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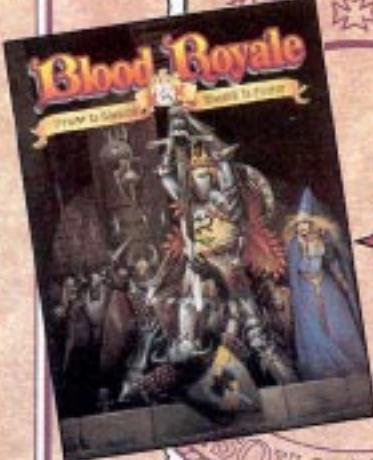
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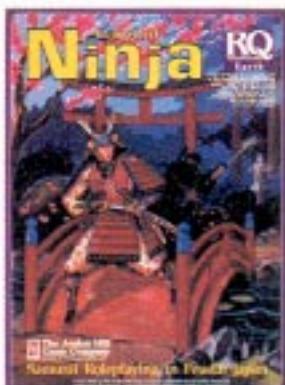
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Magazine

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COVER

A high-riding adventurer looks down over a forested valley in our cover painting by Pennsylvania native Teanna Byerts. One can only imagine what thoughts are passing through the mind of the wide-eyed rider, though the pegasus seems quite at ease with it all.

LETTERS

Recordbusters

Dear Dragon:

My friends and I are interested in breaking the world's record for continuous AD&D® game playing. Could you send me information on this or tell me where to send for it?

Peter C. Rauch
Colorado Springs CO

Sorry, Peter (and the dozen or so other gamers who have written to ask this question). We have no idea where you can obtain information on the current records for any sort of gaming. We also have no interest in printing such records, whether they are legitimate world records or not, because such stunts don't encourage good health habits. (I can't imagine sitting down and gaming for more than six hours at a stretch nowadays, anyway. My son wouldn't stand for it.) — RM

More changes

Dear Dragon:

In the "Letters" section of issue #121, one of the letters was headed "More Columns." For some reason, the heading was followed by a question mark. Well, in that case, my answer is an emphatic yes.

Niel Brandt's idea for a "New Worlds" section is excellent. Anything could be included — The Known World, Greyhawk, Blackmoor, Middle-earth, the Wizard's World (from Alan Dean Foster's Spellsinger novels), Mognamund (from the Lone Wolf gamebooks) — the possibilities are endless.

I think you could expand your "Gamers' Guide" feature (you know, the one with ads for game merchants) to be more like the "World Gamers' Guide" and "Overseas Military Gamers' Guide" by including the addresses of U.S. gamers who play unusual, hard-to-find games or have lots of trouble finding gamers in their area. Also, since I (and a lot of other people I know) enjoy the posters you put out once in a while, you could put in a two-page pull-out in the middle of the magazine each month, containing that issue's cover art, or a promo for a new product, or whatever. A "character of the month" would be interesting as well.

Finally, puh-lease bring back "The Marvel-Phile" and "The Role of Computers" as regular features! Please!

P.S. Are you listed in the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature?

Mike Sugabaker
Berkeley CA

In reverse order: No, we're not in the Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature; gaming articles are not that important, I suppose. "The Marvel-Phile" has been slightly irregular due to Jeff's work schedule, but it's still around. "The Role of Computers" is proving to be more popular all

the time; currently, it alternates with "The Role of Books" feature, but this may change soon.

Your suggestion that we run the addresses of gamers is one that we ourselves have discussed, particularly with reference to a classified-ads section in which gamers could post listings of items for sale, items needed, announcements of gaming groups, etc. It was also suggested to me by a gamer on an Austin computer bulletin board that we publish a list of phone numbers for BBSs featuring role-playing game set-ups and sub-boards which discuss gaming topics. We'd like more feedback on these ideas from readers before we act on them (see this month's editorial).

As for a "New Words" department: Send more mail on this one, folks. How would you like such a feature set up? What information on a game world do you think is important? — RM

Future writers

Dear Dragon:

I am a Dungeon Master with thoughts of college next year. If someone wanted to work for your magazine or one like it, what classes should he take and what are some good colleges to go to? Also, is there any money in writing fantasy material? Are there a lot of job opportunities for a fantasy writer? Who can a young writer send manuscripts to, to see if they are any good?

Michael Clement
Peshtigo WI

If you've read the past "Profiles" on the magazine staff members here at TSR, Inc., you are undoubtedly aware that there is no established method for getting into the games or games magazine business. We currently have no openings on our staff; our main interest now is in locating high quality freelance writers who can produce gaming articles. The only requirements for one to be such a writer are creativity familiarity with games, and the ability to express one's ideas clearly and neatly on paper (as per our Writers Guidelines).

Is there any money in writing fantasy material? That depends. We pay about \$0.04 per word for articles in DRAGON® Magazine, and almost no one has ever made enough from writing fantasy gaming material to support himself without having a regular job (unless he was employed as a game designer). Even people who write fantasy fiction usually do it as a sideline to better-paying responsibilities.

If someone seriously wishes to write game material for any game company or periodical, I strongly recommend the following:

(continued on page 60)

Directions

In a previous column, I mentioned that we were still thinking of new services to provide for the hundreds of thousands of gamers who read each issue of DRAGON® Magazine. Our staff has tossed around numerous ideas to improve the quality and utility of the magazine as a whole and provide you with more hard gaming information, more news on gaming events and issues, and more of everything else as well.

We've considered classified ads, but given the wide circulation of the magazine, any such section would probably cover a minimum of eight pages per issue. More important, this feature is already covered quite well by POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. Classifieds aren't likely to appear.

We also debated the merits of new departments, columns, and features — and now you have two more ("Lords & Legends" and "Arcane Lore") which will appear at irregular intervals. And, with this issue, you now have a games-review column as well, a feature that has been sorely missed by many of our readers.

Other column ideas have been suggested, several showing much merit, but there is a limit to the number of things we can add.

Some of the semiregular features will alternate with one another in various issues. We'd like to add more pages, but we have to wait for advertising to increase sufficiently to justify the increase in size.

One other idea for a regular feature has occurred to us — a one-page listing of modem-accessible bulletin board systems (BBSs) which are gaming-oriented. Some of them feature subboards with news from game companies, debates on game-related topics (I hear that the second-edition AD&D® game is a hot topic), and on-line role-playing adventures.

Would you like a BBS page as a regular or semiregular feature? Write and tell us now — and let us know how you like the changes we've made.

Roger Moore

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The World Gamers Guide

If you live outside the continental United States and Canada, you can be included in the World Gamers Guide by sending your name and full address (carefully printed or typed, please), plus your gaming preferences, to: World Gamers Guide, DRAGON® Magazine, PO. Box 110, Lake Geneva WI 53147, United States of America.

The World Gamers Guide is intended for the benefit of gamers who would like to contact other game-players around the world, to share their interests in gaming through correspondence. Each eligible name and address that we receive is published in three consecutive issues of DRAGON Magazine. To be listed for more than three issues, you must send us another postcard or letter.

Overseas American military personnel should consult issue #123 for information on The Overseas Military Gamers Guide and how servicemen may be listed therein.

When listing gaming preferences, write out the complete title of the games you most enjoy. For the purposes of this column, the abbreviations listed below are used.

AD: AD&De game
BS: BATTLESYSTEM™ Supplement
BT: BATTLETECH® game
CC: CALL OF CTHULHU® game
CH: CHAMPIONS™ game
CL: CHILL™ game
CW: CAR WARS® game
DC: DC™ HEROES game
DD: D&D® game
DW: Doctor Who game
EPT: Empire of the Petal Throne game
G: GURPS® game
GHO: GHOSTBUSTERS™ game
EQ: ELFQUEST® game
GW: GAMMA WORLD® game
JB: James Bond 007 game

JD: Judge Dredd game
MERP: MIDDLE EARTH
ROLE PLAYING™ game
MSH: MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game
OA: AD&D *Oriental Adventures* system
P: PARANOIA™ game
PEN: Pendragon game
RC: RECON® game
RM: ROLEMASTER™ game
RQ: RUNEQUEST® game
SF: STAR FRONTIERS® game
SFB: Star Fleet Battles game
SM: SPACE MASTER™ game
ST: STAR TREK®: The RPG
T: TRAVELLER® game
TMNT: TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES® game
TN: TOON® game
TS: TOP SECRET® game
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FORUM

During the two years I have been playing the AD&D® game, I have noticed a form of inflation in the game. When I started to play AD&D games, there were only the character classes in the *Players Handbook* to choose from. The game was very entertaining, but as soon as *Unearthed Arcana* was published, it took some of the fun away from the game. Everybody wanted to be human and use one of the more powerful classes, such as the barbarian or the new paladin.

As a conservative player, I tried to prevent the use of these new classes, weapon specializations, spells, and ways to roll ability scores for humans. I myself have never played a barbarian nor any other class from *Unearthed Arcana*. My fighters never have had weapon specialization, and I roll up all my characters, including humans, according to method #1 in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. Now, when a 1st-level character becomes too powerful, the DM must use more powerful monsters to make an adventure challenging. The character, because of this, gains more experience points and should — according to the *Monster Manuals*, as well as the FIEND FOLIO® Tome's treasure table — gain more gold than magic. This makes low-level characters extremely powerful. The fun I used to have playing a low-level character is gone.

I think the DM should restrict the many advantages that *Unearthed Arcana* gave to the player characters. Many AD&D game players probably disagree with me, but I would like to hear someone else's opinion on this matter.

Rad Jorgensen
Mansfield OH

Mark Tarrance's letter in issue #121 mentioned a problem in not having enough information on the GAMMA WORLD® game to play it in depth. I believe his players are referring to the basic game set's lack of detail in the areas of equipment, skills and talents, and the background information (history, monsters, and so on). They are probably used to a game system like the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game, which has more than enough of this data. While I agree with Roger's reply that the judge usually fills out much of this information (and one of the endearing charms of the GW game is that it is so open to creativity), I would like to bring to Marks attention the fact that TSR, Inc., gives more information about the GAMMA WORLD game in the GW module series.

Jim Ward, Bruce Nesmith, and I have created a total of six modules that not only offer adventures but also provide many more creatures and lots of background information for the game. Furthermore, module GW9, which I believe is due out in late summer or early fall, offers an extensive Talent and Skill system, a revised and expanded weapons chart and cost tables, and a detailed town in which the player characters can adventure and possibly settle down. The entire series is interconnected by a couple of plotlines that provide extensive color to the game (I will not go into the plots here and give the surprises away). In addition, I am sure that

DRAGON® Magazine has more of this information from its readers as it occasionally runs articles on the GAMMA WORLD game. GW judges and players who want these products should ask their local gaming, hobby, or book store to carry them. The series begins with GW6, *Alpha Base*, and continues through GW11, due out in 1988.

If Gamma gamers wish more GW information or products, either in module form or through DRAGON Magazine, they *must* write and let TSR know they are interested.

Kim Eastland
Moline IL

I have seen several AD&D game campaigns die in their infancy. The reason for failure in each case was ignorance and inexperience on the part of the DM; he just did not understand what magic items are appropriate for low-, mid-, and high-level characters. He allowed the infant campaign to succumb to the dread disease of Monty Haulitis. Low-level characters became more like comic-book heroes, with items such as a *ring of invisibility/inaudibility*, a *vorpal sword*, or a *wand of frost* with 80 charges. The inexperienced DM cannot be blamed for his foolishness; there is a chance shown for these items on the tables, and wands are stated to have 80 to 100 charges when found. Play at this level of power becomes meaningless because there are no suitable opponents. Participants lose interest and the fledgling campaign dies.

Rearranging the magic item tables in the second edition of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* could at least partially remedy this problem. Rather than arranging the tables according to type of item (i.e., rings, swords, misc. magic, etc.), they should be arranged according to the power of the item (i.e., appropriate 1st-3rd level items, appropriate 4th-6th level items, etc.). This would probably involve creating a new meaning of the word "level" (oh, no!), meaning the power of a magic item. Under a system such as this, a DM would need a wisdom of 3 to allow his campaign to fall victim to the curse of Monty Haul.

Brock Sides
Moscow TN

I write this letter in response to the cry for help of another player in issue #118. He said he was part of a campaign in which the DM had given power in amounts which made play boring. I'm not sure if you've ever Dungeon Mastered a campaign before. If you had, I'm sure you would understand the problems your DM is having in the way I believe I do.

I have been DMing for about five years now and have gone through many different stages of style and ability. When I first started, I followed all the rules I had learned. Play soon became boring when everybody got tired of being low level and fleeing from everything they stumbled upon. While trying to keep the game exciting, I started handing out magic at every orc, gnoll, or goblin. After all, there was no rule against it. Soon players could beat anything they fought and started losing interest again. After two

players quit, I decided to leave the rules and play my own game, where I decided what happened, not the dice. Players were excited by my imagination, for that is what the game was. I decided whether the sword hit or not. Before I knew it, DMing was like writing a book with no one else to help in the creation. I decided what happened, when, and who survived. This made me bored. Players and dice had nothing to do with it; the game was just me rambling on, spinning a story from air. Now I am reading all the rules I can, trying to be a stickler, and I love low-level campaigns. I'm beginning to feel too restricted by the rules, though. Who knows where I'll turn next?

The point I'm trying to make is that no DMing style is right and, given time, your DM will decide he doesn't like his current style and move on. Of course, you can help him along, but don't push him or put him down; that just might make him quit. So, my advice is not to take your DM out of his position, but to let him advance, or mature if you will, and encourage him along until he is the kind of DM you want.

Uriah Blatherwick
Memphis TN

Lately, I've read quite a lot about clerics and how they're not being played correctly: "No one ever plays a cleric correctly. Clerics do unknown things to worship faceless gods. You don't see them preaching, converting, providing moral guidance, or anything that a real cleric does. They are walking first-aid kits and combat medics." (issue #118, p. 68)

Well, so what? After all, the AD&D game really does have a major focus on combat. Most of the rules focus on weapons, armor, combat procedures, saving throws, etc. If it takes mundane role-playing to play a class correctly, I doubt anyone would play the game. In fact, upon closer inspection, *none* of the classes are being played correctly, if this is the case. Since when does a fighter-player role-play out endless hours of "exercising, riding, smiting, pelts, tilting at the lists, and engaging in weapons practice of various sorts. . . ." (DMG, p. 85). I've yet to see a gamer with a 29th-level magic-user detail out to the DM the way in which he is going to spend the 82 total hours it will take him to re-acquire all of the spells he can cast. Nor does the player of a kensai say anything more than "I'll practice for two hours today," the rest is assumed. A fighter need not say "I'll clean my sword, recover my thrown spear, re-strap my shield, and straighten my helm." A thief only says "I'll search for traps, and then see what's in the desk." He doesn't say, "I'll search the third drawer for a wire, the second for a pressure point, and then, starting at the bottom, review the contents." All of these mundane aspects of adventuring — indeed, existence — are assumed to be continuously going on. The DMG puts it best, when it says: "All very realistic but conducive to non-game boredom!" (p. 85)

It is obvious that a cleric, a person who has devoted his entire life to the service of a deity, will continuously be preaching, converting, providing moral guidance, and doing everything that a real cleric does. This is simply another side of the assumed aspects of adventuring — like putting on your saddle and taking care of equipment. Besides, even if this were played out, it would not contribute to the game. Why can't a cleric just say, "I pay tithe, help out the local followers when I can, sacrifice on whatever holy days I'm supposed to, and execute my other religious duties," and have the rest assumed? A 29th-level cleric will spend 59%

(continued on page 38)

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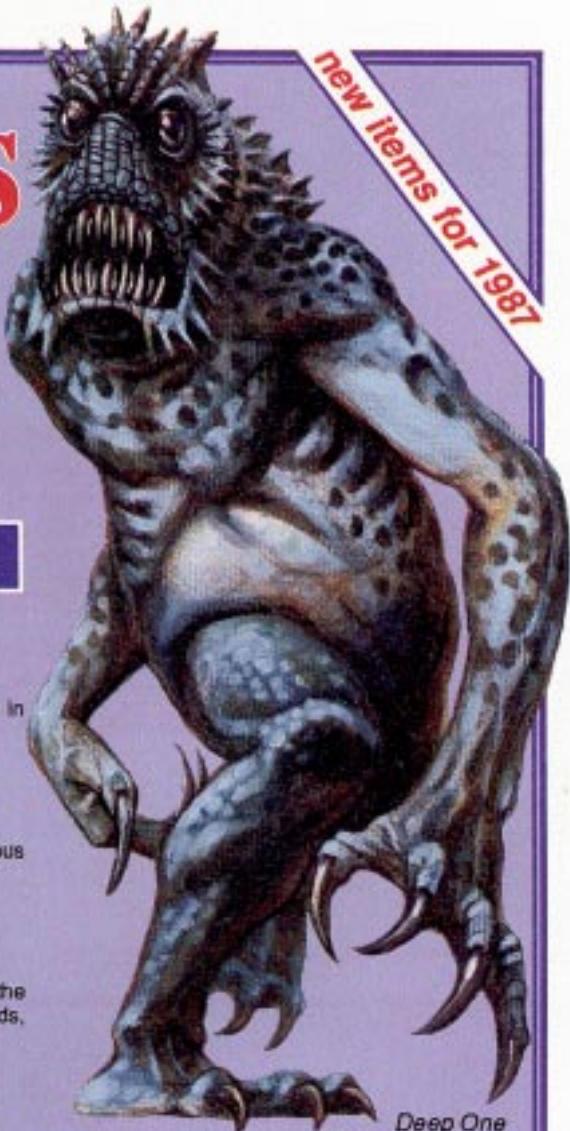
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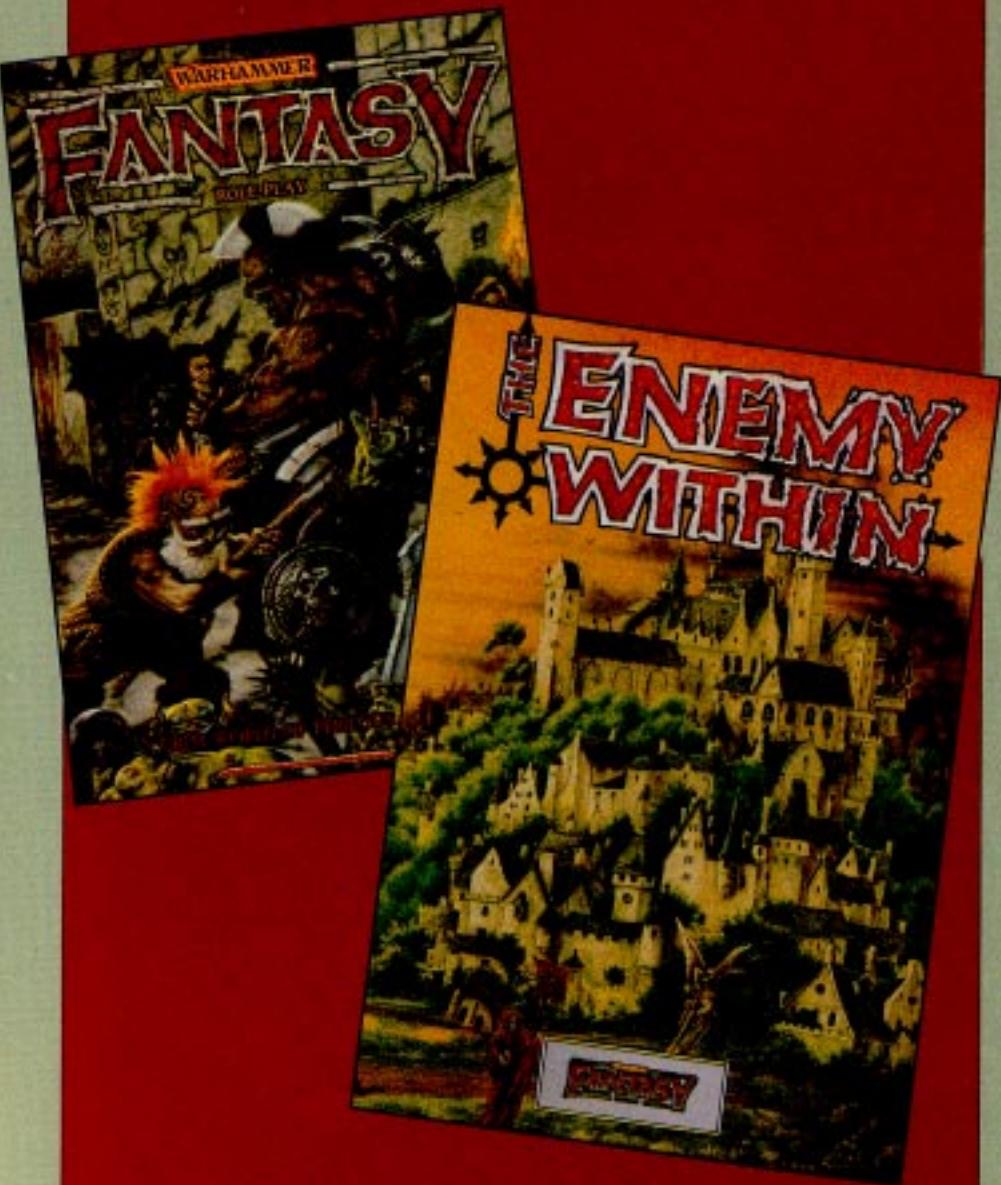
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Role-playing Reviews



Under the Warhammer

© 1987 by Ken Rolston

WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY
Games Workshop Ltd. \$29.95

Design and development: Richard Halliwell, Rick Priestley, Graeme Davis, Jim Bambra, and Phil Gallagher

Editing: Paul Cockburn
Graphic design: Charles Elliott

THE ENEMY WITHIN
(supplement and adventure for WFR)
Games Workshop Ltd. \$12.00
Design and development: Jim Bambra,
Graeme Davis, Phil Gallagher
Graphic design: Charles Elliott

The WARHAMMER Fantasy Roleplay (WFR) system is a very promising fantasy role-playing game from Games Workshop, the game company that dominates the

fantasy and science-fiction gaming and miniatures markets in Great Britain. The systems, campaign background, and presentation of the basic game are above average, and the first adventure/campaign supplement is quite impressive — the most credible alternative to the D&D® game systems and supplements in years. Though WFR is unlikely to rival the popularity of the D&D or AD&D® game, it could be the leader of the Loyal Opposition.

Shopping for a fantasy system

In the beginning, there was the D&D game. Now, over a decade later, the AD&D and revised D&D games, descendants of the original D&D game, still dominate the fantasy role-playing market.

The revised D&D game embodies the greatest virtues of the original set — it's easy to learn, fast-moving, and provides heaps of loot and hacked, toasted orcs. The AD&D game is the benefactor of the other great virtue of original D&D set — its open-ended expandability. Like other published D&D game variants, the AD&D game is a monstrous, sprawling jumble of game systems and patches — just like the countless personal variants ("house rules") spawned by hundreds of thousands of eager fans who devoted way too much wit, energy, and enthusiasm to getting the rules just the way they wanted them.

The earliest creditable alternatives to the D&D game family of fantasy role-playing games boasted of increased sophistication in four major departments: game systems, campaign settings, presentation, and adventures and supplements. For example, the RUNEQUEST® game offered more detailed combat, a colorful fantasy world with epic themes, a more appealing graphic package, and elaborate boxed campaign supplements with related adventures. Because many of these alternative systems were more sophisticated and narrowly focused than the D&D game, they had smaller audiences, but many of the features of these alternative systems (e.g., character skills, epic campaign settings, more appealing graphics, and campaign supplements) eventually made their appearance in D&D game products.

Before getting into a detailed discussion of WFR, a quick survey of the strengths and weaknesses of the more significant fantasy role-playing game (FRPG) system releases of recent years is called for.

RUNEQUEST game, third edition (The Avalon Hill Game Company): A textbook example of how to cripple a good role-playing product. First, take a slow-paced combat system and slow it down with refinements like fatigue, knockbacks, and other doodads. Take a colorful, campaign-specific magic system and make it more generalized, comprehensive, and complicated. Take Glorantha — actually the strongest element of the system — and de-emphasize its importance in favor of a broader campaign background based on a fantasy historical Earth — and provide

adequate support for *neither* campaign background. Then keep the line of Gloranthan supplements — many of them award-winning role-playing classics — out of print.

Regular publication of original, first-class supplements would have made the other faults negligible. Gamers could pick and choose among the combat and magical system refinements. The Alternate Earth idea was a good one, but the trickle of repackaged Gloranthan material and Alternate Earth supplements was a grave disappointment to loyal fans.

FANTASY HERO™ game (Hero Games): This system had potential, if only because it used the CHAMPIONSTM game system, the system of choice for many serious super-powered-hero gamers. In fact, it did have an interesting build-your-own-spell magic system, based on the build-your-own-hero character creation concepts, but the game-mastering and adventure materials in the basic game were unexceptional, and no supplements have been published.

GURPS® (Generic Universal RolePlaying System) and **GURPS Fantasy** (Steve Jackson Games): A good, playable, well-tested system for fantasy combat — actually a lot of fun to play. The basics are quite simple and simply presented, with lots of examples, informal commentary, and helpful tips for game masters (GMs).

But GURPS's strengths are in its systems and their presentation. The fantasy adventures and campaign supplements are few and unexceptional. And since Steve Jackson Games lacks the production capacity to support a wide variety of role-playing settings, and no other parties show interest in publishing GURPS supplements, the chief advantage of the generic system is scarcely exploited.

HARNMASTER™ game and **HARN™ fantasy world** (Columbia Games): HARN and the prodigious line of Harn supplements provide an exceptional campaign background. The HARNMASTER systems are involved and relatively slow-paced, and not presented with beginners — or even casual experienced gamers — in mind, but the magical and clerical systems and the world systems are detailed, distinctive, and colorful enough to stimulate sophisticated GMs and players.

However, the HARNMASTER game is particularly weak in one area — packaged adventures in the Harn setting. The rule book doesn't even have a sample adventure. The narrative, and its staging and presentation in the campaign setting, are essential elements of a superior FRPG system, and the HARNMASTER game, the HARN world, and the Harn supplements provide few guidelines and no developed examples of the art.

PENDRAGON game (Chaosium): Many former RUNEQUEST game fans have turned to the PENDRAGON game for a sophisticated fantasy role-playing campaign. PENDRAGON game's simple, fast-paced combat system, unique role-playing

mechanics, and rich Arthurian campaign setting make it an excellent FRPG, but the lack of player-accessible magic spells and the narrow tone and focus of the campaign limit its audience, and preclude it from competing with more flexible, comprehensive fantasy games like the D&D, RUNEQUEST, and MERPTM games.

MIDDLE-EARTH ROLE PLAYING™ (MERP) game (Iron Crown): A subset of the way-too-complicated ROLEMASTER™ game system, MERP's tactical systems are still intimidating for beginners, with all the charts, options, modifiers, and bookkeeping. The systems are comprehensive and versatile, but mastering them is a lot of work. The 1986 boxed edition contains an introductory booklet that relies on "a very simple set of role-playing rules compatible with standard MERP rules" to introduce the beginner to basic role-playing concepts — an earnest accommodation to inexperienced gamers but of little comfort when, after a brief sample adventure, you are sent off to read and comprehend the standard — and complicated — MERP rules.

The MERP game's great assets are the Middle-earth® campaign setting and the superior presentation and graphics of the Middle-earth supplements. Early supplements were strong on background material and disappointing in scenario and narrative values, but recent publications (particularly *Phantom of the Northern Marches* and *Trolls of the Misty Mountains*) are much improved in this regard.

With the RUNEQUEST game's decline, the MERP game and its Middle-earth supplements became the strongest of the alternative FRPG packages. WFR should challenge their #2 position partly because of WFR's simpler tactical systems and more "D&D-like" campaign setting, and partly because of WFR's amiably lurid tone.

Ironically, MERP's greatest asset, the Middle-earth setting, is also a liability in competing with the D&D games, because Middle-earth doesn't encourage the cheerful loot-and-slaughter, monster-bashing mentality of simpler dungeon-delving adventures. MERP's adventures and supplements support the high fantasy of J.R.R. Tolkien — moral, dignified fantasy that eschews trashy, sensational narratives and themes. D&D and AD&D game supplements support a broader range of themes, but they also tend toward the genteel in tone.

On the other hand, WFR deliberately aims at adventures and settings with a less elevated tone — "grubby fantasy," as its designers call it. WFR also invites adventures with grotesque horror elements in the Lovecraftian tradition. This shift in emphasis from genteel to grubby, gory fantasy, and the simplicity of the tactical and magic systems, are distinctive assets of WFR as it competes for a slice of the FRPG audience.

WFR: the basic game

WFR is a 368-page hardbound fantasy system, complete with character generation, tactical and magical systems, gods and religions, bestiary, campaign setting, and introductory adventure. The hard-bound format means no dice, pull-out references, or other nice perks of boxed FRPGs (e.g., the appealing cardboard figures that come with GURPS and MERP). A first-time FRPG player appreciates the toy value of stuff-in-the-box. However, since WFR is not ideal for first-time gamers (the D&D Basic Set is still far and away the best choice for first-timers), the hard-bound format, with greater page volume and marketing flexibility, is an appropriate choice.

WFR is emphatically complete, too. Only the third-edition RUNEQUEST game (for \$38.00) is a more complete FRPG package, having more detailed and developed tactical and magical systems, campaigning systems, and game-mastering commentary. But WFR creditably covers the basics for a full-scale fantasy campaign.

Character design: WFR offers an interesting and original system. Characters are defined by their career — a package of skills and trappings that comes with a specific background, and a scheme for gradual character enhancements through increased attributes and added skills. Characters can move from career to career in search of new skills and abilities. Like most FRPG character systems, but unlike the D&D game's character classes, character improvements are gradual and piecemeal.

To simplify presentation for beginners, WFR has you roll to determine your PC's career — a practice I don't recommend. Instead, have players spend five minutes scanning the 23 pages of text and illos, then pick a career that suits their fancy. Some careers are more suitable for standard FRPG adventuring — e.g., bounty hunter, mercenary, outlaw, wizard's apprentice — while the adventuring potential of some career backgrounds — e.g., agitator, bawd (I believe we call them "pimps" in America), entertainer, servant — is greatly dependent on setting and skillful player characterization — too demanding a challenge for rookie role-players.

Game mechanics: Skills are not rated or tested by game mechanics; you have the skill, or you don't. The basic noncombat action resolution mechanic is the attribute test (i.e., roll against your character's intelligence as a percentage). Routines for judging many typical FRPG actions are discussed in a good section on standard tests, but the ultimate rule reference is the GM's common sense. This is not a game for rules lawyers, nor for competitive gamers. Gamers are encouraged to look on the mechanics as guidelines rather than rules; GM judgment, rather than rules mechanics, is the dominant element in action resolution.

Character power and advancement: Characters receive experience points for achieving objectives and for good role-playing. The scheme is flexible and informal. Judging the rate of advance (the speed with which characters become powerful in a campaign) is difficult — so much depends on the individual GM and players — but from the published adventures, it is clear that characters begin rather weak by D&D game standards and can expect relatively modest advances over the course of a campaign. I believe that modest, regular advances are more satisfying than grand, periodic ones, but players of the D&D school are likely to be disappointed when they find out how long they must wait before they can slaughter an army of goblins single-handed or toast a tribe with fireballs.

Combat systems: Combat is relatively simple, fast-paced, and short on tactical detail and gameworthy options. It parallels the WARHAMMER miniatures combat system (see DRAGON® issue #85, pages 64-68), with more detail as befits a small-scale system but eliminating the most annoying and clumsy detail of the WARHAMMER miniatures combat — three separate die rolls (one to hit, one for strength of blow vs. target toughness, and a saving throw for armor) to resolve an attack. WFR compresses this into one die roll.

Beginning characters won't last long if

they dash into combat at the slightest provocation, but they are durable enough to survive most first blows and run away. Weapons are barely differentiated; in fact, weapon damage modifiers rules are optional. (Yes, with the basic rules, WFR knives and halberds do similar damage.) Armor and parrying are modestly effective in staving off damage and dismemberment. Characters are not effectively "injured" in a game sense until reduced to zero hit points, when they begin checking on a critical hits chart that is charmingly graphic, gruesome, and deadly.

In general, combat is quite simple, and is swift and bloody enough to suit the dramatic purposes of fast-paced fantasy adventure. It is also deadly enough to discourage players from using it as their dominant problem-solving resource. Thinking, bluffing, sneaking, and running are often superior tactics if a WFR character wants to live to spend his experience points.

Magic system: The magic system is relatively limited and unexciting. Beginning magic-using characters can't do very much. WFR is a magic-poor system for a magic-poor campaign. De-emphasizing the role of magic in a FRPG is a defensible design choice (the PENDRAGON game is a fine example). However, constrained to compatibility with the miniatures-rules magic system, the selection and utility of the spells given are uninspiring, and there

is little integration of the magical system into the WFR campaign setting. There are other sources of magic available in the campaign (amulets, potions, rings, and such), and the varieties of magic-users (including elementalists, demonologists, and necromancers, as well as the familiar sorcerers, clerics, druids, etc.) are colorful and dramatic, but the lot of the spell-caster in WFR is not a happy one. This is the area where WFR compares least favorably with the D&D, RUNEQUEST, MERP, and other fantasy game systems. The material is at best unremarkable, and disappointing in a few particulars.

Religion and beliefs: This section is more colorful than the D&D game's bland clerical system but less well-integrated into the campaign setting than Glorantha's cults. WFR's pantheon is solid and serviceable as a hook for PC characterization and motivation. Only druids have their own cult-related spells; clerics of other faiths use spells available to wizard-type spellcasters, so PC clerics are not so distinctive as they are in D&D games.

Races and monsters: This is good stuff. Games Workshop and Citadel Miniatures have produced charming — and visually compelling — intelligent monster antagonists (for example, the Skaven, a race of Chaos-tainted ratmen). The monstrous races are well-illustrated and often supplied with dramatic and humorous backgrounds. Psychological traits — an excellent feature of WARHAMMER Fantasy Battle Rules — are used to good effect here. Giants, for example, cause fear in smaller creatures and are subject to attacks of stupidity and alcoholism — each with charming effects on encounters.

Campaign setting: Here, WFR shines. The campaign world is loosely based on an early Renaissance Europe, providing a substantial underpinning for the details of culture and politics. Into this framework are fitted the obligatory fantasy cultures — remote island kingdoms of the Elves across the ocean to the west, a monumental mountain range honeycombed with Dwarven tunnels to the east, and beyond those mountains, the Dark Lands, home to goblins, lizardmen, and demons.

But the finest element of the campaign background is the epic theme of the Taint of Chaos. Over the polar ice caps, ancient portals through time and space, artifacts of the decadent Old Slann race, have collapsed, releasing a plague of Chaos spores and a host of powerful beings to threaten the Old World. The taint of Chaos is on the land and festers beneath the crust of civilization.

As a thematic and dramatic device, Chaos is a perfect rationale for the foul corruption and unspeakable evil that confronts the characters. Chaos produces lovely monsters with simple motivations — to spawn more chaos. In a subtle twist of tone, Chaos is presented as at once the blessing and doom of humanity. "Although Chaos has the power to mutate and

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destroy, it is also typically aggressive, changeable, and vigorous. Humanity inherited many of these qualities."

The thematic tone is dark — the eventual triumph of Chaos is inevitable. The tide of Chaos may be turned, but it never recedes so far as it has advanced. This epic antagonist provides the WFR campaign with a distinctive, grand, and gloomy atmosphere. This sober background gloom contrasts effectively with the light and humorous tone encouraged in session play, giving WFR a subtle and stylish depth — just the thing to suit the FRPG player's taste for epic tragedy while satisfying his more vulgar affection for adventure and farce.

Here, and in places like the rules on insanity, WFR's tone suggests that masterpiece of sophisticated horror role-playing: the CALL OF CTHULHU® game. I've always thought a blend of the latter game and fantasy role-playing would be effective, and this is certainly the campaign setting for it.

Introductory adventure: The dungeon/gangland/chaos cultist plot is exceptionally busy and contrived, but given its dubious premises, it is chock-full of problems, mysteries, and atmosphere. The introductory episodes (greenhorns newly arrived in the big city) are just right — and nicely presented for beginning GMs. The adventure itself prompts admiring

ration on one hand for the broad range of events and elements it offers, and wry dismay on the other hand that they are all jumbled together on such thin pretexts.

Other stuff: One of the nicest sections is relegated to an appendix — "Buildings of the Old World" — which offers illustrations and floor plans for typical coaching inns, toll houses, wayside shrines, way temples, and farmsteads. Also included is a diagram and brief discussion of a typical village. It's charming little bits like this that get me going for my wallet when I'm browsing in game stores.

So much for the basic game systems and campaign background. Now for a look at the first adventure and supplement.

The Enemy Within

This combination campaign supplement and adventure package contains a 56-page booklet, a 22" x 34" color foldout map of the Empire, and two 11" x 17" card-stock sheets with player handouts, maps, diagrams, and GM references. Two of the designers (Bambra and Gallagher) are graduates of the TSR school of FRPG design and presentation — in fact, among its finest practitioners (see *Night's Dark Terror* below in "Short and Sweet") — and many of the best features of TSR's adventures are represented here. But, in *The Enemy Within*, the designers also effectively exploit the distinctive tone and cam-

paign background of WFR, and the talented Games Workshop graphic design squad does a bang-up job on the look and feel of the package. Indeed, *The Enemy Within* makes a very good first impression. Though that first impression weakens slightly on careful examination, it's nonetheless a stand-out product, highly recommended, and a promising initial release for WFR's line of campaign and adventure supplements.

Graphic design: The graphic presentation is very satisfying. The cover painting is strikingly grim and unheroic in tone — no winsome heroines or brawny barbarians in sight. The fold-out map of the Empire is lovely and printed on coated stock. The card-stock references and booklet are attractively laid out, with numerous and handsome illustrations, including small portraits of each PC and significant NPC, finely rendered maps and diagrams, text illustrations, and atmospheric mood pieces. The whole package has the agreeable heft of volume and the eye-pleasing impact of quality.

The adventure: I like the adventure, but it makes very little use of any of the nice maps. Nobody in the adventure is going anywhere except right where the designers want them to go. "What else is new?" the more cynical among you may say, and admittedly, since this is a campaign supplement, the maps don't have to

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We'll answer all these and more.

THE WRAP-UP

With each DC Heroes RPG release, the line keeps getting better. In future issues we'll sneak preview upcoming titles like the Teen Titans™ Sourcebook and present new stats for characters like Booster Gold™, Captain Boomerang™, and Mr. Miracle™.

Information is our goal. Go to your local shop and look at the variety of our adventures and references. And if your curiosity is piqued, subscribe to our DC Heroes RPG Newsletter (see story below). Every issue will give more exciting information about this terrific game system.

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Wonder Woman™

WONDER WOMAN <small>alias Princess Diana™</small>			
DEX: 13	STR: 17	BODY: 13	
INT: 10	WILL: 8	MIND: 8	
INFL: 10	AURA: 5	SPRIT: 5	
INITIATIVE: 33 (43)	HERO POINTS: 180		

Powers (*Linked)

Flight*: 13

Superspeed*: 13

Skills (*Linked)

Charisma*: 12

Martial Artist: 10

Medicine*: 10

Military Science: 8

(Cartography, Tracking)

Scholar* (Mythology): 10

Weaponry: 10

Detective: 7

Equipment

Bracelets (Dex: 0, Str: 0, Body: 20)

Charges: NA

Lasso of Truth (Dex: 0, Str: 20, Body: 35)
(Int: 0, Will: 0, Mind: 0)

Powers: Control: 10 Charges: NA

Tiara (Dex: 0, Str: 0, Body: 10)

Limitations

Equipment Power Limitation: The Control Power of the Lasso of Truth can only be used to force the victim to tell the truth.

Connections:

Paradise Island (High Level)
Olympian Gods (Low Level)

U.S. Government (Low Level)

Motivations:

Responsibility of Power

Wealth:

Comfortable

Occupation:

Teacher, Ambassador

Race: Human (Amazon)

Wonder Woman A Brief History:

When the Olympian Gods discovered that Ares (god of war) had gone mad and schemed to destroy the world, they charged the Amazons of Paradise Island™ to choose a champion to go out into 'Man's World' to stop him. Princess Diana, daughter of Queen Hippolyte™, asked to participate in the contest to choose the champion, but was forbidden to by her mother.

Diana donned a disguise and participated nonetheless and won. When Diana unmasked, her mother was shocked. It was then that Diana told her mother Athena had told Diana to join the contest despite Hippolyte's wishes. Unable to defy the gods' will, Hippolyte allowed Diana to become the champion to be sent against Ares.

Diana donned the costume of her namesake and went to defeat Ares. After a tremendous struggle, Diana did stop Ares' scheme and has since become an ambassador of Paradise Island, hoping to teach the world, her society's peaceful and just ways.

Bullets and Bracelets

When Wonder Woman enters a combat situation which involves gunfire, she will often use her bracelets to deflect any shots fired at her. To do this she uses her DEX as her Acting Value against her opponent's Weaponry Skill as the Opposing Value. The Body of the bracelets is the Effect Value and the Effect Value of the weapon fired is the Resistance Value. Positive RAP's indicate that the shots were successfully deflected. If the roll fails, treat the attack normally. If Wonder Woman attempts against more than one opponent, she receives normal Multi-Attack penalties.



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be useful for the adventure as long as they serve a useful campaign purpose.

The adventure also depends on an unusually egregious use of plot manipulation to get the PCs from one encounter to the next. The encounters are excellent — elaborately staged, with detailed NPCs, GM presentation tips, and fine role-playing opportunities. The adventure materials are complete to current industry standards — prepared character sheets, with character personality and background notes, player handout props, GM reference summary sheets, attractive, functional maps and diagrams. But the creaking of the plot mechanisms for shuttling the PCs from encounter to encounter is a bit distracting. The adventure *could* be run without all the dubious coincidences — but the best parts of the adventure depend on those coincidences. If I ran this adventure, I would earnestly and shamelessly steer the PCs right into them. But I'd be a lot more careful about eroding my players' trust in the plot devices. "Say, what a coincidence — again. . . ."

One warning: The adventure really consists of only four full-scale encounters, each detailed in two-to-four pages. And the adventure is not complete in itself — it leads into the next campaign supplement adventure, *Shadows Over Bogenhafen*, without a very satisfying intermediate climax.

But I like the adventure. Sure, I complain a little — it's got its disappointments, and the PC manipulation makes me wince a bit — but I'd enjoy running the adventure, and I like the way it's presented.

Campaign supplement: The campaign setting of this module is the Empire — a rough equivalent of 16th-century Germany when it was known as the Holy Roman Empire. There's lots of good stuff here — GM presentation tips, campaign guidelines, supplemental detail on the Empire (history and timeline, society, politics, economics, religion, geography, typical dress, etc.), expanded rules detail on herbs and travel in coaches and barges, mutants (new monsters), a PC background information sheet on the Empire, the Imperial calendar, and so on. The style is readable, concise, and entertaining, unlike too many long-winded FRPG campaign dissertations. The abundant illustrations are worth the proverbial thousand words, particularly in the sections "Typical Dress of the Empire," and "Soldiers of the Empire," illustrated in the style of historical miniatures references with accompanying text and statistics.

WFR: summary evaluation

WARHAMMER FANTASY ROLEPLAY is strongly recommended for gamers in search of a fantasy system and campaign background, or in search of elements to steal and add to their current system and campaign. Its systems, presentation, and campaign setting are superior, and the campaign supplement/adventure support

looks promising. Its strengths, when compared to other popular FRPG designs, are the simplicity of its systems, its support of grotesque and macabre themes, and the distinctive flavor of its campaign setting. Magic is relatively sparse (and indifferently presented), a feature that some may applaud and others may lament, but one which is consistent with the campaign setting.

The Enemy Within is recommended as a campaign supplement and adventure for WFR, and for students of superior supplement presentation. Despite the stated reservations about the adventure, the package is quite good and an indication that supplement support for WFR should be substantial and satisfying.

Short and sweet

D&D module B10, *Night's Dark Terror*. TSR, Inc. Designed by Jim Bambra, Graeme Morris, and Phil Gallagher. This Basic/Expert adventure pack is the remarkable product of Messrs. Bambra, Morris, and Gallagher while in the employ of TSR UK Ltd. Ooh, this is nice. Two color covers with pretty maps, a 22" x 34" fold-out covered with pretty maps (on both sides), a bunch of cardboard counters for the BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement: the best-illustrated and best-designed module I've ever seen — and the adventure and campaign material is every bit as remarkable as the graphic presentation. A classic.

Cities. Chaosium Inc. By Stephen Abrams and Jon Everson. This reprint of the Midkemia Press classic is an essential reference work for any GM interested in FRPG medieval villages; towns, and cities.

The first section, "Encounters," is a mass of random encounter charts for city adventuring. Put away your dice; random city encounters are not such a hot idea. Instead, use these charts as comprehensive idea menus for the kinds of FRPG action that make city adventuring fun.

The second section, "Populating Villages, Towns, and Cities," is a set of random charts and guidelines for populating a medieval town with shops and residences. You draw the map and buildings, and the charts tell what is housed in each building. I wish they'd included a few sample town diagrams — *Carse*, another Chaosium reprint of a Midkemia supplement, is a good example. Again, use the charts as menus rather than random generators (though I've used the random roll method several times, and it works well enough for fantasy).

The third section, "Character Catch-Up," is a series of tables for fleshing out the activities of PCs during the periods between adventures. It's a very interesting concept of dubious practicality; only players and GMs with a fetish for campaign detail might follow through with the program. Otherwise, it's a nice menu of events, some with excellent role-playing potential. (Note: These are idea menus

only. GMs have to develop the one-sentence or one-paragraph ideas themselves.

Terror Australis. Chaosium Inc. Something yummy this way cometh for CALL OF CTHULHU game fans. Included in this pack are: factual background notes for presenting COC adventures set in 1920s Australia, featuring the suitably fantastic culture and myths of the aborigines; two solid COC adventures with effectively atmospheric settings by Australian natives Penelope Love and Mark Morrison; and, the heretofore unpublished Australian adventure originally intended for Larry DiTillio's classic *Masks of Nyarlathotep*.

Literate, macabre doom shambles from each page. Good reading, and a good campaign setting for COC adventures. Hot tip: Study the video of Peter Weir's fine film *The Last Wave* for Australian local color and atmosphere and a suitable COC occult mystery.

Hot Rods of the Gods. West End Games. Dan Greenberg's GHOSTBUSTERS™ game adventure of juvenile delinquents from beyond space and time. "They're back ... and they wanna race!" An alien race seeded Planet Earth with life forms in the hopes that they'd produce tall buildings — suitable for space-rod demolition derbies. The aliens are back, and the Manhattan skyline is just right.

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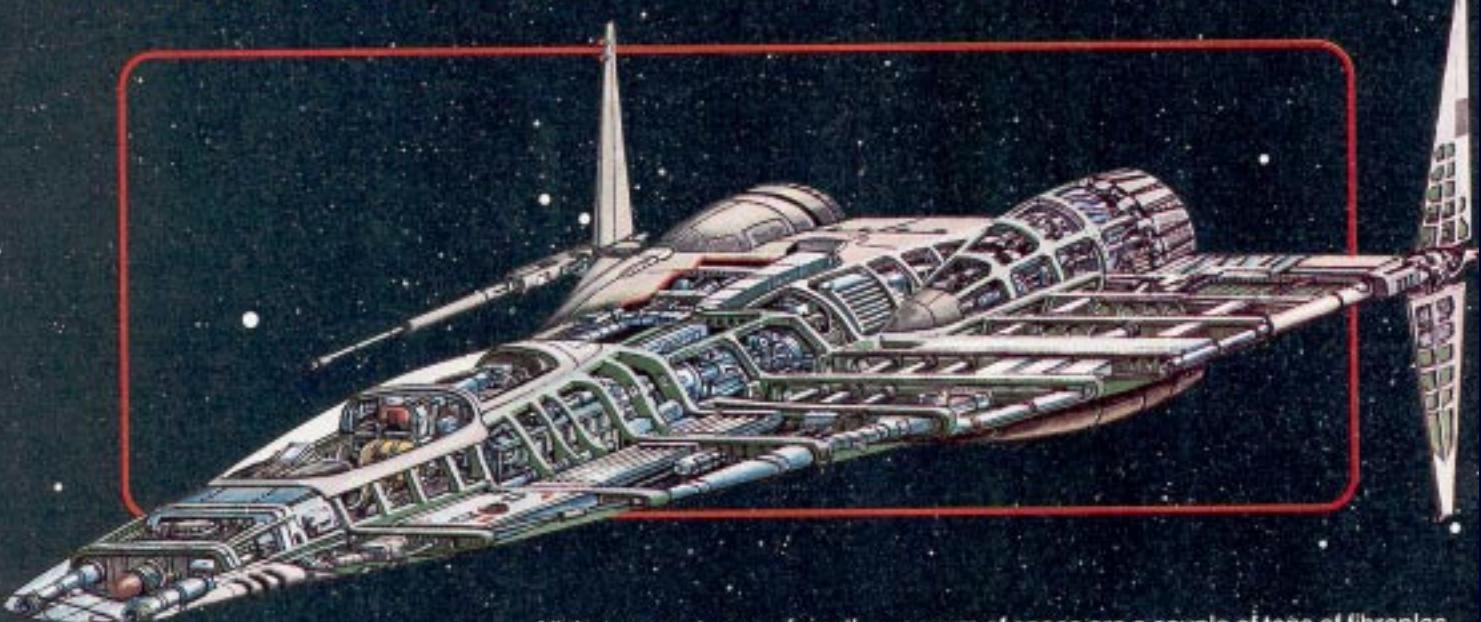
Lands of Mystery Hero Games (distributed by ICE). Aaron Allston's campaign supplement for those lovely Lost Worlds adventures where modern man can hobnob with dinosaurs, noble and bestial savages, and arrogant queens of lost civilizations. Arthur Conan Doyle, A.A. Merritt, H. Rider Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and other pulp writers made merry with this romantic genre, and it makes a surprisingly persuasive campaign setting for early 20th-century adventure role-playing like the JUSTICE, INC.™, CALL OF CTHULHU, CHILL™, and DAREDEVIL™ games.

But this supplement's greatest value is in its treatments of character stereotypes, GM staging, and role-playing narrative structure. Whether you're interested in the campaign setting or not, Allston's observations on the art of GM presentation, NPC and PC development, and adventure plot devices are required reading for sophisticated GMs, and his writing style, well-illustrated with sample session dialogs and practical examples, makes for lucid and pleasant reading. Ω

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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams

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D & D® Expert Set

When using the polymorph self spell, how large or small can the caster get when he changes? Also, what happens to the caster's items when he changes?

The only limit on forms given in the rules is on hit dice, so the caster could turn into anything from a huge dragon to a microbe. We suggest, however, that you place reasonable limits on size. For example, anything from an elephant down to a small songbird keeps the spell useful but prevents your players from getting silly. Items carried become part of the caster's new form unless he sets them aside before changing or uses a form that could reasonably carry the equipment. For example, a change to a sparrow would cause all items to disappear; clothing would become the bird's feathers, weapons its claws, and so on. These items reappear when the spell ends. If the caster became a hobgoblin, he could still carry all his equipment just as he could in normal form.

How many times per day can a hellhound breathe fire?

There is no limit on the total number of times that a hellhound can breathe fire, but it may only breathe when the dice roll given in the 1983 *Expert Rulebook*, page 51, says it can breathe fire.

Wouldn't continuous hacking with weapons keep a troll from regenerating? Would simply hacking the troll into several pieces and keeping the pieces separated keep a troll from regenerating?

If the troll's "dead" body is struck, the extra damage temporarily negates regeneration. The troll is still alive, however, until it is burned, even if it is reduced to small cubes or if large pieces are kept separated. If kept apart over two weeks, all but the largest piece dies; the largest piece then slowly grows into a whole new troll. You might have severed pieces of

troll attack the characters who are holding them, just to spice things up a bit. The novel *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, by Poul Anderson, has an excellent fight between a party and a troll. Reading it gives a good feel for what fighting a troll should be like. Note that decapitation will not kill a troll.

Will a remove curse spell actually make a cursed magical item into a useful item?

If the item is actually a beneficial item that is cursed, then removal of the curse produces a useful item. If the item is enchanted to be harmful in the first place, a remove curse won't help. See the 1983 *Expert Rulebook*, page 58, for guidelines.

How can a character keep an intelligent sword with an alignment different from his own if it damages him every time he touches it? Also, wouldn't such a sword do extra damage when it hits a character with an alignment different from the sword's and wielder's?

Handling the sword carefully in order to examine or transport it (e.g., wrapping it up or carrying it in gloved hands) does not cause damage. Any attempt to wield it or determine its exact powers does cause damage. An intelligent sword will not cause extra damage to a character of a different alignment if it is being held by a character of the sword's alignment.

Geas and quest spells are much abused. For example, couldn't an evil magic-user geas a character to never attack him? Couldn't an evil cleric do a similar thing with quest?

A quest must be a specific and finite task; the victim must be able to take actions that will bring about the end of the quest, or the spell has no effect. A geas is similar to a quest in that it must be specific. "Never stand while I am sitting" is a long-term request, but it is specific enough for a geas spell. "Serve me until one of us dies" is either too general for a geas spell or possibly fatal for the caster, if interpreted literally so that the caster is "served" to a tribe of man-eating giants. "Never attack me" is potentially suicidal for the victim if the caster attacks him, and will reflect back to the caster (see the 1983 *Expert Rulebook*, page 161).

Can a quest be removed with a dispel magic or remove curse spell?

No. Only completion of the task or a reversed quest spell removes a properly worded quest; dispel magic and remove curse will not.

Can a remove quest be used to remove a geas? Can a magic-user geas a questing character to forget about his quest?

Reading the rules strictly, remove quest will not rid a character of a geas; the victim has to find a magic-user to do it. A geas that forced a character to ignore a quest has to be considered directly harmful (because the quest's curse would then apply) and would also be ineffective. In short, quests can only be removed by clerics and geas spells can only be removed by magic-users.

If you are refereeing your own game, you might assume that the two spells are similar enough so that the reverse of one will negate the other — with chances for success based on the levels of the characters who cast the spells. This does not match either the spirit or the letter of the rules, but it is close enough to be considered reasonable.

I want one of my characters to build a stronghold. What do I do? How much will it cost? How long will it take?

First of all, you must decide how much the character wants to spend on the stronghold. There is a table of construction costs on page 23 of the *Expert Rulebook*. Time of construction (in game days) is also given on page 23. You should work out the exact floor plan of the stronghold with your DM.

If you are having difficulty coming up with a floor plan or you do not understand some of the terms on page 23, a trip to your local library should help get you started. Ask the librarian for books on any of the following subjects: castles, the Middle Ages, Medieval warfare, or Medieval architecture. Also refer to those D&D or AD&D® game modules which your referee allows you to see which also detail castles and fortresses. DRAGON issue #86 detailed a huge castle named Great Stoney, complete with 3-D fold-up materials and floor plans. Issues of DUNGEON™ Adventures could be helpful here as well, as might the AD&D game's Dungeon Masters Guide, pages 106-110.

The rules say that the cost to build a wall is normal up to 30' high, but double above that. What is the base cost to build a wall, and just how big a wall do you get for the money?

You appear to be referring to page 52 of the 1981 edition of the *Expert Rulebook*. The passage you have quoted refers to the cost of building a castle wall. The base costs for walls and other constructions are given in the table on the same page. Dimensions are also given here. This same

(continued on page 37)



FLIGHT

Aerial Adventuring

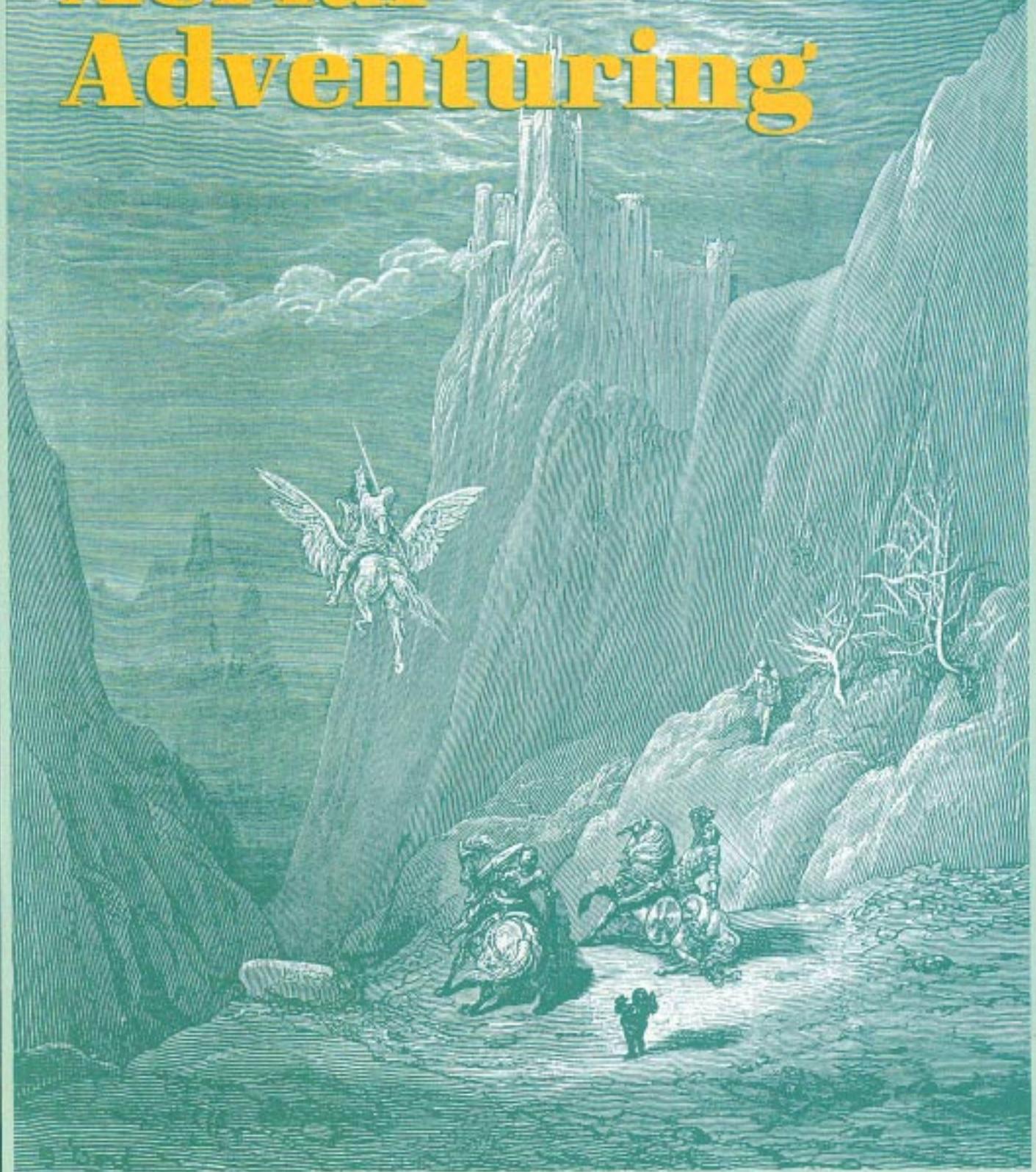


Illustration by Gustave Doré
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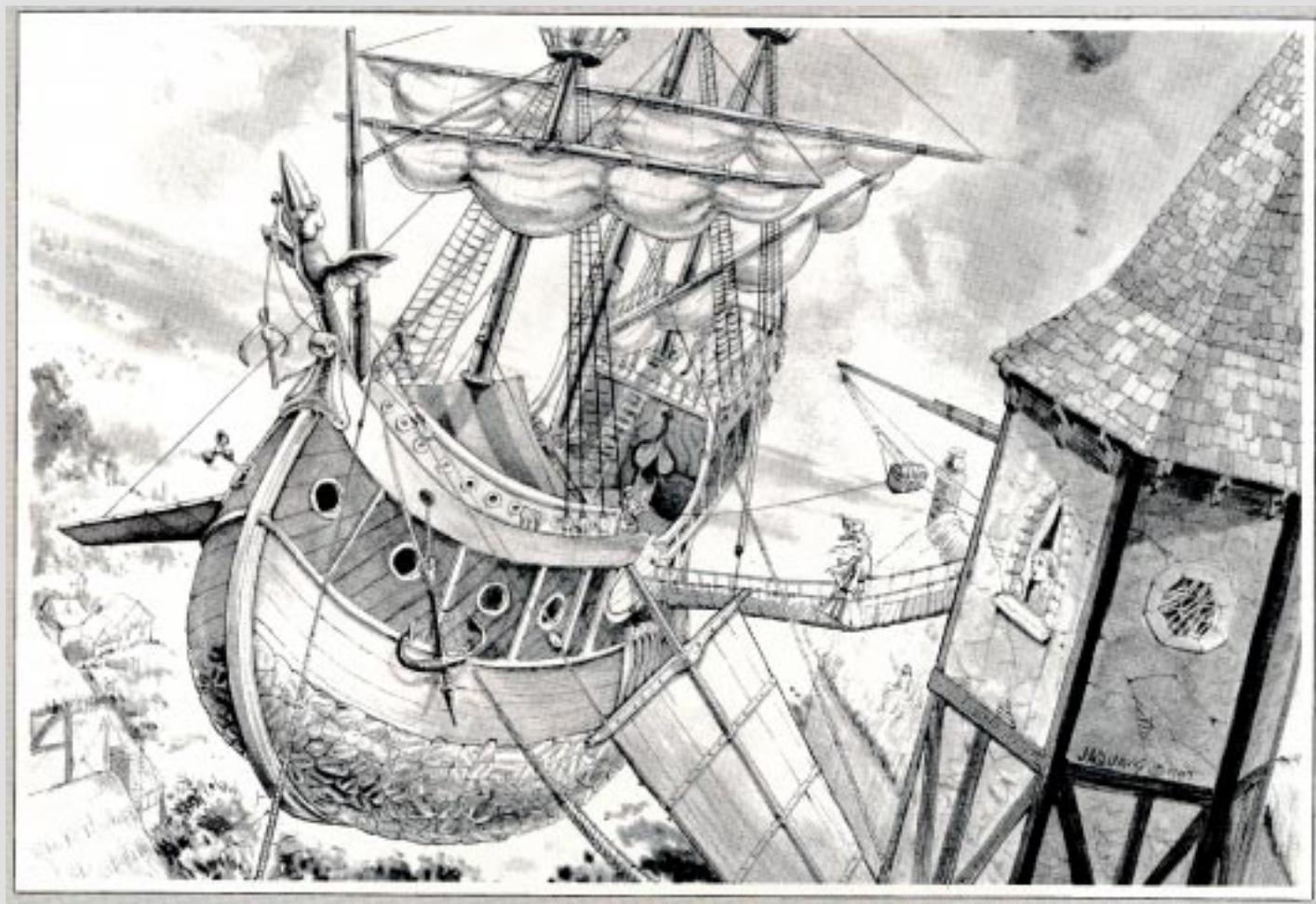
Sailors on the Sea of Air

The skyships of the
FORGOTTEN REALMS™
campaign

by Ed Greenwood

Many classics of fantasy literature describe flying ships — not spacecraft or airplanes, but ships with sails, anchors, and clipper hulls that sail gracefully through the sky. A Dungeon Master can readily see that such skyships offer fascinating AD&D® game possibilities — as long as one is careful to limit their dependability and combat usefulness so that they do not dominate play. A city or nation that controls a fleet of airships may dominate its neighbors, as happens in fantasy author Lin Carter's Thongor series. Herein the Air Guard of Imperial Patanga rules most battlefields. Likewise, in Carter's Callisto series, the Sky Pirates of Zanadar, City in the Clouds, prey with impunity on the riches of other lands. Much of Carter's writing is in the tradition established by Edgar Rice Burroughs, who filled the skies of John Carter's Barsoom with gun-armed airboats. Most of these novels lie properly in the realm of space opera, but a few take comfortable form in a fantasy setting.

Many fantasy authors, such as L. Frank Baum in his Oz series, use balloons of



various sorts, while others (such as Walt Disney, in his version of Barrie's *Peter Pan*) lift galleons intact and dripping from the water into the sky by magic. (In *Peter Pan*, magic is called "pixie dust," and the subject is simply left at that.)

Lin Carter deserves special mention because he has taken the trouble to explain the means by which his skyships stay aloft. On Callisto, the skyships are made of "miraculously tough and resilient laminated paper"¹ and have hollow double hulls. A naturally buoyant gas is pumped between the two hull layers, and a "complicated system of cables and joints and pulleys by which the jointed stationary wings"² are manipulated serve to propel and steer such vessels. A cover illustration depicts a high-pooped, three-masted galleon with full sails, as well as two spreading, bat-like wings. The vessels are vulnerable to fire, catapulted stones, and lesser missiles, such as arrows and hurled javelins.

In *The Black Star*, Carter describes a ship of Lemuria (perhaps one of the ships of Thongor's Patanga, mentioned above) which survives in the later kingdom of Atlantis. "The art of their manufacture had perished millenia ago: *viwan vidya*, as the science of the flying boats was called in the old Lemurian tongue, was one of the many casualties of time. In the dawn of man, some old sorcerer of Lemuria the Lost had first learned from the High Gods the secret of the weightless metal, *urlium*."³ In this case, the mirror-bright, silvery metal was fashioned into a slim, needle-pointed hull; within it were placed engines powered by sithurls ("sun-stones"), power crystals which draw, store, and focus energy from sunlight. The engines produce power for the rotors whose fan blades propel the craft. At the tail of the ship are adjustable vanes for steering the ship; a compass (a glass sphere containing a floating lodestone) is also included to aid the ship's captain. The story reveals that one man can fly such a craft, and the presence of the compass indicates that *urlium* is not a ferrous, magnetic metal.

There are scores of other aerial craft in the pages of fantastic fiction', and for a long time, I toyed with the idea of using such vessels as Carter does in *The Black Star*, — wherein his ship is a rarity and the knowledge of its making is a lost art — in AD&D game play in the Forgotten Realms. As usually happens when I procrastinate, the Realms decided things for me. A letter from Elminster the Sage arrived through the gate in the woods. I quote the latter part of it here:

"... In recent letters to me, the sorceress Laeral has revealed the simple principles of the skyship *Vulathar Ravoenen*, constructed long ago by unknown artisans

in the land now known as Thay. It is (or was) a sailing vessel — massive and broad of beam so that it may rest upright and intact upon reasonably level ground, but is otherwise similar to a water vessel. It partakes not of the rare or strange in its construction, but rather makes much use of the more flexible woods — willow and the great palm — so as to give and flow with the winds, and not to endlessly batter against them. It has three masts of such flexible wood, and two rigid panels that are swung down from the sides of the ship, turning on their pivots, to serve as 'leeboard' keels or steering vanes. In air, as in water, these vanes prevent the ship from being driven helplessly sideways by a wind, propelling it forward as intended.

"While undamaged, the vessel can never sink beneath the seas, for the same forces that hold it aloft act upon the waves about. The ship's hull is studded with many plates — polished tortoise-shell, I believe, although Laeral gives the impression that other substances will do — upon which *levitate* spells of unusual strength and duration have been cast. (Indeed, these may be permanent, although Laeral does mention that such ships are regularly grounded for repairs, which may well require the renewal of spells.) The ship's cargo is therefore restricted to that amount which the magic will lift; this is not, as compared to a seagoing vessel, a very large amount. Such a skyship is also subject to the vagaries of the winds, which may be more perilously unpredictable near rock faces than waves of water. Skyships cannot hover in place unless there is no breeze at all. Such a ship is anchored to rocky spires by lines and mooring gaffs ("angbraces"), or brought to the ground and pegged down with its sails furled (a rigged skyship can tear free of its lines and run aloft in scant rounds if sufficient wind arises).

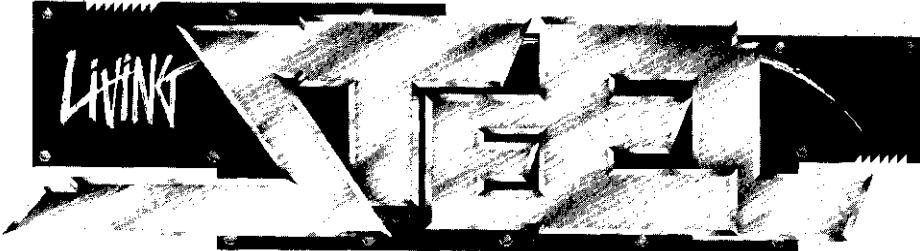
"A flying ship of this nature is obviously no steady-but-maneuverable fighting platform; spells may be cast from its decks, but it is a large and clumsy target in any aerial battle [being maneuverability class E], and has a great degree of variability in speed and stability due to the caprice of the winds and the turbulence created by other aerial bodies. Still, these skyships are effective in dropping solid missiles (or such things as acid or flaming oil) upon hostile forces. The buoyancy of such a vessel is greatest close to the ground, where the air is thickest. The maximum height at which a skyship may be controlled is 3600', Laeral writes, so a skyship must skirt the loftiest mountain peaks in a manner much like that used by travelers on the ground.

"The height at which the ship sails can be crudely affected by the amount of

cargo onboard, but is also influenced greatly by a magical rod home by the captain. This *rod of levitation* is so constructed as to consist of three parts: the central shaft and two short, hollow cylinders which fit over the shaft and cover its ends. The cylinders themselves have no end caps. These endpieces are customarily painted or carved with raised characters to distinguish one from the other in darkness. Both can be twisted like screws and slid clown the shaft towards its center. As a tip of the rod is revealed, its powers are felt. One end of the rod augments the levitate spells of the ship itself, so that it rises steadily; the other dampens their efficacy so that the ship loses altitude. The power of both these effects are increased as more of the desired end of the rod is revealed. A ship can therefore dive or climb with some alacrity if its captain is dextrous and the rod is fully charged. Laeral notes that these powerful rods need continual recharging (although she reveals nothing of the method by which this is done). Laeral also notes that a skillful individual using such a rod can leap off precipices and land safely below (as if using a *feather fall* spell), or descend from a skyship to the ground below and thereafter ascend again. Using both grips of the rod, the user may appear to walk on air by tipping the rod's ends alternately to move sideways with an awkward hopping motion.

"Regrettably, Laeral reveals too little of the whereabouts or the creation of this crucial element of a skyship — but she does say that unless a wind or some other force is acting upon a vessel's altitude, it remains at the height the rod puts it at before being recovered. When a vessel lacks such a rod, the long angbraces and the sky-anchors (metal or rock claws attached to strong lines, thrown at nearby minarets, pinnacles, other vessels, or even at flying beasts who pull the vessel higher or lower) often suffice.

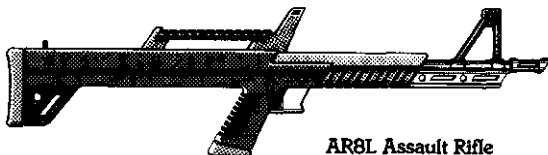
"Laeral states that one skyship of this type carried her sisters — the ranger Dove and the bard Storm Silverhand — and herself from the doomed city of Myth Drannor when they were infants, dropping them on the Moonshae Isles before scudding on westwards over the trackless great sea. The ship, the *Vulathor Ravoenen*, may yet survive, and there are recent rumors of like vessels from as far afield in the Realms as Calimshan in the hot South, and Sossal in the farthest reaches of the Northeast, across the Great Glacier. I cannot yet state in truth that such vessels still exist, but they have existed, and at least one person knows enough to direct the successful construction of others, should she wish to do so. From what I know of Laeral's sisters, they could also



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L E A D I N G E D G E
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handle all but the magic involved, and there are others, especially among the elves, who survived the fall of Myth Drannor. So, my friend, I may yet have a ship that sails the skies to show you. With pleasure, I remain your willing servant,

Elminster of Shadowdale."

Footnotes

¹ Carter, Lin. *Sky Pirates of Callisto*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1973, page 33. This paperback is the third in the Callisto series.

Ibid., page 32.

² Carter, Lin. *The Black Star*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1973, page 37. "Viwan" is the name of such a craft, equivalent to "airboat" or "skyship."

⁴ For example, Michael Moorcock's *Warlord of the Air* and its sequels, Poul Anderson's *A Midsummer Tempest*, the works of Otis Adelbert Kline, Neal Barrett, Jr.'s Aldair series, and Kenneth Bulmer's Dray Prescott series (written under the name Alan Burt Akers).

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Artwork by Bob Eggleton



by L. Gregory Smith

On a Wing and a Prayer

Gliders and gliding in the AD&D® game

Gliders in the AD&D® game are best created as crude replicas of our present-day hang gliders; their fundamental design is based upon the Rogallo-class glider, which is composed of a frame and a sail. The sail is generally made of cotton or wool felt. The frame looks like an isosceles triangle with an apex angle of 80-90°, and is usually made of wood from a young oak tree. The sail fits over the frame but is not triangular; rather, it is diamond-shaped, giving the glider better lift characteristics.

Today, the glider is primarily used for pleasure trips, but in the AD&D game it is used for much more. Herein, the glider can be used for military and commercial purposes. Military uses are quite obvious: quiet, cheap air travel that can be sued for strategic offensives, surveillance, and limited troop or equipment transport. The commercial uses vary as well, as gliders can be rented to travelers or to pleasure-seekers alike. Another commercial uses is the courier service of documents over short distances. A character with a great deal of gold could finance a more elaborate courier scheme, such as the shipment of mail over long distances in a manner similar to that of the pony express of Western folklore.

Obviously, a glider in an AD&D game world will only work in certain environments (although magical aid may make the device useful in any environment). Generally speaking, a glider requires some type of promontory from which to launch, thus giving the glider room to fall in the process of catching a wind. Hilly or mountainous terrain is best for this sort of activity, although certain instances will allow for the launch of a glider in flat, prairie-like regions. For instance, high winds close to the surface of the plains may make it possible to launch a glider from a standing start. Likewise, the employment of a magical flight spell (such as levitate) will garner enough lift for the glider to remain aloft, thereby allowing the sail to catch a breeze. These instances, however, are rare at best. As a result, gliders will be most frequently available in hilly or mountainous regions.

Additionally, it is likely that only a kingdom would have the resources, knowledge pool, and need for the establishment of glider production and a regular glider-using force. In such an event, the use of gliders would be regarded as being as normal as any other form of transport, thought perhaps more hazardous despite all of its advantages. A regular organization of pilots (made up largely of fighter-types), research and development workers



(sages and magic-users), and so on could easily be envisioned.

Before actually flying a glider, a prospective pilot must take lessons for a specified number of weeks from a character trained glider flight. The number of weeks of lessons is equal to 20 minus the student's intelligence score. During this time, the character cannot go adventuring or else all knowledge learned in flying a glider is lost. The skill of glider pilot can be treated as a two-slot nonweapon proficiency based on the dexterity score, with a -2 die-roll modifier.

A glider can be assembled or disassembled in one turn. It costs 200 gp for the tools to assemble or disassemble the glider. In disassembled form, the glider can be hauled around in a normal cart pulled by draft horses. The glider tool kit weighs 200 gp, and it includes things like a knife, hammer, punch, etc.

Statistics for gliders

There are two types of gliders: large and small. The large gliders are designed for characters and their belongings weighing between 1,750 and 3,000 gp. The small gliders are for characters and their belongings weighing less than 1,750 gp. Gliders cannot be designed for characters and their belongings weighing over 3,000 gp weight.

All rules that apply to flying creatures also apply to the glider; this includes rules pertaining to diving, climbing, reaction to loss of hit points (as explained later in the article), etc. Table 1 shows statistics for the two types of gliders, including values for magically heightened conditions. When a glider is magically heightened, it gains special bonuses induced by the casting of magical flight-assisting spells such as *feather fall*, *levitation*, *fly*, etc. Following the tables is a summary of terms used in the table.

Note that the maneuverability class of a glider is dependent upon the dexterity of the pilot. Table 2 illustrates this relationship. It is possible for the pilot to increase his maneuverability class with a glider without increasing his dexterity, through continued, uninterrupted training and practice. Once a pilot has learned to fly a glider, he can increase his maneuverability class one step by taking more lessons and conducting more practice sessions. The length of this period is determined as follows: The character attempting to increase his maneuverability class must spend time learning and practicing equal to three times the difference between the character's intelligence and the number 20. Once this time is spent, the character must roll 01-75 on percentile dice for this education to be a success. Failure means more practice is needed. This additional

amount of time is again equal to the figure listed above. Once a character has increased his maneuverability class once, he can do so no longer. Characters with maneuverability classes of A cannot increase their abilities beyond this level.

Using Table 2 to determine maneuverability, let's look at the following example. Suppose Randolph the Ranger's dexterity is 13. The maneuverability class of his glider would be C. Before he takes off, Machor the Mage casts a *levitation* spell on Randolph. Randolph's maneuverability class then becomes B. No more than one magical flying spell has any effect on a character's maneuverability rating at a time. It should also be noted that if a pilot is flying the wrong type of glider, such as a character weighing 2,000 gp using a small glider, then the maneuverability class is worsened by two levels (from A to C, C to E, etc.). The maneuverability class can never be lower than E.

Now, suppose that Randolph decides to increase his maneuverability class by taking more instruction. With an intelligence of 13, Randolph must spend 21 weeks practicing and learning ($(20 - 13) \times 3 = 21$). Randolph then rolls a 70%, thus successfully moving his maneuverability class from C to B. (If Randolph had rolled a 76%, he would be required to spend another 21 weeks practicing and learning.) Randolph's maneuverability class with a glider can now only be enhanced by magical spells. It is impossible for a character to gain a maneuverability class of better than A.

In-flight combat

Due to the fact that a pilot's hands are constantly involved in controlling the glider, hand-to-hand combat is impossible once the pilot is in flight. Similarly, since a pilot must concentrate on the navigation of his glider, it is impossible to cast spells once the glider is aloft. (This is not to say, however, that a passenger may not cast spells or perform combat.) As a result, the only type of combat reasonably possible in flight is missile combat. Two types of missile weapons that can be used in flight aboard a glider are crossbows and bombs. Crossbows have the disadvantage of only being able to fire a single shot between flights; they are, however, the only type of weapon that can be easily used to hit other aerial targets. Bombs, on the other hand, can be carried in abundance on a glider, but they can only be dropped on targets below the pilot.

Up to 20 lbs. of bombs can be stowed away on a glider. This cargo, including pilot weight and other belongings, cannot exceed the 1,750 gp maximum for small gliders and the 3,000 gp maximum for large gliders. If the bombs are ignited oil flasks, then space must be allocated on board the craft for the lantern which will be used to light them. It takes one round to light a flask and drop it. In order for the bomb to have any hope of hitting its intended target, the following stipulations must be met:

1. The glider (if bombing a moving target) must move faster than its target.

Table 1
Statistics for Large and Small Gliders *

Item	Large gliders	Small gliders
Wingspan	36'	24'
Length	24'	18'
Height	6'	4'
Weight	700 gp	600 gp
Encumbrance value	1,700 gp	1,200 gp
Cost to construct	5,000 gp	3,500 gp
Time to construct	30 days	25 days
Training time	See below	See below
Cost of training	100 gp/week	100 gp/week
Maneuverability class	See below	See below
Flight speed	60" (66")	60" (66")
Stall speed	36" (30")	36" (30")
Min. wind speed for take-off	6 MPH (4 MPH)	6 MPH (4 MPH)
Min. slope for take-off	4:1 or 76° (3:1 or 70°)	4:1 or 76° (3:1 or 70°)
Range	10 (121 miles)	8 (10) miles
Assembly/Disassembly time	1 turn	1 turn
Upkeep	50 gp/month	50 gp/month
Landing area	40' x 50'	25' x 30'
Minimum height for take-off	150' (130')	125' (100')

* Magically heightened values are given in parentheses.

See page 24 for summary of terms used.

2. For the sake of simplicity, the glider must be right above the target and tracking its movement. Normally, the payload would follow a parabolic curve down once dropped; the information on the landing point of a dropped missile may also be used from the article "Flying the Friendly(?) Skies," by Thomas Kane, in this issue.

3. A flying target cannot be further than 200' below the bomber or the bomb has no chance of hitting the target because of control and coordination problems. Damage for dead-weight missiles is calculated by the rules in "Flying the Friendly(?) Skies."

If all these guidelines are met, then the pilot can try to hit the target. All "to hit" modifiers for bombing are the same as given in "Flying the Friendly(?) Skies," with the additional note that attacks against a target moving faster than 6" are made at an additional -2 "to hit."

Crossbows, as stated earlier, are the only other weapons which can be used aboard gliders. Up to three crossbows can be attached to a glider, and all are single-shot weapons. These mounted crossbows face forward unless designed to face other directions. When fired, these weapons receive an additional penalty of -2 "to hit" which is instituted above and beyond the modifiers for range, etc.

When characters fire at a glider, they must state whether they are trying to hit the pilot or the glider. If the pilot is hit and dies, the glider crashes immediately. A glider damaged in such a fall can only be

repaired by an experienced glider repairman at a cost of 500 gp. The armor class of the pilot cannot make use of any dexterity or shield bonuses, so normal armor and magical protections are all that can help him.

Large gliders have an assumed hit-point value of 25, whereas small gliders have an assumed hit-point value of 15. Only an experienced glider repairman can repair a damaged glider at a cost of 5 gp per hp

of damage. Hit points for a glider are used the same way as hit points are used for a creature. The glider also has an armor class which correlates to the maneuverability of the glider. Table 3 illustrates what the armor class would be depending upon the glider's maneuverability class. Note that if the pilot is surprised by an attacking character, the armor class of the glider becomes 9.

Summary of terms

Wingspan: See Figure 1 for details.

Length: See Figure 1 for details.

Height: The height in feet which the average glider stands over the ground when a character lifts the glider's control bar waist high.

Weight: The glider's total (dead) weight in gp.

Encumbrance value: The amount of space the glider occupies when fully disassembled.

Cost to construct: The cost of the materials for the glider plus the cost of the glider's design work.

Time to construct: The time it takes for a typical glider of this type to be designed and built.

Training time: The number of weeks the pilot spends in training is equal to 20 minus his intelligence score.

Cost of training: The amount that the character must pay the instructor for flying lessons.

Maneuverability class: The degree of dexterity of the glider depends upon the character's dexterity. Table 2 illustrates the maneuverability of the glider in relation to the character's dexterity. The maneuverability class of the glider can be further increased by casting a *fly* spell on the pilot. Otherwise, a pilot may increase his maneuverability class once by taking more training as listed above. It is impossible for a pilot to increase this advancement beyond the A maneuverability class.

Flight speed: The distance in tens of yards the glider can travel in 10 minutes.

Stall speed: The speed in tens of yards at which the glider goes into a stall. Immediately after the stall, the glider will crash. If the fall is greater than 10', the pilot and glider will incur damages.

Minimum wind speed for take-off: To determine which direction the wind is blowing and at what force, refer to the Wind Force and Direction Table under "Waterborne Adventures," on page 54 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. To take off, the character must fly the glider against the wind to obtain adequate lift. Take-off and flight are impossible during a strong gale, storm, or hurricane. If the wind is less than the speed listed in Table 1, the glider cannot take off.

Minimum slope for take-off: The angle between the take-off area and the ground. See Figure 2 for details. The take-off area need only be large enough to contain the glider and the pilot.

Range: The distance in miles the glider can travel before the pilot becomes tired. After landing, the pilot must spend an amount of time at rest equal to the time in the air.

Assembly/Disassembly time: See the text.

Upkeep: The cost in gold pieces to keep the glider in flying condition each month — specifically, for checkout and repair, if necessary, of the wooden frame, cloth or felt wing skin, control bar action, and weapon stores.

Landing area: The area required in order to land a glider without damaging it. If the character attempts to land in a smaller area, damages from wing tears, etc., result in repair costs equal to the difference in square feet from actual landing area to permitted landing area multiplied by 1 gp. For example, the character lands a large glider in a field 30' x 40', so the difference is 800 square feet. Thus, repair costs would be 800 gp; until fixed, the glider is rendered unusable.

Minimum height for take-off: The minimum height needed to travel the given range. Lower heights produce shorter ranges. Determination of shorter ranges will be up to the discretion of the DM.

Table 2
Glider Maneuverability Class

Pilot's dexterity	Maneuverability class
17+	A
14-16	B
10-13	C
5-9	D
4 or less	E

Table 3
Glider Armor Class

Maneuverability class	Armor class
E	8
D	7
C	6
B	5
A	3

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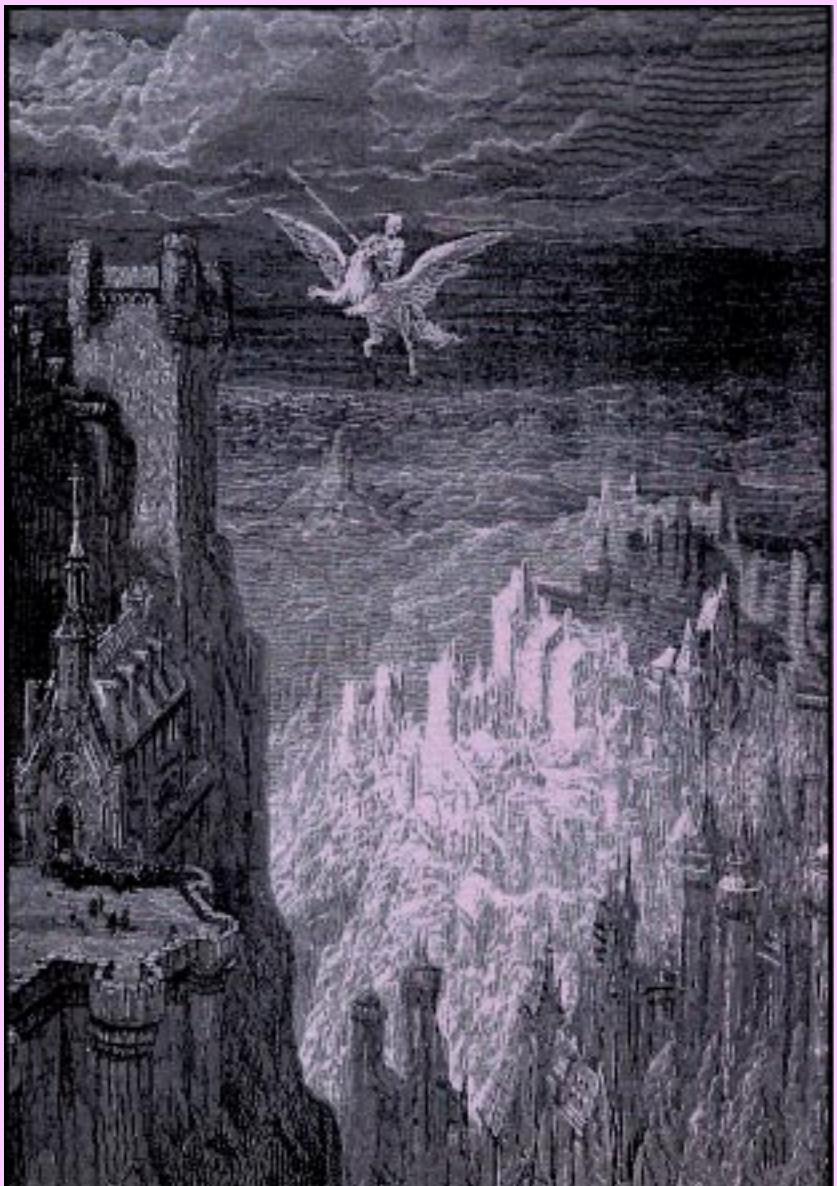
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Flying the Friendly(?) Skies

*Aerial adventuring
in the AD&D® game*



Each snap of the hippogriff's wings jarred the old warrior to the bone. Barloff felt the beast's muscles ripple and strain beneath him — then jerk as if the beast had been startled. Had it caught a scent? He tried to scan the sky through the narrow eyeholes in his helmet. Was it —?

From the mists ahead, the dragon emerged. Its wrinkled head and neck shot from the white fog like a green spear; then its vast, thundering wings tore the cloud to shreds. It had not yet seen him.

Cold with fear, Barloff guided his steed

by Thomas Kane

Winged steeds are a special high-level treasure, as they open new possibilities for AD&D® game scenarios. Flying is more than just a fast way to get around; air-borne characters also have encounters, accidents, and rousing adventures. Much of the basic information about aerial adventuring is given in the *DMG*, pages 50–53. Other information is given herein.

This article describes saving throw procedures for which dice are rolled against a creature's aerial maneuverability rating; treat maneuverability class A as equal to 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4, and E = 5. Also, the speeds of flying objects are measured in scale inches. In "tactical" situations involving normal melee, fliers travel at 10 times the combat movement rate mentioned on page 102 of the *Players Handbook*. Thus, 1" of speed = 10' covered per segment (6 seconds), roughly equal to 1.14 MPH. This speed applies to direct, nonstop travel. On long "strategic" flights, the slower rate of 3" = 1 MPH, as noted on page 50 of the *DMG*, should be used, as it accounts for time used for rest stops, getting lost, changes in wind direction which hamper travel, avoidance maneuvers when encountering unfriendly fliers, etc.

Additionally, it is assumed that all riders on live flying mounts are tied to their saddles using leg straps and the like. Any rider lacking such straps must roll 1d20 against his dexterity or less each round he is in flight or else fall off. It is assumed that magical items that grant flight while ridden do not require such straps, as they keep their riders seated by magical means (barring some catastrophe).

The aerial environment

The sky is ephemeral and ever-changing. There is no lasting terrain within it and there are few obstacles to movement. The primary features of the sky, for game

along the cloud fringe. Tendrils of mist whipped around him. The dragon's wings tipped, and it began the long glide down into the valley that was Barloff's home and the home of his people — the people he had sworn to protect. Barloff kneed the hippogriff and followed, swallowing and steadying himself. "Lord of Air and Storm," he whispered, his voice drowned in the wind blast around his helm. "Just let me get one good shot, just one good..."

But the dragons head cocked, as if listening to something that it should have

heard long ago. The head twisted slightly A glittering golden eye looked back, caught sight of Barloff and began to glow with an unholy heat.

Subtlety was wasted now, and the Lord of Air and Storm loved a brave heart. Barloff roared at the top of his lungs, waving his lance. The hippogriff echoed his cry with a shriek that rang in his bones. Perhaps the villagers would hear the hippogriff and take shelter. He could hope for nothing more now.

The hippogriff's wings slashed the wind,

preparing for its instinctive dive at the upper part of the dragons back. The ground could be clearly seen: furrowed fields, smoke from cottages, the green dragons dark shadow. Then Barloff hit the turbulence from the blast of the dragons wings, and he struggled to brace his lance.

The hippogriff's wings pulled in abruptly. Barloffs heart rose into his throat as the dive began. The dragon's eyes burned like fires from the lowest of the Nine Hells as it slowly rose to meet him....

purposes, are clouds and air currents, the former of which (if solid) can serve as settings for adventures. Consider, too, that characters cannot speed around in the sky like little airplanes. PCs are slow compared to many weather patterns.

There is nothing to stop a flier from going straight through a normal cloud, but there are occasions when a character won't want to do that. He might be pursuing a target and be unwilling to enter the fog, perhaps in an effort to keep his possessions out of the wet mist. If a PC skims the surface of a cloud, its free-form shape makes an intriguing maze. Traveling within it, a PC may become lost and may emerge from the cloud in an unexpected place or facing undesirable foes.

Cloud types vary according to shape, altitude, and weather. The DM should plan the weather at least one day in advance, using whatever weather-generation system works best. The weather system in the *Wilderness Survival Guide*, pages 107-118, serves admirably well, as might "Weather in the World of Greyhawk" in the Glossography of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting set. Cloud patterns often change before the weather does, so observant PCs may forecast the weather using clouds.

The clouds present are determined on Table 1. Roll 1d10 and compare the result with the appropriate conditions. There is a 30% chance that two separate types of clouds are present at once. If this is the case, consult the cloud formation table twice. Cloud descriptions follow Table 1.

PCs are hampered within mists. Characters inside a cloud can see only 40' and are penalized -2 on all missile "to hit" rolls. All unwrapped items become wet; parchments, papers, scrolls, and books must save on a roll of 5 or better for each turn of exposure or else become warped and smeared beyond use. Furthermore, all *invisible* creatures are outlined, bettering the chances of their detection. Such crea-

tures can be attacked inside clouds at -2 on "to hit" rolls instead of at the -4 figure, and make saving throws with but a +2 bonus. When using the Detection of Invisibility Table on page 60 in the *DMG*, add 3 HD/levels to observers for purposes of detection.

The effects of certain types of spells, when cast within clouds, are hampered by the mist. The time a gas takes to dissipate is doubled in a cloud. Magical fire-based attacks do 1 hp less per hit die of damage. There is a 20% chance that any electricity based spell is negated by the wet air. Every time a character changes direction in a cloud, there is a 70% chance that he becomes lost and proceeds in a random direction. Certain types of clouds vary from these statistics; these are noted in Table 1.

Most cloud patterns cover 30-180 square miles. The DM may select certain dimensions for a cloud rather than randomly rolling them. A clouds exterior is twisted and chaotic; bumps, canyons of clear air, and hills of fog pockmark the surface of a cloud. As a result, the DM might decide to map certain cloud surfaces (preferably a number of them for use as needed in future games). This can be done by mapping the clouds onto hex paper, as used in the *DMG*, pages 52-53, or with contour lines. Otherwise, a DM might draw the cloud as a two-dimensional object and use a color code to indicate thick and thin areas.

According to the *DMG*, page 50, a character cannot fly higher than 5,000'. However, with magical items like the *iridescent ioun stone* or *necklace of adaptation*, greater heights can be reached. Of course, a flying mount cannot go higher unless it is similarly protected. With proper magic, a PC can probably go as high as 15,000' without harm. Above this altitude, the air becomes so thin that normal flying is impossible. Modern jets routinely fly higher than this, but no such technology exists

in the AD&D game world. Even magical devices cannot take a PC over this limit (unless the DM decides that outer space is filled with breathable air).

Generally speaking, the air gets colder as one rises in the sky. Thus, DMs should lower the effective temperature 3°F for every 1,000' of altitude the PCs ascend. Thus, PCs who spend long periods at high altitudes must dress warmly.

Wind effects

Air currents greatly change the mechanics of flying. Winds blow adventurers off course and may even drive them from the air. Thermals (warm bodies of rising air) can be used to soar higher and for longer durations — a resource which may mean life or death in combat. Downdrafts and erratic winds may force PCs out of the air and into an unexpected wilderness adventure.

If your weather system does not have a method for determining wind direction and velocity, use the Wind Direction and Force tables for waterborne adventures, on page 54 of the *DMG* (perhaps with a -1 modifier on the roll). For every 10 MPH of wind speed, the movement rates for fliers change by 1". Creatures flying into the wind must subtract this change from their movement rate; those going with the wind may add it. Flying into the wind provides lift. A character climbs 10' for every 1,000' traveled if moving against the wind, and a character who flies with the wind sinks 10' for every 500' traveled. Normal diving and climbing procedures (page 50, *DMG*) may be used to counteract these effects.

Flying perpendicular to the wind is filled with problems. Crosswinds blow fliers sideways at a speed of 1" for every 20 MPH of wind speed. For example, a PC on a hippogriff goes north while an east wind blows at 50 MPH; a day's travel blows the character 4 miles off course. Winged fliers may be unable to control their flight in

crosswinds. A special save vs. maneuverability (as outlined at the start of this article) must be attempted every turn. Roll 1d20 and subtract one from the result for every 10 MPH of wind speed. If the result is equal to or less than the maneuverability number, the flier loses flight control, flips over, and falls for 1d4 seconds: High in the air, this is not usually dangerous; control can be regained in most cases before hitting the ground. Near the ground, however, this can be fatal. Details on stopping a fall are given below.

Thermals are upward gusts of warm air formed by heat rising from the ground. They can be used to buoy a flying creature or to help it fly higher. Cumulus clouds are created by thermals, and updrafts are always beneath them. Hills create updrafts as well; a 60% chance exists that a given hill produces a thermal. In such a draft, flying creatures may climb at 75% of their normal movement rate (instead of the normal 50% rate). In aerial combat, wise fighters fly upwards in a thermal, then dive on their enemies.

During thunderstorms, a clever flier can navigate between masses of hot and cold air. This allows him to stay in the air with little effort. If characters dare fly in such weather, a flier can travel 1½ times as far as normal without rest. Of course, thunderstorm flying is dangerous. Lightning strikes may occur, strong winds may blow, and dark clouds must be traversed.

The world below

In the end, most flying PCs engage creatures on the ground. If only to rest their mounts, airborne characters must occasionally leave the air. Many airborne adventures are inspired by events on the ground as well. Flying creatures can spy ahead of a party or attack ground-based creatures. In Greek myth, Bellerophon tamed Pegasus in order to attack the monstrous Chimera from a safe vantage. Many PCs may have similar aims.

Flying mounts are often used for scouting. Major geographical features like mountains or cities can be seen from 40 miles away, adding one mile for every 20' of the observer's altitude. Large objects, like buildings, formations of troops, etc., can be seen at a distance of two miles. Individual human-sized objects are indistinguishable by humans beyond 3,000'. It is possible for living beings to avoid detection by freezing in place or adopting camouflage coloration to match the local environment. Such beings have a 5% chance of escaping detection for every 100' of distance from the observer.

To calculate the distance from an airborne observer to an observed point on the ground, add the character's altitude to the ground distance to the object

observed. Thus, to a character riding a broom of flying at 500' altitude, a person on the ground 2,600' appears 3,100' away and thus is beyond his range of sight. Height is not always an advantage.

Sun glare reduces the maximum range of vision to one mile. Magical items such as eyes of the eagle allow characters to see even farther. If the DM allows optical devices like telescopes, it will be to the advantage of aerial observers. Magnifiers increase the range at which details (such as individual people) can be seen. A limit of 40 miles plus one mile per 20' of altitude remains, even with telescopic equipment. The curve of the world obscures objects beyond this range.

It is usually impossible to spot objects on the ground in woodlands. If the leaves have fallen from the trees, some things can be discerned (this is one reason why Agent Orange was sprayed in Vietnam). In barren woods, a flier can see objects as far away laterally as he is high. Thus, a character who is 1,000' high can see objects 1,000' away from the point on the ground below him. In lightly wooded areas, man-size creatures can be seen at a maximum distance of 1,500'. To see this far, a character must be flying 1,500' high. Nothing can be seen in leafy woods.

A winged creature stirs up dust upon landing on dry soil or sand. This occurs when the creature is flying 5' or less above the ground. The dust causes all characters within 10' to take a penalty of -1 on "to hit" rolls and saving throws.

Near the ground, careless fliers can collide with things. Boulders, trees, fences, and hills often lie in the flier's path. Defenders might plant stakes to keep aerial enemies at a higher altitude. When a collision is likely, the airborne character traveling at "nap of earth" must roll above his maneuverability rating on 1d10 to avoid the crash. For every 10" of speed, this save is penalized by -1. Collisions do 1-6 hp damage to the mount for every 10" (rounded down) of movement rate. The rider takes half damage from the impact. Unless the rider rolls a result equal to or less than his dexterity on 1d20, he will be thrown hard enough to stun him for 1d8 rounds (no attacks or shield use possible, -4 on saving throws and armor class). This assumes that the rider is tied onto his mount, of course. Magical items that fly, like brooms or carpets of flying, must save vs. normal blow (page 80, DMG) or be ruined in the collision. If a PC is flying on his own power, using a fly spell or potion of flying, he takes full damage.

An intrepid flier can lean down to snatch objects from the ground. To grab an unwilling victim, a grapple roll is required. This is described in *Unearthed Arcana*, page 107. If the object to be lifted

is at least 50% as heavy as the character grabbing it, the character must make an open doors roll to avoid taking an additional 1d6 hp damage from muscle strain, in which case he also loses whatever he was trying to grab. If not strapped down, a PC making any attempt to grab something from the ground falls off his mount. A character who falls to the ground takes 1d6 hp damage for every 10" he is traveling, plus normal falling damage, to a limit of 20d6 (see below).

Bombardment and falling

In the course of an aerial adventure, PCs may occasionally drop heavy objects. Such an action may be accidental or it may be done on purpose, such as to bomb a target. Any item dropped from a flying mount or platform continues in a straight line at the same forward speed and direction at which it was released, though the object's, actual speed through the air will increase due to gravity, and the item will head in a diagonal trajectory for the ground. Inexperienced bombardiers usually drop objects directly above the victim. These attacks always miss their target.

To learn accurate bombing techniques, a character must experiment with dropping objects for 20 weeks, subtracting one week for each point of intelligence the character has. Once this practice is over, use normal combat procedures for bombing. There will be a nonproficiency penalty unless the PC has taken the aerial bomb as a weapon of proficiency. The victim's armor class is treated as zero (AC 0) unless it is naturally better protected than that. For every 100' above the target a PC flies, bombing attacks are at -1 to hit, regardless of other factors.

When objects are dropped in flight, Table 2 is used to show how many feet ahead of the drop point an object lands. For example, if the rider of a pegasus drops his lance, flying 48" at 1,000', it lands 800' in front of the point where it was dropped. Dropped objects do 1d6 hp damage for every 10' fallen per 1,000 gp of weight. Thus, a 10 lb. rock (100 gp weight) dropped from 500' does 5d6 hp damage. Every die of damage is equal to one structural point (pages 109-110, DMG).

The worst thing that can happen to a flier is to fall. Falling damage, for the purposes of this article, is based upon the expanded rules in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide*, pages 19-20. A falling character takes 1d6 hp damage for the first 10' he drops, then 2d6 hp damage for the second 10', 3d6 for the third 10', etc., to a maximum of 20d6 damage. The effects of various surfaces upon falling damage are given on page 20 of that book.

An airborne creature may go out of control and drop, regaining control of its

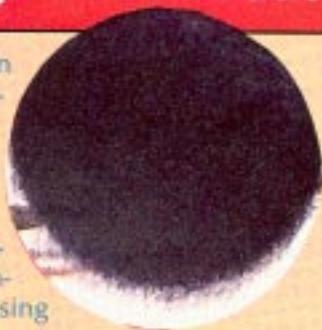
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flight shortly after wards (as noted in the section on crosswinds under "wind effects"). An object falls at 32'/second², which means that the object falls an increasing amount with each passing second, but wind resistance slows the creature's fall. For simplicity's sake, Table 3 shows how far an object falls over a short span of time.

In order to regain control and stop a fall, the flier must make a maneuverability check on a 1d6 for each second that the flier falls. If the number rolled is equal to or less than the creature's maneuverability, the fall continues. Air elementals, of course, do as they please (as noted on page 53 of the DMG) and take no time at all to recover.

A flier injured so badly that it must land, but not so badly that it will crash (see page 53, DMG), takes no damage upon landing if it makes a maneuverability check using 1D10. Failure to make the check results in half normal damage from the fall. A flier so badly injured that it plummets to the ground (having taken over 75% damage to its hit points) can save itself only with a maneuverability check using 1d4 (i.e., only classes A, B, and C can do so). Making the check results in half damage from the fall; failure results in full damage. In either of the latter events, the injured flier cannot fly again until it has been fully healed. Note that anyone riding such a falling beast takes the same amount of damage that the beast takes.

The DM may decide whether or not the PCs can invent the parachute. This device would not affect game balance greatly, and if the players can think of a logical reason why their characters would have had the idea, they could probably make one. To work, a parachute must be deployed at least 1,000' above the ground. The DM can assign chances for a parachute not opening correctly, depending on how well it is made. A parachute must be 24' wide for every 200 lbs. it is to carry. If it is solid, without a central hole, the parachute spins during the fall. This may cause the parachutist to become dizzy. A PC who uses such a parachute is incapacitated by vomiting for 1d10 rounds upon landing. Parachutists have a 50% chance of taking 1d6 hp damage per landing, modified downward 5% for each jump. There is always a 10% chance of injury.

Maneuvering

It is often important to know how slowly one can fly. A favorite trick of modern fighter pilots is to slow down so that a pursuer goes past them, then attack from behind. Flying characters may wish to slow down near the ground to avoid collisions. Magical items which allow a PC to hover allow the flier to travel at any speed

desired (up to the maximum limit of the item). *Brooms of flying* and winged creatures cannot move slower than half their normal speed. By curving back and forth, a character may cover distance more slowly (possibly forcing an opponent ahead). This ability is governed by maneuverability ratings (see page 52, DMG). Remember that a flying creature is always traveling forward, and that it is impossible to climb straight up.

Flying mounts can be trained to glide without wing movement. This type of flight is utterly silent. Gliding is also more stable than flight using flapping wings. During a glide, archery is performed at merely a -1 penalty, and long-range fire is possible. At the DM's option, spells may be cast during a glide. The spell would have to have a casting time of less than half the time spent gliding. In addition, the spell-caster would have to roll his wisdom or lower on 1d20 in order to concentrate. More detail on spell-casting from an aerial vantage is provided below.

Training a mount to glide requires 1d6 months. While gliding, a mount is one maneuverability class worse than normal. Class E creatures are unable to turn in a glide at all. In a glide, a creature descends at least 1' for every 10' traveled forward. Gliding creatures may dive normally, but can only climb with the aid of thermals — then at 25% of their normal speed. Gliding speed is limited to 75% of a creature's normal movement rate. Note that this does not change the minimum speed for the creature, which is always 50% of the propelled movement rate.

Intelligent PCs may develop artificial gliders (see "On a Wing and a Prayer" in this issue). This should, however, be a great feat in a fantasy world. As a general rule, most gliders crash, thus discouraging hopeful glider-builders. Gliders statistics are given in the article "On a Wing and a Prayer." Gliders may be launched from cliffs or towers, towed aloft by large flying mounts, or pulled behind large, fast, running beasts. A launch catapult is also possible to build.

Magic in the skies

As noted above, spell-casting from an airborne mount may present a bit of a problem for fliers. Riders of aerial mounts may be able to cast spells while controlling the mounts; this is because the mount itself is in control of its flying (though not of its navigation). To cast a spell, however, the spell-caster must roll for his concentration as described above. Spell-casters in control of gliders and other flying constructs, or who are using a fly spell, are unable to cast any spells except for those which only employ verbal components. Decisions in this instance are left to the

discretion of the DM. Some spells may not be used normally in the sky or have altered effects in casting, as noted here:

Cleric spells

Cloudburst: This may change the sort of cloud present within the area of effect (consult Table 1).

Precipitation: See *cloudburst*.

Druid spells

Call lightning: Lightning does not strike a creature that is not grounded, but creatures with electrical energy of their own may be struck. Lightning can rise from the clouds to strike a charged creature near them. This spell may attract lightning to the caster.

Cloudburst: See the cleric spell *cloudburst*.

Conjure earth elemental: The earth elemental cannot fly.

Creeping doom: It is impossible to summon crawling insects to attack foes in the sky. This spell only works against ground creatures.

Precipitation: See the cleric spell *precipitation*.

Snare: Snares cannot be set in midair.

Transmute water to dust: This spell turns cloud formations into clear air within its area of effect.

Tree: Obviously, a druid who becomes a tree while riding a mount falls. It might be possible to strap a small tree to a *carpet of flying* or similar item. Druids under the effects of a *levitate* or *fly* spell may simply hover in tree form.

Wall of thorns: The *wall of thorns* falls from the sky (making an unusual bomb).

Magic-user spells

Cacodemon: See *conjure elemental*.

Chain lightning: See the druid spell *call lightning*.

Cloudburst: See the cleric spell *cloudburst*.

Cloudkill: This cloud slowly sinks to earth. The magic-user should be directly above the victim for best effect.

Conjure elemental: It is impossible to draw protective circles in midair.

Ensnarement: See *conjure elemental*.

Gust of wind: This spell has the effect of a 40 MPH wind.

Lightning bolt: See the druid spell *call lightning*.

Precipitation: See the cleric spell *cloudburst*.

Prismatic sphere: Since the *sphere* does not move with the caster, users of flying brooms or flying creatures may be forced to pass through their own sphere.

Shocking grasp: This spell has the normal effect, regardless of whether or not the victim is grounded. The caster creates both positive and negative poles. This spell

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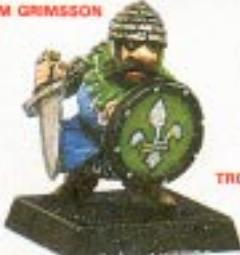
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Table 1
Cloud Formation Types

Weather	Clouds				
	1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-10
Sunny, no change	B	A			NC
Sunny, will change	NC	C			B
Cloudy, clearing	C	C	D	A	B
Cloudy, no change	D	A	B	C	E
Cloudy, will rain	A	B	C	E	F
Rain, rain continues	D	B	C	E	F
Rain, clearing	D	B	C	F	E
Rapid change	A	B	E	D	D

Weather patterns are determined using the weather-generation system of the DM's choice. Cloud types follow:

A. *Cirrus*: These white clouds occur at an altitude of above 30,000'. They are long and thin, and often form patterns or parallel rows. Cirrus bands often cover 20-80 square miles. Each strand is 100-1,000' thick and 100-1,000' long.

B. *Altocumulus*: Altocumulus clouds are long and thick, occur at an altitude of about 10,000' or above, and are approximately 1,000-4,000' thick.

C. *Altostratus*: These dark cloud layers exist at an altitude of 15,000'. They are 2,000-8,000' thick.

D. *Cumulus*: Cumulus clouds are the fluffy "fair-weather clouds." They can also form dark masses of clouds stacked atop each other in mountainous formations, which are responsible for thunderstorms. Cumulus clouds are usually round with billowing surfaces and occur at an altitude of about 5,000'. Cumulus clouds are from 1,000-3,000' thick, and cover only 2-20 square miles.

Cumulus clouds produce lightning. Of course, flying creatures are not grounded, thus they are generally unaffected. Still, any object with an electrical charge may be struck by lightning. This includes spell-casters throwing electricity-based magic and characters who carry electrical magical items, (like *the wand of lightning*). These magicks include anything dealing with lightning and the *shocking grasp* spell. Any charged object has a 10% chance per round of being struck while it is inside a cumulus cloud. Such a strike does 4-24 hp damage. A save vs. death magic halves the damage.

E. *Stratocumulus*: These are rolling grey clouds that occur at altitudes of 2,000' and above. The surface of these clouds undulate in a series of peaks and valleys. Stratocumulus clouds are usually 1,000-4,000' thick.

F. *Nimbostratus*: Nimbostratus clouds are rain clouds. They are dark and thick, and have rough, rolling peaks. Nimbostratus clouds occur as low as 2,000'. There is a 50% chance that these clouds are accompanied by scud, small black patches of mist at treetop level. Vision is limited to 5' within nimbostratus clouds, thus making accurate missile fire virtually impossible. Any item which is affected by water must save vs. acid to avoid becoming wet, even if the item is wrapped. Careful waterproofing, however, prevents this. A nimbostratus cloud is 3,000-5,000' thick.

G. No clouds are present.

Table 2
Location of Bombs and Fallen Objects

Altitude	Forward speed 6"	1 2 "	1 5 "	1 8 "	2 4 "	3 0 "	3 6 "	4 8 "
Up to 1,000'	100	200	250	300	400	500	600	800
1,001-2,000'	200	400	500	600	800	1,000	1,200	1,600
2,001-4,000'	300	600	750	900	1,200	1,500	1,800	2,400
4,001-6,000'	350	700	870	1,050	1,400	1,750	2,100	2,800
6,001-8,000'	400	800	1,000	1,200	1,600	2,000	2,400	3,200
8,001-10,000'	450	900	1,120	1,350	1,800	2,250	2,700	3,600

The *drop point* is the point on the ground directly beneath the flier at the moment a bomb is released. This table's results show the distance from the drop point to the bomb's *impact point* on the ground.

may attract lightning strikes to the caster.

Statue: See the druid spell *tree*.

Transmute water to dust: See the druid spell *transmute water to dust*.

Unseen servant: The *unseen servant* cannot fly.

Wall of ice: The *wall* falls to the ground, making a heck of a bomb.

Wall of iron: See *wall of ice*.

Wall of stone: See *wall of ice*.

Wind wall: This can be treated as a thermal.

Illusionist spells

Phantom wind: This spell affects flying creatures as a normal wind.

Note that no spells which summon land-based creatures confer these creatures with the ability to fly. Any summoned creatures come to a spot beneath the caster (i.e., on the ground). This includes *animal summoning*, *mount*, low-level versions of *phantom steed*, *monster summoning*, *shadow monsters*, *summon shadow*, *demi-shadow monsters*, *conjure animals*, *shades*, and *call woodland beings*. A 12th-13th level *phantom steed* can be called in midair; it is unable to change its altitude, although it can move about in the sky.

The sky is a strange, new place for adventuring, yet it can be reached by clever characters. This article should provide a starting point for any DM and players interested in aerial adventuring. As they say: Happy landings!

Table 3
Distance Fallen Over Time

Time in seconds	Distance fallen in feet
1	15
2	60
3	135
4	240
5	360
6	500
9	1,000
12	1,500
15	2,000
18	2,500
21	3,000

This information is modified from "Physics and Falling Damage," DRAGON® issue #88, page 12. The distances have been rounded off to fit a game scale based upon 30' units of measurement (1" scale measurement). For every 3 seconds beyond the limit of the table (21 seconds), 500' of altitude is covered. Terminal velocity is reached after 6 seconds of falling.

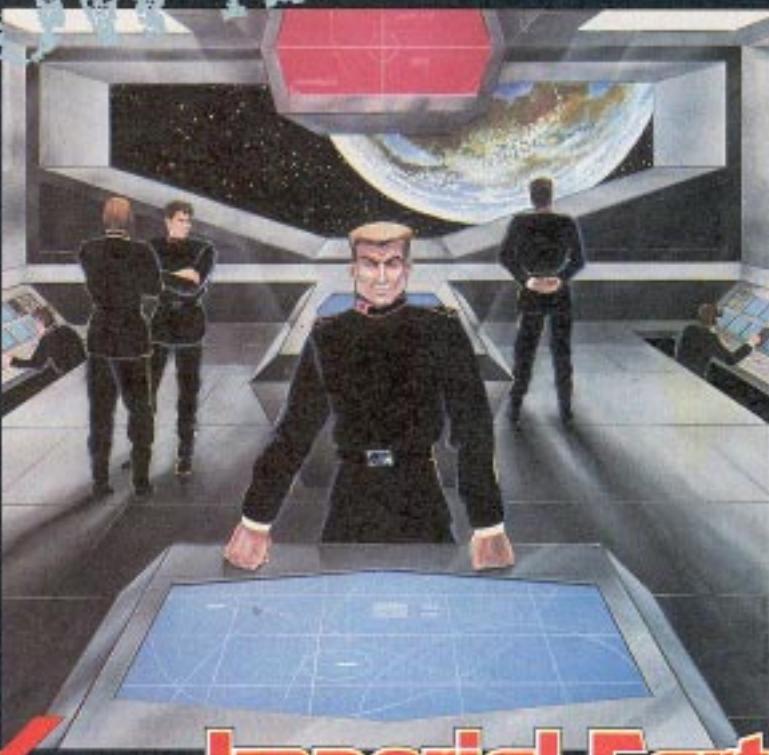
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The Wings of Eagles

The aarakocra as a PC and NPC race

by J. E Keeping

One problem with the AD&D® game is the lack of variety in the races available to PCs and NPCs: They all resemble humans in mind and body. The DMG claims that this is necessary to keep the powerful monster races away from the PCs, remain within the game's "humanocentric" basis, and avoid all the rule adjustments needed to bring nonhumanoid characters to the game. Yet there are a number of creatures in the game which are sufficiently similar to humans in power and form as to avoid endangering game balance or convenience, yet different enough from humans to provide welcome variety to the game. One of these, the aarakocra, is the subject of this article.

In this article, the aarakocra is fleshed out and detailed in a manner similar to the official races in the AD&D game, so as to make it playable as an NPC race. The bird-man has also been put on an equal footing with the other races, so it may be permitted as a racial choice to PCs if the DM permits. The purpose in bringing the aarakocra to the ranks of PCs and NPCs is to lend variety to the racial choices in the game; the aarakocra are as different from demi-humans in mind as they are in body. Thus, when the aarakocra are played, these differences should be emphasized for maximum variety, fun, and — if you like — humor.

Character statistics

The ability scores for the bird-men may be determined in the usual manner, with a +1 on strength and a -1 on dexterity, observing the maximum and minimum scores below, or by rolling the special dice on the same chart. Aarakocra have a minimum strength of 11 because good strength is required for flying. They have minimum and maximum dexterity scores of 6 and 17 because, while some agility is required for flight, they have clawlike hands which are not very dextrous. The minimum constitution for an aarakocra is 8, because the bird-men must be in good health to live with little shelter in the frozen mountains.

The comeliness of the aarakocra has no effect on other PC races, though it does affect other aarakocra. This attribute does not affect normal, nonsentient birds, though it could affect sentient birdlike species (such as kenku) at the DM's option.

Aarakocra may be fighters (maximum level of 9), clerics (maximum level of 7), or thieves (no maximum level). Their only multiclass is that of fighter/thief. If random class selection is desired, roll 1d100 to determine the following results: 01-10, cleric; 11-52, fighter; 53-80, thief; 81-00, fighter/thief. Aarakocra with class abilities cannot *summon* an air elemental as their brethren can.

Aarakocra are small and light because flying is difficult for large or heavy creatures. Like normal flying birds, the aarakocra have hollow bones, which largely accounts for their minimal weight. To determine height, roll 1d100 for the following results: 01-15, under the average; 16-75, average height; 76-00, over the average. For weight, these results are: 01-15, underweight; 16-85, average weight; 86-00, overweight. Refer these results on Table 2.

Because of the great amounts of energy expended in an airborne life, aarakocra age quickly and have short "young adult" and "mature" life stages. However, because of their mountain habitat or because of some magical influence, they outlive humans in the long run. General age classifications are as follows (in years of age): young adult, 14-20; mature, 21-37; middle-age, 38-60; old, 61-100; and venerable, 101-150. Use Table 3 to determine beginning ages for adventuring aarakocra.

Aarakocra are only average thieves, but being aerial creatures, they are excellent thief-acrobats. Aarakocra lose from abilities such as picking pockets and opening locks because of their clumsy hands. Furthermore, their wings make hiding in shadows difficult. Aarakocra have good balance because of their wings; this, in combination with their light bodies, aids considerably in broad jumping, high jumping, and pole vaulting. The bulkiness of their wings, however, makes tumbling maneuvers difficult. The aarakocra's wings

and feathers help them avoid damage when falling even if they are injured too badly for flying. Lastly, their clawed hands aid them in climbing. All rules regarding flight and aerial combat apply to PC and NPC aarakocra as well as to "monster" types.

Although the FIEND FOLIO® Tome tells us aarakocra "have little to do with humankind" and "even less to do with demi-humans," this ruling must be softened to maintain the usefulness of them as characters. The bird-men could be on good terms with the grey elves and, by extension, on tolerant terms with other elves (except the drow, of course, who live in the underground setting most bird-men avoid). Aarakocra have a general distaste for dwarves, because elves dislike dwarves and because dwarves live underground. Aarakocra treat half-orcs with antipathy because, as the FIEND FOLIO Tome says, the aarakocra "actively dislike humanoids." Generally, the attitudes of any race toward aarakocra are the same as the aarakocra's attitudes toward that race. Briefly, aarakocra are tolerant of elves, have antipathy toward dwarves and half-orcs, have good relations with grey elves, and are neutral toward everyone else.

Description

The aarakocra are a race of sentient avians who inhabit mountainous regions. The alignment of aarakocra is usually neutral good, but can be any other as well. For random alignment determination, roll 1d100 for the following results: 01-40, neutral good; 41-55, chaotic good; 56-70, chaotic neutral; 71-80, neutral; 81-85, lawful good; 86-89, neutral evil; 90-93, chaotic evil; 94-97, lawful neutral; and 98-00, lawful evil.

An aarakocra is vaguely humanoid in appearance, resembling a human-sized, bipedal eagle whose wings fold into over-long arms. Aarakocra plumage varies from tribe to tribe and region to region, and also varies with respect to gender; the males are always crested and gaudier than the females. Within the race, aarakocra plumage serves no purpose other than a means for identification. Aarakocra have

5" grey-black beaks which resemble a cross between that of a parrot and an eagle. Their faces are birdlike, except that the eyes are placed frontally to provide binocular vision. Facial shape varies little; the bird-men identify their peers by their plumage, not by their faces.

The bird-men are a timid and reclusive race, living far from humanity and civilization. Yet, like humans, the aarakocra have some exceptional individuals who find this peaceful and pastoral life a little dull. It is these individuals who become the NPC or PC aarakocra described in this article. Such adventurers are generally believed to be insane by the rest of the race.

It is a curious fact that some adventuring aarakocra do suffer from a mild form of mental malady. Most bird-men adventurers share the usual racial distaste for enclosed places and underground environments, but some claim to have no fear of such places at all. These latter aarakocra are the insane ones. Aarakocra who venture into any enclosed environment become unusually quiet and peer about with wide eyes, though they otherwise seem calm. But, if engaged in melee, the aarakocra's reserve has a 10% chance of breaking per round of battle — a reaction that is lacking in the outside world. At this point, roll 1d6; the aarakocra is seized with either: violent, indiscrete bravado (1-2); cowering, involuntary claustrophobia (3-4); or, screaming, mindless panic (5-6).

In the first instance, the afflicted aarakocra becomes a reckless lunatic, attacking any foe within range and bursting through closed doors into unexplored areas without restraint. In the second case, the aarakocra collapses and ceases to defend itself or run away, covering its head with its wings in a small, rigid ball. In the latter instance, the repressed racial claustrophobia of the adventurer whips the afflicted bird-man into a terrified frenzy; the only goal for such an individual is freedom from confinement: a goal which the victim pursues without regard to safety for self or party. In any case, the state of malady lasts for 10-60 rounds. After the condition passes, the victim returns to normal and is once again in control of his faculties.



With regard to personality, the bird-men vary almost as much as humans do, though all manage to retain one element of character common to their race: a strong love of freedom. This love results from the airborne lifestyle of the aarakocra. As a result, they find urban life constraining and uncomfortable, and all are afflicted with very strong claustrophobia, as noted in the FIEND FOLIO Tome. As noted above, however, some adventuring aarakocra are able to restrain or overcome

this fear, and are thus able to enter a town or city — at least for short periods of time. Still, even these bold adventurers refrain from extended stays in closed-in, urban settings and enter dungeons only under the gravest circumstances. Of course, this doesn't mean that a fellowship must be broken every time the PCs stay at an inn or have a town adventure; aarakocra are happy to sleep on the roofs of inns or other buildings ("Skraaaak! A few feathers and the place'll be cozy enough!"). They

Table 1
Aarakocra Ability Score Chart (either sex)

Ability	Minimum	Maximum	Roll
Strength	11	18/90	10 + 1d8
Intelligence	3	18	3d6
Wisdom	3	18	3d6
Dexterity	6	17	5 + 1d12
Constitution	8	18	6 + 2d6
Charisma	3	18	3d6

Table 2
Aarakocra Height and Weight

Sex	Height in inches			Weight in pounds				
	Average	-	or	+	Average	-	or	+
Male	60	1-8		1-10	70	1-10		1-10
Female	56	1-6		1-8	56	1-8		1-8

Table 3
Aarakocra Starting Age by Class

Class	Age in years
Cleric	30 + 5d6
Fighter	13 + 1d8
Thief	13 + 2d4

Fighter/thieves start at the age of 21.

may also serve as aerial surveillance troops, since it is being *in* cities, not above them, that the aarakocra dislike.

A problem with the footloose and freedom-loving lifestyle of the aarakocra is their lack of respect for the ground-based "walkers," as they call most humans and demi-humans. The bird-men cannot believe that "grounded" individuals have any freedom at all, or that such individuals can be anything other than boring, depressed dimwits (the psychology of dwarves is totally alien to them). Of course, this opinion often changes with time and familiarity, but still leaves room for some good jokes. ("I just found out you can't fly. You poor thing! You can cry if you want to.")

Aarakocra deities

The only character class open to normal, nonadventuring aarakocra is that of the cleric. Called "elders," bird-men shamans and clerics are the older, respected members of the community. As a monotheistic culture, the aarakocra worship Krocaa, their only deity, (see the sidebar article by Christopher Jones). Clerics who reach maximum level (7th) in the service of Krocaa are able to *summon* a 12 HD air elemental once per week, in addition to the normal ability that nonadventuring aarakocra have to summon air elementals.

As stated before, normal aarakocra regard their adventuring counterparts as insane. "Insane" clerics are tolerated, but even they are outcasts, unable to perform the rights of worship for an aarakocra community (though Krocaa does not reject

Table 4
Thief and Thief-Acrobat Adjustments

Ability	Adjustment
Pick pockets	-5%
Open locks	-15%
Find/remove traps	-
Move silently	*
Hide in shadows	-10%
Hear noise	+30%
Climb walls	+10%
Read languages	-
Tightrope walking	+5%
Pole vaulting	+6'
High jumping	+3'
Broad jumping, standing	+3'
Broad jumping, running	+6'

* Aarakocra can easily glide, making no sound at all in the air, whenever they wish.

them). Generally, "insane" bird-men are considered an embarrassment by the aarakocra society as a whole; "insane" clerics are thought to be cursed.

Aarakocra senses

Among the advantages the bird-men have is their eaglelike, telescopic vision. At distances of over 40', aarakocra see 10 times as well as humans (i.e., everything appears 10 times closer, so an object 10 miles away appears with the same resolution and clarity as if it was 1 mile away). Of course, if something is over the horizon, it will still be invisible unless the aarakocra is flying quite high. The vision of aarakocra is limited by light considerations, so a bird-man can only see 40' by the light of a torch, not 400'. At night, their vision is only slightly clearer than a human's.

Since good hearing is required for hearing sounds in the thin air at high altitudes, aarakocra hear noise on a 1-6 roll on 1d20. As a result of this acute sense of hearing, aarakocra are surprised only on a roll of 1 in 8.

An interesting feature of the aarakocra is their extra pair of "hands" — i.e., their feet. These "netherhands" are used for fighting when a bird-man is in flight, but serve as feet when on the ground. Consequently, having four hands does not affect their number of attacks per round.

Attacks and defenses

All PC and NPC aarakocra have a base AC 7, as listed in the FIEND FOLIO Tome. They can use armor on the ground, but any sort other than a small buckler prevents flight. (This does not mean, however, that a larger shield cannot be used by a "grounded" aarakocra.) A further disadvantage is that normal armor does not fit bird-men; they must contract an armorer to custom-make their protection. This takes twice the time and three times the cost for normal armor of the type requested. Most aarakocra dislike wearing armor anyway, because of their claustrophobia. Consequently, no armor is made in bird-man communities.

While flying, bird-men fight with their netherhands, as noted above. During such melees, they are able to use any hand-held or thrown weapon, but are not able to use bows or slings. Aarakocra are so accustomed to battles in the sky that they are unaffected by the usual penalties for any sort of aerial missile fire. In addition, those of the fighter class are able to attack from a dive (starting from above 200') — a favorite tactic which involves carrying a javelin in each netherhand, then suddenly pulling up as the aarakocra snap the javelins into their target. This attack is at +4

(continued from page 16)
information is given on page 23 of the
1983 edition of the *Expert Rulebook*.

to hit and inflicts double damage per weapon (one "to hit" roll is required for each javelin). Spears or similar missile weapons can be used instead of javelins.

Disadvantages and advantages

A major disadvantage for the bird-men (in addition to their AC limitations) lies in their hollow, fragile bones, which make the aarakocra very weak in grappling combat. Any damage sustained by an aarakocra during grappling is doubled (regardless of whether the system in the *DMG* or either system in *Unearthed Arcana* is used).

The main advantage the aarakocra have is their ability to fly; this allows them to avoid pits, bypass walls, and avoid or overtake enemies with ease. Unencumbered, aarakocra fly at 36"; each 125 gp weight carried reduces this by 3". Maneuverability class is C; this becomes class D if more than 300 gp weight is carried, or E if more than 900 gp weight is carried.

Strength affects the weight which can be carried by 10 gp weight for every level of strength adjustments given in the *Players Handbook*. Flying requires almost no effort for the bird-men; they can sometimes remain aloft for up to a day at a time. For long-range movement, aarakocra fly at 12 MPH (1 MPH for each 3" of movement, as listed in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*), or 96 miles per day. As a result, aarakocra have a great advantage over humans in the area of travel.

Although they are excellent fliers, bird-men are very clumsy on the ground. They have a base walking speed of 6") which is reduced by 2" for every 35 lbs. of equipment carried (calculated after strength adjustments are added). Banded, chain, padded, ring, or studded armor reduces an aarakocra's speed to 4"; scale, splint, or any sort of plate armor limits them to 2". Heavy armor and equipment (scale and 350 gp weight or more, for example) prevent them from moving at all. Ω

KROCAA

(God of the aarakocra)
Lesser god

by Christopher Jones

ARMOR CLASS: 2

MOVE: 12 12"/48"

HIT POINTS: 124

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 1-8/1-8 (+7)

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Dive*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: +1 or
better weapon to hit

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 20%

SIZE: L (30' wingspan)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral good

WORSHIPER'S ALIGNMENT: Neutral
good (aarakocra)

SYMBOL: Red feather

PLANE: Elemental Plane of Air

CAVALIER/PALADIN: Nil

CLERIC/DRUID: 10th-level cleric/
8th-level druid

FIGHTER: As 16 + HD monster

MAGIC-USER/ILLUSIONIST: Nil

THIEF: 5th-level thief

MONK/BARD: Nil

PSIONIC ABILITY: Nil

S: 19 I: 19 W: 18

D: 22 C: 20 CH: 12 (25*)

CO: 8 (27*)

* To aarakocra.

Krocaa appears as the perfect specimen of the aarakocra race. He is large and has blue eyes and golden feathers; his head plumage is deep scarlet. Aarakocra legends tell that Krocaa created the first of their species, evolving them from giant eagles. According to these legends, Krocaa gave the aarakocra intelligence and taught them to defend themselves.

Krocaa carries two *javelins* +2 which he uses in battle. These javelins return to his hands at the end of the round in which they were thrown. Krocaa is able to dive as a normal aarakocra, and he is considered maneuverability class A. He is able to use his powerful wings to create a wind equal to a *gust of wind* spell cast by a 7th-level magic-user. Once per day, Krocaa can summon two 16 HD air elementals. Krocaa generally keeps to himself, but he is on good terms with the Caliph of the Djinni and the nobility of the air elementals.

Sacrifices and tithes are offered to Krocaa at the end of every month and on various tribal holidays. Offerings generally consist of gems and eggs from various evil creatures (such as harpies). The offerings are placed on the peak of the Holy Mountain, usually the tallest mountain in the area, to be taken away by the sacred eagles that roost there. Aarakocra clerics may attain the 7th level of mastery.

Why was the method for calculating Will scores changed in the new Expert rules? As it stands now, a fighter who wants to exchange ability score points to get a high strength will have a difficult time controlling intelligent swords.

The "old" D&D Expert Set used strength and wisdom because the original D&D game by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson used strength and intelligence to determine the Will score. Since wisdom, not intelligence, determines the power of a character's personality, the editor decided to change intelligence to wisdom when the Expert Set rules were first compiled. The "new" D&D Expert Set takes that logic a step further; the struggle between character and sword is mental, not physical, so we use the character's two mental scores. Now players have to make a choice about creating their characters: gain high strength for extra experience and more damage right from the start, or keep the intelligence and wisdom scores in case the character is lucky enough to find a magical sword. The D&D game is a game of choices, and they aren't always easy ones.

The missile fire table (*Expert Rulebook*, page 29) shows the ranges for a sling as being 40/80/160, while a short bow is listed at 50/100/150. Surely the sling listing is in error.

The range of a sling is 40/80/160. A sling actually out-ranges a short bow but is less accurate at long ranges. Thus, a greater portion of the sling's total range falls into the "long" category.

The rules say that ships without sails have only a 20% chance to ride out a storm. Don't galleys have sails? If so, don't they have an 80% chance to ride out a storm?

Galleys do have sails, but they also ride very low in the water and have ports cut into their sides for their oars. Thus, a galley has as much difficulty in a storm as does a ship without sails.

Why do saving throws and thief abilities get worse in the 1983 edition of the *Expert Rulebook*?

The "old" D&D Expert Set was prepared at a time when no one knew how far the D&D game system was going to go. These rules allowed certain character abilities to improve far too quickly, leaving little room for further advancement and development. The "new" Expert Set was prepared with the D&D Companion and Masters Sets in mind. If you plan to go no farther than the Expert Set, you can use the old rules. Otherwise, use the new rules.

(continued from page 6)

hours praying to recover all of his spells — why can't this game time be as easily passed by as a magic-user's 82 hours are, without the cleric being condemned as incorrectly played?

Another ridiculous statement is: "If there were another way to heal player characters, clerics could be done away with . . ." (issue #118, p. 68). Well, if there were any other way to kill monsters, fighters could be done away with also. Furthermore, potions of healing and extra-healing, elixirs of health, life, and vitality, rings of wishes and regeneration, rods of resurrection, staves of curing, amulets of life protection, Keoghtom's ointment, and periaps of health, proof against poison, and wound closure all provide alternate means of healing characters, not to mention druids, bards, paladins, rangers, and lots of good creatures who could heal, were they so inclined. Include any magical healing fountains, places, shrines, groves, etc., not to mention healing wounds by resting (wow, what a concept!), and it becomes evident that there are many, many ways to heal characters without the aid of a single cleric. But with all of these possibilities available, clerical healing is still regularly used as the preferred mode of healing, because it's the most effective of all.

Clark Timmins
Salt Lake City UT

In issue #119 of DRAGON Magazine, Ed Greenwood gave us the beastmaster NPC. If any fellow readers are like me, they too would like to make the beastmaster a playable character choice. Several of his abilities must be lessened if this is to become a reality.

First, his abilities to move *silently* and *hide in shadows* should be reduced to the equal of a thief of the same level. His capacity to *hear noise* and *detect snares and pits* should be lowered to the same percentage chance as a thief (with the latter ability rated as *finding traps*), but the beastmaster gains 10% to *hear noise* and 5% to *detect snares and pits*. His ability to track should be the same as that of a ranger, as outlined in *Unearthed Arcana*. The ability of *sight* should be reduced to a base of 65% at 1st level and increase in increments of 4% per level gained. Likewise, *locate animals* should begin with a 50% base and rise in 3% increments, and *hold animals* should keep the 7% base, but increase in 7% increments. These changes are to lessen powers of a low-level beastmaster and to impose a more gradual gain of power.

Resistance to lycanthropy should be limited to 60%. If the beastmaster does not roll successfully for psionics, if he is a halfling, or if the Dungeon Master does not allow psionics in his campaign, then calculate the lowest score possible for psionics for the character; this figure is his psionic potential. Although no attack mode is allowed, he may choose one defense mode. The languages allowed to a beastmaster for gaining levels may only be of dragon tongues (a maximum of three), aerial creatures (a maximum of five), or woodland beings (natural or magical — no maximum limit). These languages are exclusive of those allowed for high intelligence.

After reaching 11th level, a beastmaster may train himself. He receives two weapon proficiencies at 1st level, as well as three nonweapon proficiencies. He may gain an additional weapon and nonweapon proficiency for every three levels attained.

Possibly the largest unbalancing feature of the beastmaster is his low experience-point table. An 8th-level fighter has the same experience points as a 9th-level beastmaster. The beastmas-

Revised Beastmaster Experience Table

Experience points	Experience level	8-sided dice for accum. hit points	Level title
0-5,000	1	1	Handler
5,001-10,000	2	2	Breaker
10,001-20,000	3	3	Herdhand
20,001-40,000	4	4	Husbandman
40,001-70,000	5	5	Keeper
70,001-125,000	6	6	Ostler
125,001-250,000	7	7	Tamer
250,001-400,000	8	8	Trainer
400,001-750,000	9	9	Master
750,001-1,100,000	10	9+6	Wilderunner
1,100,001-1,500,000	11	9+12	Wilderunner (11th level)

ter might lose a fight in town, but in his own environment, the fighter does not have a chance. A magic-user of 11th level would be equivalent to an 11th-level beastmaster. Again, this may seem like an equal match, but could one put an 11th-level thief against either of these two powerhouses? I propose my revised table be used if a Dungeon Master would want to use the beastmaster in his campaign for his players.

Each additional level above the 10th requires 400,000 xp. Beastmasters gain 6 hp per level after the 9th level.

The "King of the Jungle" is still a powerful character, not to be run by just anyone, but hopefully an experienced gamer can now take him and play a more balanced, consistent character.

Daniel S. Huffman
Beaver Falls PA

There were two letters written in issue #120 in response to my previous letter in issue #117, and there are issues in each letter that I would like to address.

Kristin Marquardt contends my assertion that fantasy role-playing games appeal almost exclusively to males. I would like to point out that the last time DRAGON Magazine released the results of a readers' survey (issue #62), a full 95% of the people responding were male. I wrote my letter on the two assumptions that those numbers had not changed drastically in the subsequent years and that these percentages were fairly close to the percentages of people reading fantasy books.

Both Kristin and Randy Donahue cited examples to "prove" to me that there are female sword-and-sorcery characters. However, I never implied that there weren't! My letter said "almost no traditional female sword and sorcery characters," not "none at all." Look at the fantasy books in any bookstore. Are there nearly as many books about women as there are about men? There aren't in any bookstores I've ever been to. What I was saying was that people's ideas of fantasy characters are based on the literature they read. I've had a character that was a clone of Moorcock's Elric and a magic-user that could have passed as the cousin of Tolkien's Gandalf. Why? Because the characters these authors created so impressed me that I wanted one just like them. Until there are as many diverse and vivid heroines as there are heroes, there will not be equally diverse representations of women. I never implied that women wouldn't make good players or PCs.

Mr. Donahue unknowingly agrees with me when he says that most players think that all magic-users look like Gandalf. The reason they think this is because J.R.R. Tolkien created possibly the greatest fantasy character of the

20th century with Gandalf. Here is a character that not only possesses great and admirable qualities, but also has the power to change many things for the cause of good, and is so vividly described that he nearly jumps out at you. Gandalf seems to have a tremendous appeal to everyone who reads about him. Even if Gandalf doesn't appeal to someone, there is another famous mage that might appeal to readers. His name is Merlin. What player rolling up a magic-user could not dream of someone resembling one of these two?

Contrary to what Mr. Donahue said, I laid no accusations on women. The purpose of my letter was to say that the number and types of women represented in the fantasy genre would be less than that of men by virtue of nothing more than the numbers involved in each case. To read anything else into my letter is to misrepresent it.

Dan Fejes
Aurora OH

I seldom write letters to my relatives, let alone to magazine editors; however, I am so motivated by a "Forum" letter in issue #119.

Once again, I found myself reading a letter that stated the opinion that female characters, in the role-playing context, should have limited strengths in order to make the game more "realistic." Reality is a peculiar basis on which to ground a rule for such a fantasy-oriented game. If one can take potions and go off to do battle with dragons, vampires, and liches, using magic weapons with suspended disbelief, how is it that these same individuals find it hard to deal with the concept of a female character of exceptional strength?

One must admit that adventurers are hot your run-of-the-mill folks. They are generally above average in at least one trait or characteristic, or else they don't last long in the field. It is likely that women who decide to go into the adventurer's line of work will be the sort who can cut it in the outside world.

I am not addressing feminism or the strength of real-life men vs. women. I am simply tired of seeing the term "reality" bandied about to justify limitations. The chances of rolling an 18 strength are remote enough that even if you lack the Y chromosome, you should still be entitled to keep the roll.

If we want to deal with reality, we can play *Papers and Paychecks*, eight hours a day, five days a week. If we want to play fantasy games, and can accept their incredible creatures and situations, then we can't use the "reality" rationalization for the limitations of a female character's abilities.

I, for one, don't brake for unicorns. Thanks,
Pam Parisi
Kingston NY

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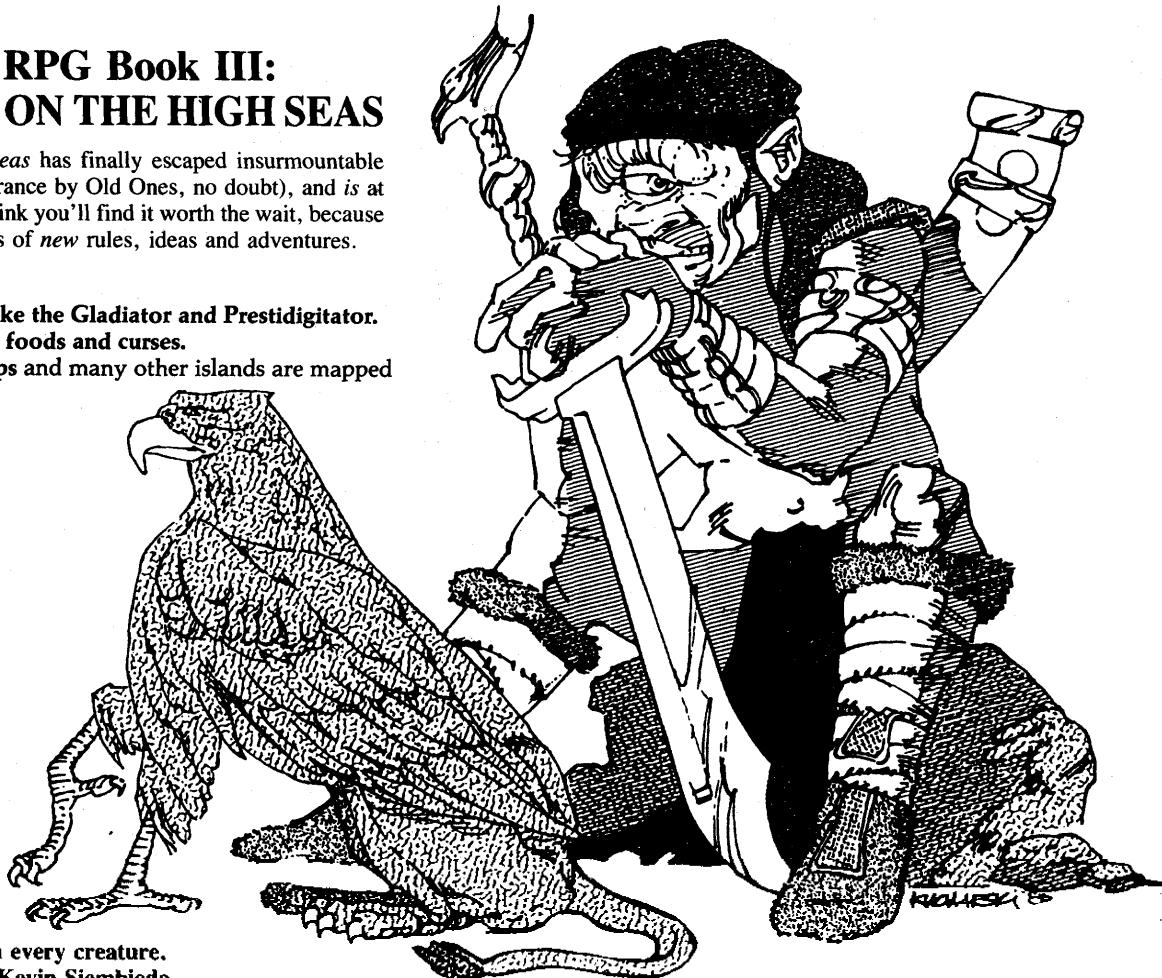
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Kicks and Sticks

Introducing escrima to Oriental Adventures

by Joseph R. Ravitts

On the outskirts of the known world of the Japanese samurai and Chinese monks of history lived the less-sophisticated peoples of the Orient (yet more civilized than the steppe barbarians). These civilizations had their own versions of Oriental culture and the martial arts. In the islands now known as the Philippines, a cluster of related tribes did so well at developing independent systems of self-defense that, to this day, many practitioners of kung-fu and karate incorporate elements of Filipino combat into their styles. Filipino martial arts have many sub-styles and many names. For simplicity's sake, all references made herein are to one of the better-known styles: the art of *escrima*.

In the rush to start new campaigns based on the *Oriental Adventures* AD&D® game supplement, many DMs may have all of the civilized character classes present in all of the civilized nations of Kara-Tur. Here, then, is a character class that helps restore a sense of regional differences. This class should exist only in a limited

area; to parallel the real-world Philippines, this should be a tropical archipelago adjoining the continent of Kara-Tur. There are four subdivisions of the class; first, however, a description of the characteristics common to all members of the class is in order.

The *escrimador*

The *escrimador* in an Oriental campaign is much like a cross between a bushi and a monk. Escrimadores are always human. They have 6-sided hit dice and use the same attack rate and combat tables as bushi (apart from special attacks, which are described later). Escrimadores also resemble monks in unarmed combat and in their restrictions on wearing armor. Because escrimadores are more dependent on the use of weapons than monks are, they gain an open-handed prowess only half as quickly as a monk does. Thus, a 1st or 2nd-level escrimador has the innate armor class, alertness against surprise, and open-hand damage potential of a 1st-level monk, while a 3rd- or 4th-level escrimador equals a 2nd-level monk in these aspects. Escrimadores do not have the spell-like abilities of monks (except for self-healing) and can never possess powers such as the *quivering palm* or distance death. Furthermore, they do not have the monks saving-throw benefits nor the ability to dodge missiles. In compensation, however, escrimadores do enjoy defensive benefits due to their dexterity, and have offensive benefits due to their dexterity and strength. Escrimadores also have skills and ki powers unique to their class.

An escrimador's initial honor score is 12. First-level escrimadores have six proficiencies and gain new proficiencies at a rate of one for every two levels of experience gained. Those who wish to practice escrima must have a minimum intelligence of 7, constitution of 10, strength of 8, and charisma of 5. A score of 15 or better is required in either dexterity or wisdom (the prime requisites of this class), with the other score being not less than 9. An escrimador with a wisdom score of 17 or better gains a 10% bonus on experience points.

Escrímadores function best in their native environment — in jungles and on islands. The first proficiencies possessed by any escrimador always include survival and tracking, which are equivalent to a barbarian's proficiencies. Like the barbarian, the escrimador's environment serves as an ally in adventures.

When in a jungle or forest setting, escrimadores can *hide in shadows*, *hear noises*, and *move silently* as ninjas of equivalent levels (the last two skills apply in all other settings as well). When fighting in the jungle against any opponent except another escrimador, they gain a +2 bonus to armor class due to their expert timing in ducking behind trees and branches. When traveling in jungles, they can main-



tain normal movement speed when others are slowed by the foliage.

In water, escrimadores can swim 10% faster than other human characters of equal strength. When fighting on foot in water between ankle-depth and shoulder-depth, they gain automatic initiative for the first round against those who are not escrimadores (unless the escrimador was totally surprised). If the escrimador is already on his guard at the start of melee, in water at least waist-deep and with a weapon in his hand, he gains a +3 bonus to hit with his first attack by concealing the weapon's initial position just under the surface of the water. (All these aquatic advantages, however, are negated if the water is extremely cold — a condition to which escrimadores are unaccustomed.)

Because metal is harder to find in the jungle than in other environments, escrimadores often use weapons made partly or entirely of wood. The vulnerability of these weapons to breaking is offset by the escrima method of parrying, which is to contact the enemy's hand and arm rather than the enemy's blade. This gives the escrimador a chance against such weapons as katana swords and even grants a special advantage: If a nonescrimador who is not wearing hand or arm protection misses three consecutive attacks against a weapon-wielding escrimador, the nonescrimador must save vs. paralysis or lose the use of his weapon arm for a number of rounds equal to the escrimador's strength (the escrimador has successfully struck the opponent's arm).

The "signature" weapon of all escrimadores is the escrima stick, a simple wooden rod 2-3' long, similar to the jo stick that a monk might use. All escrimadores are proficient with this weapon (in varying applications for the three different styles) from the beginnings of their careers. Other weapons typically used are spears, staves, nunchaku, daggers, hand axes, parangs, and rope-weapons similar to the ninja kawanaga. Escrimadores can never be proficient with long swords, nor with any missile weapons except pellet bows, blowguns, and hand-thrown weapons.

The ki powers of the escrimador are as follows:

1. For every experience level possessed, the escrimador has a cumulative 5% chance of knowing if he is being watched by a hidden observer (assuming the escrimador is conscious and not completely preoccupied with combat or other demanding activity). This is separate from his monklike surprise chances, giving the escrimador double opportunities to thwart surprise. If the escrimador's intelligence is 12 or better, he can even be aware of being magically or psionically observed (as through a *crystal ball* or similar device), but the probability of this sense's success is but 2% per level, plus 1% per point of intelligence.

2. At 3rd level, the escrimador can perform the *sinawali* prior to the start of a

Escrírador Table

Experience points	Experience level	6-side dice for accumulated hit points	Level title
0 - 2,250	1	1	Bastonero
2,251-4,750	2	2	Bastonero
4,751-10,000	3	3	Bastonero
10,001-22,500	4	4	Bastonero
22,501-47,500	5	5	Jurimentado
47,501-98,000	6	6	Jurimentado
98,001-200,000	7	7	Jurimentado
200,001-350,000	8	8	Jurimentado
350,001-500,000	9	9	Jurimentado
500,001-700,000	10	10	Escríma Master
700,001-950,000	11	10+2	Escríma Master
950,001-1,250,000	12	10+4	Escríma Master
1,250,001-1,750,000	13	10+6	Escríma Master
1,750,001-2,250,000	14	10+8	Escríma Master
2,250,001-2,750,000	15	10+10	Escríma Master
2,750,001-3,250,000	16	10+12	Escríma Master
3,250,001+	17	10+14	Escríma Grand Master

Escríadores do not advance beyond 17th level.

melee, once per day. The sinawali is only performed against humanoid foes and is a rapid sequence of whirling, weaving movements with the escrima stick, having an intimidating, quasi-hypnotic effect. This is ineffective against fellow escrimadores unless they are more than one experience level lower than the user, and ineffective against those who are not escrimadores if they outrank the user by more than one level or if they have ever previously won a fight against an escrimador who used sinawali. Other opponents, however, must save vs. spells or retreat in alarm for one round (or, if retreat is impossible, the opponent suffers -1 penalties on "to hit" and armor-class scores for the first melee round). Even if the save is made, the opponent's momentary confusion (lasting one segment) gives the escrimador +3 on his initiative roll, allowing him to make the first attack or run away. A 10th- or higher-level escrimador can use sinawali twice a day.

3. At 4th level, the escrimador saves vs. all fear attacks at +1 (+2 after reaching 10th level).

4. At 5th level, the escrimador can fight on after being mortally wounded, just as a sohei can (*Oriental Adventures*, page 24).

5. At 7th level, the escrimador can heal physical damage to himself as monks do (*Oriental Adventures*, page 181, with the same increase in self-healing ability (+1 hp per level after the 7th).

6. At 8th level, the escrimador can stay awake for two days without ill effect (or three days if his constitution is 18). Normal sleep is required afterwards.

7. At 10th level (the rank at which escrimadores first become qualified to teach others), the character can discern whether any character he meets is also an escrimador — and if not, whether or not that

character (if zero-level) is capable of becoming one later. The 10th-level escrimador is also immune to all enchantment/charm spell effects such as *charm person*, *finger of death*, *suggestion*, *geas*, and the like.

8. At 12th level, an escrimador who is not directly engaged in combat and has the opportunity to observe any nonescrimador in at least one round of melee action gains an intuitive feel for that person's reactions in combat. Consequently, the escrimador gains a +2 bonus to his armor class if he fights the individual thus studied. (This advantage does not apply to a future encounter with the same foe, since the foe may have gained new skills in the interval.) At the referee's discretion, the escrimador may employ this benefit against nonhumanoid beings.

An escrimador's alignment is usually lawful or good (or both), since loyalty to family and tribe is built into his training. Unlike monks, escrimadores do not practice any sort of monastic withdrawal from their society. Martial instruction is part of their family life and is aimed at the protection of the community from enemies. (It is up to the DM to decide if greater enmity is felt toward peoples altogether outside their homeland or toward rival tribes within the region.) The close bonds of family loyalty give escrimadores one ki power that extends beyond death. If an escrimador is turned into any kind of undead monster that is not utterly mindless, and if he encounters someone who was especially beloved from his former life (a parent, spouse, child, etc.), there is a base 50% chance, plus 2% for every point of the transformed escrimador's original wisdom score, that he is able to restrain all monstrous instincts and avoid harming the loved one. (This also applies if the escrima-

dor is turned into a lycanthrope.)

Any Escrima Master who teaches his tribe's style to an outsider who is not a formally recognized friend of the tribe forfeits five honor points — and may forfeit his life if this unsanctioned teaching causes harmful results to the tribe. If the son or daughter of any escrimador becomes a different fighting class (monk, samurai, etc.), he or she loses three honor points and the parent loses one. No such disgrace occurs if the child enters a spell-casting character class, provided such powers are used for the tribe's benefit; also, the dishonor is avoided if the child becomes a kensai, and uses a weapon that escrimadores can use.

Escríma styles

The four escrimador schools are Lapulapu style, Humabon style, Kuntaw style, and Alipang style. Each style may be practiced by more than one tribe. As long as there is no cause for serious hostility between different tribes sharing one style, there can be any number of Masters. If, however, there are incompatible moral alignments within one style, or other powerful causes for strife, each Master is bound by honor to slay all hostile Masters of his same style. Failure to attempt this results in losing nine honor points; if non-escrimador allies are called in, four honor points are lost; if escrimadores who are

allied but of different styles are called in, two points are lost. Above the rank of Master is that of Datu (meaning "chief"), of which there may be only one per tribe. In a psychic duel, a Datu's strength is treated as 50% higher than actual.

The **Lapulapu** style of unarmed combat parallels the tae kwon do style for monks. The first weapon choice for a Lapulapu stylist is an escrima stick in one hand and a dagger in the other. Both weapons can be used simultaneously with no penalty on hit probability, with both weapons attacking, both parrying, or one performing each function. If, at the start of an encounter with humanoid foes not practicing this style, the Lapulapu escrimador can keep foes unaware of his dagger (e.g., by hiding it behind his forearm), he adds a +3 bonus to his attack roll with the dagger on its first use in combat. Once engaged in combat taking place on sandy ground or in water less than knee-deep, a Lapulapu stylist of any level can kick sand or water into an enemy's face without using up one of his attacks. The impairment of vision (assuming that the enemy operates by sight) causes the enemy to suffer a one-time -2 penalty on either his "to hit" probability or armor class, depending on who makes the next attack.

One ki power peculiar to this style is gained at 10th level: a 10% magic resistance against spells that thwart movement

(e.g., *cause paralysis, repulsion or slow*).

This resistance increases 2% with each subsequent level gained. This ki power is called "The Wild Boar Charge."

The **Humabon** style parallels kung-fu in open-handed combat. Its primary weapon choice is also a pair of weapons with no penalty on simultaneous use — two escrima sticks, in this case. Whether using two sticks or one, the Humabon stylist has this special technique: On one of every three stick-attacks made, if the Humabon stylist misses by only one point on the "to hit" roll, he can make an extra attack in the same round with the butt end of the stick with which he attacked. The Humabon stylist can do this on one of every two stick-attacks from the 10th level onward, as well as when using any similar weapon (e.g., the handle of an axe).

The distinctive Humabon ki power, also gained at 10th level, is "Liquid Body." This power allows the Humabon Master to "flow away" from melee attacks. Liquid Body is usable once a day for a duration of three rounds, with an added round for each subsequent level gained, but never exceeding 12 rounds. The user of this power adds +3 to his armor class against close-range attacks and +1 against missiles; he also takes only half damage from blunt-weapon or open-handed attacks, and subtracts one-third of all damage done by sharp weapons. If the Liquid Body user is immobilized or grasped by an attacker, sharp weapons do normal damage against him. (This ki power also reduces by half the damage received in a fall.)

The **Kuntaw** style parallels jujutsu in unarmed combat. A Kuntaw stylist's feet are never used for kicking, but are used instead for other maneuvers, particularly sweeping the opponent's legs from under him, which can be performed even if the Kuntaw stylist is lying on the ground. In fights with non-Kuntaw opponents, leg-sweeping may occur without using up any of the Kuntaw stylist's regular attacks; leg-sweeping is usually used if a solitary opponent misses on his first attack, or if the Kuntaw stylist falls to the ground (intentionally or not) and the opponent tries to make a follow-up attack. In those cases, a leg-sweep occurs, knocking down the opponent if the opponent fails to make a saving throw vs. paralysis. (Monks, ninja, and other escrimadores get +1 on this saving throw, or +2 if their dexterity is greater than the Kuntaw stylist's) Another Kuntaw foot technique, usable only once in any particular combat, is to step on and trap one of the opponent's feet; this is treated as a part of the Kuntaw stylist's attack in that round, and a successful foot-trap (rolled as an attack vs. AC 10, with the opponent's magical-defensive and dexterity bonuses added) gives the accompanying main attack a +2 chance to hit and +2 hp on damage.

There are no unpenalized double-weapon proficiencies in the Kuntaw style. The Kuntaw stylist's favored weapon is a

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It's quite possible that your manuscripts and I have already met. If the editors receive a gaming article, but the author has not sent a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the manuscript to allow for a reply, the editors give the manuscript to me, and . . . well, let's not dwell on that.

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simple escrima stick; however, the Kuntaw stylist can keep this one stick shifting between one hand and the other, moving so unpredictably that a shield carried by a foe is rendered useless against the stick. At 6th level, a Kuntaw stylist enjoys the same advantage with a nunchaku. A Kuntaw stylist of 4th level or higher can jam the stick against an enemy's neck and armpit, levering the foe into a helpless, prone position. This, again, is rolled for as if the enemy was unarmored, but it can only be used if the Kuntaw stylist has only one foe before him. Also, this technique fails if the intended victim excels the Kuntaw stylist in strength, dexterity, and experience level. All Kuntaw stylists learn the "Instant Stand" technique before reaching 5th level (*Oriental Adventures*, page 104).

A 10th-level Kuntaw stylist gains a ki power called "Sinking the Roots." This power is usable once daily for a duration of five rounds, with an added round for each further experience level, but never exceeding 15 rounds. When using this power, the Kuntaw Master effectively becomes four times as heavy as his normal weight with regard to being pushed or pulled by any outside force. Armor class is unchanged, but overbearing attacks and leg sweeps are rendered ineffective. The user of this power can still move, though not at a top-speed run. If someone is trying to move a Kuntaw Master who is using

this ki power to resist, the Kuntaw Master can stop resisting at will by dispelling the power or merely by moving, thus causing the enemy to topple as if from a released rope in tug-of-war. Sinking the Roots can also be helpful in other situations, such as in walking against a powerful wind.

The **Alipang** style uses unarmed combat techniques resembling karate in *Oriental Adventures*. Practitioners use a single stick for sinawali, exactly as in the Kuntaw style; however, when an Alipang stylist attains the rank of Escrima Master, he is also able to perform sinawali with a parang or similar short sword.

Every Alipang escrimador is able to detect outdoor traps and snares as a thief of equal level can, and each will, at some time before Master level, acquire a proficiency in constructing such traps. Another skill usual for Alipang stylists is the construction of temporary camouflaged shelters like hunters' blinds. Concealment inside these structures gives benefits equivalent to magical *invisibility*.

Distinctive ki powers are as follows: Once a day, if an Alipang stylist succeeds in killing, putting to flight, or rendering helpless an opponent of equal or higher level, without assistance and without suffering any damage, he enjoys a boost in confidence. Thus, for a period equal to the character's charisma score in melee rounds, he gains +1 on his "to hit" proba-

bility in any combat (which becomes +2 at the rank of Escrima Master). This advantage, once activated, cannot be saved for later use, but if an Alipang stylist has no reason to expect further combat soon after one particular victory, it can be ruled that the ki power was not activated.

If an Alipang stylist of 5th level or higher wounds an opponent with an edged weapon, the opponent must save vs. spells (at +1 if the victim is an escrimador or +3 if he is a fellow Alipang stylist) or suffer a delusion that he has sustained double the actual damage. (After one successful save, no additional saving throw is needed for that combat.) If such imaginary damage causes the victim to fall to zero hit points or below, though the actual hit-point loss leaves the victim with 1 hp or more, he falls unconscious for 1-3 melee rounds.

If PC monks make contact with escrimadores, a DM could allow them to learn some escrima techniques, just as the famed movie martial artist Bruce Lee learned Filipino fighting in addition to Chinese kung-fu. The real value of escrimadores, however, is as NPCs. After all, the spirit of fantasy involves not only *being* different sorts of people, but *meeting* different sorts of people. The escrimador class is sufficiently monklike to fit into the Oriental campaign, but different enough to give a unique flavor to part of the world of Kara-Tur.

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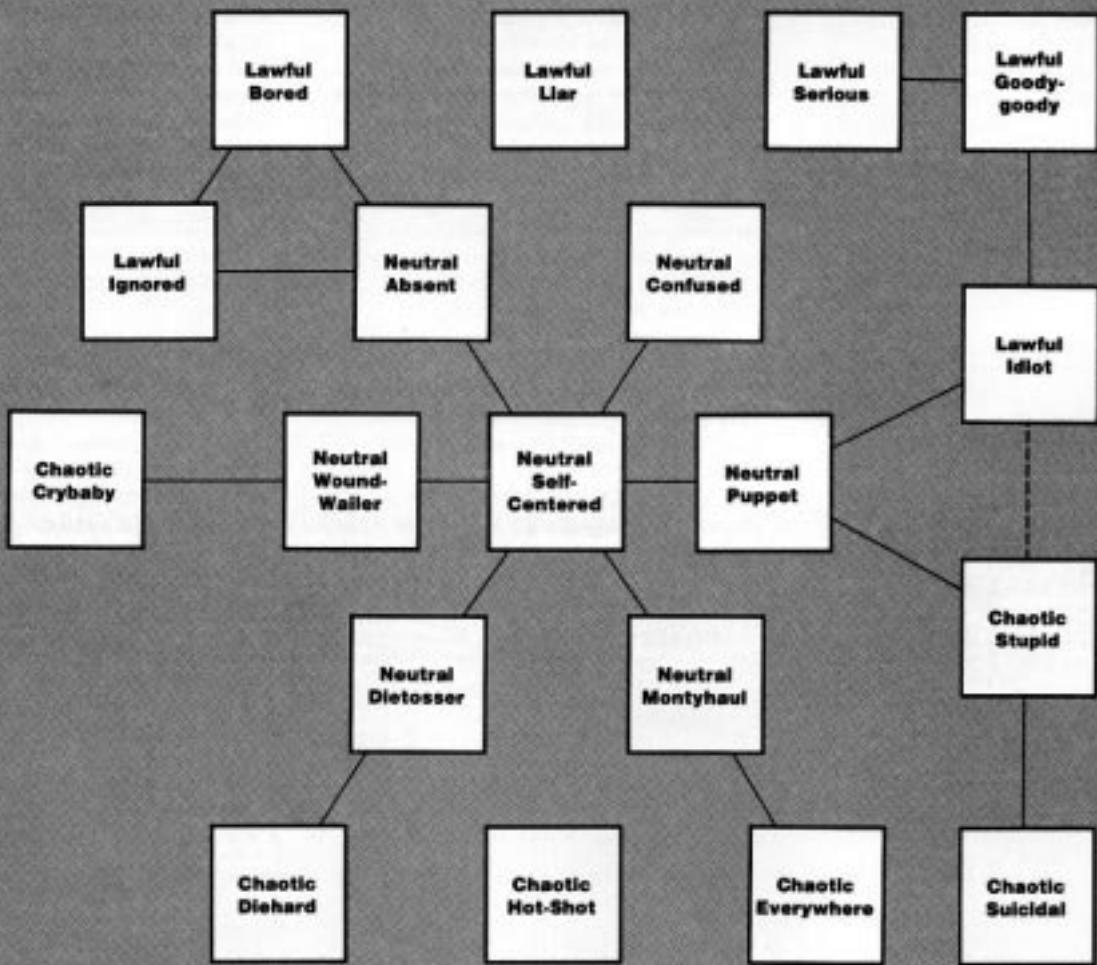
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NEW

Front-End Alignments



"Quasi-alignments" of the people you game with

by Rich Stump

The alignment system in the AD&D® game is basically a good one; it details certain aspects of each alignment, but it doesn't get into specifics. We really don't know what kinds of things a chaotic good character may or may not do.

One thing that the AD&D game alignment system is not very good for is trying to label people (namely gamers) as being of any certain alignment. It is hard to define actions in everyday life as being "good," "neutral" or "evil," and who would say that he thought he was chaotic evil, anyway? At best, we can only interpret the system

as we want to, and the AD&D game alignments weren't really made for this purpose anyway.

The following system of 19 "quasi-alignments" has been designed for the purpose of giving players alignments, however stupid or absurd that may seem. The alignments are based on how the players act during gaming sessions and on what kinds of things they do. Though the alignments and what they cover are clear-cut, there probably are a few other "quasi-alignments" not yet covered by this system.

The quasi-alignment system is divided into Lawful, Chaotic, and Neutral alignments, just like the AD&D game system. In

this system, Lawful means that players of those alignments get involved in the game, while Chaotics are detrimental to the game as a whole. Neutrals fall anywhere between. It is possible for a player to have two or more alignments at once. Though these alignments are really meant for players, it is possible to classify characters under them as well. How well this arrangement works depends upon the group in question. These alignments should only be taken as seriously as you want to take them.

Chaotic alignments

Chaotic Crybaby (CC): Players and characters of this alignment are similar to

Neutral Woundwailers (q.v.), though they are much more of a problem and are particularly aggravating for Dungeon Masters. While the latter complain mainly about combat and combat-related portions of the adventure, Chaotic Crybabies are prone to outbursts on anything. If something doesn't go their way, you can bet money that a Chaotic Crybaby will scream and yell. Things which a person of this alignment complains about include (but are certainly not limited to): missed saving throws, small amounts of experience points or treasure, character injury, having insufficient strength to break down a door, and other game facets of lesser importance.

Example 1: A Chaotic Crybaby player is rolling up an elven character. All the rolls are above average except for wisdom, which is a 9. The player wails, saying that he'll never be able to survive with such a low score.

Example 2: A Chaotic Crybaby's thief is attempting to pick a lock. When the PC's actions are unsuccessful, a moan issues from the player about unfair DMs.

Chaotic Diehard (CD): These players and their characters can be a great source of pain for many DMs. Most Chaotic Diehards are exceptionally good with dice and can coax almost any number desired out of them. Characters of these people almost undoubtedly have one or more abilities with 18s, with strength, dexterity, and constitution being the abilities that have such scores most of the time.

Chaotic Diehards are noted for foiling a DM's most intricate plans, such as saving four times against the medusa's gaze, single-handedly wiping out eight orcs at 1st level, dicing up an illusionist while not believing any of his spells, and so on. Some Chaotic Diehards get carried away during melee combat: It is not uncommon for such a person to make attack rolls before the DM asks him to do so, and he may have a thing about always being the one to roll the initiative die. Players who act in this manner are also known as Chaotic Hackers.

Chaotic Everywhere (CEv): These players cause heartache to many a DM and player alike. A Chaotic Everywhere tries to be everywhere and do everything at once. His PC is usually the first person in a room when treasure is discovered and the first out of a room if trouble occurs. Often, such a player is impatient and is nearly always a source of interruption — especially when the rest of the party is doing something or the DM is describing more than one object in a room.

Example: A group of adventurers containing a Chaotic Everywhere character comes upon a room that is set up like a chemist's lab. The Chaotic Everywhere moves all over the room, showing up whenever another adventurer finds something of interest. The person then tries to do anything in the room that someone else was planning to do. If the character in

question creates an explosion with some chemicals, the player claims no damage was taken because he ran at the first sign of trouble.

The best way to get revenge on this type of person is to get the whole party to threaten the Chaotic Everywhere's character with death, or for a DM to design an enclosed room that floods when entered, making sure that the Chaotic Everywhere is the only one to go in.

Chaotic Hot-Shot (CHS): The Chaotic Hot-Shot is a relatively common alignment, and most players have either met or played in an AD&D game with such an individual. A person of this type of alignment is known for chronic bragging. If given the chance, such players will go on about ability scores, hit points, armor class, and whatever else until they're blue in the face. Characters of this alignment usually make enemies among the DM's NPCs, and have been known to die because of their ceaseless braggadocio.

Example: A Chaotic Hot-Shot and a friend are at a tavern, and both are drinking. The hot-shot brags to his friend all about his magic sword, his prize gem, his fortune in silver, and his special shield. The Chaotic Hot-Shot's friend then buys him two more drinks and tells him to come outside when he is finished. The "friend" is really an assassin who plans to give the hot-shot an evening to remember, assuming the PC lives through it.

Chaotic Stupid (CSt): Characters of the Chaotic Stupid and Lawful Idiot alignments are alike in some ways, though not in others. Where Lawful Idiots simply make bad mistakes, Chaotic Stupids have been known to actively seek out idiotic things to do. Some of the actions performed by these people are nearly suicidal — actions that would cause even Conan to hesitate. Chaotic Stupid characters may make enemies in their adventuring party and might be slaughtered by members of the group for certain reasons. In one such case, a Chaotic Stupid was slain by his adventuring buddies because the character always insulted monsters that could wipe the party out. The PC in question signed a death warrant for himself after he shouted a few insults at a large and nasty dragon.

Example: A Chaotic Stupid has his money-pouch stolen and decides to give chase. The thief runs down a flight of steps into darkness. Not bothering to wait for the rest of the adventurers, the PC charges into the darkness — only to find out that he can't see because he's a human! Shrugging off this setback, the character proceeds into the gloom, gets lost in a maze, and is riddled with arrows by a friend of the very thief who stole his pouch in the first place.

Chaotic Suicidal (CSu): A person of Chaotic Suicidal alignment is one with an obsession for killing his characters. A player of this nature may go through four or more characters in a month. This is

very frustrating for many DMs, as they must now find a more stable player to incorporate into the current adventuring group. Sometimes a Chaotic Suicidal may kill his character off for no apparent reason at all; at times, the player simply tires of his old character and desires another one. Of course, the second example doesn't make any sense — especially when that character is killed off after reaching a high level of experience, being knighted, getting a powerful magical item, or other related goals.

Depending upon what reason or reasons the Chaotic Suicidal has for destroying his character, the DM may not allow the character to be done away with so easily. To counter this, the Chaotic Suicidal goes on a kamikaze rampage, attacking at every opportunity until the character is slain.

Example 1: A Chaotic Suicidal with a 5th-level fighter is wandering around in a large cave system. When the fighter gets hit by a wight and loses an experience level, the player complains briefly and decides it is time to get a new character. Consequently, the fighter jumps off the next cliff he finds.

Example 2: A Chaotic Suicidal character gets into a jam and is cornered by a pair of very nasty fire giants. Though the giants might be willing to ransom the character, the PC decides instead to go out in a blaze of glory by daring the giants to attack him and throwing rocks at them until they squash him.

Lawful alignments

Lawful Bored (LB): Players of the Lawful Bored alignment are not very vocal. Though they might be excellent players or may have good ideas, they never get a chance to present them because (from their viewpoint) the rest of the group talks too much or argues all the time. This alignment can be linked to Lawful Ignored, as the two may occur simultaneously in the same individual. A player may be bored and is thus ignored by the rest of the group, or the player is ignored in the first place and becomes bored. A Lawful Bored person usually waits from 10 to 30 minutes for a chance to do something important. In the meantime, he just sits in a chair and listens to other people argue about nothing. After this waiting period, the person may instead get up and leave the group. The rest of the players often don't even realize that the Lawful Bored person has left.

Example: A party of adventurers containing a Lawful Bored person stumbles upon a large treasure hoard. While the rest of the party immediately begins to argue over the treasure, the Lawful Bored character does nothing to get involved. Ten minutes later, the Lawful Bored person leaves the gaming room to raid the refrigerator, and is not missed by the rest of the party members until the next day, when lots of precious victuals are discovered missing.

Lawful Goody-Goody (LGG): This type of player is a rare one. A Lawful Goody-Goody person is usually very nice and never does mean or nasty (i.e., "fun") things to other members of the party. They are also the "Champions of Justice," rescuing anyone in need, saving fair maidens, and giving alms to the church or to the poor. The Lawful Goody-Goody runs a super example of a paladin and is really a good guy to have around.

Example: A Lawful Goody-Goody's PC comes upon a small village which has fallen upon hard times. After speaking with the locals, the character finds out that they are being unfairly governed by a mean and evil mayor, who is also very greedy. The Lawful Goody-Goody decides to run the mayor out of the town and is successful. He then gives the villagers money from his own pockets so that they can start over, declines a reward, and is gone like the wind. (Sounds like a comic-book hero, doesn't he?)

Lawful Idiot (LId): This alignment is akin to the Chaotic Stupid alignment. Though they may be firm believers in law, these players still seem to be "barefoot in the head," as Brian Aldiss might say. A person of this alignment may not do the bizarre things that a Chaotic Stupid character would, but they may do other things: for example, telling the owner of a gambling house in front of the patrons that his games are fixed, or walking into the local Thieves' Guild and demanding to fight the "head crook." The difference between this and Chaotic Stupid usually lies in the fact that the Lawful Idiot is acting on the general intent of the group ("But you *told* me the games were fixed, and you wanted to do something about it! We're paladins, right?"), while the Chaotic Stupid isn't ("I don't care what you want! I feel like telling him off!"). Sometimes a Lawful Idiot accidentally does something right and becomes a hero ("You mean he ran away just because I told him he was cheating people?"), but this isn't common.

Lawful Ignored (LIG): A person of this alignment is either extremely laid-back or an NPC. These players usually wind up in

the back ranks of an adventuring group and don't do much. However, if a serious problem comes up, the Lawful Ignored person can be counted on to pull through and help the rest of the group. For example, a cleric may be asked to heal the whole party after a fight in which they were nearly killed. A thief might have to disarm a trap, or a magic-user may have to knock open a door. Of course, the Lawful Ignored person is sent right back to the rear of the party after performing their function. When a Lawful Ignored person isn't directly involved in the action, they often get away from the group to play cards or do something else the others won't notice. This turn of events may cause some players to also become Lawful Bored in addition to Lawful Ignored. When the person is needed but is not there, a catastrophe is sure to occur.

Example: A Lawful Ignored magic-user with measly hit points is the main source of missile power for a group, as he can cast *fireballs*, *lightning bolts*, and other destructive spells. A group of orcs ambushes the magic-user's party in a mountain pass one day. The fighters in the party hold back, waiting for a *fireball* to cook the orcs. When one doesn't come, the party finds out that the magic-user's player has disappeared because he didn't have anything to do. The DM rules that the magic-user was shot full of orc arrows and is unconscious. The orcs charge and hack up the adventurers.

Lawful Liar (LL): Though this sounds like an alignment for law and order, any PC of a normal AD&D game alignment may be, knowingly or unknowingly, a Lawful Liar. (If the "L" from "Lawful" is removed, a person of this alignment is exposed as an Awful Liar, which is usually what they are.) This player or character is not a teller of falsehoods; instead, he or she is constantly out of line with any professed alignment or class.

Example 1: A paladin character is also a Lawful Liar. This individual violates nearly all the rules in the book by failing to keep only a modest sum of cash, by hoarding magical items, and by building up a great

deal of conceit. The paladin also resorts to violence to solve day-to-day problems (sound familiar?).

Example 2: A druid of neutral alignment is played by a Lawful Liar. She acts in a totally Chaotic fashion, doing things by whim and not caring whether or not the "balance of nature" is kept. A lot of her motivation is built upon the possible gain of treasure, and she gives little thought to conservation of the wooded areas in the region. She also spends much time in dungeons and other underground places, rather than in the outdoors of which she is supposedly an intricate part. On top of that, she rarely visits her home base and does not give worship to nature except in dire circumstances. These types of people are extremely annoying to DMs, other players, and of course, the deities themselves. A good way to solve problems created by this character involves having a deity or deity's servant chew them out, demanding reform on pain of death (or worse).

Lawful Serious (LS): Anyone of the Lawful Serious alignment *really* knows how to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® games. Rather than being silly or doing stupid things, the person creates a character to be role-played differently than prior characters. He aims to have a good time, as well as to get things accomplished when the group meets to play. Many DMs (including myself) feel that this kind of person is one of the best to game with. As long as the player does not take the game too seriously, this is one of the best alignments there is.

Neutral alignments

Neutral Absent (NA): A person of Neutral Absent alignment is, for one reason or another, always unable to attend gaming sessions, but always wants experience and treasure for the day. These players are known for calling up a DM and asking to have their character run as an NPC. If the Neutral Absent player is not too busy, the person might call up three or four times for an update on what is going on. After many calls of this sort, a DM may feel like telling the Neutral Absent person that he can go to the ninth level of one of the Lower Planes. These people have a knack for getting on everyone's nerves.

Example: A group of friends are playing the D&D game one day when the Neutral Absent player of the group calls up to say that he is busy and cannot come. The player then asks the DM to run his character as an NPC. A half hour later, the Neutral Absent player calls back for an update. After four such calls, the DM tells the person that the rest of the group killed three dragons and is now swimming in a sea of treasure, but the Neutral Absent player's fighter got fried. Of course, the DM is lying, but the player doesn't know that.

Neutral Confused (NC): A player of this alignment walks around in a daze 98% of

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the time. Neutral Confused players are the ones who come into a room, look around, then ask where the exits are. Magic-users who act in this manner are notoriously unreliable, for they do not decide what spell should be cast until all of the opponents are dead. A fighter of this alignment may attack an enemy even after the foe is down, or attack his own party by mistake. Jester players who are Neutral Confused screw up their jokes and puns so badly that they are rendered useless. Sometimes this person even forgets what has been done by their character in that play session, and thus repeats his actions. A good example of this is a Neutral Confused person who looks in a closet four times while searching a room.

Example: A party containing a Neutral Confused character comes upon a chamber outfitted like a bedroom. After a quick search reveals a secret door, the party decides to go through it. The Neutral Confused character is left behind, totally oblivious to what is going on. He searches around in the room, but finds nothing of value. At that moment, the rest of the party comes speeding back through the secret door yelling to the Neutral Confused character to get out of the room. The Neutral Confused character asks what the problem is and watches everyone run out of the chamber without moving. Turning to face the secret door, he sees a huge tunnel worm enter the room.

Neutral Dietosser (ND): This alignment is similar to Chaotic Diehard in that both involve die-rolling. Neutral Dietossers, however, are those unfortunate people who have lots of dice but are never able to roll well with them or get the numbers that they want. A Neutral Dietosser may get very upset with his dice; at this point, the player begins tossing dice over his shoulder or at other people. If such a player lofts enough dice into the air, the person may be subdued by the DM or by other players (depending on who is sitting closest to the Dietosser).

Example: A Neutral Dietosser is very upset at his last few "to hit" rolls, as none of them were higher than 12. The player then announces to the group that unless his dice roll well, they will be tossed to new locations. By the end of the gaming session, the Neutral Dietosser has thrown dice 52 times and has lost six of them forever.

Neutral Montyhaul (NM): This extremely popular alignment is the favored choice of hundreds of players. Those individuals under this alignment are always in the race for the "bestest with the mostest!" If a player falls under the hold of this alignment, look out! Examples of Neutral Montyhaul characters are all too common, but here are a few: a fighter who has a sword +10; shield +10, and field plate armor +20; a 4,000th-level magic-user or cleric; a character with an intergalactic battle cruiser; a fighter with a sword that does 400 hp of damage to any target; and, a

gambling thief who has an unlimited supply of 1,000,000 gp gems. If you ever run into one of these types, it is best to leave as quickly as possible. Some campaigns have been known to drift under this alignment and vanish into nothingness.

Neutral Puppet (NP): A person who is a Neutral Puppet does not have a brain and cannot think for himself. These players always follow another member of their party around and do whatever that individual does (except during combat — they usually try to hide at this point). Neutral Puppets can get to be extremely annoying, especially when they follow another annoying player, which often leads to idiotic actions being done twice over.

Example: A Neutral Puppet has grown attached to a Chaotic Suicidal character. When the Chaotic Suicidal decides to jump into a vat of acid for no reason whatsoever, the Neutral Puppet copies the gesture. When a Neutral Puppet gets involved with people like this, you can bet that the person will not have a very successful gaming life.

Neutral Self-Centered (NSC): A Neutral Self-Centered person believes that the world revolves around him and expects everyone else to act in accordance with this belief. When a person of this alignment doesn't get his way, screams of protest may occur (see Chaotic Crybaby and Neutral Woundwailer). A major belief of this alignment is that all is well with the world if all is well with the Neutral Self-Centered person. Some characters of this alignment may believe themselves to be super-powered and unstoppable, but their bubble bursts soon enough.

Example: A party containing a Neutral Self-Centered cleric encounters a group of trolls and gives battle. They win, at the cost of three characters being badly wounded and another one going to zero hit points. The cleric, who was not injured in the melee, decides that no one else needs aid, as he is healthy. The player (and his character) may be sent to the hospital by angry gamers, which may be unavoidable at this point due to a history of past occurrences like this one.

Neutral Woundwailer (NW): A player who is a Neutral Woundwailer has a strange susceptibility to injury and thus cannot let his characters take damage. He believes that a powerful force field should protect his PCs from bodily harm and that the DM is always out to get them. If a Neutral Woundwailer's character is nailed for even one hit point of damage, you can bet money that there will be trouble. One strange thing about Neutral Woundwailers is that they usually have high hit points but would rather stay in the back of the party and let everyone else get beaten up.

Example: A Neutral Woundwailer meets a band of 10 hobgoblin guards. After drawing his trusty sword and hacking up six of them, the fighter is hit twice for 5 hp damage. The player jumps up immediately, yelling obscenities at the DM and

saying that 5 hp is too much — this despite the fact that the PC has 57 hp left. DMs usually tell such players to quit whining or they really *will* have something to whine about. See Chaotic Crybaby for more details and similarities.

Alignment diagram notes

The quasi-alignment system is set up like a wheel rotating around a hub. The farther away from the hub that an alignment is, the more extreme the behavior of people of that alignment.

Neutral Self-Centered is at the center of the wheel since everything supposedly rotates around it (at least according to those of this alignment). The Neutral Alignments radiate outward from the center and form six spokes. Chaotic Crybaby and Neutral Woundwailer go hand in hand for obvious reasons. The Chaotic Diehard is a more devout die-roller than the Neutral Dietosser, though both are related.

While Neutral Montyhauls are basically interested in getting everything they can, Chaotic Everywheres want to get everything, do everything, and see everything. The Chaotic Hot-Shot alignment seems to be in a class of its own — one that isn't really related to any other alignment. Many people of a different alignment wish the Chaotic Hot-Shots were in a *world of* their own, but that's another story.

Neutral Puppet is related to two alignments: Lawful Idiot and Chaotic Stupid. This makes sense, since those of the foremost alignment have no brains and can't help but follow others around. If the person has a brain, however, their tendencies usually shift toward Law or Chaos, although they continue to perform stupid actions regardless. Chaotic Stupid is related to Chaotic Suicidal because both alignments are ridiculous in the first place and have high character death tolls.

Lawful Goody-Goody is vaguely related to Lawful Idiot because being so good is seen by many to be quite idiotic in the first place. Lawful Goody-Goodies claim to have nothing to do with Lawful Idiots, but many believe that they do, so the connection stands. Lawful Serious is tied in with Lawful Goody-Goody, and both alignments uphold the tradition of Law. Lawful Serious is one of the two quasi-alignments that normal AD&D game alignments from the *Players Handbook* can claim; Lawful Liar is the other one. The latter alignment sits all by itself, as the Liars claim to be any alignment but are usually the opposite of their claims. Neutral Confused may be related to Lawful Liar, but those of the latter alignment aren't in a daze and seem to know what they're doing.

Neutral Absent has some ties with Lawful Ignored and Lawful Bored, as all three alignment types may be absent from a gaming session at various times. However, the two Lawful alignments have very strong ties (see Lawful Bored and Lawful Ignored). Ω

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Arcane Lore



The secrets of Odeen the Arch-Mage

by Rich Baldwin

Most of what is known of Odeen's magical knowledge comes from a very rare and ancient tome, *The Spells of Odeen*, said to have been compiled by the Sorceress Odessa, Odeen's daughter. Only seven copies of this work are known to exist, none of them complete. The volumes were originally 17" high, 12" wide, and 3" thick. They were bound in a gray, silky material, undoubtedly of elven origin, with gilt edges, locking mithral clasps, and inlaid mithral runes revealing the title. Ravaged by time, they have now fallen into decay.

The original work is purported to have been written in the elven tongue and protected by spells that obscure the meaning of its content. Some of the copies are rumored to contain explosive runes or even symbols. Other rumors tell of poisoned needles in the locks and curses inscribed on certain pages. Little else is known of the tome, but for this excerpt from *Encyclopedia Rothari* on the subject of Famous Magical Works:

"I have been informed by Haliman the Elder that he has succeeded in deciphering five of the spells, though they are of lesser import than he had hoped. The first, which he calls *Odeen's magic cloud*, appears to be a spell to evoke small clouds of various color and effect. The second, *Odeen's impenetrable lock*, is a form of locking spell. The third, *Odeen's magic tailor*, is a spell to alter garments to fit. The fourth, *Odeen's secret word*, is a spell to render writing unreadable until a certain word is spoken. The fifth, *Odeen's*

sounding stick, is a spell to find faults in stone by tapping with a stick. Haliman reports that the most difficult of these spells is no more intricate than a *fear* spell, but that he believes the most cogent spells in the work are more cleverly concealed."

The tome is certain to contain many more puissant and perilous spells, but none of the copies are available, for their owners are fiercely jealous of them.

Generally, finding the secret words that guard the volumes will be as difficult as finding the word of command for a magical item, so *legend lore* or some other such spell must be employed. Sages would be quite unlikely to know the secret words, much less to divulge them. Each spell in a copy of *The Spells of Odeen* would be protected by at least a *secret word*, and the more powerful spells would be protected by other means as well. It is up to the Dungeon Master to decide which spells should be included in a copy of this work if it is found. It should not include all of the five spells listed in this article, and should include a number of more powerful spells, the nature of which is left to the DM's discretion. About half the spells should be incomplete, not all of them noticeably so. This way, more than one copy of the tome must be consulted in order to gain all relevant knowledge.

Odeen's Magic Cloud (Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M
Range: 2" + 1" /level CT: 2 segments
Duration: 1 round/level
ST: Special
AE: 5' x 5' x 5'cloud

Explanation/Description: When *Odeen's magic cloud* is cast, the magic-user causes a small cloud to appear wherever he desires within range of the spell. The cloud remains in place for its duration so long as the magic-user pays it nominal attention. Once his full attention is diverted, the cloud drifts with the breeze. There are several types of clouds:

Storm Cloud — This *magic cloud* is thick, dark, and billowy, with rain or lightning at the magic-user's option. The lightning does 1d6 hp damage per round to any creature below or inside the cloud unless a saving throw vs. spells is made.

Obscuring Cloud — This especially thick cloud is centered on the face of its subject. It prevents both normal vision and infravision. This cloud may be used either to protect the subject from a gaze attack or to hinder an opponents vision (it does not, however, affect a beholder's eye-spells).

Rainbow Cloud — This *magic cloud* is thin and displays a rainbow when light is present in the visible spectrum. Its chief purpose is to impress viewers; double the duration of the spell if this form is used.

Many more versions of this spell are possible. The Dungeon Master is advised to keep their effect in line with those listed here. Material components may vary with cloud type at the DM's option. A ball of cotton should be a component common to all the cloud types.

Odeen's Impenetrable Lock

(Alteration)
Level: 4 Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch CT: 3 segments
Duration: Perm. ST: None
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: When *Odeen's impenetrable lock* is cast upon any locking device or mechanism, that device may not be opened by any nonmagical means, nor may it be broken by any mundane force, for the lock is magically strengthened, and the locking mechanism is also caused to continually change shape. This foils any attempt to unlock or pick it. Further, the lock will be unaffected by a *knock* spell, since the *impenetrable lock* was specifically designed to counter *knock*. The spell may be removed by a *dispel magic* spell cast either by the caster of the *impenetrable lock* or by a magic-user of at least one level higher than the magic-user who cast the *impenetrable lock* had attained at the time he cast it. The spell is not affected by extra-dimensional beings.

Note that while thieves cannot pick a lock with this dweomer on it, they are still able to detect that the spell exists as if it were a trap. Upon careful examination, they can note the lock's magical shifting. If the spell is cast on a lock set in a door of some kind, fighters with a strength of 18/91 or better will have 50% of their normal chance for opening magically held doors to open it. This chance reflects the possibility that the door might give way at the

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hinges or that the casing might crumble. Note too that if a magic key is used in an attempt to open the *impenetrable lock*, the key will be caught fast. Any attempt to remove the key without first dispelling the *impenetrable lock* will be unsuccessful, save for a *limited wish* or *wish* spell, a *time stop* spell, or the act of a god, demigod, or some other ultra-powerful being. (Needless to say, no ultra-powerful being would normally even consider such a demeaning task.)

Only one locking mechanism may be affected by this spell. Simple devices such as bars and wedges are merely strengthened by the spell, as they have no locking mechanism. Material components for this spell are three drams of mimic ichor and two drams of doppelganger blood, rubbed on a small gold key. The key is not destroyed in the casting of the spell and may be used by the caster alone to open the lock without first dispelling the magic. Note that if the gold key is used in the casting of any subsequent *impenetrable lock* spells, it can no longer be used to open previous *impenetrable locks*.

Odeen's Magic Tailor (Alteration)

Level: 1 Components: V,S,M
Range: $\frac{1}{2}$ "level CT: 1 segment
Duration: Perm. ST: Special
AE: Special

Explanation/Description: This spell alters the size and shape of a garment or piece of leather or cloth armor to fit its wearer. Size may be altered up or down by 10%. The garment or armor must be worn at the time of the spell-casting by the person who will use the garb. The spell affects only one outfit or suit of armor with each casting of the spell. Magical garments, such as a *robe of blending*, are entitled to a saving throw vs. acid against alteration, but the magic remains unaffected regardless of the result of the saving throw. Metallic armor is not affected by this spell, and magical armor is not affected by the spell either, since it changes shape to fit the wearer on its own. The material components for *Odeen's magic tailor* are a small bone needle, a length of silken thread, and a bit of wool.

Odeen's Secret Word (Alteration, Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 3 Components: V,S
Range: Touch CT: 4 segments
Duration: Perm. ST: None

AE: One spell inscription or equivalent
Explanation/Description: *Odeen's secret word* is used to render writing illegible until a secret word chosen by the caster is spoken. When the spell is cast upon writing, that writing cannot be read by any means, magical or mundane, until the

secret word is spoken. If the writing is of a magical nature, a *read magic* spell must be employed in order to read it, and if the writing is written in a language unknown to the reader, *comprehend languages* is required. A *write* spell may be used to copy the inscription if the secret word has been spoken. If *Odeen's secret word* is dispelled, it destroys the writing on which it was cast.

Odeen's secret word has no effect on *glyphs*, *symbols*, or *explosive runes*. It may not be cast on writing with an *unreadable magic* (reverse of *read magic*) or *incomprehensible languages* (reverse of *comprehend languages*) spell cast upon it.

Odeen's Sounding Stick (Alteration)

Level: 2 Components: V,S,M

Range: Special CT: 1 segment

Duration: 2 turns/level

ST: None AE: Special

Explanation/Description: *Odeen's sounding stick*, which may be cast upon any rod or stick of wood, enables the holder to detect hollow areas, faults, and weaknesses, including concealed and secret doors and certain traps, in wood, earth, and stone. Such faults are detected by tapping with the stick. Only the holder of the stick is able to note such faults, for they are revealed by vibrations in the stick, rather than by loud noises. The base chance for detecting a fault or hollow space is 60% for magic-users who know *Odeen's sounding stick*, and 40% for any other characters. Add or subtract modifiers as given in the following tables:

Type of stick	Modifier
Oak or yew	+ 10%
Witch hazel	+ 5%
Birch or alder	+ 0%
Cottonwood or dogwood	- 5%
Pine or fir	- 10%

Other factors	Modifier
Holder is an elf	+ 10%
Holder is a half-elf	+ 7%
Holder is a gnome	+ 5%
Holder is a dwarf	+ 5%
Holder is a half-orc	- 5%
Holder wears gloves	- 5%
Holder wears gauntlets	- 15%

Other modifiers may be set by the Dungeon Master as seen fit. The range of the *sounding stick* varies with its size, as does the minimum fault size that may be detected. The range of the stick is four times its length, up to a maximum of 20'. The diameter of the smallest fault which may be detected is half the length of the stick.

Only one stick may be affected in a single casting of the spell. A *light* or *continual light* spell may be cast on the stick without affecting the *sounding stick* spell.

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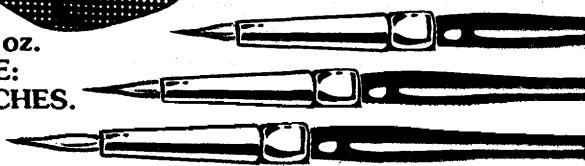
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Packing It All Away

The backpack, the wilderness, and the fantasy adventurer

by Ian Chapman

According to the D&D® game rules, a backpack is a container worn on the back that is able to hold up to 400 cn (or 300 gp, in the AD&LD® game) of material, while leaving both of the wearer's hands free. While that description is partly accurate, there is no encumbrance difference between carrying a sack of goods, having goods strapped to the body, or carrying them in a backpack. Anyone who has used a backpack for real-life mountaineering knows that this is wrong.

There is a good reason why modern soldiers, mountain climbers, and hikers use backpacks almost exclusively for carrying equipment. I've had hiking experience in the Olympic Mountains, and I can say that there is a tremendous difference between carrying 60 lbs. of assorted goods in your arms and carrying 60 lbs. of goods in a pack. When something is in a backpack, there is no extra encumbrance beyond the item's own weight; if an object is carried, there might be some extra encumbrance from the resulting uneven

weight distribution.

Any given backpack holds a certain amount of material, as determined by the amount of available space within the backpack. The AD&D game system (in the Permanent Character Folder's wraparound cover) gives the volume within a backpack as 3 cubic feet, equating 100 gp with 1 cubic foot. Because the backpack essentially eliminates the portable aspect of encumbrance, only the actual weight for most items needs to be considered. A caltrop is not especially encumbering if you don't have to deal with the sharp edges. Thus, for purposes of figuring the porter's encumbrance, a revised encumbrance figure (the item's actual weight) should be used. For purposes of packing things within the backpack, however, the old figure for encumbrance is used, to note the difficulty in packing oddly shaped items together within a limited space.

Unfortunately, calculating actual item weights involves a lot of judgment calls and estimations, since both the D&D and AD&D games fail to give exact weights (only encumbrance values) for most items.

A table showing some of my own estimations appears with this article. Assume that, for all practical purposes, 1 cn (D&D game) equals 1 gp (AD&D game) throughout this article.

Thus, when calculating the encumbrance of materials in a backpack, the weights of the contents are totaled and added to the 20-cn encumbrance of the backpack itself. If a spell book takes 450 gp of encumbrance within a backpack, it might only encumber the person by 150 gp. When adding weights together for the bearer's encumbrance, use the chart included in this article.

Though a backpack has very distinct advantages (particularly to spell-casters), it also has a couple of equally distinct but unavoidable disadvantages. First, no object over 3' long may be placed in a backpack (this restriction obviously applies to many items). Second, it takes two rounds to get something out of a backpack: one to drop, open, and rummage through the pack; the second to find and withdraw it. Certain backpacks have pockets, however, as explained below. An object carried in a pocket takes but one round to retrieve.

Rangers learn the efficient use of the backpack out of necessity. As a result, they know how to maximize efficiency and are

Weights Of Standard Items

Item	Weight in gp or cn
Belt	1
Belt pouch, large	5
Belt pouch, small	2
Book, large metal-bound	50
Boots, hard	30
Boots, soft	10
Bottles, flagons	30
Caltrop	1
Candle	1
Cord, 10'	1
Crystal ball	100
Flask, empty	3
Flask, full	10
Gem (with protective wadding)	1
Hand tool	3
Holy water, potions	25
Jewelry, large	40
Jewelry, small	1-5
Lantern	50
Mirror	1
Purse	1
Rations, iron	49
Rations, standard	150
Robe/cloak	25
Sack, large	5
Sack, small	1
Scroll case, bone	10
Scroll case, leather	5
Spike	2
Tinderbox	1
Torch	10
Wand: bone/ivory case	30
Wand: box	40
Wand: leather case	10
Waterskin, empty	1
Waterskin, full	50

able to apply good judgment when using a pack. Instead of throwing everything randomly into a pack, which is usually assumed to occur, rangers are capable of prioritizing items in packing. Rangers get a 10% bonus to the encumbrance capacity of any type of pack (including individual pockets – explained later). This never reduces the weight of the packed items. Also, a ranger usually knows what items will be needed the most or the quickest. Thus, the ranger is not assessed the one-round penalty when retrieving an object from the backpack (though it still takes a round to actually open the pack). This ability may be gained by other character classes as a nonweapon proficiency.

Some of the backpacks listed in this article have a certain number of pockets. Each pocket has an encumbrance capacity of 25 cn, or 28 for a ranger. This encumbrance capacity is added to the base capacity of the backpack. Each pocket must be treated as a separate entity within the pack. Thus, if a pack has three pockets, an extra item of 75 cns encumbrance cannot be added, though three items of 25 cn each can be.

Historically, there are many different types of backpacks. As a general rule, all fall within the following categories: soft, one-chamber rucksacks; soft, two-chamber, large backpacks; and wooden-

framed, two-chamber, large backpacks. All three varieties of backpacks are available with or without pockets.

The soft, one-chamber rucksack without pockets is the backpack that all AD&D game players know. This backpack holds up to 450 cn (495 cn for a ranger) of encumbrance. It can also be made or bought with up to three pockets (25 cn each). Without pockets, this backpack costs 2 gp; with pockets, it costs 5 gp (special order).

The soft, two-chamber, large backpack is a larger version of the rucksack. One large chamber is generally for foodstuffs; the other is for clothing and other equipment. This backpack holds up to 800 cn (880 for a ranger) of encumbrance and can be made with as many as six pockets (25 cn each). It costs a base of 10 gp, or 30 gp with pockets (special order).

The wooden-framed, two-chamber, large backpack is similar to the soft, two-chamber backpack, but it's the supporting frame makes the framed pack more rigid (and thus more efficient and roomier). This backpack holds up to 1,600 cn (1,760 cn for a ranger) of weight plus tent and bedroll. It can also be made with six pockets (25 cn each). All framed packs must be specially ordered and cost 100 gp without pockets and 120 gp with pockets.

All backpacks have a base encumbrance value to which the total weight is added.

Rucksacks have a base encumbrance of 20 cn; soft, large backpacks have a base encumbrance of 40 cn; and framed, large backpacks have a base encumbrance of 100 cn. Any large backpack (soft or framed) must be made for the character's approximate height. If this is not done, the backpacks total encumbrance (base value plus contents weight) is multiplied by 150%.

Finally, the weight of each individual item should be considered. A list of commonly used items that fit into a backpack is included here. I've generally assumed that any weapon carried in a backpack weighs half its encumbrance value. If a question arises concerning items not included in this list, that item weighs exactly half its encumbrance value (or a reasonable amount to be decided by the DM). Note that certain items weigh far less than half their encumbrance value; this is due to a difference between the space that object occupies and its actual weight (such as a caltrop). Other objects offer a negligible advantage by being carried in a pack. In this case, the object's weight is also its main encumbrance (as is the case with water skins or flasks of oil). This table is not intended to replace the encumbrance table on page 225 of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*; it is used only to find the total weight of objects in a backpack for encumbrance purposes. Ω

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The Ecology of the Gelatinous Cube

*Unseeing,
unthinking,
unstoppable*



by Ed Greenwood

The adventurer Haptooth had spent many years exploring the vast, labyrinthine, subterranean ways of Undermountain, Waterdeep. Many and strange were the tales he shared over sour brintmash wine at The Sign of the Staff or before the Council of Mages upon the Feast of the Moon, at winter's onset.

At the last Feast, Phantas, a member of that Council, pointedly challenged Haptooth to do more than entertain by speaking of curious observations and dramatic events. Rather, he demanded that Haptooth inform that prestigious group by employing the adventurer's access to the unusual to increase the common knowledge of what is not common at all (as Phantas so eloquently put it). None could fail to note the sharp edge of the verbal dagger he thrust at his peer, though it was but one of a thousand such attacks he had made on Haptooth over the years.

For his part, Haptooth seemed chastened



by the words of his rival and, indeed, came to the next yearly Feast with words of note, for he spoke of inquiries into the nature of that curious creature, the athcoid — more commonly known as the gelatinous cube.

Controversy over the athcoid has long raged among the wise — quite heatedly so in the corridors of the Hall of Beast-Tamers and in the offices of the Imperial Zoo of Amn, the keepers of which have managed to keep a cube alive in captivity for some 12 winters. Over and over, the questions are asked: How intelligent are the cubes? How amorphous are their forms? Of what is their digestive fluid composed, and can it be used as a weapon or in alchemy (or, for that matter, in medicine or in the handling of beasts)? How do athcoids mate —indeed, *do* athcoids mate? Haptooth provided all at the Council of Mages with answers.

"Even now," he said, "in the lightless ways beneath us, these great creatures glide noiselessly along, devoid of malicious intent — indeed, devoid of an conscious-

ness at all — but fully a menace to all who encounter them. Even children know that these nearly transparent, gelatinous monsters cannot digest metal or stone, but feed on plants and beasts of all sorts by paralyzing those encountered, engulfing them, and absorbing nutrients from such prey by means of corrosive digestive fluids.

"Athcoids have no thoughts as we know them, but rather respond automatically — and identically, in all cases — to certain stimuli. They cease to advance when they encounter a cold surface or object, then probe forward to seek a way past or around it. Athcoids are attracted to vibrations or warmth, but seem devoid of hearing. When flowing over or around objects, they seem quite fluid and mutable, but return always to a rectangular or rhomboidal form when their surroundings permit.

"An athcoid does not appear to communicate with any creature, nor can it be controlled, save by use of the stimuli I have already mentioned. When two athcoids meet — and this I saw happen — they merge to become one, of greater size and of an apparently stable nature. This monstrous combination has twice the innate hardness of either of its component creatures, though it eventually divides into two normal athcoids, each exactly like the original component creatures, which go their separate ways.

"More I can tell, gained from the darkest researches. Sadly, athcoids are ignorant of sex." Mutterings and chuckles from the Council followed the comment. "Rather, they reproduce by growing to sufficient size, then split into two slightly smaller creatures. These creatures then grow to a stage which passes for adulthood within a short time.

"As you all must know, athcoids anesthetize prey by means of a gummy secretion which is absorbed into the bloodstream of the prey through its skin. An oral antidote is now available to counteract this effect." Haptooth held up a metal flask, then returned it to its place beside another such flask on the lectern before him. "This antidote is of my own devise. It's expensive, but then so are the consequences if you lack it."

Haptooth paused, appearing to reflect upon some matter. "As to their digestive fluids — these are produced and held in movable, elastic cavities or bubbles within an athcoid's body. When prey is engulfed by a cube, one or more of these mobile bubbles are shifted into contact with the prey. Such fluid has no effect on metal of any sort, and, as we have all heard, metal objects are held for a time within the creature, then expelled through its skin; but the fluid has devastating effects on flesh and cellulose."

So saying, Haptooth undid his sash and pulled his robe open. The crowd mumbled grunts and oaths of amazement. Haptooth's ribs were laid bare in an ivory lattice on one flank. All about this gaping

hole, his flesh was gnarled and twisted like half-melted wax.

"I recently fought my way through a cube, when trapped in a dead-end passage, and this was the result," he said simply. He continued to hold his robe open, turning slowly to allow all in the Hall to see his injury. Then, dropping his arms, he went back to his lectern and took up the two flasks, pocketing the antidote. As he undid the cap on the other, he slowly walked toward the audience, in the direction of Phantas. "Dearly, I paid for my labors, but they were well rewarded. I captured a sample of the digestive fluid," he said in a loud voice, whereupon he drenched the astonished councillor with its contents. "Now, the eminent alchemist Phantas can in his turn increase the common knowledge of what is not common at all."

He left then, teleporting with a last fiendish grin, as Phantas's scream echoed loudly through the hall.

Notes

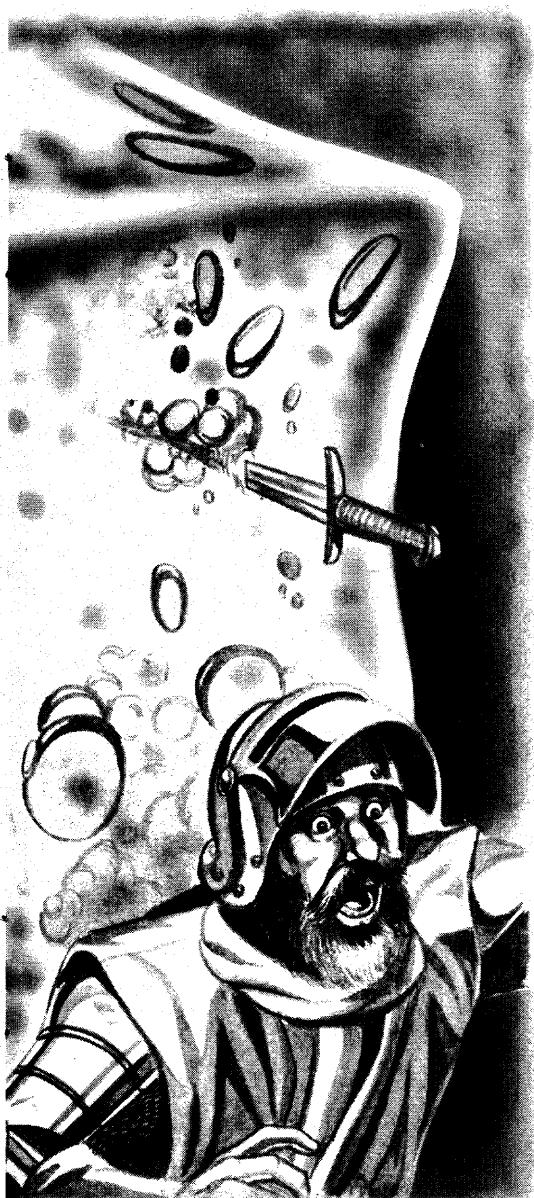
1. Gelatinous cubes may flow through openings as small as 1' across. They sense all living, moving beings within 120' from the vibrations and heat given off by such creatures, and actively pursue such prey.

2. Being so totally mindless, a gelatinous cube should be immune to all will-force and mind-affecting magical powers — particularly enchantment/charm spells and mind-reading talents. Charm monster thus has no effect upon them.

3. When two cubes meet and merge, the resulting "double cube" attacks as an 8-HD monster with a total number of hit points equal to the total of the two merged cubes. This combination creature retains a size of 10' x 10' x 20', the longest axis being pointed in its direction of travel like a thick-bodied (but square) worm. Otherwise, it is like a normal cube in all respects. Division occurs either immediately upon contact with a third cube or after a period of 2-8 days. Normal-sized cubes divide after a period of six years. Each of the two resulting cubes has 3 HD, half the number of hit points the "parent" cube originally had, and a size of slightly under 8' x 8' x 8'. These "little" cubes grow to maturity in three months. Technically speaking, the gelatinous cube is an immortal organism, since (unless destroyed by adventurers, starvation, or disaster) a cube never dies.

4. Cubes may move about underwater with ease, though the contact poison which paralyzes opponents is much diluted. Saving throws against this effect are made at +6 in this environment.

5. If Haptooth's antidote against a cube's *paralysis* is made available, it removes the *paralysis* within 1-4 rounds after being swallowed (an automatic reflex not stopped by the *paralysis*). However, the potion has no effect on any other form of *paralysis*, such as that from ghouls or carrion crawlers. The antidote is not magical in nature.



The Game Wizards

Sneak previews and more

by Michael Dobson

Second Edition update

It's always been a little difficult to enter David "Zeb" Cook's office, what with rows of toy robots, walls covered with bizarre cartoons and drawings, heaps of Oriental reference works, German and Russian military histories (for Zeb's upcoming SPI® game project, the MOSCOW 1941™ game), and the other detritus that separates the office of a game designer from that of a normal human being.

Lately, the problem has been compounded by over 2,000 letters from you, our best fans and harshest critics, concerning every aspect of the Second Edition AD&D® game project. Boxes filled with letters are first read by Zeb (and, yes, he reads every word of every letter he gets), then the most interesting observations and comments are highlighted. Next, Steve Winter, our Senior Games Editor who's also working on Second Edition, reads every letter. Then I read them all. Selected letters are passed on to the rest of the Games Division staff and to company executives.

Some of the responses we've received are incredible. Three stand out: an 80-page dissertation on the AD&D game system by Bob Bell, a Tennessee player and DM, who did a first-rate job of analyzing problems and recommending innovative solutions; a 50-page analysis of magic-user spell problems by Scott Mayo, another long-time player (he's now working on clerical spells); and, the single biggest package we received: a "letter" from Jim Trew full of creative rules variants and some very interesting questions that we'll need to address. We appreciate the shorter letters, too, so don't rush out to send us

a few hundred pages of comments. We are sincerely appreciative of the time, effort, and quality that all of our correspondents have shown.

Incidentally, to provide your letter with the maximum impact, it's a good idea to type it, organize your thoughts and comments, and keep it concise. Zeb, Steve, Jon Pickens (Research and Play-Test Coordinator), and I regret that we can't personally answer each letter, but if we did, Second Edition would never get done. By the way, death threats are not very effective.

As Zeb has noted in previous installments of this column, the letters have had a real impact. Things we were pretty sure about have changed because you, the true editors of the TSR line, have persuaded us that the changes are right. The bard, for example, lives because of your letters.

But we need even more input, and that's why Jon has put together a mammoth questionnaire to find out everything we can about what you want. The questionnaire is slated to appear in POLYHEDRON™ Newszine and this issue of DRAGON® Magazine, and we'll be bringing copies to the GEN CON® 20 Game Fair and elsewhere. When we tabulate the questionnaire, we'll share with you what we learn — and I guarantee that what we learn will go into the project.

While Zeb worries about game mechanics and Steve worries about organization, clarity, and style, I've been worrying about format and timetables. Zeb discussed some of the options we've been considering: three hardcover volumes with softcover or S-ring binder supplements, or all 3-ring binder format, or one giant core hardcover, or . . . They all have advantages and disadvantages, and you haven't indicated a strong preference for one format over the

other. That suggests that we haven't figured this one out yet, and we need to keep sifting ideas. We're having some of the options analyzed for cost. For example, if we had to sell a S-ring binder edition for \$50.00, that's ludicrous. I wouldn't pay that much, and I wouldn't expect you to do so, either. On the other hand, if we could sell it for, say, \$17.95, this is a much greater value. If we could sell it for \$4.95, there'd be no doubt about value (but don't hold your breath on this last option).

Then there's the timetable. An incredible amount of work must be done in the design and editing phases of the project, and it's hard to finish a project when you don't know what format it should use. Other critical issues appear, such as play-testing; the Second Edition will need as much play-testing as possible. There's also the matter of finding reviewers to go through the Second Edition drafts and find problems; the matter of arranging a preview series in the pages of this magazine to let you know — in advance, while you can still register meaningful complaints — what we've done and why we've done it; and, finally, the mammoth project of taking all the feedback that we get and integrating it into the final version of Second Edition.

Our timetable for Second Edition now looks like this: Zeb and Steve have been given a goal of completing design and editing of the revised *Players Handbook* and *Dungeon Masters Guide* by December 1987. We'll then prepare about 200 play-test and review copies of the edition and send them out in January.

The play-testing of Second Edition will be handled by the RPGA™ Network; as a result, the play-testing DMs must be RPGA Network members. If you aren't already a member, join today. Jean Rabe, RPGA Network Coordinator, and Harold Johnson, Director of Consumer Services for TSR, Inc., are developing standards and procedures for the play-test program. The Games Department selects the manuscript reviewers — these will be noted professionals and fans with major credentials.

Play-testing and review is slated to take place from January 1988 through June 1988. We'll start a new set of boxes to collect comments, problems, complaints, and (hopefully) praise about the draft. Then, in July 1988, we'll assign a new creative team to spend six months working through the Second Edition once again, to integrate the results of the most massive play-test and review campaign in the history of TSR, Inc., to fine-tune every rule and sentence, to prepare the finest index in the history of role-playing games, and to make sure in every way that the Second Edition is as perfect as possible.

Next, our top graphic designers and art directors will work on page design, border graphics, typography, and clarity of format. Our Art Department will paint covers, do interior illustrations, and prepare diagrams and maps. We'll pore over every page of the galleys, keylines, and bluelines,

hunting for typos and last-minute problems (incurring, as usual, the wrath of our long-suffering Typesetting Department). Then we'll get it printed, assembled, and shipped.

So, when can you expect to pick up the published Second Edition AD&D game at your local store? Our working estimate now is that Second Edition will appear in approximately March or April 1989. That's a long time in the future, but that's the only way we can guarantee that what we finally publish will be the best. For a project like Second Edition, later and greater is the only way to go. It's also the only way we can guarantee that you will have full input in every stage of the process, so that what we publish is as close as possible to what you want — and so we won't come back in a few years to announce Third Edition!

The best news you've ever read

We're lowering module prices. The modules that leave our shipping docks in late July (reaching your local store sometime in August) will carry the new prices. What would have been an \$8.00 standard module (32-48 pages) henceforth will cost only \$5.95. The \$10.00 deluxe module (64 pages) will cost \$7.95. The \$12.00 special module (96 pages) will cost \$8.95, and the \$15.00 supermodule (128 pages) will cost only \$9.95! That means all new TSR® modules, regardless of size, will cost less than \$10.00 — or, less than they cost even prior to the last price increase!

Of course, there is always The Fine Print. This price reduction applies only to new modules — those already in print and on the shelf keep the old prices. Likewise, hardcovers, boxed games, and DRAGON Magazines stay at their current prices.

What's even better is that the quality doesn't change; if anything, it will be better than ever! Page count stays the same for all classes of module, as does paper stock, cover stock, amount of color (in fact, that will probably increase in the future) — almost everything's the same. The only change you're likely to notice in modules happened several months ago, and is not related to the price cut: type size has increased from 9-point to 10-point, for a small loss in text. We've done that to increase the readability; the tiny type makes the module harder to read and play with. We were all starting to need glasses to read the products.

The price cut is made possible by changes in our production process and the way products are printed — and that's the doing of Mike Martin, Director of Manufacturing, one of the unsung heroes of TSR, Inc. Mike identified new techniques and procedures that have resulted in substantial savings to us. Consequently, we're passing them along to you. The price cut takes place in July because that's the beginning of our new fiscal year, and so we're beginning our new year with an early Christmas present to all of you.

What's new (with apologies to Phil & Dixie)

This has been a very exciting year for TSR, Inc. A lot of things have started that we'll be sharing with you in the months ahead. In many ways, this is the beginning of a new and exciting period of growth, which will be reflected in the product line.

For example, there's the first SPI Lightning Simulation Game, ONSLAUGHT™: D-Day to the Rhine, a fast-moving wargame with a hard board (as opposed to paper), which is at your stores now. At only \$19.95 retail, it's an incredible value. Jeff Grubb's AD&D game hardcover tome, *Manual of the Planes*, just came in from the printer today (as I write this — you've probably gotten your own copy by now), and it looks wonderful. I'm about a third of the way through it already. The new Gazetteer series for the D&D® game provides a rich world for D&D game play. The FORGOTTEN REALMS™ boxed set is a must-have for the AD&D game. Then there's the new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game by Doug Niles — the top-of-the-line espionage game for top-of-the-line role-playing gamers. It's got more stuff in it than any other game you've ever seen, and it's still only \$15.00 (more pricing magic courtesy of Mike Martin). Don't miss the great CATACOMBS™ gamebook line, beginning with *Faerie Mound of Dragonkind*, by Jim Ward and Jean Black, the closest thing to a real AD&D game adventure in gamebook form. Those are just a few of the highlights of the line.

There are some new things that don't show. For instance, all of us in the Games Department just got new offices. For years, since we moved into the new TSR building in sunny Lake Geneva, we've all been living in tiny little cubes, each less than 10' per side, crammed full with computers, books, and toys, in a windowless part of the building. Now, at long last, things have changed. First, we got windows; now we can all photosynthesize during office hours. Then, in a major overhaul of "Cubeland," all the Games Department staff got double-size cubes, with new file cabinets, bookshelves, and extra work tables. Some of us are dangerously close to filling up our new homes already, but the feeling of luxury hasn't worn off yet.

We're traveling to more gaming conventions and making some personal appearances. Several members of the staff went to the Minicon SF convention in Minneapolis, and we've been regular attendees at such local conventions as Rockcon, X-Con, and Wiscon. Of course, the GEN CON Game Fair has always been the centerpiece of our convention attendance.

In the past couple of years, we've begun attending Origins again. This year, the largest TSR contingent in many years attended the Baltimore Origins [See the *Origins Awards winners on page 94*.] Recently, Doug Niles and I attended Neo-

Vention in Kent, Ohio, and Zeb Cook and I went to Glathricon in Evansville, Indiana. The Game Lizards will be on the road a lot in months to come: Watch for us at a gaming convention near you!

Watch your local store for the first issue of a free newsletter, TSR Worlds, which has all the latest information on what's coming from TSR, Inc., in the next six months. Handy checklists, contests, and much more — and it's absolutely free! I'll mention one of the contests here: the "Name That World" contest. We've been wracking our all-too-feeble brains for a great name for the D&D Gazetteer game world. If you've got a suggestion, send it to "Name That World Contest," TSR Games Department, PO. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. The winner gets an autographed copy of our newest AD&D game hardcover and whatever other interesting prizes we can think of.

Sneak previews

The time between the moment we think up a new product and the moment it arrives at your store is at least a year, often more. Thus, we've been hard at work planning the 1988 schedule of new games from TSR, Inc. Although some of our projects are secret, there are a few things we can share right now.

For the AD&D game system, most of our 1988 products revolve around the new

Jay Omega

Jay who?



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Look for Jay, *Bimbos*, and a \$50 prize at the GEN CON® Game Fair.

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FORGOTTEN REALMS fantasy game setting. Several sourcebooks, supervised by Jeff Grubb and Ed Greenwood, open up new lands for your inspection; one compiles all the new spells and magical items Ed has developed (most have never appeared in print before). Kara-Tur, the *Oriental Adventures* land, is now part of the Forgotten Realms, and Zeb Cook has begun work on the definitive Kara-Tur project (in his spare time from Second Edition). Doug Niles and I plan to conclude the Bloodstone Pass module series with H4, *The Throne of Bloodstone*, for character levels 18 and up, with a simple little adventure: go to the Abyss, steal the *Wand of Orcus*, and escape alive. Nothing to it.

We're returning to the WORLD OF GREYHAWK™ Fantasy Setting with the "Greyhawk Jam" supermodule (not its real title), in which 15 different game designers each contribute a level to the most insane round-robin zoo dungeon of all time. The infamous Random Monster Generator has been activated, and you must stop it! There will be anthology collections for the Outer Planes, BATTLESYSTEM™ supplement, and DRAGONLANCE® saga campaigns, as well.

For D&D games, look for more Gazetteer sourcebooks, and one very special (and very secret) project that takes place in the strange land of Vulcania. The new TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game has new source-

books and modules, and an incredible campaign set that makes spy adventuring more dangerous than ever before! The GAMMARAUDERSTM game (coming soon) has several expansion sets and a hardcover role-playing game and world book planned. Plans for MARVEL SUPER HEROES® game supplements are still classified (that means we haven't quite figured them out), but we plan to build new campaigns and worlds on the Advanced Set that will knock your socks off!

Finally, we're working on two new role-playing systems and two licensed properties that are classified right now. I'll tell you about them as soon as possible. Oh, all right, I'll give you two clues about the licensed properties. Clue for License #1: Ryan's Express. Clue for License #2: Seven and Five-Sixteenths. Good luck.

The future

Starting this summer, the Games Department will meet regularly to develop a long range plan for the future of role-playing and adventure gaming at TSR, Inc. What new role-playing areas should we cover? What should be the long-range direction of the D&D and AD&D games? How can we deliver the highest-quality products at the lowest price? How can we make sure that the heart and soul of our hobby is preserved and supported? If you'd like to have your voice heard about these issues or any others, write to: Michael Dobson, TSR, Inc., PO. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.



LETTERS

(continued from page 3)

1. Know your material. If you want to write articles or modules for a particular game, know that game system inside out and read everything available on it.
2. Know your market. Contact the company or periodical you wish to write for, get their guidelines for game designers and writers, and keep in touch with at least one of the staff members there. Find out what sort of gaming material

they wish to see, and discuss some of your ideas with them. Then, too, find out if the company has some sort of product disclosure form that must be submitted with your article, module, or game design.

3. Strive to improve your writing and communications skills. Pay close attention to your spelling and grammar, and make sure that your writing is neat, clean, clear, and professional in style. This helps enormously in gaining the respect of the people you wish to work with, and it reduces the chances for error.

Beyond this, all you need is luck. There are no colleges (or classes) for game designers and games magazine writers. — RM

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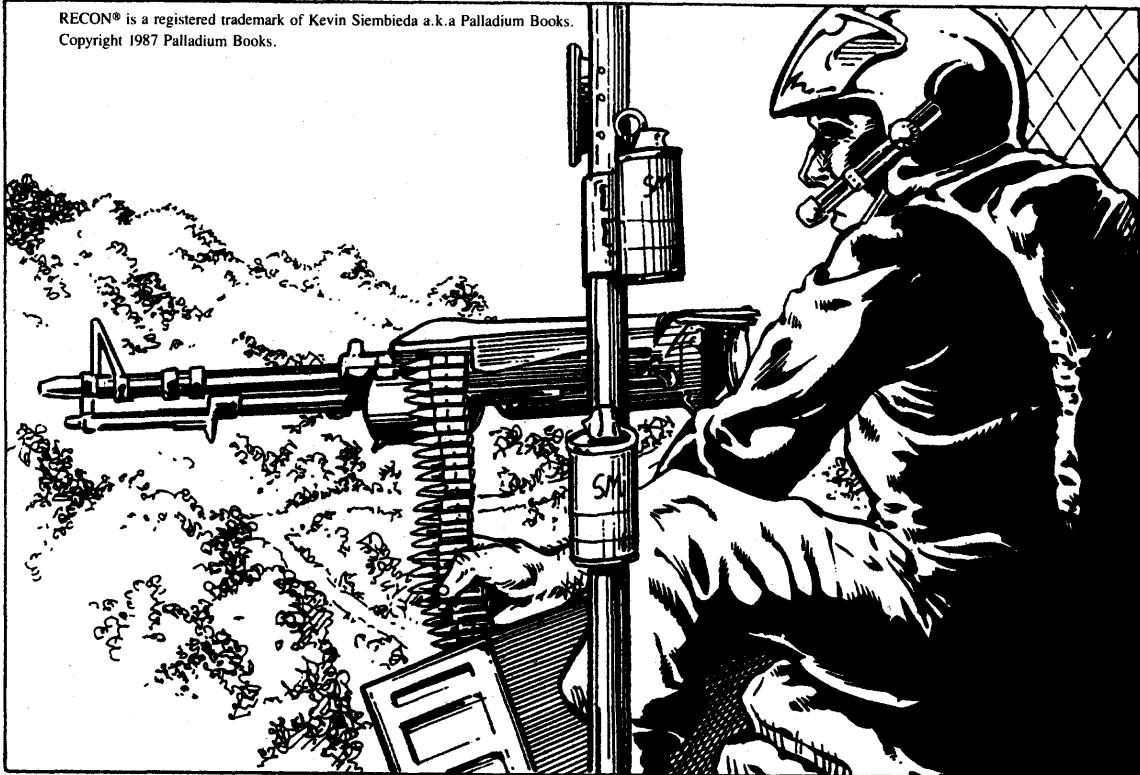
New Rules enable you to roll-up tougher characters with increased skills and physical attributes. Other information includes small unit and large unit tactics, communication techniques, communist strategy and tactics, optional DOS, and more equipment.

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Blasters & Blunderbusses

A look at firearm laws: past, present, and future

by Peter R. Jahn

Any game master running a game campaign in which characters use guns will, sooner or later, have the same problem — characters who have more firepower than most artillery divisions. Few things are more obnoxious than a "typical" modern-day espionage or mercenary character who travels about freely with a pair of Skorpions in his arms, an M-60 on his back, and a half-dozen LAW rockets in the car. Luckily, GMs aren't the only ones making rules to control this problem. Most modern and historical cities, states, and national governments have passed weapons restrictions. Knowing something about past and present gun laws can keep a game campaign — any campaign — in balance. The earliest gun laws can even be adapted in various ways to fantasy game settings, and a basic grounding in the history of weapons laws is especially helpful for players involved in time-travel games, like Pacesetter's *TIMEMASTER™* or FASA's *DOCTOR WHO* games.

Because world-wide gun laws vary so much, most of the information below applies only to campaigns set in the United States. A trip to the library is called for in other situations. Also note that in war-torn areas of the world, weapons restrictions are enforceable only at gunpoint. Military personnel and civilians alike are probably heavily armed, and the only practical restriction on firearms is encumbrance.

Early gun laws

Many role-playing games are set in Medieval fantasy, Caribbean pirate, and swashbuckling campaigns, with technological levels approximating the period from

prehistoric times to the 1600s. Gun laws during the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods were merely the latest form of weapons regulation. Very small and wealthy nobilities dominated very large and poor populations. The fear of a peasant revolt ran through all of the European monarchies, and as a result they passed laws preventing landless persons from having any weapons. A character with low social status was often put to death for the possession of a glaive, which was merely a tool for trimming branches straightened into a weapon for trimming knights. Peasants occasionally did perform some knight-trimming, but the laws almost always kept weapons solely in noble hands; anyone running a fantasy or Medieval campaign (using TSR's D&D®, DRAGONQUEST™, or AD&D® games; Chaosium's RUNEQUEST® or PENDRAGON games; or, FGU's CHIVALRY & SORCERY™ game, among others) should remember this. Carrying weapons and armor is usually illegal, or at least in very bad taste, in many civilized areas. Conspicuous components for offensive spells may also be restricted to the ruler's mages, making possession of them by PCs illegal.

As firearms developed, restrictions on who could own them developed as well. Characters in many swashbuckling campaigns (FGU's FLASHING BLADE™ game, for example) will be well armed if they are serving in the military or in some major noble's retinue. The common man and even lesser nobles were not permitted much firepower. English law allowed a small-time landowner to possess a longarm, and landowners with larger estates could have a couple of rifles and a blunderbuss, while a major noble could add a pair of pistols to the above. Possession of firearms by the masses was incon-

ceivable; the nobility formed the army and had the sole right to hunt, so the masses had no need for weapons — and no right to own them. Remember this when one of the PCs starts waving his weapons around a bar in more civilized areas, especially if he has a low social status.

In the American colonies and in pirate-ruled enclaves in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean, however, this was not the case. The early colonists were faced with danger from hostile Indians and wild animals, and needed to hunt game or starve. The settlers were armed; indeed, the captains bringing new colonists from England were required to make sure each colonist brought a rifle. America never had a history of firearms prohibitions, so it shouldn't be too surprising that the first laws and regulations involving guns were hunting laws. In 1677, Connecticut passed the first wildlife protection laws. If you're running a campaign in colonial America, gun laws won't help control PC excesses; you'll have to rely on the weight and bulkiness of the guns involved to limit firepower.

The 19th century

Games set in the American Old West (like TSR's BOOT HILL® game), the Age of Sail (FGU's PRIVATEERS & GENTLEMEN™ game), and Victorian England (the *Cthulhu by Gaslight* supplement to Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® game) present a different problem in firearms control. By the 1850s, America's casual attitude toward weapons had changed. In the settled eastern areas, the citizens no longer needed to be constantly vigilant. The habit of carrying rifles to church had disappeared from the North, although fear of slave revolts kept it alive in some areas of the South. The higher social circles

considered carrying guns barbaric. Even the police were unarmed; the first police force to be issued guns was Nashville's, and that happened in 1871. New York City police did not receive pistols until the 1890s, although New York gangs had been carrying pistols since the 1840s, and some officers had — unofficially — begun carrying them around 1850.

The federal government had not passed any firearms legislation through this period, but many cities had. By the time of the Civil War, nearly all major cities had passed laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed weapons. The degree of enforcement varied, as did the penalties, but one thing was sure: Anyone making enough of a nuisance of himself could be arrested and lose his gun.

While the eastern cities had a fairly uniform policy on firearms, western towns varied widely. Many allowed citizens to carry and possess any weapon at any time. Others had ordinances requiring guns to be checked while in town, or prohibiting the carrying of a gun in a saloon. There were no standards or patterns; a GM can get away with practically any restrictions on firearms, especially if backed up with a fast-draw sheriff and a few shotgun-toting deputies to supplement the local gun laws.

BETWEEN WORLD WARS

The 1920s and 1930s are the times for adventures using TSR's GANGBUSTERS™ and THE ADVENTURES OF INDIANA JONES™, Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU, FGU's DAREDEVILS™, Pacesetter's CHILL™, and Hero Games's JUSTICE, INC.™ game systems. Gun laws at this time are similar to those from 1850 on, although slightly tougher in some areas. Parts of the West had become settled, and even some cities in Texas had prohibited concealed weapons. In settled areas, concealed weapons were forbidden everywhere, although the penalty was often limited to a fine and confiscation of the weapon. One major exception, however, was New York. The Sullivan Law required all New Yorkers to have a permit to own firearms and a second permit to carry one, and made it a felony to possess a pistol without one. (Prior to the Sullivan Law, it had been a felony to carry a concealed knife, brass knuckles, etc., but it was only a misdemeanor to carry a pistol.) After the 1916 law, characters carrying a pistol illegally stood a fairly good chance of going to a New York State penitentiary. (The Sullivan Law is still in force in New York.)

The federal government's first major law only affects campaigns running in 1934 and after. The National Firearms Act of that year required licensing of firearm dealers and collectors, and required serial numbers on all guns. More important, it required a special license to own a sawed-off rifle or shotgun, a machine gun or submachine gun, a silencer, or trick guns hidden in swords or canes. Violations

were made felonies with stiff jail sentences. The law also added a heavy fee to the required license, and a \$200.00 tax on the purchase of any restricted weapon.

Prior to 1934, FBI agents were not allowed to carry guns as law officers, though they could do so (and did) as private citizens. After January 1, 1934, however, FBI agents could use virtually any weapon and had much expanded powers of arrest and jurisdiction. Most police officers of this period could carry many sorts of firearms as well, and they had broader powers of arrest than they have today. These facts may prove useful to a harried GM with a gun-happy group.

In 1937, the government decreed that only federally licensed dealers could ship or sell weapons from state to state. The licenses weren't difficult to obtain; the annual fee was \$1.00, and at one 1930s gangland convention the majority of the participants were federally licensed firearms dealers. This did not change until the 1968 Gun Law, which raised the fee and strongly tightened the requirements. The 1986 amendments legalized interstate sales and shipments of rifles and shotguns.

MAIL ORDER AND WORLD WAR II

Another problem dealt with during the 1920s and later concerned mail-order firearms. A criminal (or a character) wishing a nearly untraceable gun could order one anywhere, usually under a false name. Mail-order gun ads appeared everywhere, even in medical journals. The practice came under fire (ahem), and most magazines had stopped publishing the ads by 1920. In 1922, Sears, Roebuck and Company began requiring copies of carrying permits if such were required in the purchaser's town. (Company executives claimed that decision cost them half a million dollars a year, an indication of the extent of illegal or semilegal mail orders.) In any case, Sears stopped selling pistols by mail two years later. Federal law prohibited the sale of pistols by mail completely in 1927. Such sales are still illegal.

Mail ordering other weapons was still legal, however, and boomed following World War II. Europe was flooded with war-surplus weapons, and most were imported and sold here by mail order. Almost anything was legal, provided you had a federal dealer or collector license. Ads touted a submachine gun as "the perfect Father's Day Present," and claimed the Lahti antitank gun as good for shooting "deer or bear, or cars or even a tank if you should happen to see one." My favorite, though, listed a mortar and ammunition for only \$99.00: "perfect for demolishing buildings, getting even with the neighbors or just plinking in the backyard!"

Although security was fairly tight, it was possible to fraudulently obtain restricted weapons through the mails. Several newspaper editors ordered machine guns in the names of convicted felons or the editors' baby daughters, and still received the

weapons. President Kennedy's assassination in 1963 did much to damage the future of mail-order firearms, as Lee Harvey Oswald had purchased his rifle in exactly this manner. This situation eventually led to the banning of all mail-order firearms as part of the 1968 gun laws. These laws also limited the availability of small, cheap handguns.

As a side note, and as one would expect, practical restrictions on firearms possession and use was extremely chaotic in Europe after the D-Day invasion in 1944. Military personnel used any available weapon, as did civilians and resistance groups, and heavy firepower was not difficult to acquire. This time period and locale would prove dangerous in the extreme to time-traveling PCs. The most relevant game campaign in this time period is the BEHIND ENEMY LINES™ game (originally by FASA Corporation, currently produced by The Companions).

THE MODERN AND NEAR-FUTURE ERAS

The modern era is considered to extend from about 1946 to the current date, and it can also be extended into the near future; the year A.D. 2000 serves well as a cutoff date for near-future vs. science-fiction campaigns. Game systems involving modern-era campaigns include TSR's TOP SECRET® and TOP SECRET/S.I.™, Hero Games' DANGER INTERNATIONAL™, Task Force Games' DELTA FORCE™, Sleuth Publications' MERCENARIES, SPIES & PRIVATE EYES™, Victory Games' JAMES BOND 007, and Palladium's Revised RECON® games. The PSI WORLD™ game from FGU, though placed in the near future, is assumed to take place in a world in which gun laws are very much like those in force today. Note that several of these games focus on or could take place in regions of active warfare (e.g., Vietnam), where weapons restrictions discussed here do not apply.

Modern campaigns come under all the laws noted in the last section, in addition to state and local ordinances which vary widely even across America (see the table in this article for the laws of any particular state). Cities often have more restrictive ordinances; GMs should check on those cities around which their campaigns revolve. New York has not rescinded the Sullivan Laws, and Chicago has legislation nearly as strict, but Los Angeles' laws are not significantly tougher than those of California in general. Spies who travel a lot could get into trouble quickly!

It is still possible to lay down some general guidelines for modern campaigns. Almost all states have provisions in their statutes to confiscate illegal weapons or those without permits. Most states require permits to carry concealed weapons, and these permits are issued only by the local court or police chief. There is no national permit to carry arms. Only authorized federal agents and police officers are exempted from the permit requirements under most state laws. The GM can decide

Firearms Statutes in the 50 States

State	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Alabama	NP	2	X	NP	X	-	-	-
Alaska	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona	NP	-	-	-	-	-	X	-
Arkansas	X	-	-	D	-	-	X	-
California	NP	15	X	X	X	X	NP	R
Colorado	NP	-	-	-	-	NP	NP	-
Connecticut	NP	14	X	X	-	NP	-	R
Delaware	NP	-	X	-	-	X	X	-
Florida	NP	-	X	-	-	-	NP	S
Georgia	NP	-	-	-	-	NP	NP	-
Hawaii	NP	10	-	X	-	X	X	B&R
Idaho	NP	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Illinois	X	3	-	X	X	X	X	B
Indiana	NP	7	-	NP	X	-	-	-
Iowa	NP	-	-	NP	-	X	X	-
Kansas	X	-	-	-	X	X	-	-
Kentucky	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	S
Louisiana	X	-	-	-	X	NP	X	-
Maine	NP	-	-	-	X	X	X	-
Maryland	NP	7	X	-	-	-	-	R
Massachusetts	NP	-	-	-	-	X	NP	B&R
Michigan	NP	-	X	-	X	X	X	-
Minnesota	NP	7	-	NP	-	-	X	R
Mississippi	X	-	-	-	-	X	X	R
Missouri	X	7	-	-	-	X	NP	R
Montana	NP	-	-	-	-	X	NP	-
Nebraska	X	-	X	X	-	-	NP	H
Nevada	NP	-	X	X	X	-	-	S
New Hampshire	NP	-	-	-	X	-	-	S
New Jersey	X	-	-	X	X	X	NP	B&R
New Mexico	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New York	NP	-	-	NP	-	X	X	B&R
North Carolina	-	20	-	-	-	NP	NP	R
North Dakota	NP	-	-	-	-	X	-	R
Ohio	X	-	-	-	-	NP	NP	-

whether the cover papers issued to a PC include a weapons permit; if not, the PCs might consider leaving the extra ammo and holster rigs at home. Carrying a single gun that can be thrown away at a moment's notice does have its advantages.

Carrying submachine guns, silencers, or heavy weapons requires a federal license currently costing \$500.00 per year, plus \$200.00 per weapon purchased. As of May 1986, no new permits for the possession of any type of machine gun can be issued; those people who had one at that time may keep it, but machine guns are illegal for anyone else (except for the military and on-duty police officers.) Federal permits include the owner's address, and many states require a separate state permit to own silenced or fully automatic weapons, or may outlaw them completely. In some states, the use or possession of such weapons carries a mandatory jail sentence. Finally, carrying a weapon in the open is not always illegal, but is certain to invite police attention. (Only two states' laws specifically allow carrying holstered guns; several outlaw the practice.)

The main thing that PCs should remember is that the police rarely approve of

anyone using grenades and auto-fire weapons, even in self-defense, and that a local officer is usually within his rights to confiscate the weapons if the owners don't carry permits. Even if the characters are cooperating with the police, the local cops still have to explain all the dead bodies once the PCs have gone home, so confiscating the heavier firepower is not only legal, it's often good politics. PCs are advised to comply (SWAT teams are unforgiving).

The laws in most foreign countries are at least as strict as those in the United States. Both Great Britain and Japan, for example, have very restrictive handgun laws; encounters with armed NPCs should be very rare in either country. Most European and Soviet Bloc laws are tougher than ours, and average criminals have less access to firearms, but exceptions do exist. Countries engaged in warfare, like Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Vietnam, and parts of Central America, have unpredictable reactions to the appearance of firearms in anyone's hands; playing tough is not advised.

Though the above guidelines apply to certain "normal" near-future game cam-

paigns, some game systems take place in unusual near-future environments, such as the post-World-War-III campaigns of FGU's AFTERMATH™, GDW's TWILIGHT: 2000™, and TimeLine's THE MORROW PROJECT games. (True, THE MORROW PROJECT game actually takes place in the mid-22nd century, but it fits the same post-atomic genre.) All restrictions on the ownership and use of weapons in post-atomic worlds are assumed to have vanished with the onset of global warfare and destruction; only the America of the TWILIGHT: 2000 game and similarly "civilized" nations would have anything resembling firearms laws, and these would not be uniform from place to place. The same situation in a non-nuclear "dark future" campaign exists in the CAR WARS® game from Steve Jackson Games. If you can carry it, it's yours — unless someone takes it from you.

West Ends THE PRICE OF FREEDOM system involves a conquered America, and gun laws would logically be extremely restrictive (making guns invaluable possessions, especially to guerilla groups that could possess any sort of weapon). Communist military personnel are likewise

State	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Oklahoma	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
Oregon	NP	5	-	-	-	-	NP	S
Pennsylvania	NP	2	-	NP	-	-	-	-
Rhode Island	NP	3	X	NP	X	X	NP	-
South Carolina	NP	-	-	IT	X	-	-	-
South Dakota	NP	2	-	U	X	NP	NP	S
Tennessee	NP	15	-	-	X	-	NP	S
Texas	X	-	-	-	-	NP	NP	-
Utah	NP	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Vermont	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-
Virginia	NP	-	-	X	X	-	NP	-
Washington	NP	5	-	NP	-	-	X	S
Washington, D.C.	-	2	X	-	-	X	X	B&R
West Virginia	NP	-	-	-	-	-	NP	S
Wisconsin	X	2	-	-	-	-	NP	-
Wyoming	NP	-	X	-	-	-	-	-

Key to table columns

A: Carrying concealed weapons: X = illegal, NP = need a state permit.

B: Waiting period: a period of time between asking a dealer to sell the gun and actual delivery. This was designed to prevent an angry person from purchasing a gun during a fight, and to allow a police check on the buyer. The table shows the number of days' wait required.

C: Mandatory penalty: X = a non-parolable jail term for any felony conviction involving use or possession of firearms. This can include carrying without a permit.

D: Vehicular carry: X = illegal to carry a loaded firearm in a car, NP = need a state permit, IT = only in a closed compartment or trunk, U = only if unloaded. (Federal law made it legal to carry an unloaded weapon in the trunk while traveling through a state, as of November 1986.)

E: Armor-piercing ammunition: X = illegal to possess AP ammunition.

F: Silencer: X = illegal, NP = need state permit to possess.

G: Automatic weapons: X = illegal, NP = need state permit to possess.

H: Possession permit required to own gun: N = none, H = at home, W = at work, B = both, R = all guns registered with police, S = all sales reported to police.

If a state's statutes do not directly address a topic, the column receives a dash (For example, Alabama does not specifically outlaw silencers or automatic weapons, nor does it require gun owner permits. (Note that a secret agent possessing a machine gun in Alabama must still comply with all federal laws.)

unencumbered by most restrictions, and fighting is likely to be widespread and deadly in the extreme.

Futuristic societies

The final frontier for role-playing games lies in the future. TSR's STAR FRONTIERS® game, GDW's TRAVELLER® and TRAVELLER: 2300™ games, ICE's SPACE MASTER™ set, FASA's STAR TREK®: The Role-Playing Game, and Chaosium's RINGWORLD game depict other-world human and alien societies in which the possession (or lack) of a firearm can make all the difference between success and failure in a mission, as well as life or death.

The laws in futuristic settings vary widely and depend greatly on the flavor of the individual campaign. In unsettled or frontier worlds, especially those with hostile inhabitants, the restrictions on weapons would be fairly lax. Most individual weapons will be legal, but heavy military weapons will still be unavailable to civilians. (Even in the Old West, the Army frowned on private ownership of cannon.)

In more civilized areas, the trend toward restricting weapons will probably con-

tinue. All military weapons will be illegal, and civilian weapons less and less common. Purely defensive, non-lethal weapons like stunners may or may not be legal, at the GMs option. (Remember that TASERs and stun guns are widely restricted at present.) Radically new weapons not developed by the military may be legal for a brief period, until the authorities realize a criminal element is using them. (Thompson submachine guns were legal and sold in hardware stores for ten years, TASERs for five.) Finally, badly outdated military weapons *might* be permitted in private collections, but this policy is by no means universal, even today.

Beyond this — the game master is on his own. Hopefully, this article will reduce the number of Rambo-type PCs and increase the ranks of PCs who look before they leap — or shoot.

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A special damage system for STAR FRONTIERS® games

A SHOT IN THE ARM



by Jason Pamental
and David Packard

The combat system used in the STAR FRONTIERS® game is generally realistic and simple, but the damage system lacks that realism. You never see anyone with a broken limb, a wound, a concussion, etc. The only damage taken is to one's Stamina. The following rules make the damage system more realistic and provide information about broken limbs, wounds, and cuts, and how this damage can be healed. It also provides realistic damage to robots, computers, weapons, and equipment. Vehicle damage is already covered in the game rules.

Table 1
Special Damage Modifiers

Modifier	Reason
+1	Short range
+2	Point blank range
+2	Explosive weapon
+1	Careful aiming *
+2	Firing a burst
+1	Per 5 SEU used by weapon
+1	Target hit twice in same turn
+1	Small target
+2	Tiny target
+1	Per skill level with weapon
+2	Per Robotics or Computer skill * *
-1	Large target
-2	Giant target
-1	Long range
-2	Extreme range
-1	Moving target**
-2	Suit-type defense
-2	Target is underwater
-2	Target makes RS check

* +1 is added for each round spent entirely on aiming, up to the maximum of +5.

** This applies only to attacks against robots or computers, respectively.

*** This modifier is counted only once, even if both attacker and defender are moving in any manner.

Table 3
Damage Results Table: Living Beings

Modified 1d10 roll	Stamina damage	Special damage	Units of lost equipment
1 or less	0	None	0
2	5	Chest wound	0
3	5	Leg wound	0
4	5	Arm wound*	1
5–6	8	Shoulder wound *	1
7	9	Arm wound**	1
8	10	Head wound	1
9–10	10	Leg broken	1
11	15	Chest deeply cut	1
12–13	8	Arm broken *	1
14	8	Arm broken **	1
15–16	15	Abdomen deeply cut	1
	17	Back wound, leg paralyzed	2
	18	Shoulder deeply cut **	2
	19	Side deeply cut	2
20–22	30	Head concussion	2
23+	1,000	Head removed, body falls apart, target vaporized, etc. (pick one)	5

* Secondary side (i.e., the left side if on a right-handed person).

** Primary side (i.e., the right side if on a right-handed person).

Special damage effects

Chest wound: -5 to hit.

Leg wound: -3 meters/turn on movement.

Secondary-side arm wound: -5 for firing rifles, can only fire one weapon, -10% for doing tech, robotics, medical, demolitions, and computer skills.

Primary-side shoulder wound: -10 for firing rifles, same other modifiers as a secondary-side arm wound.

Primary-side arm wound: -30 to hit, can't use rifles, -15% on above-mentioned skills.

Head wound: -5 INT/LOG, 50% chance to be unconscious for 1d100 minutes.

Leg broken: Only 2 meters/turn movement.

Chest deeply cut: -10 to hit, -5 DEX/RS.

Secondary-side arm broken: No rifles can be fired, -10% to all skills mentioned for a secondary-side arm wound, may only fire one weapon.

Primary-side arm broken: Same as with secondary-side arm broken, but with -25% to all above mentioned skills, -10% to hit with all other weapons.

Abdomen wound: -3 meters/turn on movement, -5% to hit with all weapons, -8 kg on limit for carrying items.

Back wound, leg paralyzed: Only 2 meters/turn on movement, -15 kg for carrying items.

Side deeply cut: -8 DEX/RS, -10 kg for carrying items.

Head concussion: -10 INT/LOG, -5 DEX/RS, 75% chance to be unconscious for 1d10 hours.

Dead: Dead beyond a doubt, no chance of revival.

Table 2
Weapon Modifiers

Weapon type	Modifier
Projectile pistol	+2
Projectile rifle	+3
Heavy projectile	+5
Beam rifle or pistol	+3
Heavy beam	+4
Gyrojet pistol	+2
Gyrojet rifle	+3
Heavy gyrojet	+6
Short melee *	+1
Long melee *	+2
Fist	+1
Grenade**	
Other thrown weapon	+2
Bow or crossbow	+2
Tooth, claw, etc.	+2

* Whips, swords, polearms, spears, chairs, and big clubs are *long*; axes, bottles, small clubs, knives, nightsticks, pistol butts, shock gloves, etc., are *short*.

** Only a fragmentation or incendiary grenade can cause special damage. Each counts as an explosive weapon on Table 1.

The system

Each character has a percentage chance to cause special damage to an opponent when that character performs a "to hit" roll. This chance is figured out by the formula: 3% + (skill level x 2), where the skill level refers to the appropriate weapons skill. For example: Fl'remp, a female Vrusk, fires a laser pistol at a Human. She has a level 4 Beam Weapons skill, so her chance to cause special damage is 11%. She rolls a 06 on her "to hit" roll (less than her chance), so she has scored special damage. A character can add 1% to his special-damage chance for each round spent aiming at a target. A maximum of 10% may be added this way. If a character's chance to hit an opponent is less than the chance to cause special damage, then special damage cannot be scored.

After a character has caused special damage, the player must find out the type of damage done (this special damage is in addition to normal Stamina-reducing damage). To determine damage, the player rolls Id10. Add or subtract any applicable

modifications to this roll, as shown on Table 1. The referee may modify this number with modifications not found on Table 1 as seen fit. Note that a target in an activated defensive screen cannot take special damage. There are two damage-type tables: one for living beings and one for robots. Computer damage is explained elsewhere.

To read the damage tables, go from left to right. The first column on the left is the number a player has rolled. The next column shows how much extra damage is taken to the target's Stamina score. The third shows what kind of special damage is taken, and the final column shows how many pieces of equipment have been

destroyed. There is a 10% chance that a weapon will be destroyed instead of equipment. The victim's player can pick which piece of his equipment has been destroyed. If the character has more than one unit of a certain type of equipment, then two units of the equipment are destroyed (two clips, two rations, etc.).

Special damage need not only occur due to an attack using weapons. Vehicle accidents, falling, and fires are just a few of the other possibilities, although this article is only concerned with weapon-related damage.

The referee should keep track of damage for NPCs, creatures, robots, and computers, while players should keep track of

their own damage themselves (unless the referee doesn't trust them). If the referee feels that damage to a character might greatly lessen the other players' chances for completing their mission, then he may alter the damage taken by that character.

Computer damage

Computer damage is easy to determine because a computer has no major moving parts. Take the modified 1d10 roll generated above and divide it by 5, rounding down; this represents the number of programs which have been destroyed. The lowest-level programs are destroyed first, highest level last. If the computer has a Computer Security program which has not been destroyed, then any alarms it controls are set off.

A computer may be repaired, but the programs may not be brought back unless a computer specialist knows them (as per the Computer skill). A computer which has more programs destroyed than it possesses will explode, causing 6d10 damage points to anyone within 5 meters of it (Reaction Speed check defense). A computer destroyed in this way cannot be repaired.

Healing special damage

Adventurers may find it necessary to heal damage caused to themselves. To heal a *wound*, all Stamina points of damage caused by the attacking weapon must be healed, and 1d10 +1 hours of game time must pass until penalties caused by the wound are nullified.

A cut may be healed as a wound, but it takes 4d10 hours until the penalties caused by the cut are nullified.

A *deep cut* may be healed this way, but it takes 1d10 +1 days until those penalties are nullified.

A *broken limb* may be mended if all the Stamina points are healed and the limb is set in a cast or splint. If it is not set within two hours, the limb does not heal until the character enters a hospital (costing 50 Credits per day for 3d10 days). A limb set in a cast or splint takes 3d10 +1 days until the penalties are nullified.

A *concussion* may be mended if all Stamina is healed and the PC rests at least 10 hours per day for 1d10 days. Hospital fees for this time amount to 200 Credits.

The *back wound* is special. It may be mended if all Stamina is healed, major surgery is used to repair paralyzation damage, and the PC rests for 2d10 hours. Otherwise, it heals in 3d10 days. A hospital charges 200 Credits for these services.

A Dralasite cannot have a broken limb, but it loses the ability to grow one until the spot heals where it was hit. This healing takes 3d10 days. The Dralasite still suffers the same penalties as if it had broken limbs.

If a character has multiple damage, such as a chest wound and a broken leg, it still takes 1d10 +1 days for the leg to heal. Healing times are not cumulative.

A Vrusk with a damaged arm requires a 1d10 roll to find out which arm was hit: 1-5 is the left arm, 6-10 is the right.

A Dralasite is not able to absorb a paralyzed leg until it is healed. Because of this, the Dralasite suffers the special penalties caused by the paralyzed leg.

An electrorunner does not break a limb. If a *broken limb* is indicated because of an electrorunner or other electrical damage, then the limb has excessive nerve damage instead. The same penalties occur, and the nerve damage may be healed the same as would a broken limb.

Repairing a robot

Repairing a robot is easier than healing a living creature. A character with Robotics skill is required.

Damage to a robot takes 2d10 minutes to repair. A *broken* part takes 5d10 +5 minutes to fix, while a *cracked* item takes 4d10 +5 minutes. Add 10 minutes to the repair time for each joint which is *damaged* or *broken*, and 20 minutes if the brain casing has been hit. If the brain casing and the body have been *cracked*, add 1 hour to the repair time.

Ω

Table 4
Damage Results Table: Robots

Modified 1d10 roll	Stamina damage	Special damage	Units of lost equipment
1 or lower	0	None	0
2	5	Body damage	0
3	5	Leg damage	0
4	5	Arm damage	1
5-6	8	Arm joint damage	1
7	9	Arm joints damage	1
8	10	Brain casing damage	1
9-10	10	Leg broken	1
11	15	Body cracked	1
12-13	8	Arm broken	1
14	8	Arm joint broken	1
15-16	15	Brain casing cracked	1
17	15	Movement center damaged	2
18	12	Arm joints broken	2
19	15	Body and brain casing cracked	2
20-22	30	Brain casing broken	2
23+	1,000	Explosion (cannot be repaired)	15

Special damage effects

Body damage: -5 to hit with weapons because of internal damage.

Leg damage: -5 meters/turn on movement (unless robot has alternate movement system, such as rocket movement).

Arm damage: Attacker can choose attacked arm or tentacle, -9 to hit with any weapon held in that arm.

Arm joint damage: -14 to hit with a weapon in that arm, -2 damage for melee attacks.

Arm joints damage: No weapons may be fired from that arm, no melee attacks.

Brain casing damage: 50% chance of robot being stunned for d100 minutes (even if A-S implant is installed), -5 to hit with all weapons, 20% chance of a malfunction.

All robots have brains, but a noncybernetic robot's brain is a computer.

Leg broken: -10 meters/turn on movement, -5 meters/turn to movement using alternate movement system because it also has been hit.

Body cracked: -10 to hit with all weapons, -5 meters/turn on movement, 20% chance of a malfunction.

Arm broken: No weapon can be fired from the arm, -5% to chances to repair it.

Arm joint broken: Same as arm broken, but a -25% to chances to repair it.

Brain casing cracked: Stunned for d100 +20 minutes, 50% chance of being deactivated, -10 to hit with all weapons, 35% chance of a malfunction, -30% to chances to repair it.

Movement center damaged: Robot cannot move, -30% to chances to repair it.

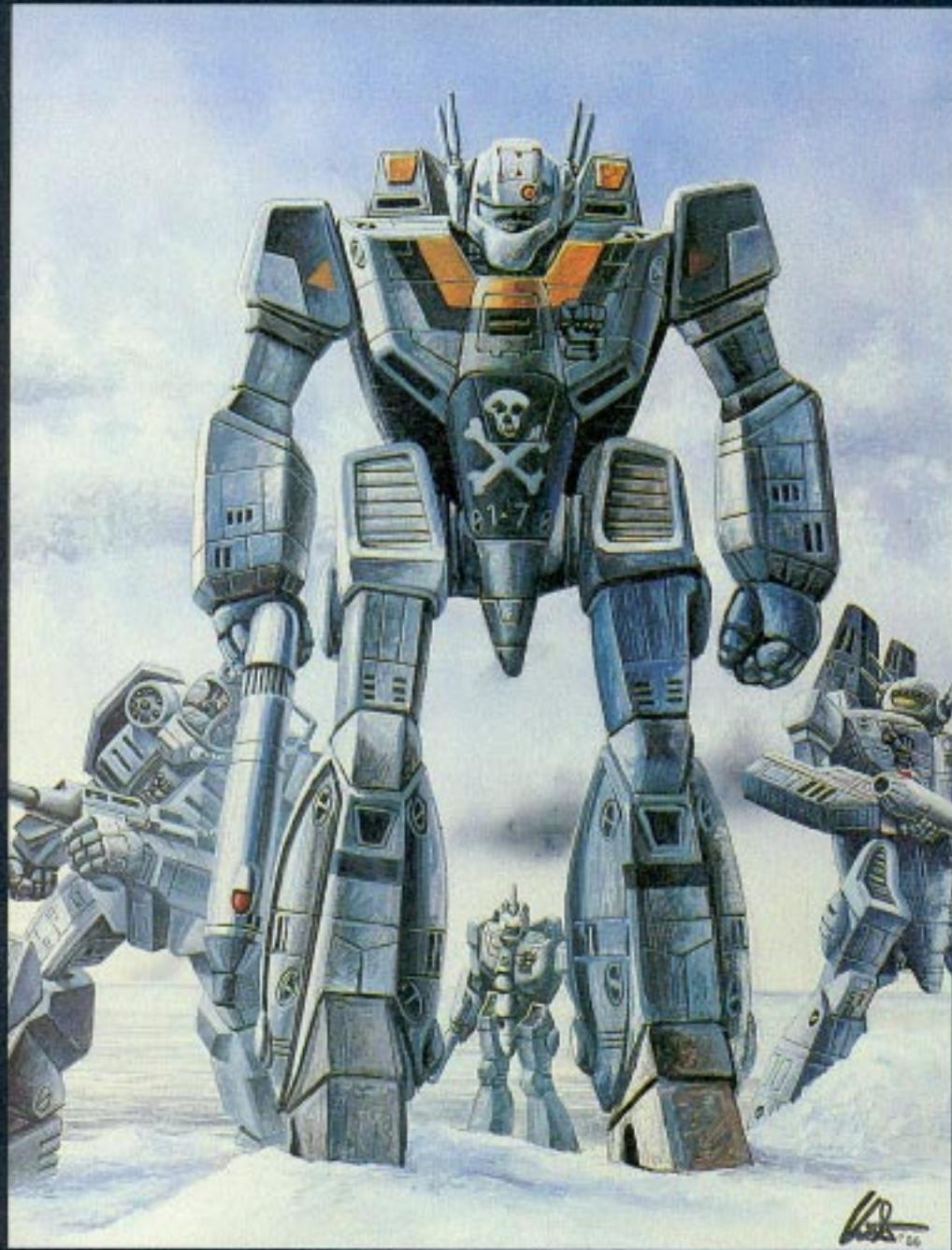
Arm joints broken: No weapons can be fired from the arm, -20% to chances to repair it.

Body and brain casing cracked: The same effects as body cracked and brain casing cracked combined. All damage and penalties are cumulative..

Brain casing broken: Automatically deactivated, -20 to hit with all weapons, -20 meters/turn on movement, 55% chance of malfunction, -50% to chances to repair.

Explosion: Everyone within 10 meters takes 7d10 damage (RS check defense).

BATTLETECH



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THE MOST SECRET

by Thomas Kane

There was once a war in which the good guys escaped by the skin of their teeth. The most powerful foe they faced had developed a wide array of secret weapons, including subsonic cruise missiles, nerve gas, submarine-launched missiles, intermediate-range ballistic missiles, rocket-powered fighters, jet fighters and fighter/bombers, miniature attack submarines, antiaircraft rockets, and some of the most advanced and heavily armed ships, planes, and tanks in existence. Its armed forces were well-trained, well-armed, and devoted to their cause. This nation maintained death camps in which millions of people were executed by increasingly sophisticated means of extermination, and it had an avowed policy of conquering the world and building an empire to last for a thousand years.

This foe was on the verge of developing atomic weapons, intercontinental ballistic missiles, orbital satellites, manned space-plane bombers, intercontinental-range jet bombers, and more, when it started its final drive for victory. That nation and its allies finally fell under the weight of nearly the entire world's armies after a six-year war. But it had been close — closer than anyone could have imagined.

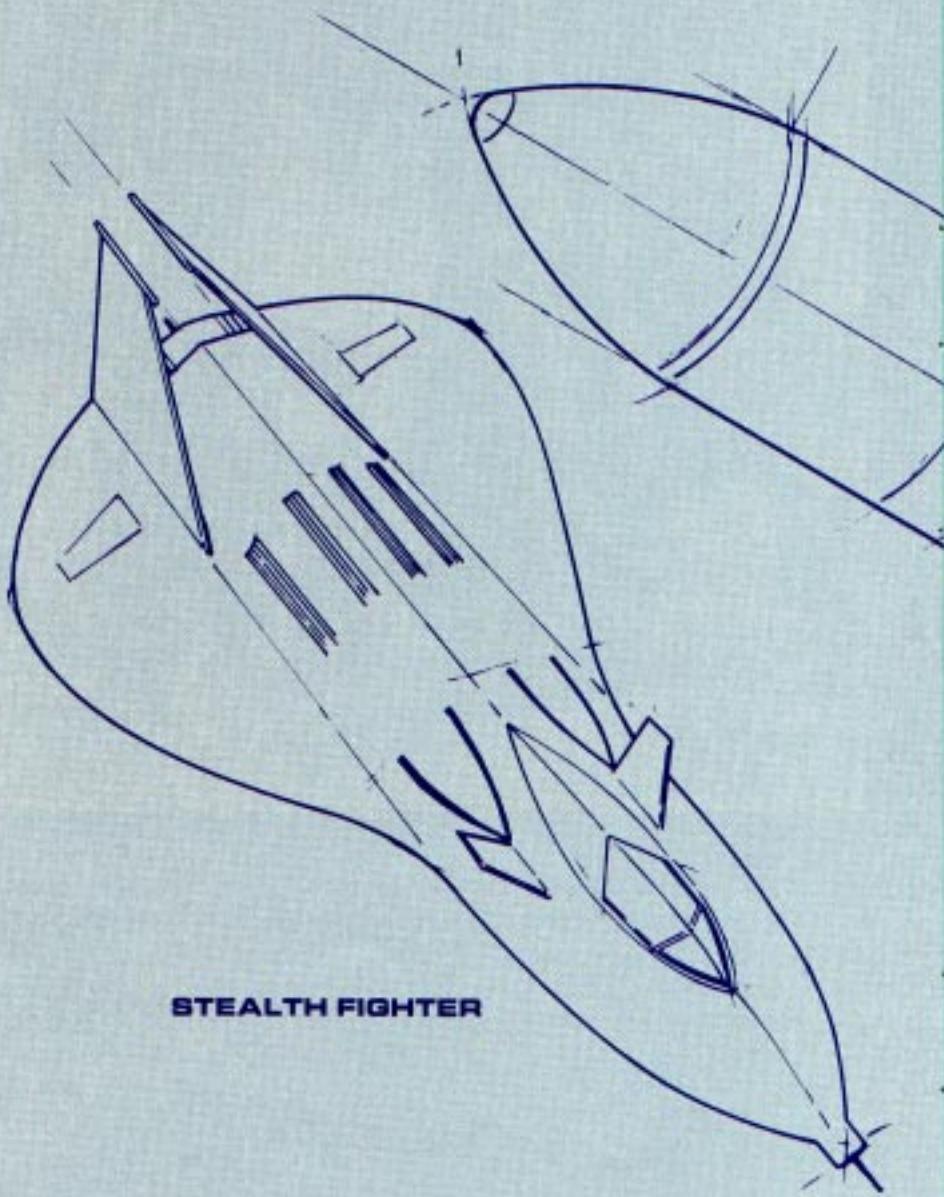
Since World War II, technology has unquestionably become the best ally that any nation could have in wartime — and the greatest treasure any agent could steal or protect. What super-secret projects are world governments developing now? The details, problems, and intrigues of such projects can inspire many adventures in TOP SECRET® and TOP SECRET/S.I.™ espionage games. In addition to improving a scenario's realism, use of basic information about actual secret research plans in espionage games adds depth to the campaign, showing what problems trouble the governments that develop them and how scientists plan to solve those problems.

Secret aircraft

The U.S. Air Force does not have large numbers of aircraft. It hopes that the ones it has are fast, agile, and powerful enough to take the place of large squadrons. Keeping aircraft safe in battle is extremely important, and engineers constantly struggle to make airplanes more difficult to detect and more deadly in combat. Several projects are on the boards to do those very things.

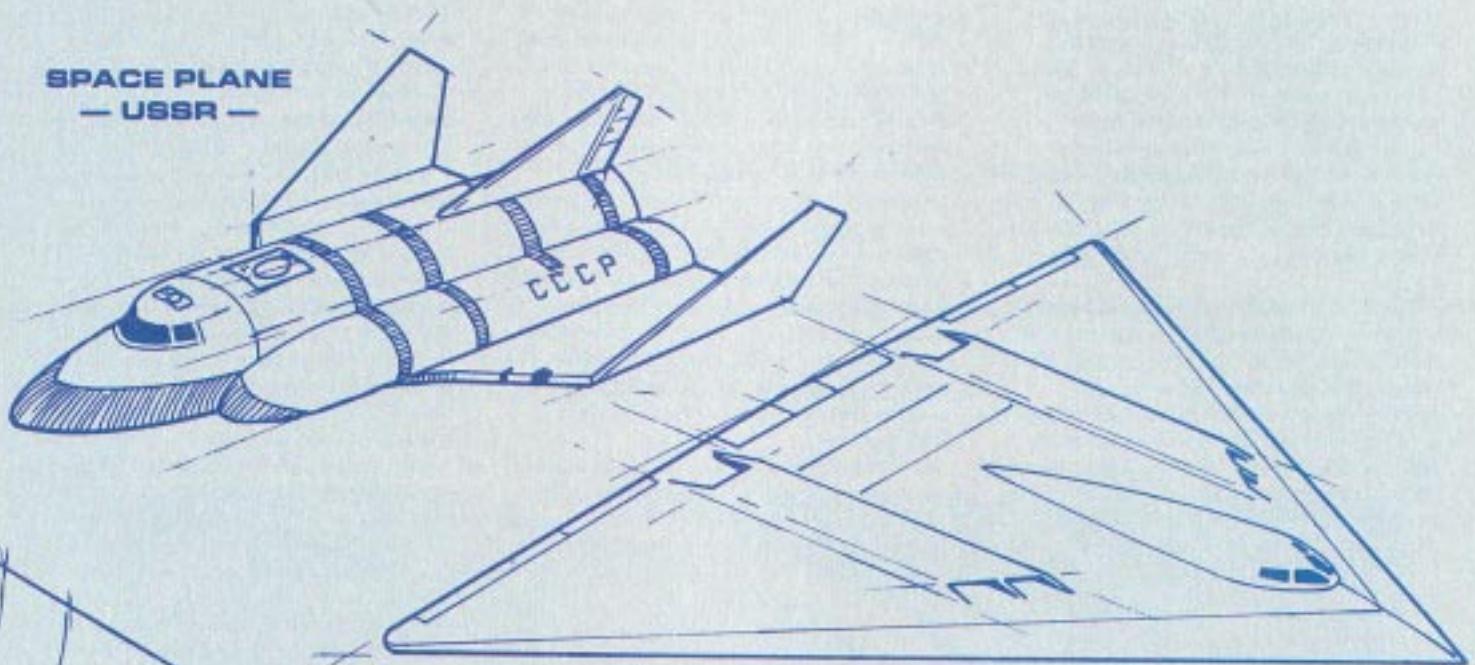
Stealth: In the desert north of Los Angeles, a secret factory has been built in

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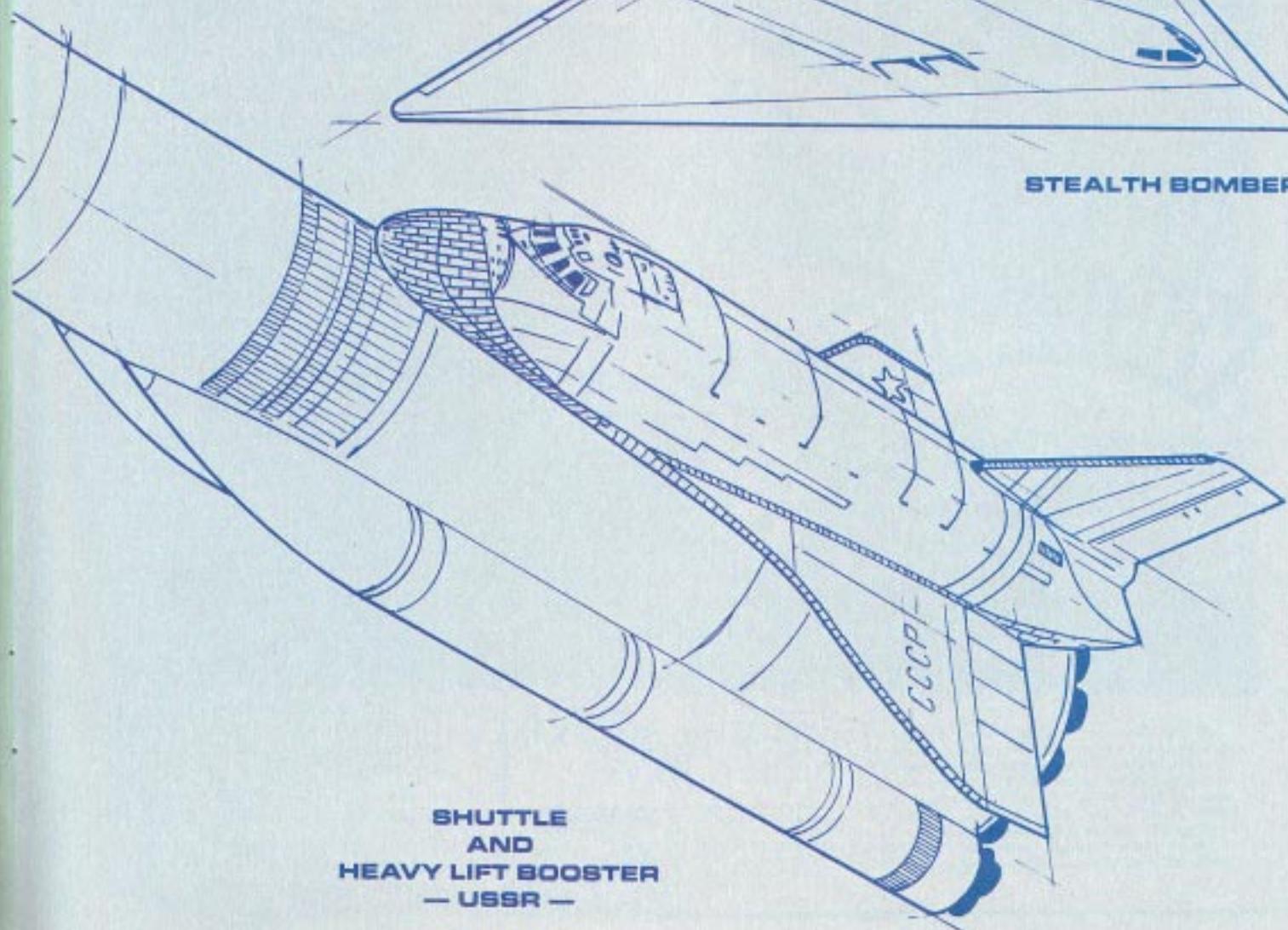
OF SECRETS

SPACE PLANE
— USSR —



STEALTH BOMBER

SHUTTLE
AND
HEAVY LIFT BOOSTER
— USSR —



a tan, windowless building with a great door the size of an airplane. The factory looks like a prison — but the barbed wire atop the fence arcs outward, not inward. This is where prototypes of "Stealth" aircraft are made. The U.S. Air Force will not admit that Stealth exists, but it is certain that the United States is designing an airplane invisible to all radar and detection.

Actually, two Stealth airplanes are under development. One plane is the Northrop Advanced-Technology Bomber (ATB); the other is Lockheed's Stealth airplane, the F-19 fighter. The bomber is meant to destroy mobile ballistic missiles on the ground in wartime. The F-19 could be used for espionage in times of peace, conducting surveillance near radar stations. In battle, the Stealth fighter would be best suited for eliminating antiaircraft batteries prior to a major air raid. Stealth cruise missiles are also under development.

The ATB would be especially interesting to agents. Anything that can destroy ICBM bases is a threat to "the other side's" security. If ATBs could find missiles and destroy them without being detected, they could quickly render the Soviet Union defenseless. Only by launching their missiles in a preemptive strike could the Soviets protect themselves if they suspected ATBs were in use. Even a fleet of Stealth

bombers probably could not destroy all of a superpower's missiles, since submarine-based ICBMs would still ensure deterrence. But neither side would risk a war caused by Stealth.

The theory behind Stealth is fairly simple. A radar set emits a microwave signal and detects signals which are reflected back. If the microwave signal is absorbed, no image is presented. The radar operator assumes that nothing was there and that the microwave signal kept on going. There are materials that absorb microwaves; ferrites, like those used in magnetic tape, are excellent for this purpose. Even steel balls embedded in rubber absorb radar. Stealth engineers look for radar-absorbing materials that are strong enough to serve in aircraft construction. If the radar absorbent material were simply carried on a plane, the extra weight would slow the craft to a remarkable (and fatal) degree. Various epoxies may absorb radar, yet may be strong enough to be used in aircraft construction. If iron filings or needles are mixed into the epoxy, the substance is even more absorbent. The exact materials used in testing Stealth technology are highly secret.

A Stealth airplane must not emit microwaves itself. It uses a special radar system which creates false images using the microwaves that enemy radar emits. Cur-

rent airplanes depend on electronic warfare to do this, dropping decoys to fool radar and using powerful signals to flood enemy sets with microwaves or project false images. The exact nature of Stealth radar defense depends entirely on the aircraft's shape. Additionally, in a Stealth airplane, alcohol is mixed with the fuel to stop ice crystals from forming in the exhaust; this prevents a contrail, so people on the ground cannot see where the plane has passed. The aircraft's engines are muffled, making it close to noiseless. Finally, infrared energy must be eliminated. The aircraft's engines have inlets to mix cold air with the hot exhaust. When the air leaves the airplane, it will be cool — untraceable by antiaircraft missiles.

Straight lines and angles reflect micro waves; curves and bumpy areas do not — and thus are much used on Stealth design. Because jet engines show up with ease in radar sets, a Stealth aircraft would certainly have some sort of baffle over its engines. The edges of wings also are highly visible in radar, so "ram wedges" (sawtooth-like devices which cause microwaves to bounce back and forth until they are absorbed) may be used on such surfaces.

Most secrets of Stealth design involve reconciling radar-absorbent shapes with aerodynamics. Rumor has it that the Stealth aircraft is a flying wing, shaped like a large, flat triangle. The original "Flying Wing," a USAF plane called the YB-49, was notoriously uncontrollable and crashed so often that the program was abandoned. It is suspected that at least one Stealth prototype has crashed. Because of secrecy, the family of the pilot may never have learned how the pilot died. In espionage scenarios, Stealth accidents may also prove to be sabotage.

The Advanced Tactical Fighter: No prototype of the Advanced Tactical Fighter (ATF) has been built. Indeed, no exact goals for the ATF's performance have been settled on. Seven companies are still working on designs for this airplane. In espionage campaigns, this may lead to corporate spying. The company with the lowest bid for the best airplane will get the contract, so all involved corporations will be anxious to know what their competitors are bidding. Economic maneuvers are also possible; companies can attempt to take control of other companies, gaining the contract in the bargain. Note that none of this has actually occurred on the ATF project; it merely could in the game.

The ATF is intended to be an extremely agile airplane. Computers control every part of the ATF guiding the airplane automatically so that the pilot may concentrate on other things. The ATF will gather so much information from radar, infrared sensors, and sensors within the airplane that the pilot could not possibly keep track of it all. A computer must digest the information and tell the pilot only the important parts. The pilot will be able to guide an ATF by voice command. By merely

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looking at a target, the pilot can aim missiles. An ATF will be able to display a "gods-eye" view of the environment to the pilot, showing the local battlefield with the aircraft's location. Computers in the ATF will advise the pilot on the best flight course for a given situation.

Interestingly enough, the ATF is unstable in flight. This makes it extremely maneuverable, ready to turn in any direction. It also means that a computer must constantly readjust the wing surfaces; otherwise, the pilot could not possibly direct it. The ATF's engine will contain "thrust vectors," fins which redirect its propulsion and make it even more maneuverable. Indeed, the ATF will be capable of turns so sharp that the pilot could be crushed by centrifugal forces.

Transatmospheric vehicles: Flying at 15 times the speed of sound, these airplanes could take off on a normal runway and fly to Earth orbit. Transatmospheric vehicles (TAVs, or spaceplanes) are being developed by several nations. Britain is far ahead of any other country in this program with the British Aerospace HOTOL, a robotic, air-breathing craft longer than the American Space Shuttle (with a top-secret propulsion system). These craft could circle the globe in less than an hour. Passenger flights in these airplanes are anticipated. TAV warplanes would combine the advantages of ICBMs and traditional bombers; they could rapidly cross continents but return to base after take-off. These vehicles would make space launches much easier and more frequent, making them useful for reconnaissance flights. Like satellites, they could fly anywhere on the globe safely, being quite maneuverable.

TAVs are not new (Nazi Germany had plans for a "skip-glide" bomber that would reach Earth orbit after being launched on a rail track), but there are still problems with the design. The engine which attains such high speed must be perfectly shaped —even at remarkably high temperatures. The whole airplane must be incredibly strong. In flight, it must withstand temperatures of 4000°F and give the passengers a comfortable environment. The aerodynamics of hypersonic flight are unknown. Designers hope to experiment with electronic models on "supercomputers." Some spaceplane designs involve rocket sleds which carry the plane into the air, then drop away. Other designs would be released from normal airplanes.

Space programs

A strong space program is extremely helpful to any modern military force. Satellites allow communication between continents to hold armies together. Orbiting cameras take detailed photographs deep in enemy countries to verify treaties, watch for hostile actions, plan strategies, and learn of secrets. Radio signals from satellites direct ships at sea and guide missiles to their targets. On a smaller

scale, espionage depends on satellites, too. Secret agents must also communicate between continents, guide themselves in the wilderness, and use pictures of enemy territory. The military space programs of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and other countries are sensitive; even scientific space launches are monitored. [See DRAGON® issues #120-123 for Merle Rasmussen's four-part series on space espionage in the TOP SECRET game world.]

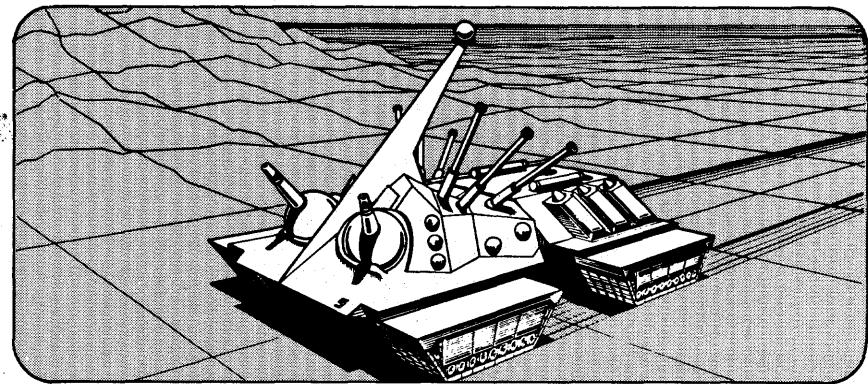
The Soviet heavy-lift launcher: This rocket is meant to carry extremely heavy cargoes into space. It would be needed for the U.S.S.R.'s ambitious space program, such as the manned Mars mission that the Soviets hint may occur within the next 10 years. The heavy-lift launcher could also carry powerful military cargoes. One source believes that it could carry objects weighing over 100 tons into orbit. Most depictions of this vehicle show it to be a huge, fat rocket with four strap-on boosters. [*The first flight of this super-booster came on May 15, 1987, and it was a success. Future flights of this vehicle, called the Energia booster by the Soviets, may be used for placing solar-power satellite stations in orbit, launching massive space station modules or Space Shuttles, or for assorted military purposes.*]

The Soviet Space Shuttle: The Soviet Union is designing a reusable space shuttle

like that used by the United States. It will have certain features which the U.S. shuttle lacks, such as jet engines for maneuverable landings. The cargo bay will have a larger capacity than the American shuttle as the rear engines on the American shuttle do not appear in the Soviet design. The Soviet shuttle, despite at least one apparent accident in which the heavy aircraft transporting it slid off a runway on landing, could be ready for launch within a couple of years, using the heavy-lift booster mentioned above.

The Soviet spaceplane: Certain satellite photos and other photo sources have revealed what appears to be a Soviet rocket-launched spaceplane. Once launched, the manned spaceplane would go into orbit and fly to the ground on its return. Many believe that this is a model of a space shuttle; others fear that calling this a "shuttle" is "mirror-imaging," assuming that the Soviets will always imitate the United States. Still others feel that the spaceplane may be more sinister — a new warhead for a nuclear missile. Both superpowers are developing multiple attacking reentry vehicles (MARVs). Many of these bombs could be carried in one missile, which could fly across a whole country bombing one target after another. Modern missiles can carry many warheads, but they are merely used to make a "foot-

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print," dropping many bombs within several hundred miles of each other. We do not know what the Soviet "spaceplane" actually is.

ASAT weapons: Wars in space would not be like science-fiction duels. Electronic jamming and attempts to take over enemy satellites would dominate such a scenario. Thus, nations are interested in details on enemy satellites and their radio frequencies. Many attempts would be made to destroy satellites with unmanned antisatellite (ASAT) space launches. Both the United States and Russia have tested ASAT weapons. The Soviets have an ASAT weapon currently ready for use at their Tyuratam space complex. It is a rocket-launched satellite which orbits into a position close to an enemy satellite, then explodes, releasing many steel pellets. These pellets collide with the enemy satellite at incredible velocities (many kilometers per second), destroying it. The American ASAT system is a two-stage missile launched from an F-16 fighter. In one test, it destroyed a target satellite with ease. The ASAT test was bitterly opposed, since a functioning scientific satellite (owned by the Air Force) was the target.

The existence of ASATs makes space accidents dangerous. If an orbiting vehicle suddenly breaks up for some reason, there is always the suspicion that it was deliberately destroyed. For example, if the early-

warning satellites which watch missile fields were destroyed, a crisis would result. Most military satellites have backup satellites; if one satellite is destroyed, the other can replace it. Also, some satellites can be given highly elliptical orbits, making them hard to hit. Soviet spy satellites are often designed for one mission only, orbited for a short time, then discarded. When a new one is needed, a new one is launched. American spy satellites are usually reused over many missions. This means that there are fewer of them, and they are more vulnerable to attack.

Supercomputers

Many upcoming military projects require far better computers than are now available. The ATF needs a myriad of electronic devices, and the process of developing transatmospheric vehicles demands computer modeling. All space projects require powerful guidance, maintenance, and tracking computers. Computers are also useful in espionage; they can store and process huge amounts of data, and secrets can be encoded in silicon chips. Computers are being used to investigate public records: picking out patterns, noticing where individuals are during certain events, or finding other "coincidences." Often, by comparing several sets of unclassified data, one can learn extremely important secrets.

Information on computer design is harder to protect than the secrets of military projects. Most computer research is done by private companies without government secrecy. Furthermore, the products are then sold to the public. Spies can buy these secret devices as easily as anyone. There are laws against exporting certain computers to hostile powers, like the Soviet Union, but computers can still be legally shipped to neutral countries, repackaged, and sent on to a restricted nation.

The primary requirement for building a supercomputer is reducing its size. In theory, one could make a current computer as smart as one wishes by adding more "chips." But as computers get larger, they become slower. The electricity simply has farther to go. Also, huge computers are too expensive and too bulky to use in airplanes. Many designs are being tested to speed up computers. Some designers are trying to place circuits that require many chips onto a single block of silicon. However, these compressed devices become quite hot and must be refrigerated. The circuits on these "monster chips" tend to break during use. A chip this large is too vulnerable to various stresses.

One way to circumvent this is to have the computer itself detect flawed areas and avoid them. Another approach is to make the chips a different way. At Livermore Laboratories, computer components are made by laser pantography. This involves putting the silicon wafer into a

mixture of chemicals, then using a laser beam to etch out circuits. These wafers are less fragile than the current kind, but they are also extremely expensive and slowly made. Photonics — computers which use light instead of electricity — are now being developed. Light beams can be distinguished by color and polarization. Many beams can cross the same area without interfering with each other. Therefore, a photon computer will be able to perform remarkable calculations.

Another important part of a supercomputer is the way in which it processes information. A current computer goes through data piece by piece. A supercomputer would use parallel processing, in which it breaks data down into small units and processes them all at once.

Undersea activities

A submarine's advantage over other warcraft is that it is hard to find. The very nature of undersea warfare depends on hiding and locating submarines. Now that submarines carry nuclear missiles, these problems are especially acute. The United States can track Soviet submarines using a vast array of microphones in the northwest part of the United States. This array can "hear" submarines on the other side of the planet. Presently, the Soviets cannot track ours — and there is no darker secret than the locations of American submarines. This very problem was at the core of several recent spy trials held in the U.S.A.

Maps of the ocean floor are vital for submarine maneuvers. With the right information, a submarine captain can hide amid shoals and reefs, escaping detection. From there, the sub can launch its missiles. Scientific ocean research is always watched. Recently, the Woods Hole Institute developed maps of America's Atlantic seaboard and planned to publish them. However, the Navy demanded and got the maps. They would have been invaluable to the Soviets.

Conclusions

Actual top-secret projects may differ from the descriptions given here. This information was taken from several sources, including issues of Popular Science magazine, the U.S. Defense Department's "Soviet Military Power" resource, and the *Boston Globe's* "War and Peace in The Nuclear Age." The information was slightly altered to make it more suitable for game use. None of these secret projects have yet been completed (*except for the Soviet superbooster*). This is why no technical details have been given on them. One could run a scenario where the PCs recover stolen plans for an ATE but the agents could not actually fly one. Nonetheless, secrets like these are what agents bargain for, lie for, kill for, and perhaps even die for.

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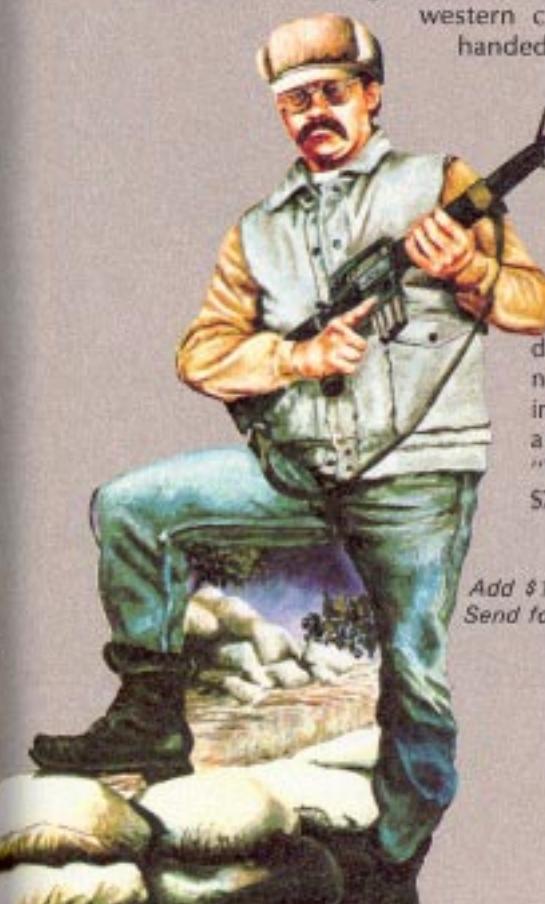
Allegheny Uprising

It was enough to make a man's mouth water. Computers, electric typewriters, jeeps, soybeans, canned food, medical supplies, arctic parkas, and (I swear) videotapes of every NFL game since 1992! No wonder those Civgov johnnies were falling all over themselves to find the place! Somebody had salted it all away in a secret government storage facility before the balloon went up, for his own personal hidey-hole, but whoever did it never got to benefit from it.

Allegheny Uprising is GDW's latest module for *Twilight: 2000*, which takes the characters to the backcountry of western Pennsylvania...the Allegheny Mountains. Working for the Civilian government, they must locate the secret supply cache known as SRS-17374-2 and arrange for the rescue and recovery of its contents. All the while, they must keep knowledge of the cache's existence a secret, remain uninvolved in the continuing local conflicts between the native inhabitants of the mountains and the interloping refugees who entered the area four years ago, and live to tell their grandchildren how they saved western civilization single-handed.

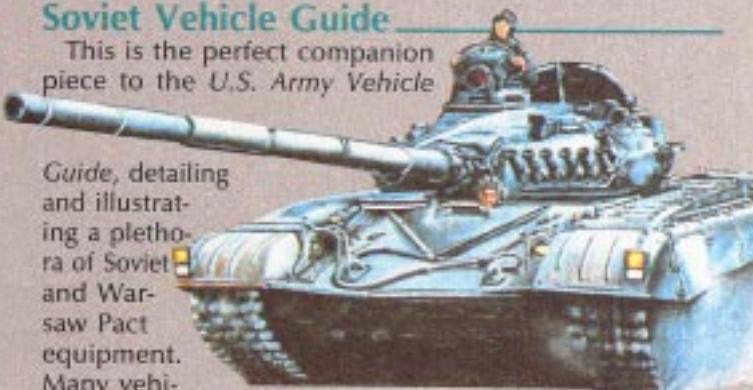
The module includes: a map of western Pennsylvania; historical details on recent events there; a rundown on the various marauders, bandits, and bands of ne'er-do-wells which infest the region; and a little surprise called "The White Death." \$7.00.

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Soviet Vehicle Guide

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Guide, detailing and illustrating a plethora of Soviet and Warsaw Pact equipment.

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The Marvel-Phile

The all-new Incredible Hulk® — and Hulkbusters™!

by Jeff Grubb

Roger (duh Boss) has been asking for the latest cast and crew of Bruce Banner's comic: the Hulk. Since I last wrote about them (in the Advanced Set, about a year ago), Bruce and the Hulk have been pulled apart, sent on a rampage, put back together, and returned to their joint roots as a gray-skinned monster that is nothing like the friendly just-wants-to-be-left-alone-to-smell-the-flowers kind of jade-green guy he was.

What can I say? He's just Incredible.

The HULK®

Robert Bruce Banner, physicist

F	IN (30)	Health: 175
A	EX (20)	
S	AM (50)	Karma: 70
E	MN (75)	
R	GD (10)	Resources: FE (2)
I	RM (30)	
P	RM (30)	Popularity: -20

KNOWN POWERS:

Body Armor: The gray Hulk's thick skin provides him with Amazing protection against physical attacks and Incredible protection against energy attacks.

Resistances: The new Hulk is no longer invulnerable to cold, heat, fire, and disease, but has Unearthly resistance to these attack forms.

Leaping: The new Hulk can leap up to 40 areas in a single turn.

Transformation: The new Hulk is currently co-existing with the form of its alter-ego, Bruce Banner. This transformation is triggered by the setting of the sun, which allows the Hulk persona to come out. The Hulk can resist the transformation by a Psyche FEAT roll made each round, just as Banner can, but no Karma may be added to these rolls. Banner's stats are:

F	A	S	E
PR	TY	TY	TY
R	I	P	
RM	GD	TY	

Health: 22 Karma: 46

Homing Instinct: For some unknown reason, the Hulk is able to locate the place at which he was "created" — Desert Base, New Mexico — with Class 3000 ability.

TALENTS: The new Hulk himself has no talents, but may pull ideas from his Banner personality by making an Intuition FEAT against Banner's Typical Psyche. Banner is an expert in physics and radiation, and receives a +1 CS in matters dealing with those subjects. Banner also





The separated Banner, in the meantime, was organizing his own force to hunt down his former alter-ego. Unlike Samson, Bruce planned to kill the monster. Banner revived the old Gamma Base, once the headquarters of Thunderbolt Ross's Hulk-hunting activities, and revived the Hulkbusters as well (see below). During this separation from the Hulk, Banner married Betty Ross, daughter of Thunderbolt Ross.

The physical separation of Hulk and Banner proved to be unhealthy for either, so their reintegration was necessary to save Banner's life. The Hulk was defeated by the combined forces of the East- and West-Coast Avengers, and his and Banner's bodies were re-merged by the Vision. To solidify the process, the rejoined Hulk/Banner was to be bathed in a tank of radioactive chemicals. The Hulk was driven into the tank, but was joined by an unwilling Rick Jones, who was pushed from behind by Thunderbolt Ross.

The result was the temporary creation of a "Teen Hulk" (who was really Rick Jones) that greatly resembled the previous jade-jawed giant, and a reversion of the Hulk/Banner persona to its more primitive, weaker, gray-skinned form. This Hulk currently is only active at night and does not appear during the day, even when Banner's adrenaline levels are raised.

In addition, while the previous Hulks were senseless, stupid, and inadvertently violent or resentful, this new gray Hulk has an evil, scheming personality matched with a keen, intelligent craftiness. It has locked itself into Banner-proof rooms and drunk itself into a stupor to prevent Banner from regaining control of his body.

SHIELD, Doc Samson, and Rick Jones are all searching for this new evil Hulk, while Banner tries to control this darker side

of his personality. Unlike previous incarnations, thoughts may be remembered or consciously blocked between the two personas. Both Banner and the Hulk have recently been made aware that, despite their own experiences, the government continues to produce, test, and stockpile G-Bombs.

The Hulkbuster's story: The original Hulkbusters were part of a force drawn from the U.S. Army and Air Force, under the command of Thunderbolt Ross, and were charged with the task of subduing the Hulk. This group fought the Hulk on a number of occasions, but was finally disbanded when the then-intelligent Hulk received a presidential pardon.

When Banner and the Hulk were separated and the Hulk persona escaped, Bruce Banner formed the second team of Hulkbusters to track down and destroy his former alter-ego. Saunders, Parmenter, La Roquette, Martel, and Takata were all brought in to form this specialized team. Each was an expert in his or her field, but their willingness to take risks in dangerous situations had left them all "Jonahs" — unable to get funding or support for their projects. Banner proposed to turn these five into a fighting team capable of destroying the Hulk. The new Hulkbusters, based in the rebuilt Gamma Base, had

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at their disposal a number of weapon systems, including a Hulklike test robot. The group came into conflict with Dot Samson at one of these tests, and the resulting battle between the Hulkbusters and Samson left one of the Hulkbusters, Carolyn Parmenter, dead.

Maddened by grief, Sam La Roquette swore vengeance on Samson, and he remains filled with hate and the determination to kill both the Hulk and Doc Samson. Martel wishes to capture; not destroy, the Hulk, and use the monster for study. Saunders seeks to keep La Roquette under control, and Takata remains the cool center of the team, trying to pull all the pieces together.

With the reintegration of the Hulk and Banner, the Hulkbusters were hired by SHIELD to capture or kill the Hulk. The team failed in combat with the "Teen Hulk," and most of its members were badly injured. Whether they will remain at Gamma Base to continue their Hulkbusting mission is not yet known.

Hulkbuster equipment: When the Hulkbusters go after their prey, only the best will do — but even that's not always good enough.

Walker-Flyer vehicle: This vehicle consists of two linked battle machines, each with a two-man crew. The Walker Vehicle

is a two-legged construct which carries the jet-powered Flyer until the two are separated for scouting or battle. The vehicles have the following statistics:

Walker Vehicle _____

Type: Off-road
Cost: MN (with Flyer)
Control: RM
Speed: EX
Body: IN
Protection: IN
Armament: Valence Disruptor (5-area range); can be set for Amazing, Monstrous, and Unearthly energy damage.

Flyer Vehicle _____

Type: Air
Cost: MN (with Walker)
Control: TY
Speed: IN
Body: RM
Protection: RM
Armament: Hypersonic Screamers — 2-area range; inflicts Unearthly sonic damage

The Walker Vehicle, though heavily armored, proved ungainly in combat with Doc Samson; the Flyer Vehicle, more lightly armored, proved to be vulnerable to the

disruptor weapon of the Walker in the same fight. The resulting crash of the Flyer caused Carolyn Parmenter's death.

Hulkbuster Body Armor: This black metal battlesuit is an apparent variation on the Mandroid armor design, upgunned to handle the Hulk.

ABILITY MODIFIERS:

Raises Agility by 1 rank
(Maximum of EXCELLENT)
Raises Strength by 2 ranks
(Maximum of REMARKABLE)
Raises Endurance by 1 rank
(Maximum of REMARKABLE)

The armor's osmium-steel hide provides Amazing protection from physical and energy attacks. Most other systems and sensors have been bypassed to provide an Unearthly-strength neuro-stunner, with a range of two areas, which inflicts full energy damage on its target.

Neuro-Neutralizer: This yoke-shaped device emits a low-frequency wave which neutralizes brain activity with Amazing ability. The being so neutralized must first be subdued and placed into the yoke, which is not the easiest thing to do with a thousand pounds of enraged Hulk. Q

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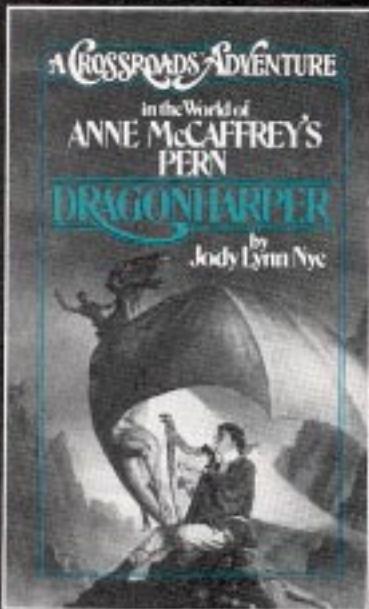
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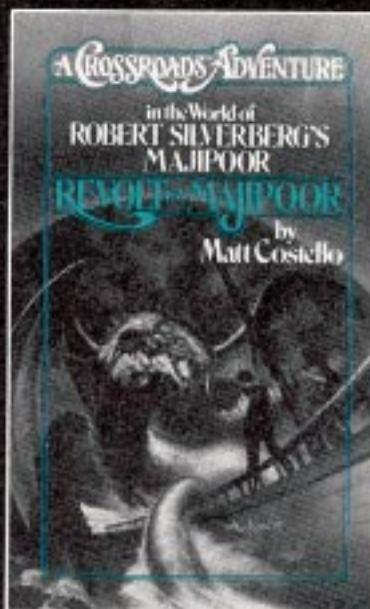
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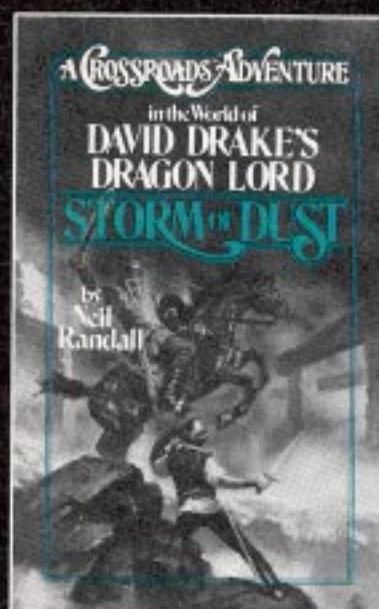
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The Role of Computers

A little Black Magic in the Realms of Darkness

by Hartley and Patricia Lesser

Photos courtesy of Strategic Simulations, Inc., and Datasoft.

Your response to this column continues to be most gratifying. We appreciate your valuable comments, as well as your game hints. As space permits, we shall include those hints and the names of the gamers who offer the most timely game advice.

Black Magic's spell

For our first review, a surprise adventure/arcade game has appeared from Datasoft — *Black Magic*. Designed by Peter Ward, the game's first screens recall those arcade games of the early '80s: entertainments like Miner 2049 and others of its ilk. Multiple-level screens require the player to be quite handy with a joystick in order to avoid battalions of unfriendly beings and retrieve a variety of goodies.

With formats for both the Apple II computer family and the Commodore 64/128, *Black Magic* finds your onscreen character involved in a struggle with an evil warlock named Zahgrim. Zahgrim has turned Anakar the Wise to stone, leaving the kingdom of MariGold open to the evil invasion of the warlock. The character must find six magical eyes and put them back into the stone statue that once was Anakar. When this feat is done, the secret of Zahgrim's location is learned, allowing you to defeat him once and for all.

With over 100 different screens and eight different magical spells, you also have an onscreen display that constantly informs you of your character's status. The character's experience, class, number of arrows, number of spells, health, food level, and the number of magical eyes discovered are all recorded in a window at the bottom of the screen. As an Apprentice, you initially have only a Blink or Vanish spell. But should you collect the onscreen icon of a spell as you maneuver your character, the total number of spells available to your character increases by one. The same applies to your food level and number of arrows — find them

onscreen, and when your character moves over their screen icons, the acquisitions are added to the booty. You are promoted to Wizard, Sorcerer, and Necromancer as you acquire points.

We were fully prepared not to like this game. However, we now find *Black Magic* quite addicting, as the action is fast and some amount of strategy is involved in successfully completing the quest. Such creatures as demons and ghosts are quite injurious to your total health points, while trolls offer aid in exchange for food. Watch out for the rocs, though; these birds carry you to regions you won't care to visit.

Not all of your adversaries are living, however. Spiked beds, guillotines, lava pits, and stalactites are constant impediments to your adventure and must be dealt with cautiously. For instance, there are many water pools that block your progress; by casting a Chill spell, you can turn water to ice and cross these obstacles without worry. To cast a spell, you simply depress both of your joystick's fire buttons. A message appears onscreen ("SELECT SPELL TO CAST"), and you move your joystick until the spell you wish to cast appears in the window at the bottom of the screen. When the correct spell is named, you press the lower fire button.

Certainly, this is one of the better games in the current crop of arcade/adventure games, as the tasks required to complete the quest are quite varied. You must also rescue prisoners as you wander the lands and caverns of the game's environment. The final contest takes place in the castle of Zahgrim, otherwise known as the Red One. Check this game out at your dealer!

In the Realms of Darkness

For several years, Strategic Simulations, Inc., based in Mountain View, California, has managed to find and produce adventure games whose caliber is far above

the norm. SSI continues its winning tradition with the release of *Realms of Darkness*, the brainchild of two talented programmers, Gary Smith and Duon Nghiem. This fantasy role-playing game encompasses a broad range of environments, and features the ability to input not only text from your lead character directly into the game, but normal adventure game activities, as well.

The graphics are not of the high quality one might wish to see, especially when played on an Apple II series computer. Unlike *Might And Magic* from issue #122, in which the onscreen city and dungeon walls are solid in appearance, *Realms of Darkness* presents simple line views of walls and other structures. When confronted by a specific sort of opponent, you'll find the onscreen representation of it to be less than you might expect. The drawings are reminiscent of earlier adventure games, such as those created and produced by Sierra On-Line (Coarsegold, Calif.), with the Wizard and the Princess and their On-Line Adventure series.

The graphics in *Realms of Darkness* were created using a paint program called *The Graphics Magician* by Polarware (Geneva, Ill.). We have seen far better graphics in other games which were produced by this graphics program. What this could mean is that this pair of programmers have more strength in creating the actual story and game design than the onscreen representations. However, we found that we grew accustomed to the graphics as we became more involved in play — so much so that after the first few minutes, the lack of solid modeling onscreen didn't affect game play or enjoyment whatsoever.

The strong points of this game include a wealth of puzzles that must be deciphered. In addition to moving around, fighting, and finding treasures, your characters must solve increasingly difficult



Screen #1: A Priest stands prepared — he hopes — for anything he meets in the Realms of Darkness.

scenarios. We've been at *Realms of Darkness* for over a week and have only scratched the surface of the game. Also, most of the game is menu-driven, meaning you don't have to learn a variety of commands in order to play the game. If you prefer, you can play the game using a joystick. If you happen to stumble across an object on the game, that object's name is displayed onscreen. You then enter G for GET, and a listing of your characters is presented. You simply "mark" the character who is to pick up the object, and the game automatically adds that item to that character's backpack.

Complementing the game are several utility programs that enable you to restore saved games, manage your characters in various ways, reinitialize and repair disks. An overview of the game system, as well as in-depth documentation and partial maps, eases the novice into game play quickly.

Players must complete seven quests. Scenario One has your party of eight characters searching for two lost pieces of a magical sword; Scenario Five has a four-level dungeon; Scenario Seven has a final battle that culminates in a special animation sequence. Additionally, because of the game's range, you can split your party into any number of smaller parties (from one to eight characters may make up a single party). However, keep in mind that the more parties you have, the harder they are to control — and the more difficult it is to defeat opponents who get tougher as the game progresses. We found that two parties worked best until the characters became stronger through their adventuring gains. At no time did we find four parties to be advantageous.

Once you've broken up your parties, you can determine how great a time delay should be allowed by the program in switching from one party to another for your input. When the program switches to



Screen #2: An Apprentice stands before the Blind Statue of Anakar the Wise, ready to set out on a quest in Black Magic.

a secondary party, the first party is put into a state of "suspended time" — nothing happens to them during your interaction with the second party. Then, when you wish, you can Regroup your parties; when they meet one another in the deadly halls of a dungeon, they are automatically merged. Another important matter to bear in mind is the fact that once your party is separated into individual groups, each group will require its own light source.

Exactly what kind of characters are available for play? For those inclined to the martial arts, you can create a Friar. This character has a foot fetish; if you "arm" this character with hands and feet, the damage he or she can inflict upon an enemy is great. The Friar can also develop healing skills (a very desirable trait in this game), as well as the ability to stun adversaries. Once an enemy is stunned, the Friar can then decide how best to dispatch the foe once and for all. As the Friar reaches the upper levels of experience, he or she can develop an "ironwill" ability that allows him to avoid the damage of an inflicted blow. The player should also bear in mind that it's pretty tough for a Friar to manage a flying kick if the character is weighted down by plate armor and a shield.

One of our favorite characters is the Barbarian, an awesome fighter who eventually gains berserker ability (berserking causes great damage against foes who are the focus of this fury). The Barbarian also gains thieving abilities, which come in handy when he finds unopened chests or traps that require dexterity to successfully disarm.

What fantasy adventure game would be complete without a good, standard Fighter? As a combat-trained member of your party, your Fighter is usually in the forefront of the action, and a Fighter can arm himself with any armor or shield that can be purchased or found. Two others in the

fighting class of characters are the Knight and the Champion. The Knight possesses all of the weapon skills that a Fighter does but can also acquire Priestly spells, while the Champion is more inclined to acquire Sorcery spells. Both are helpful elements in any adventuring party.

Speaking of Sorcery and Priestly spells, these are normally wielded by either a Sorcerer or a Priest. The Priest's abilities with spells encompasses the healing arts, although this character also has several offensive spells and can be quite proficient with an edged weapon. The Sorcerer is quite weak when it comes to combat, but can be a powerhouse with magic. We found even multiple opponents were immediately destroyed when the Sorcerer gains enough experience to cast major spells. The Sorcerer must be protected, though, due to this character's physical weakness and lack of hand-to-hand combat ability.

The Thief, another important member of the party, proves to be handy when it comes to opening chests or disarming traps. When it comes time for combat, the Thief can sometimes strike a first blow against an enemy, as he has learned to move silently and thus surprise foes — a deadly ability for any character.

Characters are generated by the computer, but you never have to accept the computer's roll. We found that the best way to proceed is to determine what sort of characters would be most useful in a party of eight. The manual suggests four Fighter types, one Thief, one Sorcerer, and two Priests. Since the Barbarian can double as a competent Thief, the following group did well in our group, in this order: Up front — one Barbarian, one Knight (with Priestly spells), one Champion (with Sorcery spells), and one Friar; second rank — two Priests and two Sorcerers. As you can readily see, this also gives a fairly even makeup for two parties, should you wish

Minimum Scores for Character Classes (Realms of Darkness)

	Wisdom	Intelligence	Agility	Strength	Vitality
Fighter	—	—	—	14	—
Sorcerer	—	14	—	—	—
Priest	14	—	—	—	—
Thief	—	—	—	14	—
Champion	—	13	10	14	—
Knight	14	—	10	14	10
Barbarian	—	—	14	14	14
Friar	13	—	15	12	10

to split the group in an area search.

The table in this article summarizes the eight classes' minimum scores. Once you know what sort of character you want, it's a simple matter to determine if the statistics rolled by the computer are sufficient for the character you are trying to create. From the game's Main Menu, you select the "Character Utilities" option, which takes you to a sub-menu where you select "Create A Character." Each attribute has a range of from 1 to 20 points; you simply press your RETURN key to begin.

The computer screen displays the five scores. By using the up and down arrow keys, you then assign each of the five scores to one of the attributes. For example, the computer generates a 5, 18, 11, 14, and 15. You want to create a Barbarian. Checking your chart, you note that the highest required scores are for Agility, Strength, and Vitality (minimum of 14 each). You have enough points on this computer roll to create your Barbarian, so you move the rolled 18 to the Strength attribute, the 15 to the Agility attribute, and the 14 to the Vitality attribute. You have an 11 and 5 remaining, and must assign those to the Intelligence and Wisdom attributes. No one ever said that a Barbarian had to be smart!

This process continues until all eight characters have been created to your specifications. If you don't like a series of rolls, press the ESCAPE key and re-roll the character. This is one of the toughest adventure games we've played, as far as obtaining above-average scores in all attributes is concerned. We seemed to have been rolling forever just to obtain two very powerful characters, three decent characters, and three mediocre characters.

When spell-casters have higher ability scores, they can cast more spells at low levels. However, at the start of the game, the spell-casters receive the same small number of spell points (two) with which to cast spells.

Once your party has been assembled, you can wander around the city of Grail as you look for the Hall of Heroes, Guard House (where you receive your first quest), Tavern, Inn, Blacksmith Shop, and the Provisioner. Each of these locations is important, as you purchase your weapons at the Blacksmith Shop, food at the Provisioners, and so forth. A Temple can be

found outside the city gates to handle such matters as removing poison from a character or bringing someone back to life from ashes or dust. The latter niceties, however, can be rather expensive.

Your characters must equip themselves with weapons, food, and other appropriate items. Then, it's off to the outside world to find the dungeons and whatever else is of importance to succeed in this highly entertaining adventure. Don't expect to sit down and finish play in a couple of days. Each scenario becomes more and more complex, and you could find several weeks under your belt before a satisfactory conclusion is reached for even one of the scenarios.

Due to this investment of time, the game's authors were wise enough to include a "save-game-in-progress" feature. Believe me: you'll count your blessings each time you reinstall that saved game, after your party goes down in ignominious defeat at the hands of some heinous henches. Additionally, you can always inspect your characters during play. This ensures that you won't press forward on a particular scenario when one or two important members of your party lack the necessary hit points to continue with a dungeon investigation. We recommend that, as hit and spell points are depleted, you leave the dungeon and head for the nearest locale for rest and recovery before continuing.

Mapping — your favorite activity, right? — is very important in *Realms of Darkness*, as there are many secret passageways, traps, and teleportation areas. Even a map sometimes doesn't help in deciphering these locales: some of them are one-way, and others are illusory.

Another aspect incorporated into this offering is the "Adventure Mode" of play. This allows your lead character to talk with beings and handle objects found along your way. You press RETURN, and a window appears at the top of the screen. You type in what you wish accomplished, such as "Talk to the statue," "Climb the rubble," "Start the lawnmower," or "Kill the beast." The computer then completes the activity and gives you a message in return, telling you what has occurred as the result of your action. To return to normal play, press the ESCAPE key and use either the keyboard or joystick to move your party in the direction you wish.

Other single-letter commands that are keyed directly into the game as you move along include D for Down, U for Up, O for opening an unlocked door, and L for unlocking a door (but only if a party member has the correct key). Once you get through a locked door, write down all those clues that are brought to your attention. As each scenario requires a puzzle to be solved, these clues are needed to fit this jigsaw puzzle together.

There's plenty of magic available here, including seven levels of Sorcerer and Priest spells. A typical Level 1 Sorcerer spell book could contain Absentmindedness, Ignite, Fireball, Light, and Identify Item; a Level 6 spell book might contain Valhalla Spirit, Blizzard, Disarm and Identify, Reflection, and Teleport. Three of these spells are for combat only, while one only works in the presence of a treasure chest. Level 1 spells for a Priest could include Restore Sight, Pray, Heal, Peace, Crossfire, and Light; a Level 6 spell book might contain Acid Rain, Restore Ashes, Restore Lost Levels, and Cell Rejuvenation. These spells are definitely needed as you move further into the different environments in *Realms of Darkness*.

Before closing this review, we have a couple of other handy hints. Never give rare items to any of your first four characters. Never drop keys behind doors that those keys unlock. Always have more than one light source (spells can be used, but save those for emergencies). Watch out for false passwords. Last, don't be afraid to run when you have to. *Realms of Darkness* is enjoyable (despite the mediocre graphics), and you'll immerse yourself in its secrets for many, many hours.

The clue corner

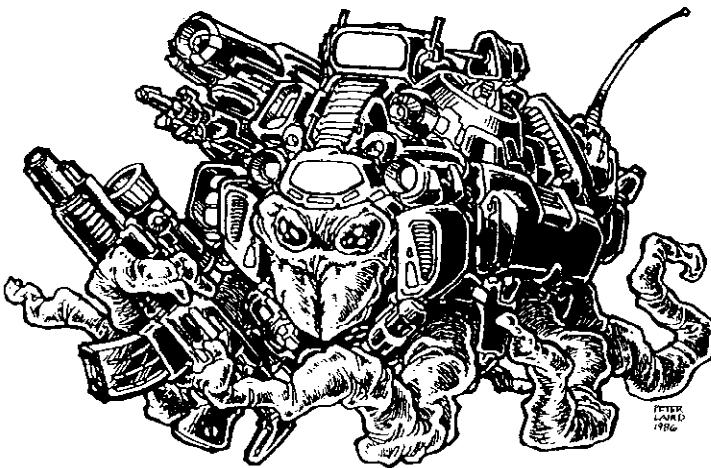
Starting with this column, we will provide answers (when possible) to problems that readers seem to be having with specific areas of certain fantasy role-playing computer games. In order for a clue to be warranted, we must receive several requests that delineate the same problem. The area of difficulty cannot be one that is easily taken care of; there must be some difficulty involved. Also, if you happen to have hints that you consider to be of value, please send them to us. We'll describe the hints that are the most timely, with the name of the gamer who submitted the clue. With so many people reading DRAGON Magazine, this is a perfect opportunity to help other gamers.

Readers with specific problems (or other comments regarding the column) should send a letter directly to us at: 179 Pebble Place, San Ramon CA 94583. No phone calls, please.

Kevin Wyatt, of Pasadena, Maryland, has addressed an adventure quandary confronting him in *The Bard's Tale*. He writes:

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trapped in the first level of Kylearan's Tower. I answer the Golden Riddle and get teleported to a place I can't get out of. I've tried every spell in the book (I think) and kicked until all my characters had broken toes. How do I get out?"

We think that all you need to do, once you've been teleported to that dark area, is to look for a second magic-mouth area, which will ask you to name the "endless byway." If you'll recall, there is one seemingly endless street in Skara Brae. Name that street, and at that point, whether you notice it or not, you'll be teleported once again. When you're walking around in the maze this time, you'll note a door that wasn't there before; enter that door and you'll find a triangle of silver that is similar in appearance to the one in Harkyn's Castle. Avoid the chamber that can be reached only through a snakelike corridor that twists and turns its way south.

Hopefully, this will keep you afloat in Kylearan's Tower. Currently, *The Bard's Tale* seems to have a great number of players, so we'll probably be receiving many more requests for assistance. If you're involved in *The Bard's Tale*, just wait until you get your hands on *The Bard's Tale II*!

Software scoops

Activision is taking over the distribution of that fantastic adventure game, *Might*

and *Magic* (we reviewed this offering in DRAGON #122). The first scenario, *Secret of the Inner Sanctum*, has you assemble six adventurers and enter the Land of Varn, which has more than 13,000 different locations to investigate. This is one "must have" game; with Activision distributing the software, you should be able to find it at your local retailer soon. This game is already available for Apple II computer enthusiasts, and versions for both IBM micros and compatibles, and Commodore 64/128 computers, will be released later this year.

Activision has also released *Hacker II* for the Apple IIGS computer, an adventure game set in current times, wherein you must foil a plot to destroy the United States. There are no rules for play and very little in the way of documentation. This game is the sequel to the company's smash hit *Hacker*, and is a real brain-twister.

Electronic Arts continues to increase its affiliated label line of products. The company has now signed up the Datasoft line of home computer software produced by IntelliCreations. Some of the Datasoft products include: *Saracen*, *Black Magic*, *The Goonies*, *Conan*, and *The Never-Ending Story*. Again, distribution agreements such as these enable the consumer to find games previously not available in their geographic area.

For those Atari computer-users who have written to us complaining about the lack of B-bit software, Electronic Arts has good news — they've released *Autoduel* for Atari 800 systems. Produced by Origin Systems and Lord British (of *Ultima* fame), this adventure game is set in the year 2030, when highways are controlled by marauding outlaws and the most popular sport of the day is motorized arena combat. The company has also released the computerized version of Steve Jackson's famous OGRE® boardgame for IBM micros and compatibles. This is one of our preferred strategy games; it involves an incredible Cybertank pitted against conventional infantry and armor units. Commodore 64/128 aficionados can now enjoy the first offering in the *Ultima* series from Origin, *Ultima I*, which has been released by Electronic Arts. This is an expanded version of the original 1981 release for Apple computers, and has much faster game play and far better graphics. There's even some arcade-game action in the adventure. Lastly, the company has also signed with Sierra On-Line to distribute *The King's Quest Trilogy*, a series of three adventures that are in 3-D (and animated, to boot).

If you're a text-adventure gamer, Douglas Adams has written his next hit, entitled *Bureaucracy*. Released by Infocom and distributed by Activision, this is an outrageous journey through red tape that puts you directly in the middle of a bureaucratic muddle so convoluted that you can't help but laugh. This offering is available for the IBM, Apple II, Macintosh,

Atari ST, Commodore 128, and Commodore Amiga personal computers.

Strategic Simulations has ported three of their popular games to Atari ST format. These include two of our favorites, *Wizard's Ring* and *Ring of Zilfin*. The third conversion is *Colonial Conquest*. SSI has also converted *Phantasie*, *Kampfgruppe* and *Roadwar 2000* to the Commodore Amiga as well. (Watch for our review of Strategic Simulations's *Phantasie III* in our next column!)

From Firebird Licensees Inc. comes *The Sentry*, for Commodore 64/128 machines. You're stranded in a world where energy is the only constant in an ever-changing environment, as well as being a life-sustaining commodity. There are 10,600 unique landscapes where you, as a lone robot, battle against the Sentry and her Landgazers in an attempt to usurp her as ruler. Also from Firebird is an entertaining game called *Golden Path*, for the Atari ST computer. This two-disk set contains a tale of the mysterious East, drawn directly from Chinese mythology. The graphics in this set are stunning. You find a ring that turns you into your own father; you must try to become your youthful self again by earning wisdom. More on this adventure game in our next column.

Well, that's it for this issue. We look forward to receiving your mail and hope we can be of some service to you with your software gaming questions. Please keep in mind that we're not always able to personally respond to each and every letter, but we'll do our best in that regard. For now, game on!

Valuable addresses

Activision, Inc.
P.O. Box 7286
Mountain View CA 94039
(415) 960-0410

Datasoft (IntelliCreations)
19808 Nordhoff Place
Chatsworth CA 91311
(818) 886-5922

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo CA 94404
(415) 571-7171

Firebird Licensees, Inc.
P.O. Box 49
Ramsey NJ 07446

Infocom, Inc.
125 CambridgePark Drive
Cambridge MA 02140
(617) 492-6000

Strategic Simulations, Inc.
1046 North Rengstorff Avenue
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The Armory and MATTMARK Publications need your help in compiling what will be the definitive guide to figure painting, "432 Helpful Hints for Figure Painting".

We have joined forces in this undertaking to provide the military/fantasy figure painters with information useful and essential to their craft.

We are seeking helpful hints that you use in figure painting. Hints for painting weapons, vignettes, facial expressions, etc. to the care and maintenance of your equipment (brushes, paint storage, etc.). Anything that you wish to share with others is what we seek. Let others in on your "dark secrets" and techniques.

All suggestions that we receive will be considered for publication. Duplicate submissions are on a first-come, first-serve basis. All writers whose suggestions are published will receive full accreditation for their ideas, a free copy of the publication from MATTMARK Publications, a basic color starter paint

set with a red sable brush (over a \$10.00 retail value) courtesy of the Armory. The colors in this set are: white primer, red, yellow, blue, green, flesh, black, leather brown, white and chain mail.

We ask that all submissions range between 100 - 750 words. Shorter and lengthier suggestions will still be considered.

Send all ideas, suggestions, etc. to:

MATTMARK Publications
432 Helpful Hints For Figure Painting
664 Airbrake Avenue
Wilmerding, Pennsylvania 15148

Please do not send any actual figures as we cannot be held responsible for their return, however, photos are welcome.

Let's all band together to get the job done. 432 Helpful Hints For Figure Painting will be available in the fall of 1987.



The Armory

Roy Lipman, President



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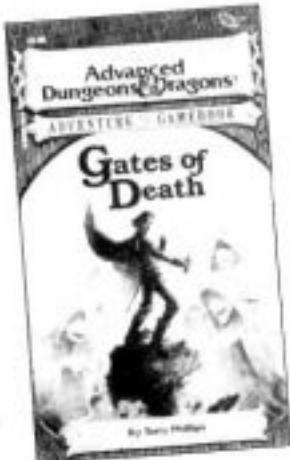


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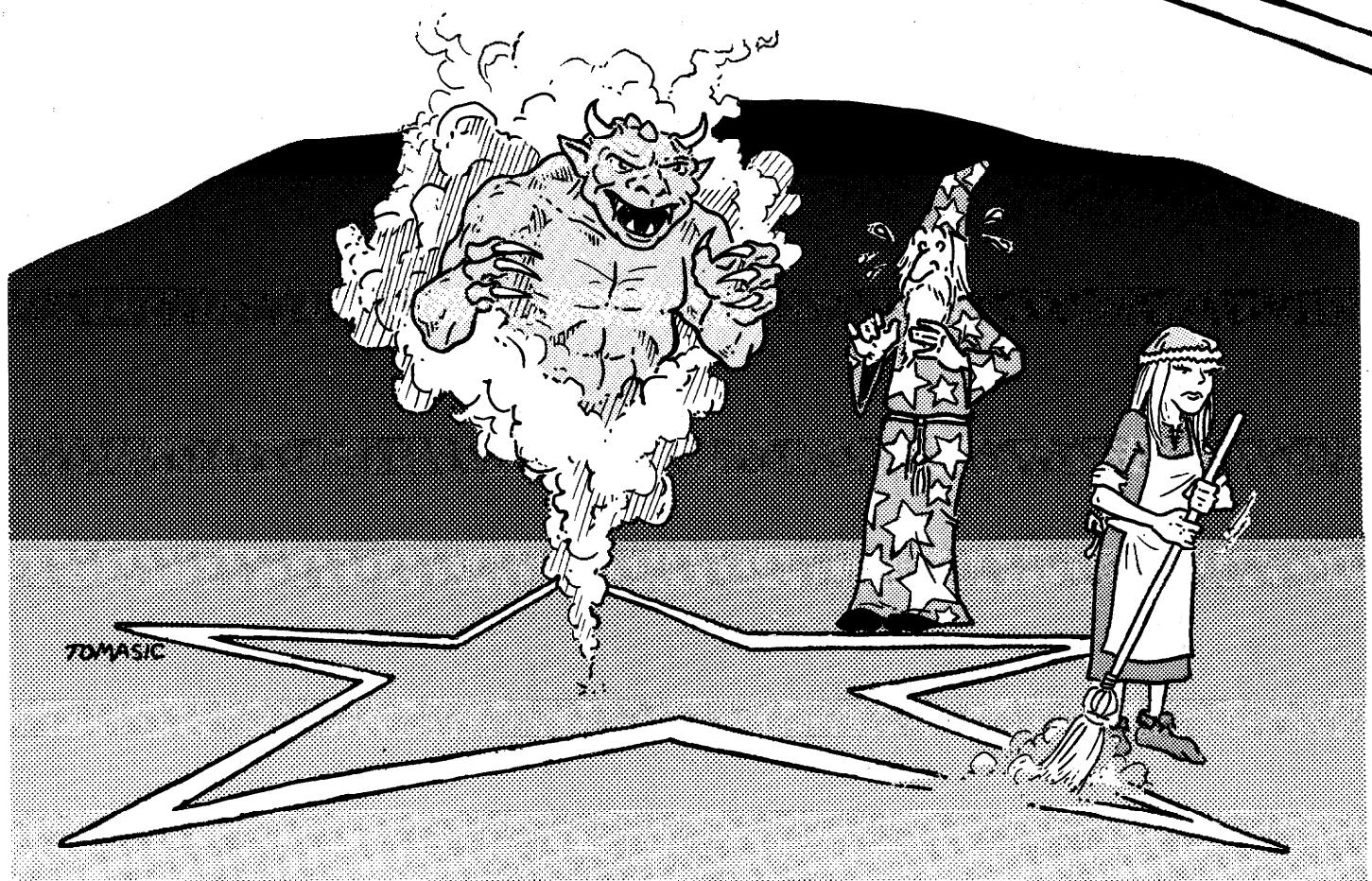
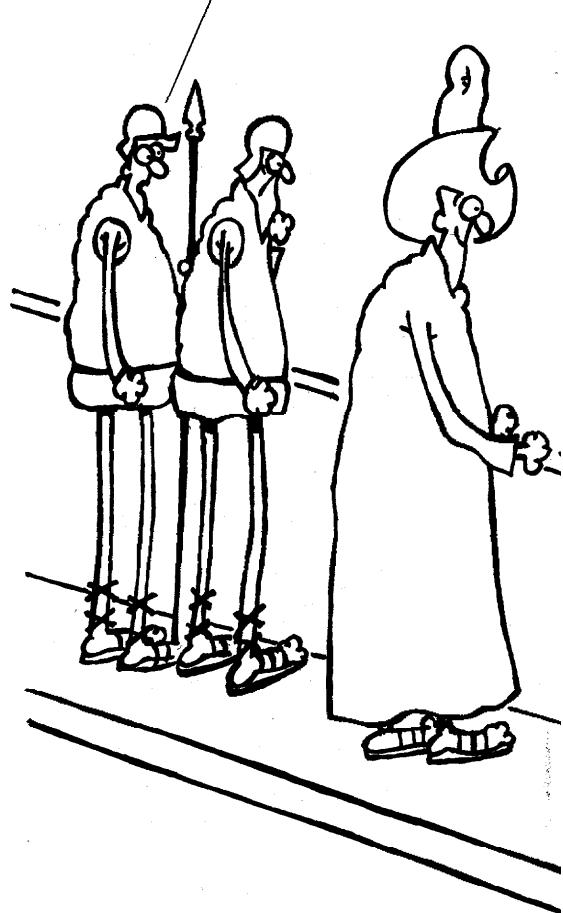
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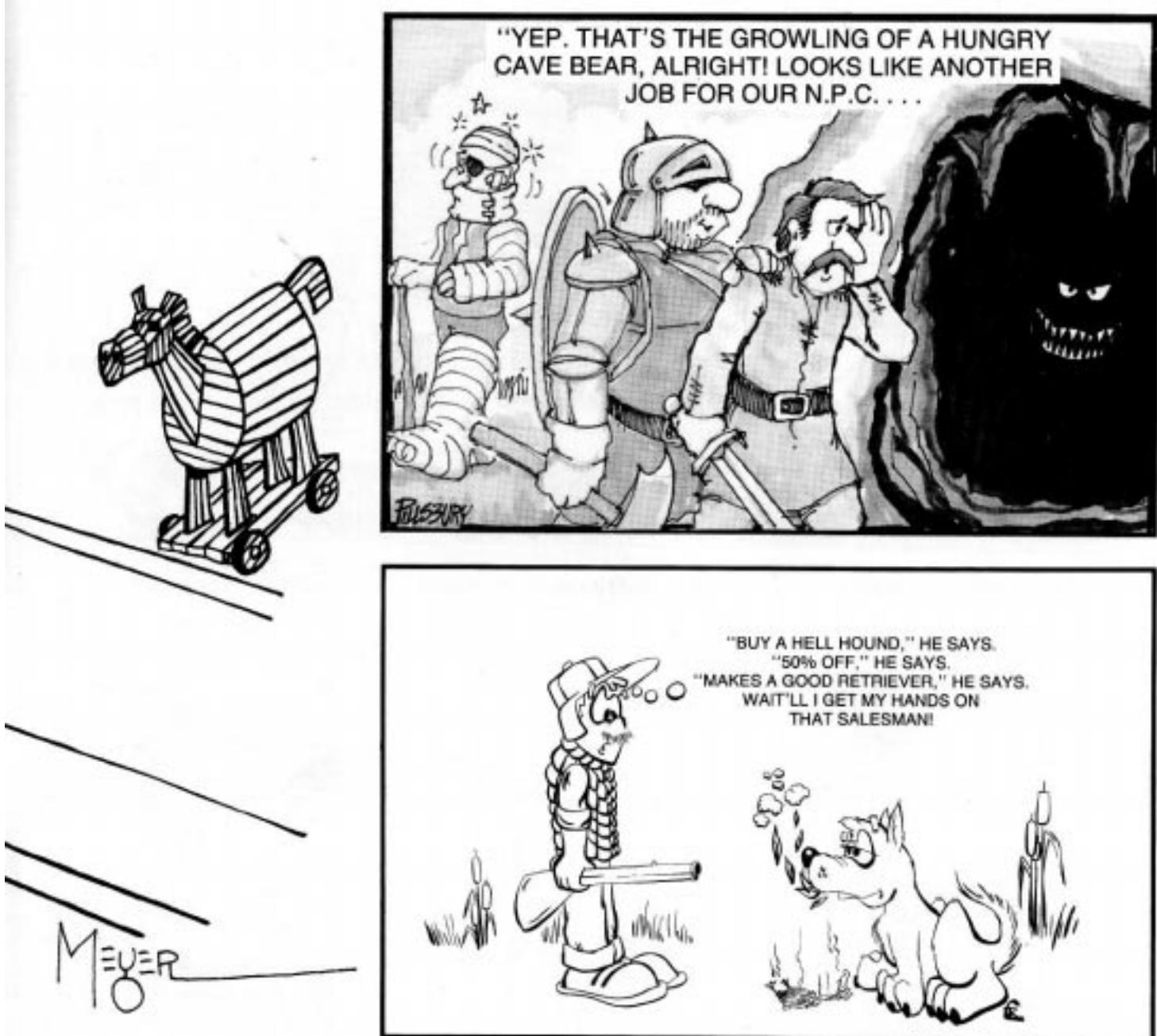
Edited by Mary Kirchoff

DRAGONMIRTH

HE SAID TO
BRING IT IN!

AND A MIGHTY
HANDSOME FROG
YOU MAKE,
LORD EBERT.





DRAGONlance® Tales: One day in the Inn of the Last Home.

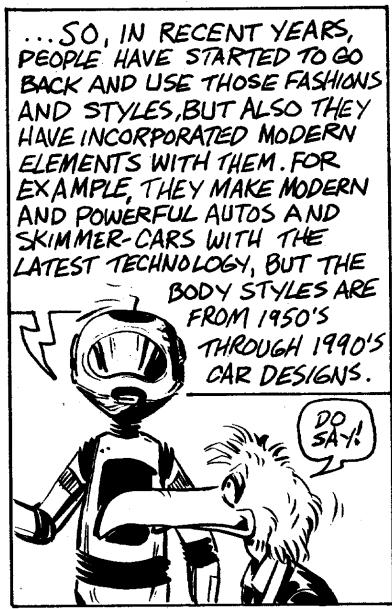


SNARF QUEST

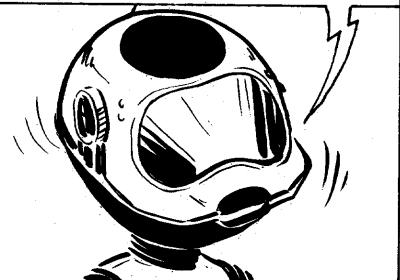
#48 BY ELMORE

THREE MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE WE LAST SAW OUR FRIENDS.

WELL, I AM VERY PLEASED OF EVERYONES PROGRESS. ALL OF YOU COULD FIT INTO THE MODERN WORLD AS SPACE TRAVELERS. ALL OF YOU GET AN 'A' ON THE RESTURANT TEST.



IT'S SORT OF COMPLICATED. WHEN ONE TRAVELS FROM PLANET TO PLANET, HE WILL SEE ALL KINDS OF FASHIONS AND FADS. EACH PLANET HAS IT'S OWN UNIQUE LOOK, PLUS THE MODERN LOOK- PLUS THE OLD EARTH 'FAD' LOOK. BUT ONE THING IS FOR SURE, SPACE TRAVELERS DO NOT LOOK LIKE PRIMITIVE BARBARIANS. NO OFFENSE TO YOU GLIYS.



WELL, WHAT FASHION ARE WE GONNA LOOK LIKE?

AVEEARE AND I DECIDED TO GO WITH A MIXTURE OF THE MODERN LOOK AND THE OLD EARTH LOOK. BECAUSE THAT LOOK IS VERY COMMON AND BECAUSE FRED, THE PREVIOUS OWNER OF THIS SHIP, COLLECTED OLD EARTH CLOTHES, MUSIC, AND ARTIFACTS. FRED WAS ALWAYS ON TOP OF ALL THE LATEST FADS.



THIS SOUNDS GREAT. I LOVE THE CLOTHES.

YEAH, AN' I WANNA LEARN ALL DA OLD ROCK MUSIC.

BAH, THIS IS ALL A LOAD OF GARBAGE. THERE IS NO MAGIC IN THIS MODERN TIMES, SO ALL THE PEOPLE MUST BE SISSIES.



I'M GLAD, I HATE ALL OF DAT MAGIC @*#%\$ ANYWAY! AN' YOU CAN TAKE YER STUPID OL' MAGIC AND SHOVE IT UP YO!

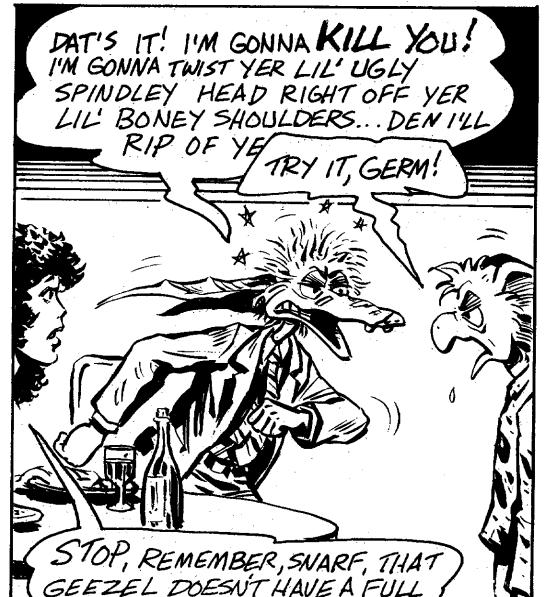
YOU BETTER WATCH IT, 'CAUSE I MIGHT JUST...



...FRY YOU! MCAP!



DAT'S IT! I'M GONNA KILL YOU! I'M GONNA TWIST YER LIL' UGLY SPINDLEY HEAD RIGHT OFF YER LIL' BONEY SHOULDERS... DEN I'LL RIP OF YE TRY IT, GERM!



GEEZEL IS YOUR FRIEND.

YEAH, DAT'S RIGHT, WE ARE OL' DRINKIN' BUDDIES.



HAVE A BOTTLE!



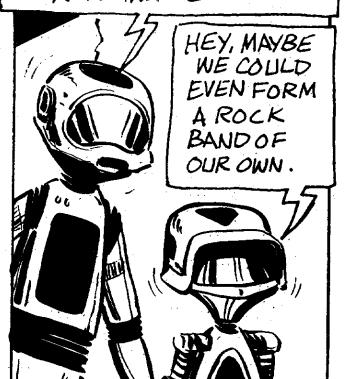
OH! OH! OUCH! YOU JUS' WAIT, SLIME BRAIN, I'M GONNA GET YOU YET.

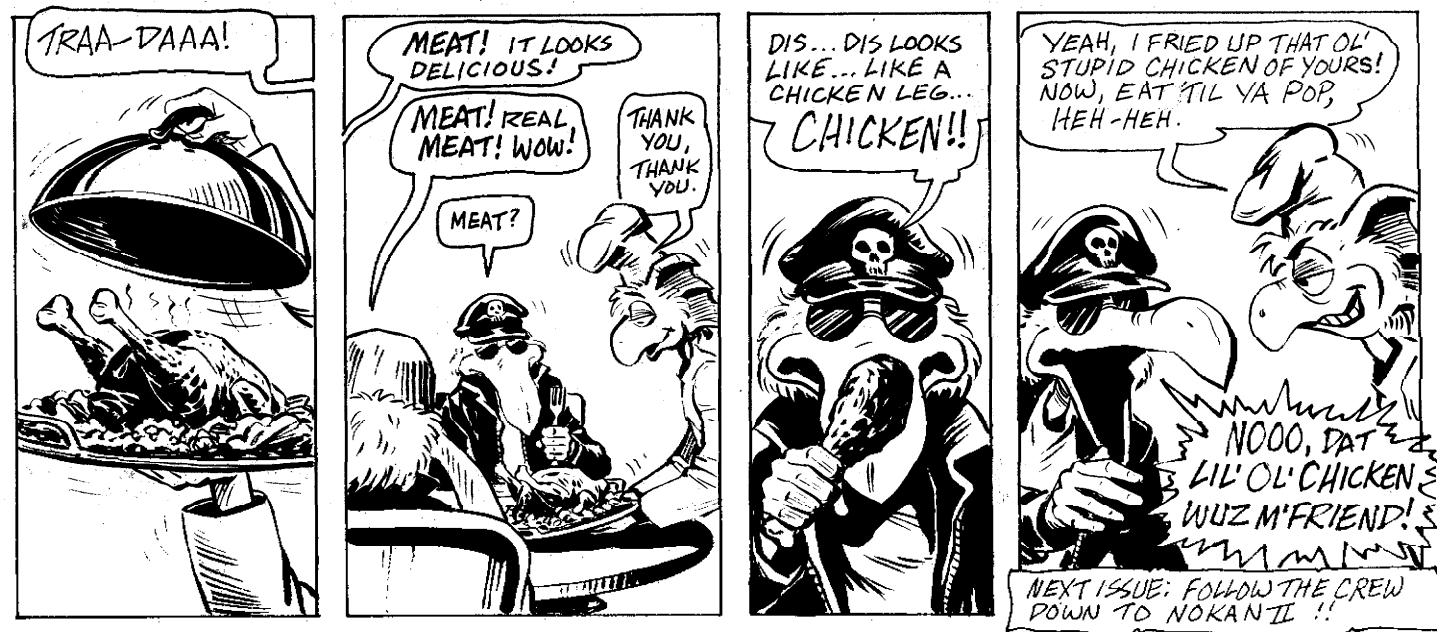
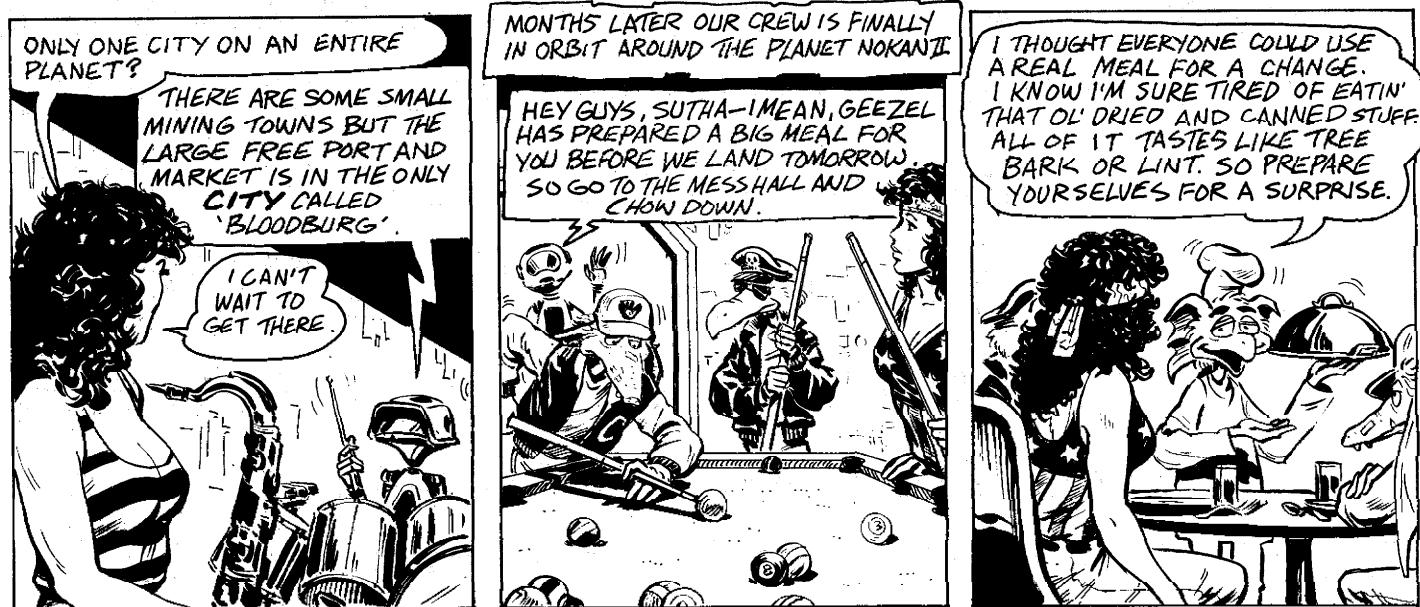
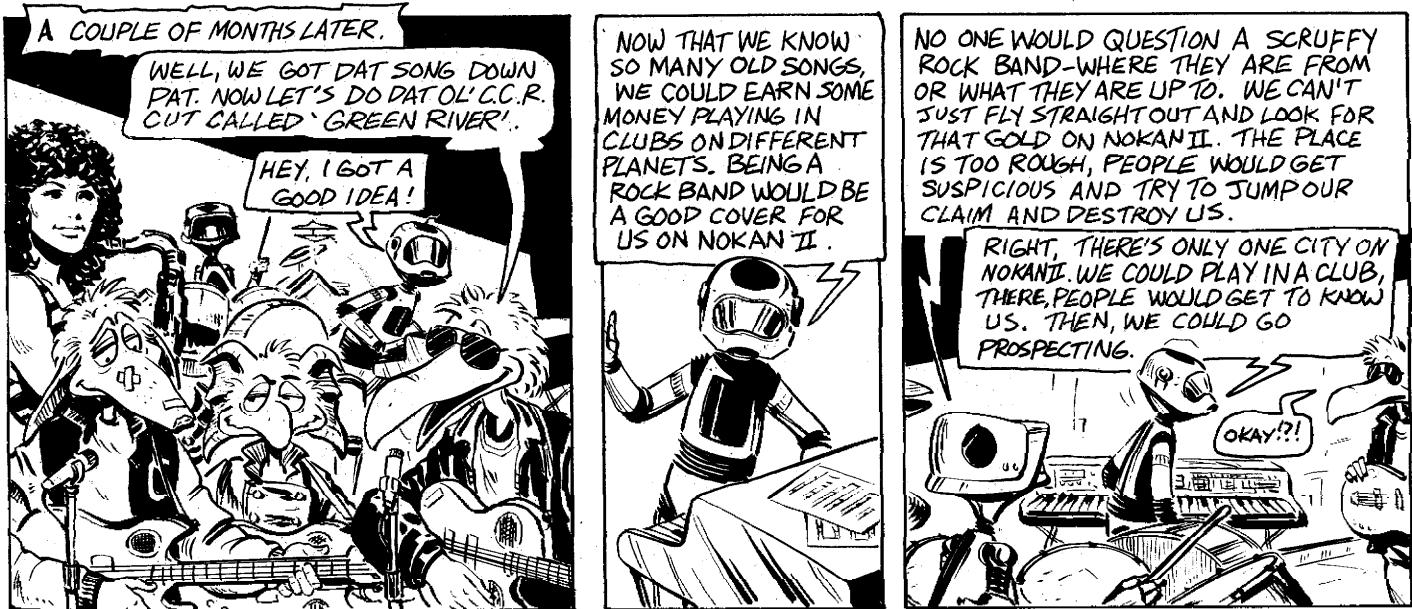


MINUTES LATER, AFTER A CEASE FIRE WAS MADE

NOW LET'S CONTINUE OUR STUDIES BY STARTING WITH RECORDINGS AND VIDEOS OF OLD ROCK 'N' ROLL MUSIC.

HEY, MAYBE WE COULD EVEN FORM A ROCK BAND OF OUR OWN.

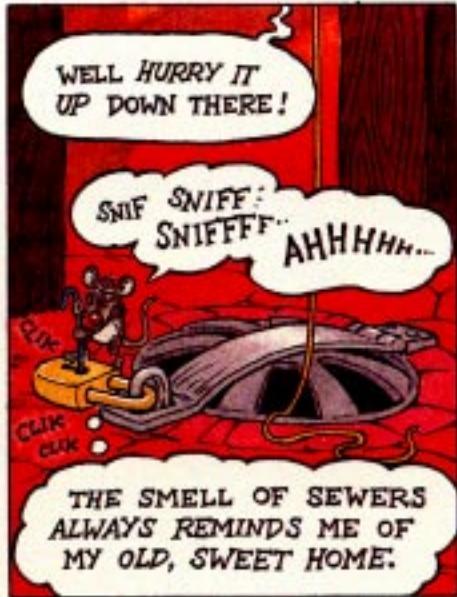


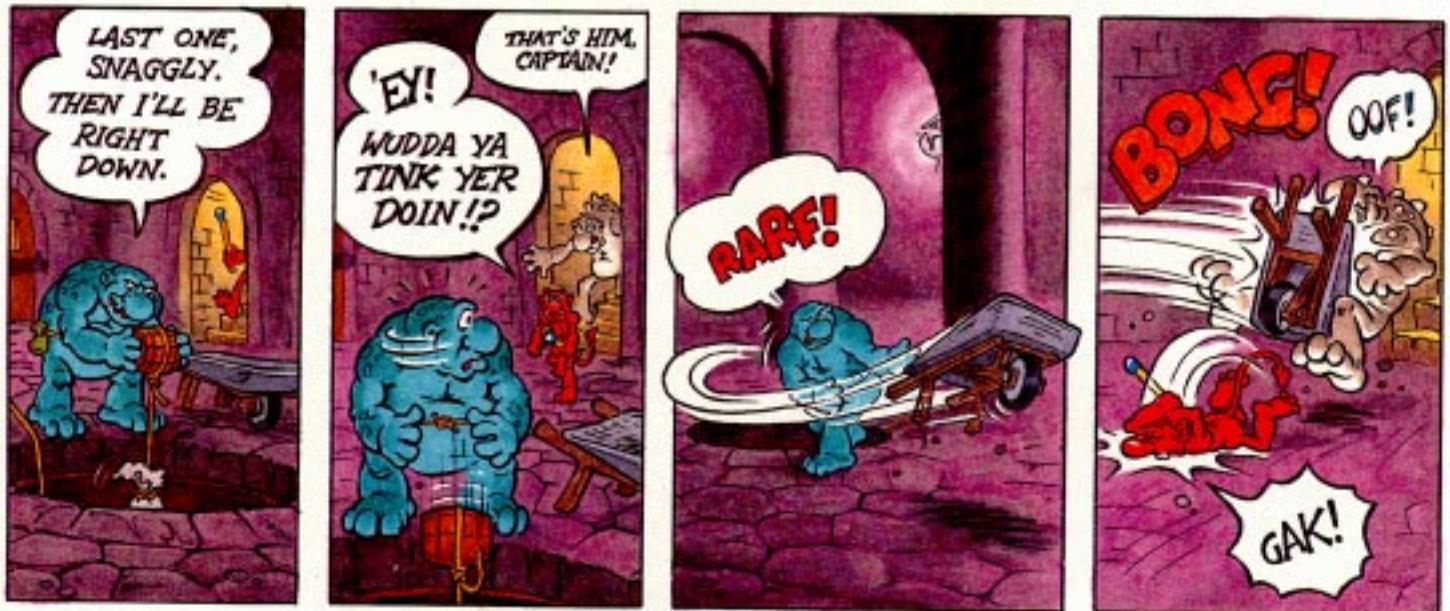




WORMY

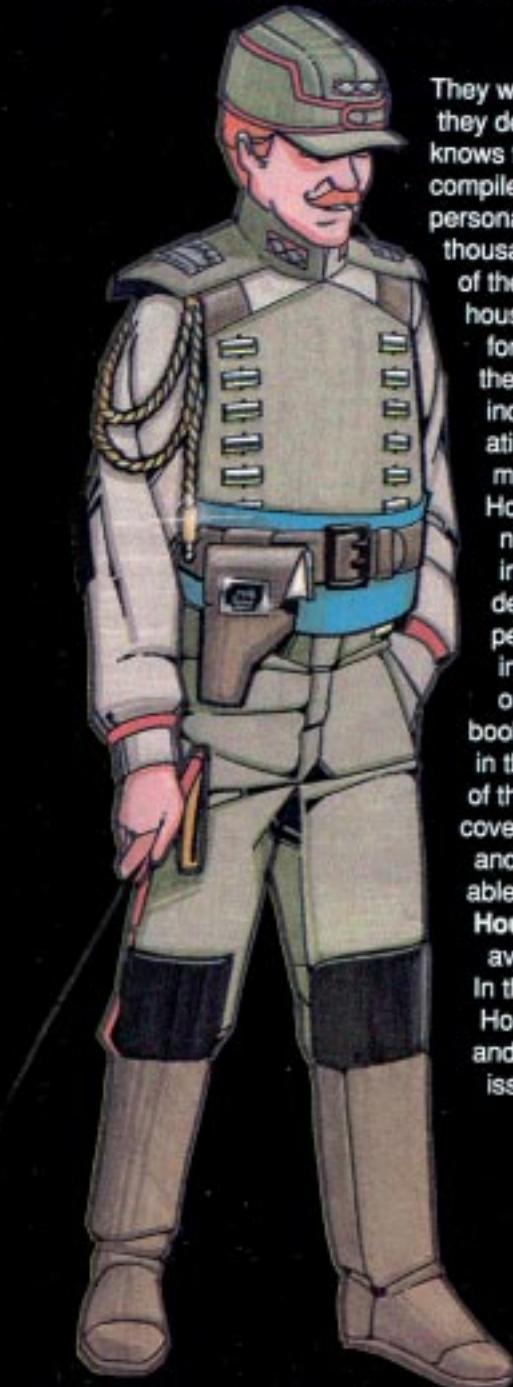






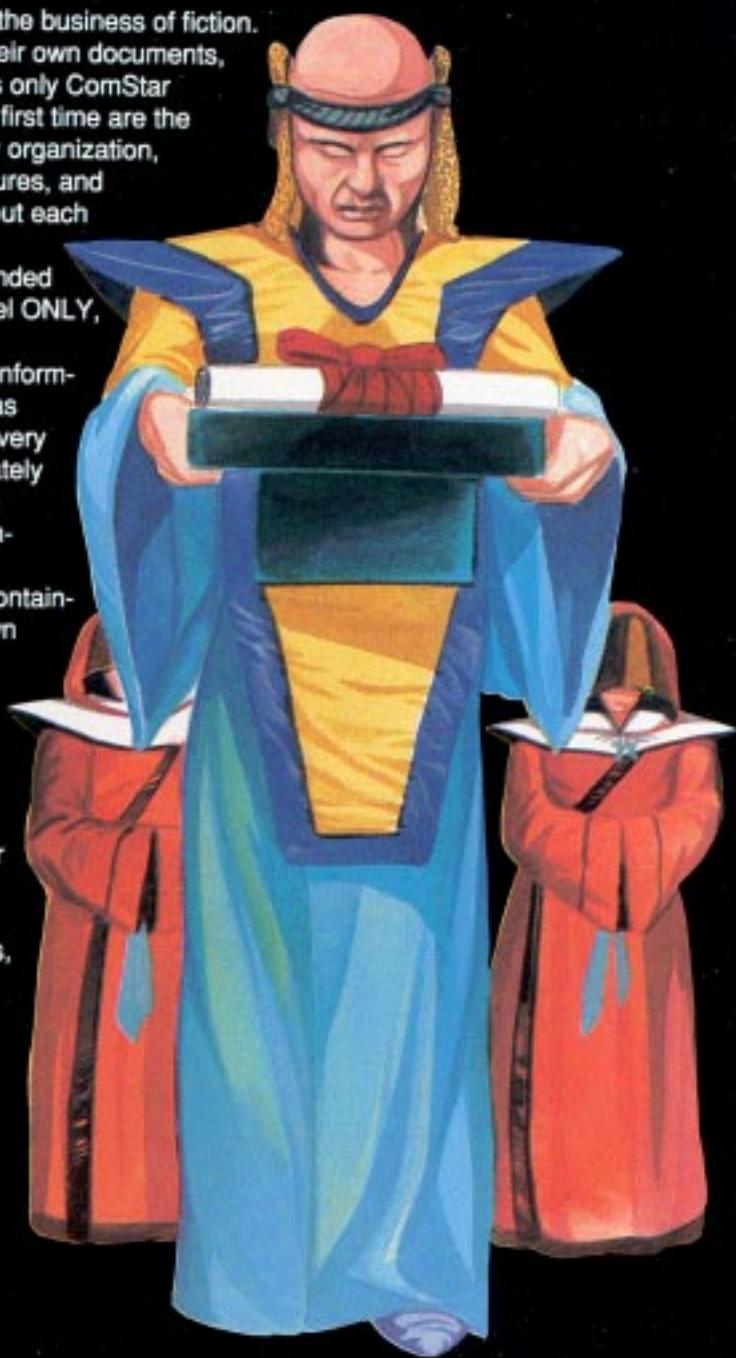


THE FACTS ABOUT THE SUCCESSOR STATES



Colonel Steven Zaks, commander of the 12th Donegal Guards, is shown wearing the typical senior officer field uniform. Campaign bars adorn the front of flack jacket. Colonel Zaks' blue sash shows that he is graduated from the prestigious Nagelring Academy on Tharkad. As so few officers carry a riding crop, it indicates that this colonel is either young, vain, or both - a potentially disastrous combination.

ComStar is not in the business of fiction. They want facts. And in their own documents, they deal with the facts as only ComStar knows them. Here for the first time are the compiled histories, military organization, personalities, social structures, and thousands of FACTS about each of the five Successor houses. Originally intended for ComStar personnel ONLY, these works show the incredible amount of information that ComStar has managed to get on every House (but, unfortunately not how they got the information). From in-depth unit listings to personality profiles containing knowledge known only to a few, these books are amazing in their depth. The first of the these books covers **House Steiner**, and is already available. The next will cover **House Kurita** and be available soon. In the following months, Houses **Liao**, **Marik**, and **Davion** will be issued.



Pictured above are adepts of the Order of the Five Pillars. This semi-religious monastic order is devoted to preserving and enforcing the Combine's religion, ideology, and social codes which are contained in the work called the *Dictum Honorium*. The Order, also known as the Pillar of Ivory also controls the very important ivory trade in Kurita space. This power block is used to fund the inquisitorial mission of the Order.



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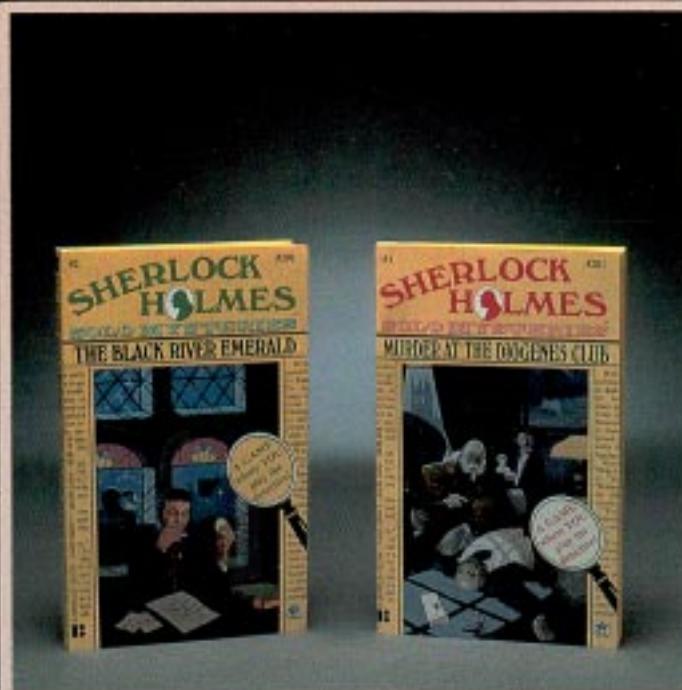
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