WHERE WE'RE GOING

LETTERS

REVIEWS

FEATURES

- Tips for Diabolical Dungeon Masters
- The Ythri: An Historical Appraisal
- The Rule to End all Rules
- Stellar Conquest: The Colonization
- Starguard: What to do after you hit the beach
- SF's "Star Soldier"--A Solitaire Game
- Variation on a Theme: More Realism

Front cover by Winchell Chung
Back cover by Kenneth Rahman

Subscription note: a six-issue renewal is $4; a twelve-issue renewal is $6.

TSG GOES BI-MONTHLY

That's right! It has been only two months since you got your last issue of TSG. With this issue we're now on a bi-monthly publishing schedule. After the next six issues or so, our bi-monthly format, TSG will re-evaluate and consider another round of possible improvements.

For instance, we may go to a 6 x 11" format of approximately 50 pages, a 25% increase in actual printing space. Or we may keep our current digest size, but publish more frequently. Also in the future, Metagaming may possibly come out with a second magazine in a new area of gaming. This new-area gambit depends on what happens in the next year, so we won't say more now.

MONSTER! MONSTER! will be available for August 5, 1976 shipping. It's at the printers now. MI MI is designed by Ken St. Andre, TURNERS & TROLLS designer, and edited by Steve Jackson and the Metagaming staff. Have the unbelievable heroes and diversities of TUNNELS AND TROLLS and SEMINAR OF THE FALLEN THRONING been leaving you a bit jaded? MONSTER! MONSTER! will provide instant relief. No longer do the heroes cast Long Shadows of Doom over the Louis Monsters! No longer are the monsters were set for the experience points of a board of triumphant players! ARISE YE MONSTERS and smite thy tormentors! Now you become one with the horrid friends of the Underworld. You prey upon the luckless humans happening upon your path. Instead of winning points for gold and monsters destroyed, you score for being nasty and horrid in the game, of course.

St. Andre's fertile, yet grotesque, creativity has been organized to present a welcome change in sword and sorcery gaming. The rules are a complete package with sections detailing vital set-up for play, sequence of events and game master regulations. You'll find MI MI an excellent introduction to fantasy gaming.

Our next game will probably be WARS OF THE NARYM, by Lynn Willis. NARYM is a complex game strong in social and political factors, including war and economics. NARYM may be ready shortly after TSG77--if subscription renewals roll in fast enough.

PLEASE RENEW EARLY so you won't miss an issue, and so we can plan accurately for circulation levels. We will offer a renewal bonus, nothing big, but it will not be ready soon. Work on the all-vital games, currently, is taking creative priority.

PLEASE wait please, we schedule tentatively for November. It will be expensive, with a plastic map and a pile of die-cut counters for six players.

For now, we hope those of you who have been with us from the early issues are beginning to see the results of your loyalty and trust. 1976 is the year we get on our feet and organize. 1977 will be the year for innovations. We're small, but stick around. You'll be surprised.
Dear editor:

There has been a lot of talk in your articles about the reality and believability of your science-fiction game. Several points need clarification. The writer who complained about the lack of realism remarks about the far-out weapons used. Yet, in issue #5 he says a possible weapon against the proposed interstellar ramjet is a field distortor. This sounds like one of those far-out weapons he put down. But this isn't the point. What I'm saying is that this writer is shortsighted.

Such things as phasers and hyper-light speeds don't ignore physics. They are extensions or developments of the basic laws. Although Einstein says no matter how fast you go, you can exceed the speed of light, there is no denying the law of your science-fiction game. One writer points out how constantly broken. Another points out that in order to make the game playable isn't my main point. What I'm saying is that this writer is shortsighted.

They're both right. Several games ignore completely several laws of physics, but there is a difference between ignorance and extension. The writer who complains about the lack of realism remarks about the far-out weapons used. Yet, in issue #5 he says a possible weapon against the proposed interstellar ramjet is a field distortor. This sounds like one of those far-out weapons he put down. But this isn't the point. What I'm saying is that this writer is shortsighted.

Still, I agree that a designer should take notice of the laws of nature when designing a game. This adds to the believability and realism of the game. I've often wondered how a spaceship traveling faster than light can fire a laser-type weapon (a beam of light) and hit another ship going faster than light. The beam is traveling slower than its target! Unless an energy beam is made that can go faster than light (I'm not saying it's impossible, but an upstep in grammatical and reduction of tautology (I'm allowed them, you're not) would sand down the rough appearance, don't finish it, you'll ruin the wood! (If that doesn't make any sense, don't read it.)

Don't get cute and try to repudiate that statement, for tautology in your magazine (of course, it does add excitement to the reading—can you break the code? I believe they meant, "he spat" in the gutter") and grammar isn't quite good enough to make "it" in an English class. The constant use of "it" (non-acceptable slang for until, it's until or till) rubs against the grain of my perfectionist. I must state that your magazine would be lucky to come out of a journalism course (which was good in drumming slower than its target! Unless an energy beam is made that can go faster than light (I'm not saying it's impossible, but the designer should have some sort of explanation), the primary weapon will be the missile.

These missiles would be armed with fusion, anti-matter, or corrosive warheads. An attacking ship would fire these missiles and then sever to avoid the blast. If the range of these missiles is great enough, the attacker may not even have to leave. There are several different means of propulsion. For anyone who has some imagination, they are easy to think of. Besides the usual idea of self-contained propulsion, another method comes to mind: the use of a deflector-tractor beam. The tractor holds the beam on course, and the deflector pushes it toward the target. Again, there is the problem of the composition of the beam. It can't be based on light because of the restrictions mentioned earlier. (I think I'm getting more involved with this.)

Finally, I wish to mention one other possible weapon. Say a ship has the ability to enter hyperspace by going on a different space and time continuum. This ability could be used as a weapon. The field that allows the ship to enter hyperspace is thrown out in front of the attacker at the target. As the fabric of normal space is torn apart, so is the target.

Well, that's it. I just wanted to get my views in about the subject. In closing, I'd like to say that I enjoy your magazine a great deal. Keep up the good work.

Keith Bernado

********

Hurray!! You're getting professional!! I don't want to see the casual format (which I believe they meant, "he spat" in the gutter") and grammar isn't quite good enough to make "it" in an English class. The constant use of "it" (non-acceptable slang for until, it's until or till) rubs against the grain of my perfectionist. I must state that your magazine would be lucky to come out of a journalism course (which was good in drumming slower than its target! Unless an energy beam is made that can go faster than light (I'm not saying it's impossible, but the designer should have some sort of explanation), the primary weapon will be the missile.

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I'm sorry about the length of this letter, maybe I should have written it like an article. You would have gotten the information, but I would have had a chance to turn a quick buck. Still a possibility, but I don't feel qualified to write on SC yet, maybe if I had just seen the cover in a store window...

Frank B. Weir, Jr.
Clarion, Iowa

********

16210 Marquis
Cleveland, Ohio 44111
May 21, 1976

Brendon Thompson
Metagaming Concept
Box 15346
Austin, Texas

I was intrigued by Mr. Mitchell's article on Stellar Conquest's combat results in TSS #4. It was surprising that he did not include a summary of the result expectations. To correct that oversight I include what could be viewed as an appendix to his article.

PROBABILITY OF COMBATANT ACHIEVING FIRST HIT

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Esc</th>
<th>ATK</th>
<th>Combo</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Two ESC</td>
<td>One ESC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.637</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESC only</td>
<td>.3148</td>
<td>.242</td>
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</table>

EXPECTED LOSSES GIVEN ESC LOSS ACCEPTANCE

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<th>Off After One Loss</th>
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<th>Three Losses</th>
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<td>.6638</td>
<td>.7358</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESC</td>
<td>.6852</td>
<td>1.0853</td>
<td>1.3734</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Losses are cumulative for all firing rounds thus broken. The tables were generated using simple Bayesian-decision tree
### Speculations

**SPACE WAR GAMES: Avoiding Cliches**

by Lynn White

Science fiction was born in the dawning recognition of the newness of the industrial revolution, an event unparalleled in human history. Suddenly iron, steam and regimentation had indifferently dis-embodied religion, feudalism, mercantilism and rational humanism, leaving the field at last the empiricists and the romanticists from whose bucket we still have to clasp free. Pre-18th century fictions are socio-political, religious or outright satire; only around the time of Dickens does the familiar crush of technology against the personal and social self begin to appear with any regularity. In broadest outline, we have never left the nineteenth century, for trade, tariff, nationalism, colonialism, slums and existential dread (to name a few) haunt us still. However, Rodnim Simonsen (designer of STARFORCE, etc., and SPI graphics whiz and rule cleanser) reminds us that this long century is about to pass at last. I don't mean to say that he has made this discovery himself. Good company, but he has done it in a way of interest to TSG readers.

In issue 26 of Moves editor Michael G. Wulk, Jr. Cleveland, Ohio


didn't think of the situation. It's not going to tempt for with its lame excuse for multi-fications are socio-political, religious or outright satire; only around the time of Dickens does the familiar crush of technology against the personal and social self begin to appear with any regularity. In broadest outline, we have never left the nineteenth century, for trade, tariff, nationalism, colonialism, slums and existential dread (to name a few) haunt us still. However, Rodnim Simonsen (designer of STARFORCE, etc., and SPI graphics whiz and rule cleanser) reminds us that this long century is about to pass at last. I don't mean to say that he has made this discovery himself. Good company, but he has done it in a way of interest to TSG readers.

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If one has powers surpassing understanding, why strive to understand at all? The idea of total abundance are as frightening as any other totality. While it is plain that human institutions must handle such problems, the record of our struggle against such a minor snag as the automobile is not encouraging. There is a good chance that institutions would devolve to a clan or tribal level, since the need for anything more would not be evident for some time.

Humans have been known to fight for entertainment, but I think the juvenile rivalries of clans enounced in skycrapers (why limit populations when there's always more room than ever?) would be adequate to start lengthy bloodfeuds. Killing in exciting, I suppose, or at least escaping death is a memorable experience. One does not have to think hard to see status derivations in such procedures. Given artificial intelligence and an NFL drive, what monkeys could be sent to the stars!

Humans need not fight, if freedom does not become punishment, as it does in ghettos, and if we manage to retain the collectivism of man's spirit in the humanities and the social sciences. Eventually things would calm down, for there is obvious need for government in space, and war, but times, as they say, would be interesting.

I offer this scenario by way of saying that history, real or not, is a real concern to the TSG reader, and that thus far man's ingenuity has led to war and to space-war games as to any other symptom of human existence. It is a fact that the human tendency toward war is as old as man himself. The spirit of his games is not unique to man. Some species of animal are known to fight for possession of a territory. Even the most peaceful of species, like the wolf, are apt to find a number of your Viking berserkers getting cindered in them. There's a simple cure for itchy lightning-fingers though. Have your dwarves polish up the end of a, say, thirty-foot long passage-way. Now whenever an expedition with lots of firepower turns into the corridor, pantasmal the illusion of a purple worm. You've done your first-ask-questions-later type that I could not be in greater agreement. The ancient two-fold purpose of literary art is to entertain and to instruct, seems to me to be as applicable to space-war games as to any other symmetrical activity. However, I find the following honorable rationale for any activity; we will generate more interest and self-respect by doing our own creating than by uncritically appropriating cliches from the hoary past.

We'll be back to clean this place out... with an army! What Dungeons & Dragons dungeon master hasn't had this threat hurled in his face as a party of adventurers retreated, licking their wounds. But as time goes on, and players start reaching the higher levels, the threats begin to look more and more like promises. Your favorite Red Dragon is zapped by three six-die lightning bolts. Maps of your first few dungeon levels sell for less than a gold piece at the marketplace. Each mercenary is being recruited near your stronghold by a mysterious person known only as "Fred the Butcher". What's a heroic average high lord of Castle Crepid to do?

Well, obviously you could beef up your defenses, maybe by having a Balrog captain your elite ore patrol, setting up a regular production line for Invisible Stalkers, or even seeing just how well the lawful capital city stands up to an evil high priest's Bishops spell. But wholesale slaughter isn't really in the spirit of the game. There are subtler methods available to the dungeons master who gets up on the wrong side of the bed.

High level magic users often get rather uneasy once they've received those third-level fireball and lightning bolt spells, and if your dungeon has a number of sixty-foot or longer corridors you're apt to find a number of your Viking berserkers getting cindered in them. There's a simple cure for itchy lightning-fingers though. Have your dwarves polish up the end of a, say, thirty-foot long passage-way. Now whenever an expedition with lots of firepower turns into the corridor, pantasmal the illusion of a purple worm coming out of a sixty-foot corridor. Now imagine the look on the wizard's face when his lightning bolt comes bouncing back at him.

TIPS FOR DIABOLICAL DUNGEON MASTERS
by Stephen H. Dorneman

"Hey come back! I only wanted you to attack at one to four odds!"

Trigger-happiness on a smaller scale, such as a tendency to smash open doors and fire heavy crossbow bolts at anything they hear, can be combated by inviting a few lawful types to take up residence under you castle. One shoot-first-ask-questions-later type that I know of got cursed by a visiting patriarch they tried to kill, and last I heard he was still having problems. Seems he's now somewhat of a weer-lost magnet. Draws them from miles around. If a whole expedition is giving you an unwarranted hassle - like by deliberately taking out from adventuring to race your guard hasting - the next time you roll a random encounter teleport in enough force to Sleep or subdue the lot of them and have them wake up in the next city. Labyrinth, not the usual Mistyart-type Labyrinth, but rather a Coliseum-type, open air arena. Labyrinth, where thousands of cheering and jeering kobolds gather to watch the members of that nasty expedition fight each other to the death? Why should they fight each other to the death? Because such of them wakes up with one chit in his hand. And it takes two chits to get outside.

Habit thieves looting your treasures, picking the pockets of your 10th-level Magic Users? A high percentage for encounters, but a low percentage for stealing pseudo-objects, so perhaps the task of replacing them will be easier.

All "good" dungeons have at least one teleporter designed as normal corridor, if only for to throw off mapmakers. Nine teleports the party to a small room where the only exit lies very high up in the ceiling. And in the room above a wizard warms up a Bispel Magic spell for the filers and levitators in the group. So how does the hardy band escape? They Flood the room with water and bob up to the surface. Of course,
This dungeon master doesn’t mess-around! There’s a Roger’s Thesaurus in There!

The things are not used very carefully can also be their own solution. A limited wish of “begone from here for four days” drove a 20th level wizard and his company from his own treasure chamber so that the adventurers could leisurely gather up the gold, then use another wish to whisk themselves back to the town of their origin. Of course, it was at that particular town that the wizard had settled down in for his four-day wait… Then there are those magical items that echo Gilbert and Sullivan’s “Things are seldom what they seem.” When a spell-storing ring is counted well, and unarmored parties are just important with alleged infringement that:

You give the case of the advertisements, with the rush of Dungeons & Dragons. In a letter from Peterborough, NH 03458. You can see to flash whenever a non-dungeon occupant guards the most precious treasure on my ruby guards itself. A physics-minded war

If it’s a really big game, there’re bound to be a number of chaotic or would-be chaotic players around. So be nice to them. Build an all-lawful dungeon for them to explore. And one day, when a Chaotic expedition is down in the Lawful dungeon and a Chaotic expedition elsewhere is down in a Chaotic dungeon, well, have the dungeon masters confer and build a connecting passageway between the two. Talk about neat!

But don’t let me leave you with the impression that all dungeon masters are, or even should be, out to “get” the expeditions. We just want fair fights and lively adventures in the spirit of the game. That Ogre Magi wasn’t deliberately put there to charm you, but rather to charm nobody who couldn’t answer the riddle. There was no malice involved when the hobbit-bard stole your fourth-level magic books, or then your +1 magic sword turned out to be cursed with an infinite eco-just attempts to keep the game lively, unexpected, and balanced. But then again, dungeon masters, isn’t it nice to know that that half-elf who killed your giant is about to look into the Medusa’s lair?

In a lesson in patience from the recent publication of Sullivan’s “Things are seldom what they seem.” It is pub

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THE RULE TO END ALL RULES

Occasionally, for no known reason (although, personally, I suspect it's caused by aerosol sprays) one is overcome with a great distaste for the entire universe. Such a feeling struck me one night not long ago, as I was staring vacantly at the TRIPLANETARY rulebook.

Having no small, furry animals to stomp, I turned to my typewriter instead, and this is what came out:

*Monsters From Outer Space

If at any time during the course of the game, for any reason, the die comes up "6" six times in a row, the solar system is invaded by Monsters From Outer Space. All regular play halts immediately. Roll the die once more and consult the Monster Combat Results table.

-Steve Jackson

FEEDBACK & GAME RATING

Your are right, we did miss mentioning the Worst SF&F Game of 1975 on the feedback form. So, in order not to let any deserving game miss its full chance at the honor, we will do the voting again. The five games with the most nominating votes were STAR RAIDERS, BATTLE OF FIVE ARMIES, 4,000 AD, RIGELIANS, AND WARS OF THE WORLDS II. There is space for the voting on this issues feedback form so let us know your particular favorite "worst" game.

TSG #5 FEEDBACK

The most notable thing about feedback on TSG #4 is the much higher rating for the art. We are getting a good selection of art from our contributors. What also helped is the fact that we shifted to a heavier grade of paper that takes offset printing better than the minimum grade used in previous issues.

Another thing to note is that the general level of the ratings has gradually dropped from issue to issue to that could be from several reasons. One reason is that as our circulation increases we get more readers who aren't exclusively hardcore SF&F gamers. Also, the nonessential years off and we get compared more to other professional publications instead of small smaller efforts. As we do better in content and appearance we raise readers expectations. All these things combine to give us a gradually lower rating history as our format and content are actually improving. Or, maybe we are not doing as well as we think. Be sure and tell us if you think we're missing the mark altogether.

The ratings of last issues are below. The rates are on a scale of one (low) to nine (high). The service type features like ads, letters, and Where We're Going are not rated as usual.

ARTICLE RATING

Laser Weapons 6.97

Issue # 5 Overall 6.87

Issue # 5 Art 6.77

Sorcerer and War Review 6.57

Interstellar War 6.36

Elton Tannahal # 6.36

ARTICLE

Laser Weapons

6.97

Issue # 5 Overall

6.87

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6.77

Sorcerer and War Review

6.57

Interstellar War

6.36

Elton Tannahal #

6.36

FEEDBACK & GAME RATING

Ship Effectiveness In SG 6.36

Allocation of Bonus III Output 5.96

The Thrill: Review 5.75

STG GAME RATINGS

Results from our first new style game ratings are shown below. Response was good and with your continued feedback and participation gamers will have the type of data they need.

The first number to the right of the game is the Overall rating for how well that specific game was liked. The next number represents the Type rating for who well that type of game was liked. All ratings are on a scale (low) to 9 (high) basis. The games are grouped by general type classification. We did get some comment on our classification of games and invite more.

GAME Overall/Type

Fantasy Role Playing Games

Empire of the Patal Throne 7.7 7.7

Dungeons & Dragons 7.7 7.7

Gryphawk (WD Sup. #1) 7.4 7.7

Tunnels & Trolls 5.5 7.6

Royal Armies of Hyborian Age 5.2 5.0

Blackmoor (WD Sup. #2) 5.2 7.2

Chainsaw 4.8 6.2

C'tidel 3.5 5.5

Fantasy Board Games

War of Wizards 6.9 7.9

White Bear & Red Moon 6.7 6.8

Sorcerer 6.7 7.3

Siege of Mimas Thrith 5.3 6.4

Dungeon 5.1 5.5

Battle of Helms Deep 4.2 5.6

Battle of Five Armies 3.5 4.5

Planetary Tactical Combat Games

Starguard 6.8 7.0

Futute Society Level Games

StarQuest 7.4 8.1

Starlord 5.9 7.0

Legmen 5.7 7.6

Star Probe $1,000 AD 2.6 5.7

Space Tactical Level Games

Starforce 6.8 7.7

Triplanetary 6.5 7.0

The Yithri 5.8 7.0

Alien Space 5.5 6.4

Fomalhaut II 2.5 5.1

Star Ship Combat 2.3 4.6
The Emperor is Dead

The Race for the Petal Throne

The Seal Emperor, Hirk'a'ne Tlakota'ni, has just died at the age of seventy-three in the year 2537 A.S. The Azure Legion has brought the aspirants for the Petal Throne together at Avantha't to begin the contests for the determination of the new Emperor.

The contestants are: Lord Eselene' (protege of the family of Ke'ttukal), with his ninth level adept studying with the priests of Sa'rku, Reresh'q'ala (protege of the Clan of the Sea Blues, the most powerful clan in the Royalist Party), Mrid'obu (protege of the Priest-Lord of Avantha't), and Kryth'ai (the only daughter declaring Ard'ani status—supported by the priestesses of Ava'nthe and Blime'Ish).

There are three contests used in deciding the new Emperor: an arena duel to the death between each candidate, individually, and an opponent of equal status. Each claimant to the throne draws for the order in which he/she will fight. The opponents have been determined, in order ahead of time. Two—each candidate is placed in a trap room constructed by the Azure Legion. All rooms will be the same, and there will be one for each Level Two candidate. The object is to survive. They either find the way out (or a way), or they die. Three—each aspirant must make a descent into the underworld. All contestants descend at the same time through different entrances. If a candidate fails to return within a specified amount of time he/she is eliminated. There will be some object they must bring back up out of the underworld.

The next three contests were all to be with magic. Therefore, the arena was surrounded by ninth level (at least) magic-users who placed a "protect" spell around it. In this way no spectator would be harmed by the magic spells used in the arena. Mrid'obu was meeting Thau'kha for the third contest of the day. (War of Wizards rules)

Two minutes into the duel Mrid'obu's Unread Priest hit Thau'kha's Shield of Defense eighty yards away and was killed. Roughly eight minutes later Mrid'obu destroyed an advancing She'n (leaving another one) with poison arrows. He missed an Aq'a with an Energy Bolt. Shortly after, Mrid'obu's Shield net was broken by arrows. Both took two points damage and moved passed each other. The Winda Wall then destroyed the Aq'A creature losing two more points itself. Thau'kha's three advancing Fresh'Enga then ran into a Dla'Kollel and were destroyed. A few minutes later Mrid'obu had a Demon meet two Hra'. The Demon and one Hra' were destroyed, while the other Hra' was seriously wounded. Mrid'obu's Wind Wall was destroyed by an enemy Stone Wall, and the same Stone Wall crushed the advancing Dla'Kollel while losing nine points itself. About then Mrid'obu thought he had better cast an Invulnerability spell (lucky for him) to combat the possible approaching spells he couldn't see. It immediately ran into a Doorkill spell. Combat took place with only two points damage to the Doorkill before they passed each other. Mrid'obu took eighteen points damage. Mrid'obu was beginning to worry. He had not been able to get past Thau'kha's defenses yet while already taking damage himself. Thau'kha had a Fire Wall already close so Mrid'obu cast a Water Wall to meet it. He failed to stop it, although it was reduced greatly, and took three more points damage.

Meanwhile in the middle of the arena there was a huge crystal on a stone wall and sealed it only to meet a Su' and Hra' on the other side. They moved into the Hra' first and killed it, while both Hu'ys'ks took severe wounds. The Su' then attacked, destroying both of the wounded Hu'ys'ks. Mrid'obu hastily cast an energy bolt to stop the Su' and killed it forty yards from his station. Thau'kha's advancing Fire Wall destroyed an opposing Water Wall eighty yards from Mrid'obu. Mrid'obu advancing Demon destroyed the advancing Fire Wall that had caused so much trouble so far and a single Pergon just behind it. Both men had blocking Wall spells thirty yards from Thau'kha (Water, Stone).

Thau'kha threw an Energy Bolt to try and break up the Water Wall. The Wall suffered damage, but it took a second Bolt to destroy it. Mrid'obu threw a Dispel Evil into an advancing Silver Wall and caused three points damage. Another quickly threw Dispel Evil caused another three points damage, but the Wall won through and hit Mrid'obu causing nine points of damage. Two opposing Demon's net forty yards from Mrid'obu, and Mrid'obu was destroyed.

Finally, after almost twenty-five minutes, Mrid'obu broke through Thau'kha's defenses. He hit him with an Energy Bolt doing eight points damage. Another Bolt broke through Thau'kha's Shield of Defense and was fast approaching. At the other end of the arena another set of Demon's net with Mrid'obu's coming out on...
top this time. Towards the end of the first half hour things became a little more hectic. Mrid'obu, reinforced DOOMKILL meet the opponents INVISIBIL-
ITY spell and easily broke through, killing twenty-three of the.
Thau'kha's hastily cast DEMON destroyed an
advancing DEMON twenty yards away. Another ENERGIZE BOLT hit Thau'kha, doing
twelve points damage. While these things were
happening, however, the number of people in
the room reached its peak. Thirty-two of the
candidates were put to use in the test rooms.

Mrid'obu found the three levers, to him, like play-
blocks. He carefully tried to relate the items in
the room to the three levers. He eliminated
the chest, to all appearances, was not heavy and
was not heavy when he tried (carefully) to
move it. He next looked at the three levers on
the opposite wall. They appeared to be simple
doors (up/down) type levers with no markings of
any kind. Finally, Mrid'obu went to the statue of
Thu'mis. He carefully tried to relate the items to
the statue. He decided to open the chest, if possible. He
decided to try the three levers but was unable to
move it. He tried to tip it, with no results. He was
now somewhat puzzled, having finally found a
statue to the key to the problem. He
still did not wish to try the door, and the two
levers in the room. He was not paying
the odds against ones paying ones
taxes. This left only the chest. He had
already spent considerable time and was begin-
ning to worry what might have happened.
Therefore, he decided to open the chest, if possible. He
closed the chest very easily but contained nothing:
however, there was a sliding noise to the
left and . . .

Mrid'obu had spent consid-
erable time studying the clue also.
He came to much the same conclusion that
Eselen'e had but felt one of the "eyes"
piled by the statue might be the key. If
he could find it then he would have a
"psychic ability" and it could be safely used.
He did not like the idea of the levers, but he felt his
psychic ability might give him a cut above
the rest. Therefore, he started checking the
"eyes", careful not to touch them, first.
Unfortunately he touched one and
had no knowledge of what to do next.
Mrid'obu quickly scanned the and
noticed nothing else in the area. In this situ-
ation, it looked like the "psychic ability eye"
from the treasure pile and held his
breath. At first nothing happened, and
the door started coming up. He
heard the metal scrape with the levers. You have activated a
Fail Safe system. In exactly two minutes the
room will fill with poison gas. All
the levers are pulled in the correct sequence
A verbal count will begin with thirty
seconds left. Mrid'obu was not too worried
since with his original psychic ability
plus the thirty percent increase he had
one hundred four percent chance of choos-
ing the right lever first. He started the
clock on the three levers and confidently
dropped the lever. "You have made the
correct choice. The time sequence will
not start again until the end of this
message. Psychic ability will be of no
help in the future." Time was running out,
in all fairness the clue will be

"Jark'lan, the God of War, favors
those who act forcefully, put-
ting both the shield and sword
to good use."

Mrid'obu stared helplessly at the
remaining two levers trying to
remind himself of the key to
the clue. He tried to check out the
chest after committing himself.
He searched the chest, to all
appearances, was not heavy and
was not heavy when he tried (carefully) to
move it. He next looked at the three
levers on the opposite wall. They appeared to be simple
doors (up/down) type levers with
no markings of any kind. Finally,
Eselen'e went to the statue of Thu'mis. He
carefully tried to relate the items to
the statue. He decided to check
out the chest before committing
himself. He found that the chest, to all
appearances, was not heavy and was not heavy when he tried
carefully to lift one end. He next looked at the three
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out the chest before committing
himself. He found that the chest, to all

out of the room and into another room with a large bolted chest or box in the center. There was an inscription on the top of the box. Kryth'ai translated this as saying, "Radioactive - dangerous". None in the party knew what radioactive meant but they had no trouble with the word "Dangerous." They all knew that was things of this type. According to legend, that the Ru'un were designed to guard. Therefore Kryth'ai threw the bolt on the top and the chest, having no intention of opening the chest unless absolutely necessary. All warriors and Kryth'ai were watching and waiting. Almost immediately a Ru'un appeared from nowhere. It threw two steel bolts before anyone could react, killing two of the warriors. Kryth'ai pointed the "eye" obtained from the Ngo'ro and pressed the activating stud. An enormous net-like substance flew towards the Ru'un but it reacted in time to avoid it. He engaged one of the warriors in combat while throwing another steel bolt at another. (It missed) The warrior engaged in personal combat threw himself in the Ru'un, yelling at Kryth'ai to use the "eye". She fired the "eye" twice and then the power apparently ran out. The warrior held the Ru'un immobile, hoping the net would reach him. There was a great shower of sparks and the Ru'un fell to the floor. Both the warriors were dead. This left Kryth'ai and two warriors to bring back the Ru'un. Kryth'ai used a "change others" on the remaining dead Ru'un into a small white mouse and started the remaining members of her party back towards the workroom. Just as they were almost to enter the moving room they were attacked by a Ng'ya which Kryth'ai hit with a DOOMKILL spell. The party entered the small cubical and Kryth'ai remembering which button had been lit when they first entered, turned around, pushed the button and once again slid open the group was met by three small Chne'lh. They managed to destroy the creatures but lost another warrior, while the last remaining suffered a serious wound to the shoulder. The remaining two members of the original party headed up the long stairway that had descended so long ago. As they entered the room off the stairway they met eight Ru'un (Stars of Carinth). The wounded warrior killed three of them before he was overrun by the others. Kryth'ai destroyed three more when they were heading on the body of the dead warrior. She took two serious wounds herself before disposing of the two remaining. She descended the entrance stairs out into the open. She asked the legion officer waiting for her to hand over a large bundle of equipment consisting of a "change others" spell. It was done and the white mouse again became a dead Ru'un.

The Auren Legion waited for Mrid'Obu to return, as did Kryth'ai, for the remainder of the week. He did not return and was never found. The Empire had its new Emperor (Empersors!) Kryth'ai was the first male that woman to rule in the Empire's history.

"Long live the Empersors!!!!!!"

---

"MUGGERS! MUGGERS!

"I've got it! I've got it!"

"Well, try pencillin. Preferably somewhere else."

"We were putting the game together. It's just fine."

"We've GOT a game this month, and we like it just fine."

"No, no. You think you just THINK you have a game. I was up here last night after you guys left."

"So THAT'S where the rubber cement went."

"Barnigame, I'm warning you..."

Steve Jackson

---

"And I looked it over. Another fantasy role-playing job. When are you guys getting back to the real world?"

"What?"

"The real world! Out there. Squall, filth, pettiness, hatred - the real stuff of life. Now that game you've got has possibilities, I'll admit - it just needs the real barnigame touch."

"Well touch this, Red, if you don't cut out and let us work."

"You'll have the lot of me. Barnigame, I'm warning you..."

We rose as one and ran. We went down, still shouting: "You start as a punk and work your way up. Here's the way it all the way to boss and Godfather..."

We dragged him, kicking and screaming, into the inner office. It was a different game - with games awaiting unpacking. Repeating "the cartoon, we garned Barnigame with a half-dozen back issues and stuffed him in. Somehow, he continued his tirade: "badblades only 1-lide weapons, bicycle chains 3, broken bottles 2 with 2 ades...mummm...leather jackets take 3 hits...saving roll against base..." We slapped tape on the carton and pushed it out into the hall. "Instead of elves and crocs, you got fairies and narn...I stole that, but nobody'd catch it...mugg..."

We addressed the car and left it by the mailbox. As we backed back to the office, with the warm feeling that comes from finding the creative solution to a problem, we heard, dwelling behind us..."Mugger's" fanzine scenario based on "West Side Story"..."sume miniatures, or just plug it out yourselves...

With Red out of the way, everything went quite smoothly. At last, we've implemented our game-in-every issue policy. Unfortunately, there's a little difficulty this time around. The following pages of MONSTER! MONSTER! had to be reduced drastically to fit the TFG format, especially since we had so much other material this issue. But we managed. If you'll look closely at that smudge on page 8, you'll see it's actually very fine print. But out your magnifying glasses, and hang..."
game, supplemented was all over, had Avas.
defences are available at ~ent bak~ry defender's I I a battle-c^f we space War of the Worlds II is quite Tony reduced eqergy even if they were all in soil, being cream or chocolate in color a Avalon remained should have done it? (Fxtra a few a about 80 hexes away on help them out once as though, Mogana as THB About Red, I guys ln the game business doesn't mean were unusually strong for a colony world, really appear a monster, and sought a way of conquering Avalon without destroying the the world. He grasped at information provided by an escaped prisoner, which hinted at the vulnerability of the large equatorial continent. Terran troops were landed in that area and that area was established. Too late, it was discovered that Equatoria was undefended because it harboured remnants of Avalon's native ecosystems. Long-term incursion by civilization would destroy the ecology; in the short run, the plants, animals, and heavy metals crippled the Terran force. The remnants of the Avalonian space fleet returned from hiding, shot past the Terran forces and blockaded attempts to evacuate the men. At this point, Avalon "surrendered" to Admiral Caja. They provided medical aid to the Terran forces stranded on Scorpeluna Plateau. As a result of these actions, Avalon was required to negotiate its own peace terms. The conditions of the treaty with Quetlan were already fulfilled: there were Terran troops on Avalon and even if they were all in hospitals. In the end, Avalon remained in the Domain of Ythri, and was not absorbed by Terra.

In Metagaming's version, THE YTHRI simulates the first part of the Anderson's Battle of Avalon. Originally, the Terran fleet hopelessly outnumbered Avalon, both in numbers and in relative composition. Strength. However, the Terran fleet was split into thirds, and one portion was sent against Avalon. The other contingents were to attack their objectives when the battle had controlled.

The Marchwardens of Avalon--the Ythrian Terrans and the human Daniel Holm--had prepared their world for such an attack over many years. Orbital defences were unusually strong, and the economy was based on Avalon, and its soon Norgans supplied a space fleet half the size of the Terran contingent.

The Terran Fleet, stuck the Avalonianships with difficulty, but could not breach the orbital defences. A small contingent of spaceships was sent to do the job, and while the main fleet went onward, Avalon was the last remaining enclave of Ythrian resistance; even the homeworld, Quetlan, had fallen. The Terran Fleet returned to conquer Avalon.

Avalon continued to resist, even when a nuclear blast destroyed Centauri City, one of the two human-dominated centers. Admiral Caja had no wish to appear a monster, and sought a way of conquering Avalon without destroying the

2. The Guardian Satellites should be more numerous and less vulnerable. I would suggest that there be three GS counters available at the starting setup. Also a step reduction from 4-3-2 could be included. This should improve the usefulness of the satellites.

3. The Terrans require more ground troops. The move to Avalon's defense was its space fleet and satellites. For these, the small ground forces would have been obliterated. Only the ecological balance on Equatoria prevented the world from being overrun once the Terrans had landed.

Give Terra four more AT points and four more AP points.

**Historical Scenario: Use the setup in the standard rules plus the GP option and the variations given above.**

**a. Withdrawal of Forces:** On game turn 7, the Terran Player must withdraw all remaining spaceships, including unlanded troops, from any edge of the map to conquer the rest of the Domain of Ythri. If any Ythrian spaceships (or on PC only remain, twice that number of Terran ships remain with the world.

**b. Ythrian Recovery:** If the Terran ground troops landed before turn 7 have been destroyed before turn 12, the Avalon Player may replace on the map one-half the friends lost. As well, all Terran units reduced to 2-3 units may be raised to 4-3 units again.

**Victory Conditions:** The Terran Player must capture all City/Choth Bases before turn 18 or lose the game. Add 3 turns to the standard Victory Conditions.

The changes suggested above will have a drastic effect on THE YTHRI in general, and I would not recommend their use except to create a scenario appropriate to the original battle.

**Final Note:** The Scorpeluna Landing option cannot be simulated realistically without a great deal of trouble. Avalon is a moderately large world, 11,000 km. in diameter. The ground combat map shows only Corona and a small portion of Oronesia, on a scale I would estimate at 2000 km. This is reasonable, as a colony world's population and technology would be concentrated in a fairly small area. However, this places the Equatoria continent about 80 hexes away on the far side of the planet. Most of the intervening area is ocean, and contains only small islands. Although the operation was planned and executed, to simulate it would require considerable expenditure of time and energy, and possibly a new game.
of each player. Gases, stations, and interceptors are either on the planetary surfaces or carried, hidden from the opposition's inspections, in the cargo holds of the command ships. The objective of the game is to control more planets than the enemy. Most likely you will have to fight to gain control, and this is the game's real appeal.

Once attacking command ships have entered the local planetary space (provided they have displayed any defending command ships) combat begins. There are three zones above each planet in which combat takes place. They are unlabeled on the map. Zone 1 should be zone 3 and vice versa.) Players must follow a fairly intricate procedure, and this is where a little thought comes in. The defender first places his space stations in any of the zones, then he places interceptors in the outer zone. The attacker must "neutralize" this zone with at least one attacking interceptor. The same procedure is repeated for zone 2. In zone 3 the attacker places first and is then able to reinforce any of this units in any zone. This is the most crucial phase for the attacking forces or two-sided attack. The CRT uses a symbolic results table which adds a nice flair. After all of the decisions in the game for any player, no matter what his position.

The defender's interceptors are destroyed the attacker places first and is then able to reinforce any of this units in any zone. The attacker must "neutralize" this zone with at least one attacking interceptor. The same procedure is repeated for zone 2. In zone 3 the attacker places first and is then able to reinforce any of this units in any zone. This is the most crucial phase for the attacking forces or two-sided attack. The CRT uses a symbolic results table which adds a nice flair. After all of the decisions in the game for any player, no matter what his position.

I'm not trying to shock anyone, but in the interests of fair play, I think I should point out that in a basic game of Stellar Conquest, Player #3 has a distinct advantage over the other players regarding the amount of intelligence he can accumulate and utilize in making the decisions. All may be used in his first colony—which is one of the most vital decisions in the game for any player, no matter what his position.

Player #3 must choose which of his units to move to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack. Player #3 can send his CTs to the planets that have been destroyed or are currently under attack.

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The game system is the essence of simplicity. On any given turn the player may move and fire against any planet or base. The charts are well planned and easy to read. One point that must be emphasized about this game is the violence of the weapons involved. Devices of incredible frightfulness are lobbed around the board with gay abandon, including free use of micro-nukes and conversion beams. Needless to say, since all this happens on an HO-scale board, the distances have been shrunk by a factor of over 100. A laser rifle has a range of 23 inches maximum and a micro-nuke with a yield of .02 kT has a blast radius of nine inches.

The best feature of the game is the miniature figurines McWain sells to go along with the game. The basic idea is to sculpt and match some of the best SF combat stories around. The Dremoi figure is an insect-type with a hive mind. The Ralnai is reptillian, and there are many types of human troops, including Dickinson-style troops and powered armor. The latter is by far the best in game terms and is also an excellent figure. The only thing more powerful on a one-for-one basis than powered armor is the Dorsal Triology, and David Drake's Under the Hammer are only a few of the stories that are not only fun to read but propose fascinating new weaponry and tactics.

McWain Miniatures (38060 Street, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103) has published a set of rules which can be used to game out some of their future conflicts. The game is called STARGUARD!_ INTERSTELLAR INFANTRY 2250 A.D. and is a fast-moving, flexible miniatures game. I think it provides a realistic picture of what future ground combat might be like.

The rule book is divided into three sections, all profusely illustrated. The first section describes the various forces that can be used along with background information, uniforms descriptions, weapons carried and even T.O.I.S. for the units. The next section describes the weapons and their abilities. These weapons include lasers, sonic weapons, projectiles and several other types of weapons. The last section describes the rules, mostly conditions for moving and firing, and how to compute the weapon's effect. The rules are a little vague in spots, but they are 'clean' and easy to use.
Although the game system is simple and the figurines appealing, STARGUARD is not by any means perfect. For example, the limited range means almost shaking hands with the target before firing. Projectile blast radii are all well defined, and if the figurines are not appealing, they are certainly not going to be. We would propose the following modifications:

1) **TRIPLY RANGES**, except for the grenades and the Y-Rack. Double these, leave the ranges of the "ancient" weapons alone. For example, an M.I. plasma gun (not to be messed with) reads: short 0-5(I), medium 5-10(II), long 10-15(III). The number in parentheses is the chance of hitting on a twelve-sided die. Expanding the ranges 15-20/20-25 gives a slightly more realistic range; however, it still works out to only 90 scale yards. This modification assumes you have this do this, at least a four-foot-by-eight-foot area.

2) **To reduce** the level of mayhem involved, reduce the numbers of troops and equipment. Remembering that an M.I. platoon can cause a fair-sized city, and what such costs, limit their numbers. Also limit the use of tactical nuke weapons to a few per side. Remember the effect they have on local topography. If you are running a STARGUARD campaign, the weapons and numbers will of course be dictated by the strategic situation.

3) **Adding** the V-Races up the galaxy considerably. Along with this goes a "surprise" rule: if the individual is detected by sensors or heard about in some other way, he can still surprise the other soldiers. The person doesn't have a 1/6 chance of reacting that turn. Next turn reactions are normal. This is where the gamer's imagination comes into play, and if you can't find what you want, build it yourself. Prior modeling experience is helpful, but not necessary.

4) **Another modification** that can make the game interesting is to have the attackers drop in on a city/beach by the incredible amount of very imaginative ships. If these are in some way related to the "big stuff", model that is exotic-looking and easily recognizable. Rocket parts can be used to construct some models that are Dreadnought-type spacecraft. This is adequate, simply haul out a piece of Balsa wood and start carving. The spacecraft needed in STARGUARD are of the "landing craft" or "retrieval boat" type, with the mother ship out of sight. Airfix puts out a 1/72 scale hovercraft model that is exotic-looking and easily assembled. The general rule is to scrounge, and if you can't find what you want, build it yourself. Prior modeling experience is helpful, but not necessary. This terrain can be used from anything imaginable. Rocks and odd-colored lichen are always usable as are cut-and-pointed pieces of styrofoam. The environmental architecture will depend on the planet being fought on (or over).

**ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY** should be scrounged or built to fill in the gaps. Some of these include Larry Todd's "Martlets" (armed 12-foot-high non-amplifiers) and battlecraft (floating spheres with a non-cannon warhead for fire-control). The source for these is a fiction article in a 1968 issue of Galaxian: probably a 1970 or "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollo are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

5) **Miscellaneous mods:**

   a) For a laser rifle, smoke is hard cover.
   b) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.
   c) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.
   d) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.
   e) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.
   f) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollo are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   Vehicles and flyers play a slightly different role in the future shown here. When an infantryman can move 30 inches in one turn, against 15 for a tanked vehicle, the rank is in a bad way. A vehicle's role becomes that of long-range antipersonnel and area bombardment, and the present role of reducing strongpoints and shock effect. The M.I. now have that role. The vehicle's reliance on infantry support is increased drastically, because the infantryman can raze a building or party and fire on a 12-foot-high man-amplifiers)

   (armed 12-foot-high man-amplifiers)

   a) Delete the Y-Rack's nuclear capability. According to the book, only one turn is needed to install a computer-directed, self-defense system that can fire support to assaulting troops.

   b) For a laser pistol, smoke is hard cover.

   c) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   d) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   e) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   f) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   g) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   h) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   i) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   j) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   k) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   l) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   m) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   n) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   o) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   p) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   q) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   r) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   s) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   t) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   u) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   v) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   w) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   x) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.

   y) For a laser rifle, smoke is soft cover.

   z) Any weapon firing at 1/6 of its bore is also mentioned as being part of a "Walker". Described in Keith Laumer's *A RELIC OF WAR* (dynamite story), it is a turreted, six-legged and self-propelled projective weapon. The hollors are also mentioned as being part of a 1/6 chance of reacting. Next turn reactions are normal. Mutual surprise is possible and common.
I would once more like to point out that I have attempted here to provide a playable solution to the realism question that I’ve heard many times, and indeed, raised myself. There are many more advanced adaptations of this variation. For example, sensors of different ships could be graded, and when two ships met, the more powerful sensor would block the weaker one, while still detecting information itself. The grading would be necessary when two large groups met, and the various sensors of each added up and compared to give one victor, or something similar. The possibilities are endless.

**VULCAN’S FORGE**

**Eldon Tannish: Conclusion**

(Eldon Tannish is a gifted, young gamer competing in NORCON, a sophisticated future computer-moderated game tournament, the easiest series of heuristically self-directed computer program systems resident in a technologically exotic future computer. Each game usually consists of six to twelve gamers competing in a diversity of computer generated scenarios holographically displayed.

Eldon had won the last game and was now to play in the finals with eleven others. But, a change in plans by The Games Foundation, sponsor of the Tournament. The Games Foundation has often used to use it’s sophisticated computer to create a scenario based on a current world crisis. This offer has been accepted by the American government and Soviet States. The tournament final will consist of the crisis scenario.)

Morning’s slow breeze softly rustled the curtains around the open sliding glass door. He sat erect on the tiny hotel balcony, legs crossed, lips barely whispered an oft practiced rhythm of words. Eldon’s morning exercise was longer, more concentrated than usual. Today of all days would require utmost conscious clarity. Today’s game was a dream-goal achieved, the culmination of many years of training and effort. Many, most perhaps, would credit blind luck for his point total. But, there was no room for skill or luck, today was an opportunity he’d make the most of regardless of criticism and disdain.

As Eldon’s trance ego-state deepened, mental speech patterns fragmented. The altered consciousness trance was a matter of thought control to his right hemisphere functions. Linear, rationalistic functions like speech were dominate left hemisphere functions and tended to desert Eldon in deeper trances. These trance exercises were designed to form and strengthen co-
herent right hemisphere ego-state pat-
terns. The result of such training in
intensive doses was a greatly increased
waking access to brainstem func-
tions. A gamer without intuition was for-
ever doomed to mediocrity.

The trance's duration lasted no
more than ten or fifteen minutes. As
he began coming out, memories of the
aftermath of his last, incredible game, flood-
ed it.

The Undersecretary for Colonial
Affairs handled the situation nicely.
"Given the fragility of all affairs in-
volving colonial expansion, the Presi-
dent is unwilling to leave any opportu-
ity for a solution unexplored. The proposal
of the Games Foundation, while unusual,
does offer a format for analyzing the
current confrontations.

"Mr. Secretary," a reporter inter-
rupted, "is it true that a Soviet games
team is being assembled?"

"That is essentially correct," he
replied. "A Soviet team of eight gamers
with advisors will direct the Soviet re-
sources in the planned scenario.

"How long will this game last?" asked
another.

"Three days have been allowed.
The scenario will commence with the con-
struction start date of the proposed North
American colony.

The scenario created by the Games
Computer will allow a live simulation of
the new colony's eventual economic and
environmental impact on the world's balance
of power. It will also document the best
training methods for an advancement to
an effort at developing new alternati-
tives to the coming economic confronta-
tion. Most of the decisions are left to
Soviet-controlled oil and satellite
power for decades. We need to know what
can happen if that relationship is alter-
ated.

"What role did the First Soviet
Secretary's master's standing in the Russian
games play in these de-
velopments?" came another question.

The Undersecretary's bureaucratic
exterior lightened at first, smile. "I'm
sure that played a part. Just as im-
portant is the desire of all parties to
avoid another conflict. The idea is not
too unusual considering the increas-
ingly important economic role of master
gamers as consultants.

"How do the Soviet Trojan Colonies
feel about this development?" asked a
particularly aggressive reporter of
Ambassador Mikhail Solokov who was stand-
ing beside the Undersecretary.

"The Soviet Peoples Republic of Luna
and L-S space always favor peaceful ven-
tures" responded Mikhail. "We do not
recognize, of course, any North American
right to establish a military garrison at
any Lunar orbit Trojan position. The
world blessing of Soviet peace cannot be
threatened. The Games Foundation's pro-
aposal is not necessarily a threat to
peace. It may provide alternative sugges-
tions acceptable to the cosmonaut spirit.
I request that you analyze the
proposal.

"'Will the Soviet team seek coopera-
tion in their play?' another asked
Solokov.

"The Soviet team is instructed to
maintain the peace," he replied. "So
many things depend on the peaceful
ability of the Soviet Republics.

"The Soviets will protect the peace
as we have in the past. The L-4 scenario
depends on the peaceful acceptance of
the Solovets by all the participants.

"Yes, but will your team go to war?"
came an insistent voice from the ranked
reporters.

"The Soviets will prevent the peace
as we have in the past. The L-4 scenario
depends on the peaceful acceptance of
the Solovets by all the participants.

The news conference had gone on just
as inconclusively as most. Eldon's brief-
ing had added little data. The
-twelve finalists in The Games tournament
were allotted roles as leaders of various
segments of the non-Soviet world. Each
played would be scored on how well he
fostered and protected the interests of
his allotted segment and also go for compro-
mise alternatives. The Soviet team would not
be scored per se. The team itself was well
prepared, was to maintain and protect Soviet
world dominance. Eldon's role in the game
was that of colony director for the North
American L-4 lunar orbit colony. His job
was to find a way to keep the colony's
economic wealth from threatening the
Soviets', yet protect the colony's future.

Given the fact that the proposed
colony could eventually build power sat-
ettes to provide 25% of the Other's
power - half the amount now supplied by the
Soviets - Eldon's task seemed im-
possible. The team had the power to
prevent the colony from developing if
they saw the slightest threat.

As Eldon's role ended he rose to
dress for the day and breakfast. The
Games Computer had allotted him perhaps
the most difficult role to discuss
with his role with Alba and some of the
younger gamers last night. Some interesting
suggestions had been made. Despite
that, he had no plan. One idea, a lunch really, stayed in his mind.
But it was so radical, Eldon had no more
time than tried with it, to go into the
game ready to talk to the others
rather than having the initiative. The
next three days seemed unappetizing to
him.

Eldon made his decision and quickly
called up certain astronomical and
technical data. Eldon knew the game
core might destroy the simulation and lose him
the game. But, he knew what he would do
in the actual game. The relationship, power and
resources provided in this reality
simulation. The preliminary data satis-
fied him. He actually had two chances.
Why not try both, since both were cer-
tainly cheaper than the plan he'd been
given. The latter was essentially the same
case as the one currently being debated in
politics.

Eldon's plan was certainly differ-
ent. He ordered several vehicles readied
for launch at New Cape Canaveral. Their
carapace would be greatly altered. He
entered his deputy's office and asked him
could he beat the time limit.

It had been a good tournament for
him. A real triumph. The turn of events at the end was the sort of unexpected occurrence for which the Games Foundation
had been founded. Eldon knew of a
rather than building a Soviet lunar accelerator,"
ambassador Solokov said. "It may be
possible. The Soviets had the power to
build power satellites for Earth power
satellites just aborted everything.

"The two are very close, but not
necessarily the same as I see it," Eldon
replied.

"We can't have war," Eldon had ans-
swered matter-of-factly. "If North America
builds power satellites it destroys the
Soviet domination. By promising not to
build a power satellite for Earth we
avoid war. Promising not to build the accelerator is a solid sign of
our intentions.

"But the colony material will have
to come from Earth. 'We'll have to buy it
from the Soviets as the 'accelerator,"' pro-
tested the team leader, a powerful
international Games master.

"Buying material from the Soviets is
easy way to get a colony and give them an
economic profit," stated Eldon.

"It's a whole different game. The
Soviets are usually the last to be
considered. The conference had continued. Only
the need to get turn in decisions and Eldon's
final say over use of resources allocated to the colony project had cut things short. Eldon's dream was slashed by the group representing the North American interest. The Soviets were gleeful. Eldon monitored the reports generated by the Games Computer closely.

The shot of rock at L-4 was Eros, an asteroid that occasionally passed as close as 8.2-A.U. (Astronomical Units) to Earth. Scientific work teams sent up by Eldon had gone to Eros to stop its spin, dig a tunnel, and set off a series of mini-nuclear laser devices. The small chain of nuclear blasts, as radiation clean as they came, halted Eros' rotation at L-4 in eighteen months. Fortunately, Eros was in near optimal position for capture or Eldon couldn't have done it. Eros was a 36 by 15 by 13-kilometer asteroid heavy with iron silicates. The 2,000 cubic kilometers of material was more than could be sent from-thirteen in Earth's atmosphere.

Homing one large rock was a lot easier than throwing a lot of tiny parcels from the moon and catching them. Eldon had done what God had not, given earth a second moon and a wealth of convenient building material.

The four-kilometer diameter floating cylinder looked similar to the three Soviet colonies, only it was much larger. The eight-kilometer length would give it 100 km of interior surface area when finished. A long segmented tube fitted with Eros' tunnel would run the central axis serving as the colony's "sun." Power satellites would beam energy at one end of the tube to keep the eight-long-eleven-keel from blackout to Earth surface summer high. Fail safes would prevent overloads.

The finished colony would support about 200,000 inhabitants in comfort. A one-third gravity spin would be instituted with an interior air pressure two-thirds earth sea level pressure but with 50% oxygen. Eldon's main problem was air. The colony needed forty-eight cubic kilometers of the stuff. Silicates from Eros were supplying some oxygen, but it was still a headache. It also needed trees, plants, supplies of animals, insects, machinery, etc., etc. Having built a colony for forty times the number of original colonists, Eldon knew getting everything to the L-4 site was going to cost plenty.

Eldon's North American "allies" were happy with the project. They did not want a colony as huge as Eldon was building, but they were openly pleased at tweaking the Soviets. Their pleasure was short-lived when Soviet observers saw the construction site. They have to be satisfied I'm keeping my word, I keep my promise. No lunar accelerator was built. They have to be absolutely sure. The colonies of asteroids are built, or they go war. I won't start a war.

"Why should we continue to budget you at any level you asked him." The Games Computer is simulating North American public approval of the colony. Of course, the simulated public also believes I'm lying in my teeth and still plan some sneaky way to give them cheap power," Eldon said. "The Soviets believe I'm lying, observer teams are crucial. Another factor is the estimate that the colony could support a million people. Many of the intelligentsia and technical class people are toying with the dream of a low-gravity, energy-rich future for their families."

In the end Eldon's budget survived. It amounted to only half the original, not enough for the colony, but plenty for Eldon's purposes.

The tenth of the game simulation saw Vulcan, Eldon's name for the colony, take the first slow spin toward one-third gravity revolution. The lights also came on for the first time, showing the raw rock interior in its bleak reality. Another long project of Eldon's had sent a seed to orbit for water. They'd returned, many dead, bringing chunks of methane-dirty ice totaling a tenth-cube kilometer from Earth.

Growing things took first priority. Algae, bacteria, and small floras of all types arrived in seed to bulk to be hurriedly planted. The first batch of colonists, skilled industrial types, arrived with a sprinkling of children and a one man to one woman ratio. Raw structures had been built on the interior surface for some shelter. Extra asteroid material left in loose piles would supply other material as needed.

Other prime cargo included industrial and technical machinery. Much work remained. Eldon intended the colony to survive even if it suffered a technological Dark Age. But the initial colonists would be the nucleus for a highly technical, energy-rich culture.

The possibility of war was what bothered Eldon the most. The Soviet team still hadn't committed itself one way or the other. The more powerful the Soviet Union, the less inclination to build power satellites, the Soviets just couldn't trust its huge economic potential. The huge Soviets didn't want direct power. Eldon had ruined the "normal" flow of the game, and other participants were suffering severe mental constipation as a result.

"You have to start building satellites NOW. The Soviets are bluffing. They know their star is on the wane," concluded the majority opinion of the other twelve finalists.

"I'd be happy to consider plans in private," Eldon said, "and know the magnitude of new resources that can be spared." He was simultaneously reaffirming his promise not to build the satellites to the Soviet inspection teams full run of the colony. There would be a crucial 3-month period when optimally timed and used to build power satellites. Soviet attention on those shipments would divert attention from crucial modifications to Vulcan's surface. If it was lost it would be in the next few game turns. Eldon had hidden his secret under the noses of the others' expectations.

As was threatened Earth, Luna, and the colonies, Vulcans, too. Low terrors and shakes disturbed the night of the work-exhausted colonists. Small, steady propulsive forces on the Vulcans' surface grade to Saturn by a mission, taking out of the L-4 orbit lunar orbit path. Vulcan was on the move away from Earth.

"Vulcan's going out of orbit! What in hell's going on, Eldon?" Eldon's video communicator blasted out.

"Just checking out some emergency safety features," Eldon lied sincerely. "There may be need to adjust orbit occasions, either for the over population of the Soviet threat, if you get my meaning."

That had held them for awhile-until Vulcan was threatened. Vulcan was going out of orbit. Thy had lied blandly about "malfunctions," but, they were beginning to doubt. When Vulcan was 1.5 million km out he directed a new series of nuclear blasts aboard Eros that forced it out of orbit several times more rapidly than Vulcan. For a while the game was over, even though three hours of the last day remained. He knew he'd "lost" the tournament final. The Games Computer would have no other way of scoring him. Not that he gave a damn. There'd be other tournaments and other tournament finals. It would always have a risk of being the unknown quantity in this game, but he'd endure. It was all worth the image of freedom that was made in his mind. He would visualize his final instructions and programming to the Games Computer being executed.

Vulcan slowly toward the sun in a long elliptical orbit. It would pass the sun at .25 A. U. (Astronomical Units) and return to the Mars' orbit in a two-year cycle. Eros would follow it to orbit the sun as a permanent resource of some supply for the solar energy. The Vulcan colony would be busiest doing maximum metals fabrication and production while solar energy was sixteen times more intense than at Earth's orbit. On the swing out to Mars' orbit final products and components would be built for the asteroid mission. Onward swing asteroid exploration would occur, and serial colony bases would be established.

and supplied. More asteroids of valuable composition could be sold to Earth. Outside Mercury's orbit. Eros would become a permanent industrial base, the bulk of its rock shielding the worst solar radiation. Mercury might possibly be colonized.

Eldon's vision was of a high-energy, space-borne cultural orbiting asteroid resources and solar power to achieve independence. To his way of thinking, building and using as conveniently as Eros was resource-poor Earth was a waste. Once in space why go back, except for trade? That's evolution, that was space, not a space-supported Earth.

THE END

Non-Technical Note: Most of you have probably seen mention of a lunar Trojan point colony scheme getting some play in current popular periodicals. That scheme is based on roughly current technology and is horribly expensive. It includes the lunar "accoustic station" built in Earth orbit and moved from the moon and the final building of micro-wave generating solar-electric satellites to beam energy to Earth.

Questions that came to my mind regarding the scheme were as follows:

1. Why use moon rocks when sizeable asteroids may be available near Earth's orbit? They may not be mined faster. Not that the Earth was the story, but still available.

2. Why beam power back to Earth? That only wastes it. Why not use the power in space with no economic dependence. To his way of thinking, building and using as conveniently as Eros was in the story, but still available.

3. Why not get closer to the sun than to the moon? Why not use a solar energy available? Hijacking an asteroid gives you a lot more material with which to work. It also saves you the expense of a lunar base to build the accelerator and what would have to be a complicated scheme to catch the tossed rocks. Also, consider the cost of slowing the rocks down so they stay at the Trojan point.

No, the asteroid has to be cost effective. You don't really need to build a colony or space station; you just dig out the raw materials and supply it and it supply. In fact, why even consider some of the expensive Earth-orbit satellite schemes currently mentioned in science fiction literature? A one-kilometer chunk of asteroid would do just nicely, thank you. And, wouldn't Eldon's colony be a grand place to live!