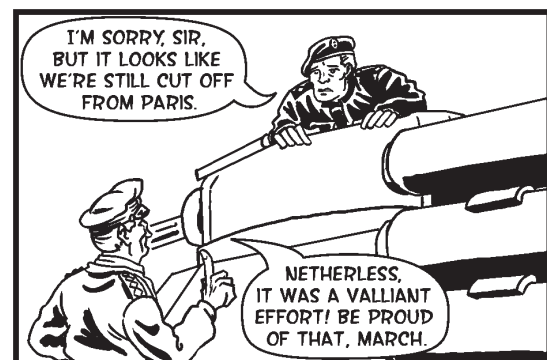
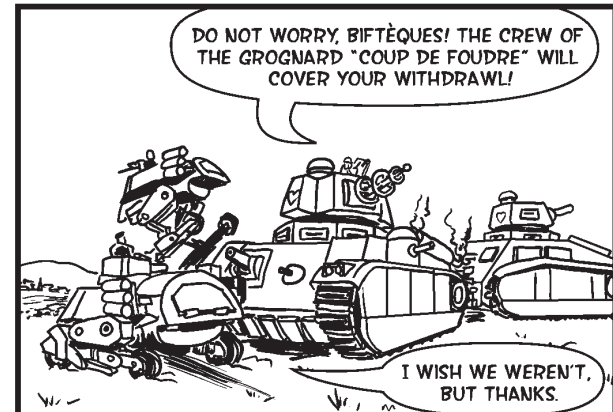
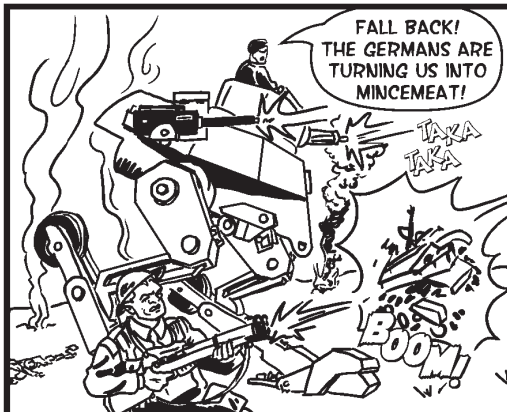
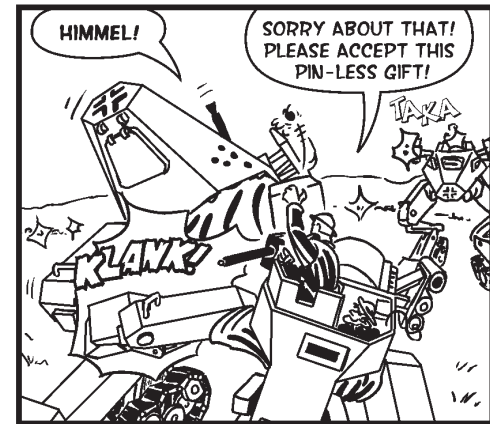
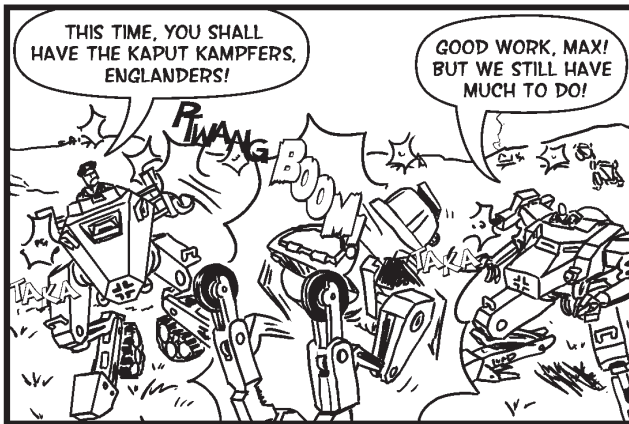
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ALFIE'S TENNERS

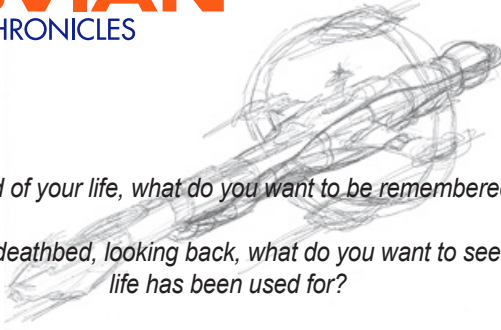


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ALFIE'S TENNERS



NEXT TIME: HOW FAR CAN THE TENNERS RUN WITH EMPTY FUEL TANKS?



At the end of your life, what do you want to be remembered for?

On your deathbed, looking back, what do you want to see your life has been used for?

Wing Commander Maurice leaned back, the ice clinking lightly in his tumbler of scotch. Behind him the beauty of the Milky Way exploded in a riot of colour. The large expanse of glazing was an unusual feature on a cruiser, and few onboard took it for granted. Many hours were spent by the crew in the lounge, taking in the beauty of space that never ever got old.

They were alone, now, this late in the evening. Flight Leader Tatiana also sat comfortably, yet attentive. She knew something was up. "In just a few days you'll be taking my place, my old friend," the commander was saying. So that was what this was all about. "And with that you need to know where we, as the EDF, came from. And why we ply the solar system on wings that are the envy of almost every solar nation. It's not a long tale, but it is one with many layers. Here it is."

It often takes one's impending mortality to elicit reflection. For some the chance for contemplation comes early in life, through inquiry and practice, gaining insight and clarity. They may find it in a monastery, within workshops, and the lucky are just surrounded by it. For others, however, their time is so wrapped up tightly in different pursuits that life flies by until the stink of it cannot be ignored any longer. And the question looms large: has your time created anything lasting, has it forwarded the human condition?

Such was the topic that came up between two business partners during dinner some years ago. Fuelled by much sake and good food the whole conversation might have been forgotten by the next morning, as such conversations often were, yet as they gathered for breakfast with a handful of their compatriots, it wasn't. Instead, glancing across the table to each other, they knew instinctively that it had grown stronger overnight. And it wasn't going to be ignored.

Those on the apex of the business world may have comrades and partners, but rarely friends in the industry. The competition is too intense, too driven to allow one's self that so-called weakness. The six gathered around the table were, perhaps at best, mutual beneficiaries, trading amicably to grow their respective empires. And grow they had, with the partnership becoming a wildly successful endeavour, and each partner sitting on sizable personal fortunes as well as assets that reached across the solar system into a multitude of fields.

As breakfast was cleared away they dove straight into the usual affairs. Contracts, agreements, forecasts – it was a well oiled and well known routine. A routine to be shattered by an outburst. Mid meeting, one of the two spoke up, out of turn. He posed the very question that had lodged itself in his mind, and spoke with such directness and such urgency that it broke through to each and every one of the six seated around the table. And the haunting answer that came back to them was: nothing. They had an empire, they had wealth, and looking back on their deathbed they would have contributed nothing.

Whether what they chose to do was their best option, or whether it will create what they hoped is a matter for the academics to mull over. That day they chose to take an action that they hoped would ensure their legacy. What they chose to do is what now exists as the EDF.

.....

So it was that some of the richest businessmen in the solar system bound together that day to lay the foundations of a paramilitary force that would be outside the regular chains of command and control. It would also be given autonomy: they would fund it from their personal fortunes and equip it, but they would not control it directly. They would set it up as a sort of non-profit corporation, with its own board of directors who would choose its missions and run the outfit's day to day operations. It was, in a way, their surrogate child, brought into the world and let loose to seek its own path.

Given that the whole idea was secrecy, the businessmen knew they would never receive glory or even hear of their prodigy's exploits directly. But they would know. They would hear through the channels, both civilian and military, and they would know when their team had altered things. And they could smile a little inward smile.

To fully birth the newly christened Edicts Defence Force took several years. To begin they needed to recruit the finest of the finest, both in capability but also in judgement and character. They held no illusions at what they were creating and how it could go so very wrong. They knew that they needed a crew of sound mind as well as body. But they had contacts, reams of contacts built up over years of networking, lobbying, politicking, exclusive parties, consultants and even employees. They began to draw up lists. Each pick had to be vetted by the others, and through the process choices were discarded. By the end they were sure they had their team. Under the guise of a trade show they invited their choices to gather. They introduced their initiative and invited them to join. Not a single person refused.

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EDF: FOUNDATION

The new recruits included scientists and engineers, and it was to them that the task fell to design the equipment of the EDF. There was no legacy equipment or history to bog them down here – carte blanche to create what would work for their specific purpose. Simulators were built, pilots played with configurations, layouts, performance and options. Scenarios were run, then re-run. And the industrial might of the six corporations were surreptitiously harnessed to produce and test designs. Eventually it became clear that the EDF would need its own manufacturing capabilities and an asteroid in the belt was repurposed for that intent.

A similar process went on with those who would become the operatives of the EDF. They honed their skills and their tactics. They thought up scenarios and played with them, trying out different things and failing often such that they could learn. They worked with each other to discover weak areas and strengthen them. All the while they kept the feedback loop open to the engineers, informing them of what tools would suit their needs.

Meanwhile the leaders of the EDF were at work drafting a charter. They attended to their self-cultivation to ensure they were thinking clearly and operating at the highest standards of integrity and ideas. They gathered up all their existing notions and purposefully set them aside to start fresh. When they were done, an eight page document that would stand as the foundation of the EDF had been written. It would guide them and future executives in keeping the EDF guided towards its values and principles.

The engineers are the blood of the EDF. The troops are the structure. The executives are the mind. And the source manuscript is its soul.

After years of organizing, building and training, the EDF was launched without fanfare and without notice. And so it remains today.

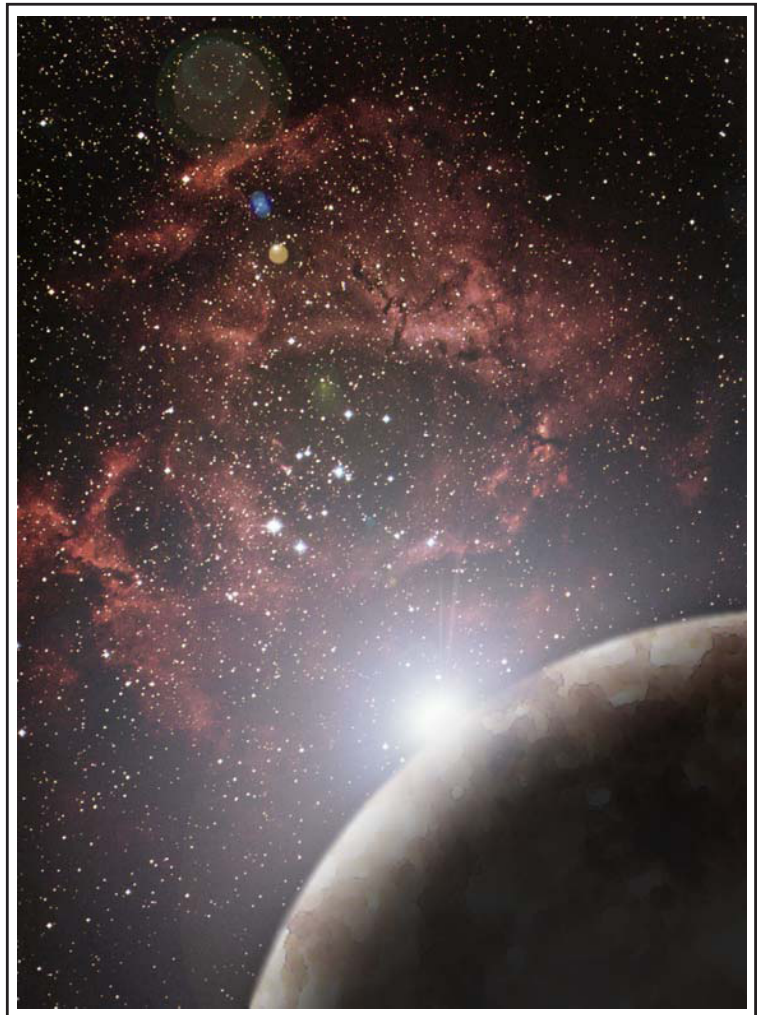
.....

The viewport now faced the endless black of space, interlaced with its curtain of stars. As though perched upon that precipice, Tatiana felt as though they were the only two people in the universe at that moment. A lot had just been said. A lot made some sense now. It was a lot to be responsible for... and she was ready. She returned her gaze to the Wing Commander, looked him in the eye for a bit, and then simply nodded once.

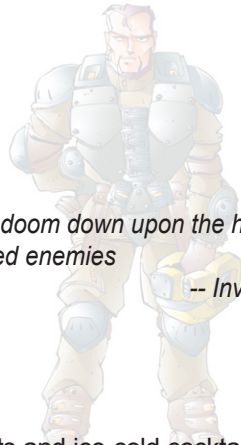
Maurice nodded back. "Get some sleep now. There's work to be done."

.....

The Edicts Defence Force is an alternate campaign idea for Jovian Chronicles. In this campaign, the PCs are part of a specialized and very-well equipped rapid reaction force that may see action throughout the solar system. The secrets and origin of this shadow organization continue to be revealed through a series of articles in upcoming issues of Aurora.



Jovian Chronicles: The Ethereal and Eternal Beauty of the Cosmos



Come, GIR. Let us rain some doom down upon the heads of our doomed enemies

-- Invader Zim

It was hot in there.

Images of ice cream, citrus fruits and ice-cold cocktails danced behind Corey's eyes. As the merciless sun of the Badlands was turning the outer shielding of his Gear into a giant cooking plate, the air inside the cab was heated to sauna temperature. Even with the ventilation right in his face, Corey had the uncomfortable feeling that he was roasted alive, probably for the benefit of some anthropophagous being from outer space.

Corey's Jaguar had been crouching behind a large-sized rock for the last three hours, waiting in ambush for some South-backed guerrilla unit. Obviously, the bastards had been delayed and Corey's unit, the Avenging Sharks—a name that carried some irony in the current situation, had been waiting, with nothing to do except trying to merge into the landscape.

The exact details on who those South-sympathizers were and what they were trying to achieve had been lost to Corey, as he had taken advantage of that part of the briefing to take a quick, open-eyed nap, in order to recover from last night's celebrations. In the plane Cyan, the unit's chaplain, had given Corey a quick summary of the situation: those guys were sympathizers of the Republic and they had some very bad habits, like blowing up lightly defended fuel depots, power relays and road bridges, in a region where most of the communities gave preference to the North. As some lazy-assed officer had once presented to the Sharks, counterinsurgency is a battle for legitimacy: if those clowns were to continue their little raids unpunished, it would eventually damage the public image of the local authorities and that of their Northern allies.

That is why, once drone recon had shown the South-lovers' to be on the move for yet another raid, the Sharks were airdropped with orders to ambush the enemy and to capture as many Southern 'advisors' and military equipment as possible. Lt Burroughs had picked a nice location for the ambush: the enemy convoy was to travel a track sided by a standing cliff on one side and a ravine on the other for four kilometres. Piles of rock provided adequate cover and the Shark's superior firepower should provide another decisive advantage to the North. As the unit's crack shot, Corey's was given the task to zap the enemy commander. He was posted behind a rock formation, on the side of the ravine opposing the track, and was to wait for the convoy to ride past his position and to take out the commander's Gear from behind. The assignment had filled him with pride and excitement.

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HEATSTROKE

THOMAS VANSTRAELEN

Except, that was three hours ago.

Now he was filled with an increasing urge to take a swim in a pool of very chilled water. As the Sharks were ordered to maintain radio silence, there was little to distract Corey from estimating the time it would take for his water-deprived body to give up at this temperature. He discarded the result he came with as excessively optimistic.

After an eternity of slow cooking, Corey caught a movement near the rock Lt Burroughs was hiding behind. The arm of the Lt's Jaguar was protruding from behind the rock and was waving for attention. Lt was probably relaying information transmitted in the same way by Karl, the Shark's point man. A quick succession of signs informed Corey that a four-wheeled vehicle was approaching from the track. Corey lowered his Jaguar's crouch, trying to hide as much as possible of the mighty war machine behind the rocky shelter.

In this position, the only part of the track the Jaguar's cameras could spot was a hundred meter behind him and on his right, so he had to wait for the enemy vehicle to get past his position to get a glance of a civilian convertible jeep speedily painted in desert camouflage tones. Let alone the driver, the two passengers were holding binoculars but didn't display much vigilance. As a scouting party, this was pretty cheap, Corey thought.

The jeep rode undisturbed past the Sharks. A couple of minutes later, the main convoy appeared in the window. An Iguana that appeared to have taken part in more than its share of battles came first followed by a second, which was in slightly better shape. Then came two civilian trucks, converted into troop transports. One of the two still showed a brilliant green area on its left side. Apparently, the Southern Milicia was out of beige paint; significant intel there.

And there it was. Following the trucks came a fresh new-looking Command Jager, Corey's target. The Northern soldier focused on it and readied himself to open fire on signal. As he kept his attention on the enemy leader, he almost failed to notice the vehicle that came next: a stripped-down Antelope on the back of which some lunatic engineer had set a heavy mortar. An extra wheeltrain had been welded behind the Antelope's frame, protruding from the back of the vehicle. Even though, this insane installation had every chance to fall to pieces on the first shot fired, in Corey's opinion. Either those Southern military advisors didn't take their job seriously or they had some very twisted senses of humour.

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HEATSTROKE

Next to the “Artillery Antelope” came a half-dozen battered-looking Jagers. Two of them were dragging a third one on an improvised trailer. This was probably the reason behind the delay: this small-budget guerrilla couldn’t afford to leave behind such a valuable piece of equipment.

The signal came. As Corey’s Jaguar rose and took aim on the enemy leader in a swift motion, static and brief battle orders erupted in the pilot’s long-silent headphones. Explosive shells delivered at point-blank range instantly tore the two Iguanas to pieces. Corey opened fire as the Command Jager threw itself on the ground. His shooting did some damage but missed the enemy’s V-engine. Before he could adjust his aim, the Jagers of the rearguard returned fire in his direction, forcing him to kneel down behind his shelter as pulverized rock rained down on his Jaguar.

A quick glance over his cover informed Corey that one of the Jagers was dashing toward the ravine, a Vibroblade in its fist. Corey threw his Jaguar on the right and opened fire as it reached the ground loudly. The first shell hit the Jager just below its cab, the second blasted its left knee. Momentum carried the Southern Gear over the edge of the ravine as it collapsed and the Jager disappeared from Corey’s sight, rolling down the incline.

Corey’s chest was hurting from the impact of his Gear with the ground. He turned his attention to the battlefield. No one was firing in his direction. The enemy had popped smoke and

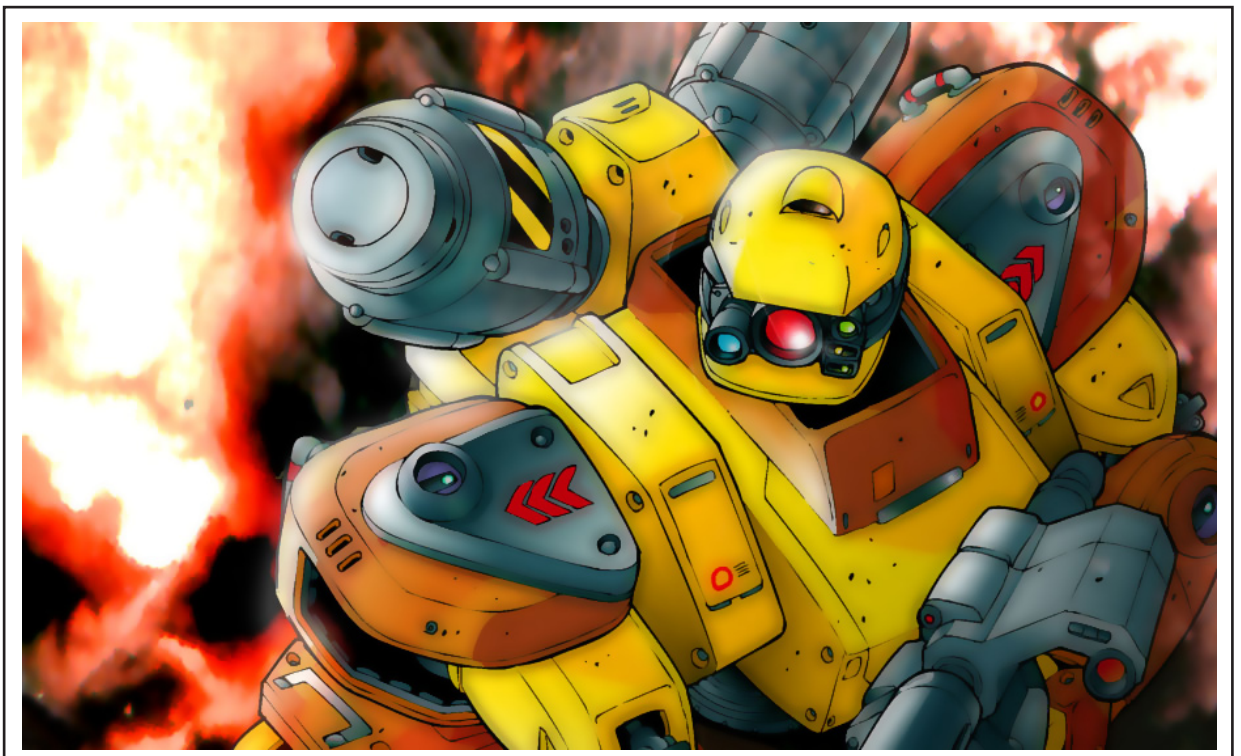
was apparently trying to regroup for a charge. One of the troop transport was one fire, the second one had been scattered apart by the Shark’s fire. Silhouettes were moving in the smoke and Corey tried to locate the Command Jager. He suddenly saw a large muzzle flash: somebody was firing a big gun upward.

No freaking way, he thought. A gust of wind revealed the Antelope, a bit of smoke arising from the mortar’s barrel. Then came the whistling of an incoming shell.

No fr... Corey’s expression of disbelief was interrupted as the heavy mortar shell exploded on impact. The explosion lifted the Jaguar and Corey felt several pieces of shrapnel hit his Gear. Then the machine crashed into solid rock. Corey’s head met with the video screen and he passed out, for which he was grateful.

Painful consciousness returned to Corey. His face felt like a giant bruise, his chest like a collection of broken ribs. Corey briefly touched his nose and discovered a new level of pain. The Jaguar was apparently lying on its front and the alert signals painted the inside of the cab a bloody red. The Gear was now officially a wreck. Corey spat some blood and bits of broken teeth and pulled the emergency hatch release. Nothing happened. A moment later, with the last draft of an air that carried the smell of burning plastic, the ventilation died.

The temperature in the cab continued to rise.



Jaguar -- INCOMING!

The efficiency and competitiveness of Northern armies has been point of debate for me in Blitz, and L&L brought some well-needed boosts to the lists. Despite this, I feel some elements are still lacking, especially compared with their equivalents in other armies, like the infamous Northern GP squad. This article is an effort at correcting those elements, while maintaining balance and coherence with the universe.

UNIT MODIFICATIONS:

- Tiger cost is lowered by 5, to 55.
- Sabertooth cost does stay at 65, so upgrading from a headhunter costs 20, while swapping with a Thunder Jaguar becomes -5 (This is taken from the errata round-up).
- VLRPs on Mammoths now both fire in the F arc, and can be linked for an additional 5 points.
- Mad Dogs increase their cost from 40 to 50 ; they gain a sturdy box, weapon link for their MRPs, and +1 defense.
- Mauler bears reduce their price from 75 to 60 and gain a weapon link for their MRPs.

SQUAD MODIFICATIONS:

- - UMF gains the ability to swap a Thunder Jaguar for a Sabertooth for -5, just like the NAF.
- - The following squads are considered aux at PL3 and 4:
NAF Recon, WFPA Dragon*
- Any Hunter or Jaguar that swaps their AC and LRP for a SC gain field armor, at no additional cost. This affects GP, Strike, and Dragon squads.

(* : In the interest of fairness, this change should also apply to MD MP squads, HPF Strider squads and PAK infantry)

GP MODIFICATIONS

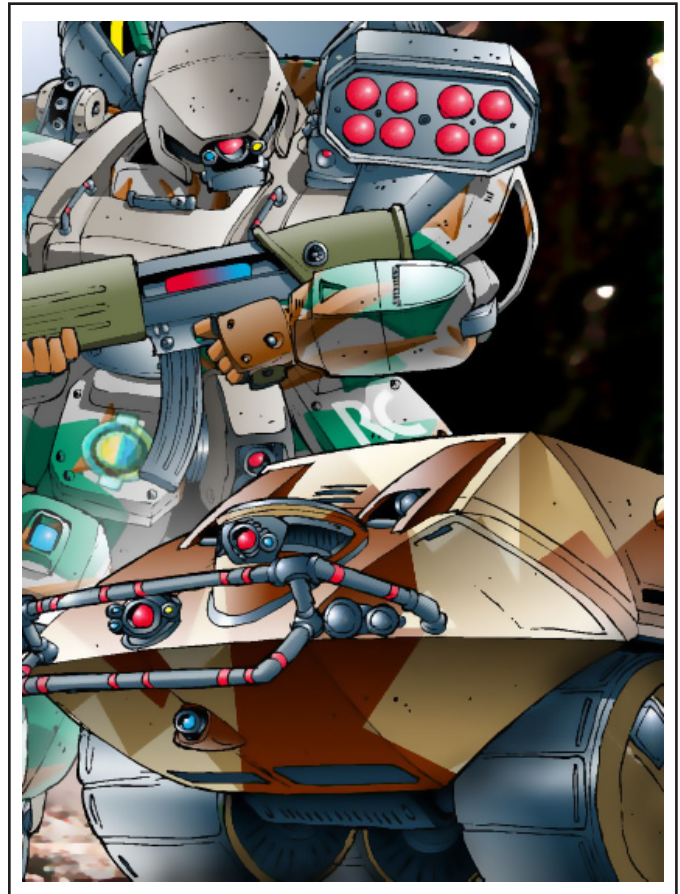
- Up to 2 GPs can be upgraded to veteran status, for one veteran slot.
- Veteran GPs gain the following option :

Up to 2 Hunters can swap their LRM for an AGM (FF, ammo 3) for +10 points, this counts against the limit of 4 weapon upgrades.

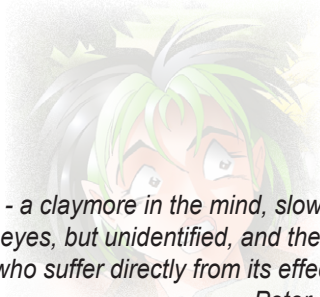
Post-1940, this upgrade is available to Jaguars.

Note: These upgrade rules were not designed or tested with the 1940+ upgrades; combine at your own risk...

Thanks to Mrondeau, Ice Raptor, Lance, Wmensing and Sar for their comments and input.



Northern Hunter and Badger



"It is the enemy within - a claymore in the mind, slowly exploding before our very eyes, but unidentified, and therefore invisible, even to those who suffer directly from its effects".

Peter Tucker

Note: The following rules are not intended for use by every gaming group. Gamemaster and players must all agree whether or not to use them, since they may drastically alter the nature of characters and the tone of a campaign. The penalties described below should never be imposed on characters without the player's consent. Its use is recommended for mature role-players only.

.....

Since the First World War, a phenomenon called "shellshock" has been known to soldiers and military authorities. When it was first diagnosed, it was assumed that it was the result of nearby detonating ordnances and shockwaves on the soldier's brain. Those who suffered from it were often accused of cowardice and punished, or treated as outcasts.

Later on, after the Vietnam and the First Gulf War, shellshock became known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Not only soldiers, but also many people confronted with sudden trauma and violence, are known to be affected by it. Its effects vary greatly in both their manifestation and their intensity, from nightmares to blackouts, catatonia, or sudden bursts of violent aggression. All of the above are devastating not only for those who suffer from them, but also for their loved ones.

SUFFERING SHELLSHOCK

When a character is exposed to some extremely traumatic event (gamemaster's discretion), the gamemaster may instruct the player to roll PSY against a threshold appropriate to the situation. It is important that the threshold not be too high, or the entire group may be devastated by shellshock, so 2 or, at the most, 3 may be good numbers. If the gamemaster wants the threat of PTSD to be more present, he may ask for more frequent rolls, with a threshold of 1.

Whenever a player fails a roll, his character becomes the victim of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Its onset is neither sudden, nor dramatic, but the effects will be felt at the appropriate time. For every roll failed, the player's PSY attribute drops by one. Note that this change will also alter the character's HEA and his stamina rating. Should PSY become a negative value (or go further below zero) **after failing a shellshock test**, take another PSY test:

SHELLSHOCK PSY TEST

- 1 or Less. Catatonia: This is possibly too extreme to impose on any player-character. The character is reduced to a complete catatonic state, unable to interact with his environment. He may swallow food and drink, but is other wise unable to participate in his recovery. The gamemaster may after some time decree that the character "snaps out of it", but the character will then suffer from one of the symptoms below.
2. Fear: The character becomes terrified my violence and the threat of it. He /she will do almost anything to escape such a situation, which may make it impossible for him to fulfill his/her military duties. If threatened with force, the character may withdraw into catatonia or break down emotionally. All combat actions while in the grip of such fear are performed at -2.
3. Insomnia/Nightmares: The character becomes virtually unable to sleep restfully, either because he suffers from horrible nightmares, or because he is simply incapable of falling asleep. For the first week of symptoms, all mental and social tasks are performed at -1. After the first week, all tests are performed at -1. A character may attempt for alleviate the lack of sleep either with drugs or alcohol, almost invariably leading to addiction.
4. Amnesia: The character has blocked the event and is completely unable to remember what happened to him. Attempts to force him/her to recall the source of the trauma may result in flashbacks (see below) or may cause debilitating pain and migraine (-2 to all rolls for one hour).
5. Flashbacks: As per the character flaw of the same name.
6. Loss of Empathy: The character becomes cold and more insensitive to others. All social rolls are from now on modified by PSY (which will be a negative value) in addition to the usual attribute.

RECOVERY

PTSD is a condition that can be crippling, often permanently. Of course, in a RPG, it is probably better to compromise with reality and allow the character to resolve those issues, but recovery should take time and require the character to go through a process of healing.

A common path towards healing is **therapy**. It may be group therapy, or one-on-one treatment with a therapist. For morale reasons, many military units and organizations will not provide such support, and will simply deny the problem. In that case, simply getting treatment may become a quest of sorts for the character. Going through such treatment will not take up so much of the character's time, but a long-term commitment is required.

For religious characters, **faith** is another way for the character to pursue some kind of healing. It functions much like therapy, but with a priest or chaplain instead of a therapist. Individual and group meetings are both possible. Prayer is an important part of recovery.

Drugs offer a "quick" path towards some kind of normalcy, but may only allow a character to function normally, not return to any kind of long-term well-being. Addiction (as per the character flaw of the same name) is a possible side effect, but some drugs have other side effects, such as leaving the character almost emotionless, or feeling disconnected from those around him.

No drug or therapy can make trauma disappear, but the best forms of treatment are probably the ones that help the character come to grips with the events that caused his condition. In any case, recovery must be agreed upon by both player and gamemaster, and shellshock should never be allowed to completely destroy a character. Redemption can be a very interesting process for many role-players, but it can never be approximated with a simple roll of the die. Both parties must act in concert and decide when recovery can be reached, or when the shellshock damage becomes more of an obstacle to the game than a source of rewarding gameplay. At the end of the healing process, the PSY attribute is restored to its original value.



Northern Infantry: Move it or Lose it!



From the rules monkey...

As you saw earlier, we have a sneak peek of what awaits in the “Black Talon - Return to Cat’s Eye” sourcebook that is on track for an April release. And that means new miniatures for the upgunned and upgraded Black Talon gears.

We’ve got them all here: Dark Jaguar, Dark Cheetah, Dark Mamba, Dark Skirmisher, Dark Cobra and Dark Kodiak! Plus the Black Talon Dark Series Upgrade Pack which includes metal parts of the dark series v-engines, missile packs and new guns for players to convert their existing miniatures into the upgraded dark series models. A whole mess of gears, rounded out by the newly sculpted Caprice Moab Combat Mount that features shorter legs and more weapons to customize. Enjoy!



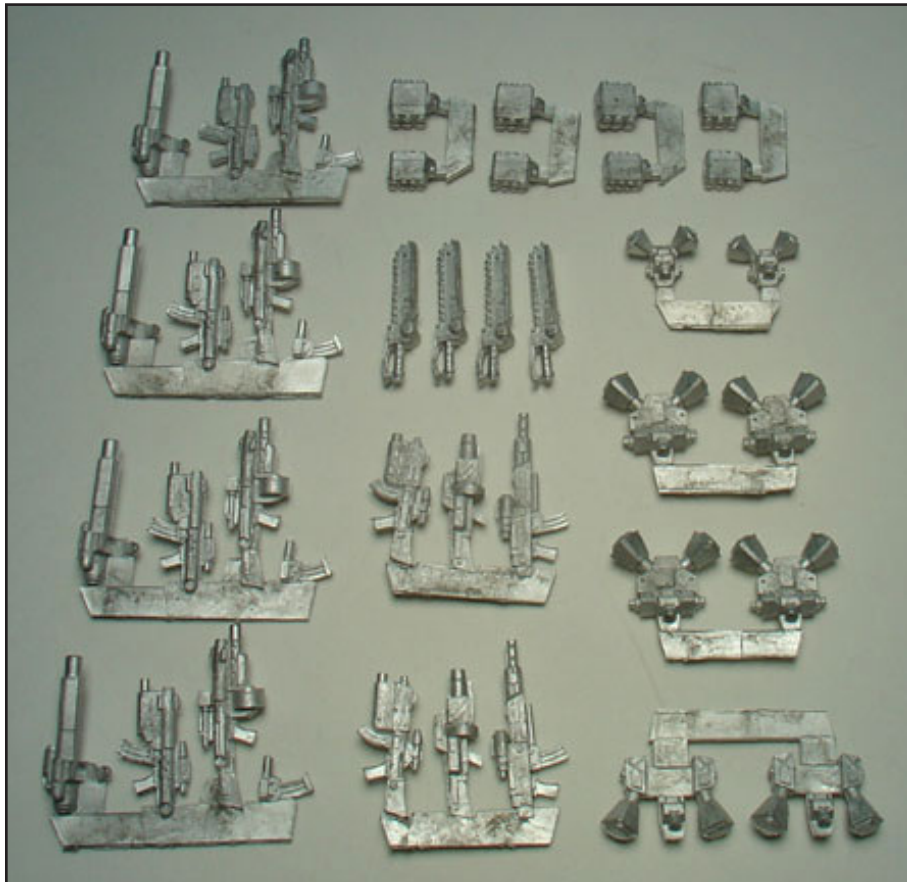
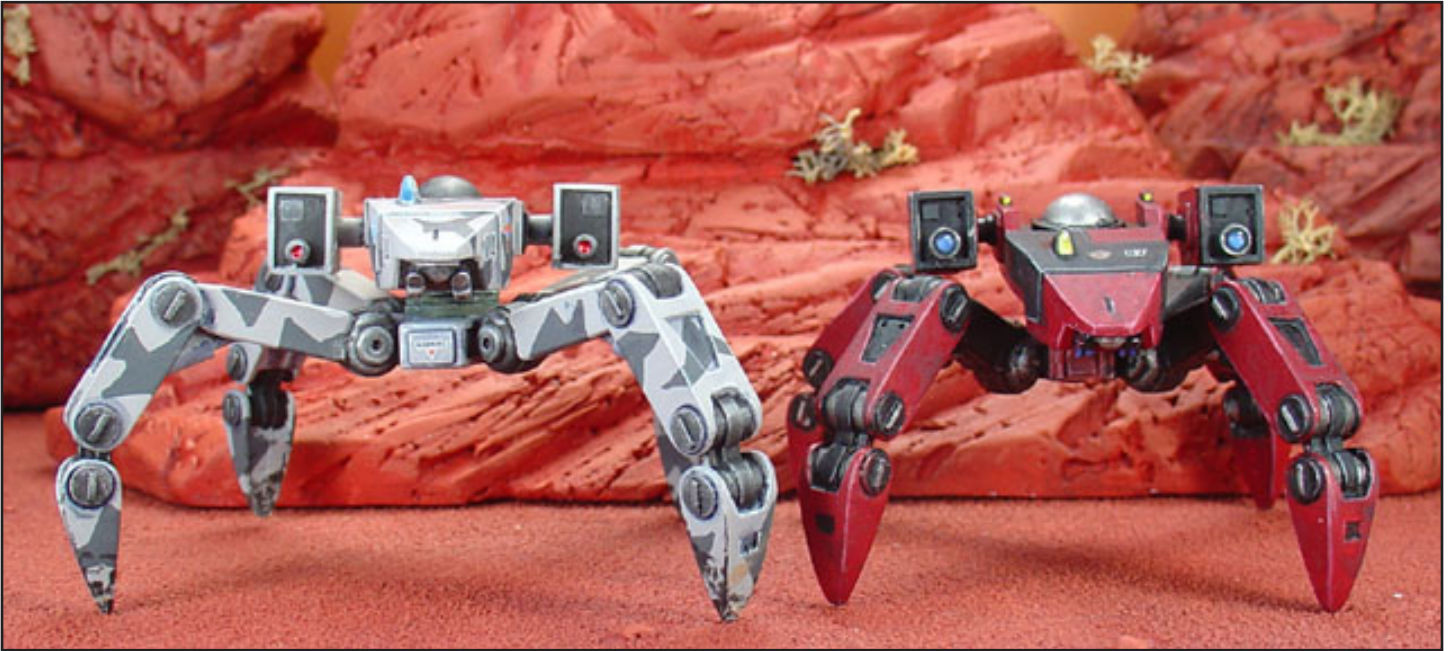
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AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Article Guidelines

The Aurora Magazine focuses on the worlds created by Dream Pod 9. As such, we are primarily interested in, but not limited to, articles dealing with SilCore and Blitz rules (variants, additions, explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment and the like that draw on established DP9 universes. This does not mean, however, that articles that are generic in nature or that do not deal with unique or original material, only that the focus is on exploring Silhouette and its attendant universes.

Any article that is a promotion piece for another product, be it an excerpt or a lead-in to another product, must be clearly defined as such within the article body.

No articles will be accepted that use another's Intellectual Property or Copyrighted material without an included signed permission to use said material.

Fiction may be a one-off or serial based, as desired. Please note that long works of fiction may be split into multiple pieces over multiple issues for length reasons; if you are writing a long story it is best to indicate breaks in the story (chapters, for example) that allow us to choose the best point to split the story, if necessary. In keeping with the nature of the magazine we ask that fiction be accompanied by Silhouette CORE or Blitz! rules detail of some kind, be it stats for characters or equipment in the story, game scenarios, mechanized designs, new rules or explanations of how to simulate aspects of the story using the Silhouette/Blitz rules. This is not a hard requirement, and you may request that another contributor be asked to create the rules support based on your story.

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

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

Photos, drawings or images should be accompanied by photo credits as well as a brief description/caption for each photo (optional). Indicate within your article where the images are to be included like so: <<<Image_Filename.ext>>>. Images should be sent at a maximum of 150dpi for greyscale or colour images, 300dpi for black & white images (1-bit). Given the size of a page, images should be no larger than 7 by 7 inches (18 by 18 cm). If we need a higher resolution image, we will contact you. Images should be compressed with an appropriate method; please check the quality of your images before sending. If by including images the submission would grow over 2 megabytes in size, please place the images on an Internet-accessible server where we will download them (don't forget to tell us where they are located).

Copyright Guidelines

Quotes or information that are attributable to other sources are permissible in appropriate quantities, and should be identified/cited (including page numbers), preferably within the article. Be sure that each quote is written exactly as it appears in the original source.

If you wish to include photos/drawings/images with your article, please provide the photo credits (artist/photographer/illustrator and subject if applicable). You may only submit images for which you have obtained permission to include in your article.

All articles and images used by Aurora remain in the copyright of the original submitters. You, as the author, must consent to release the article for publication by Aurora, with the knowledge that Aurora will not provide any compensation other than what has been listed above, and that Aurora, as an online magazine, will be downloaded by third-parties in a PDF format. All work for Aurora is volunteer-based. Should DP9 decide at a later time to compile and sell articles within a contract will be negotiated with the author at that time.

The End Print

Please send all submissions to the following email address:

auroramag@gmail.com

Thank you everyone for your interest, and we look forward to seeing your submissions soon!

Deadline for Submissions for Issue #3.3: April 15th 2009

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ARTICLE SUGGESTIONS

Historical Articles

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

Fiction

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

Modules

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

Scenarios

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

Note: Historical Accuracy

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

Designs

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

Artwork

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

House Rules

Original rules for the Silhouette/Blitz! system and modifications to existing rules. All rules submittals must include an explanation of the rule's purpose, the rules themselves clearly written, and an example of the rule in play.

Note: Blitz! Rules

House Rules covering existing Blitz! Rules will be limited. New Rules covering areas of the game not explicitly contained in the existing rules (as found in the Blitz! line of books) may be submitted freely. House Rules that modify or replace the written Blitz! ruleset (as found in the Blitz! line of books) will be forwarded to the line developer for review and comment. They will then contact you if the idea may proceed forward. Note that this applies only to the Blitz! line -- rules may be freely submitted for any other SilCore game.

Tactics

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

Miniatures/Modeling

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