

AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
GEAR KRIEG AND HEAVY GEAR FICTION
HEAVY GEAR BLITZ! SCENARIOS
VARIANT RULES FOR SILCORE
OFFICIAL UPDATES AND MORE!



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AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

Well. Well. Well.

Some big news *again* for you this issue. Something I think many of you will like. No, check that, something I know many of you will like. I expect you to be dancing all across the room with your Aurora copy in your hands. Except... that this is an electronic 'zine, which means you'd be dancing with your monitor. Hmm. Laptop? That might work...

Ok, scrap that image. BUT I still stand in that it is exciting news!

I've said it many a time before, and I'll say it again: the best part of these fantastic worlds that the Pod has created is inhabiting them. They are not mere veneer, shellacked over the rules to provide some "curb value;" they're the reason for the rules, the very foundation and floor plan. (Ok, even if I wasn't an architect I'd know I just mangled another analogy) Create great world, then explore it, and oh by the way here's some rules by which to do so (and darned good rules, by the way!).

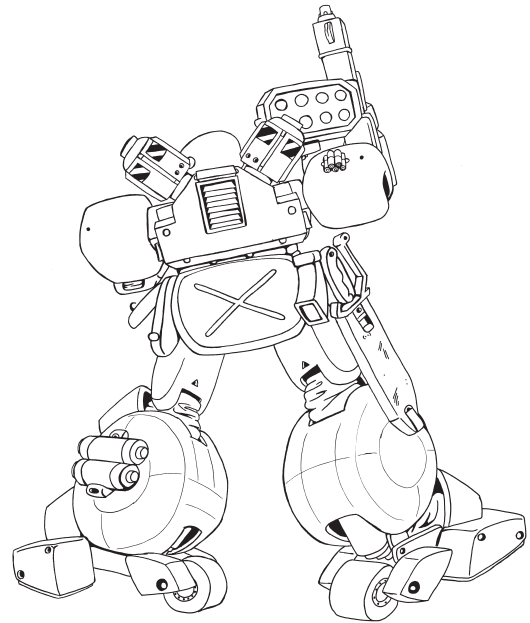
This issue we have a several great explorations that go beyond the rules and get into the worlds, including the long-running Alfie's Tanners, along with new Heavy Gear fiction. Very cool to me are the rules for Terra Novan chess – totally inhabiting the world and asking "what would exist here?"

Of course, the exciting news fits right into all of this.

You can almost smell the badlands, the white sand blowing, burning your OW!

Take a whiff (carefully!) and welcome to issue 2.5.

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor



OFFICIAL-DP9

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

TEST DRIVE

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

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

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Brad Bellows (bradley.bellows@3web.net) -- *Adventures in Tank Hunting*

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

Dennis R. Johnson, Jr. (griffon296@msn.com) -- *Harlequin Knights, Chapter 1*

Dennis Johnson is a 27-year old who currently resides in Kentucky with his wife and child. A 6-year US Navy veteran, Dennis currently works at a GameStop where he torments his co-workers with an unending supply of Star Wars and Heavy Gear trivia. He also occasionally plays Warhammer 40K

John Bell (jakarnilson@magma.ca) -- *Alfie's Tanners and Illustration: p 5 and p 21*

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

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

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

Oliver Bollmann (kannikcat@hotmail.com) -- *Core Injection: Variant RPG Rules*

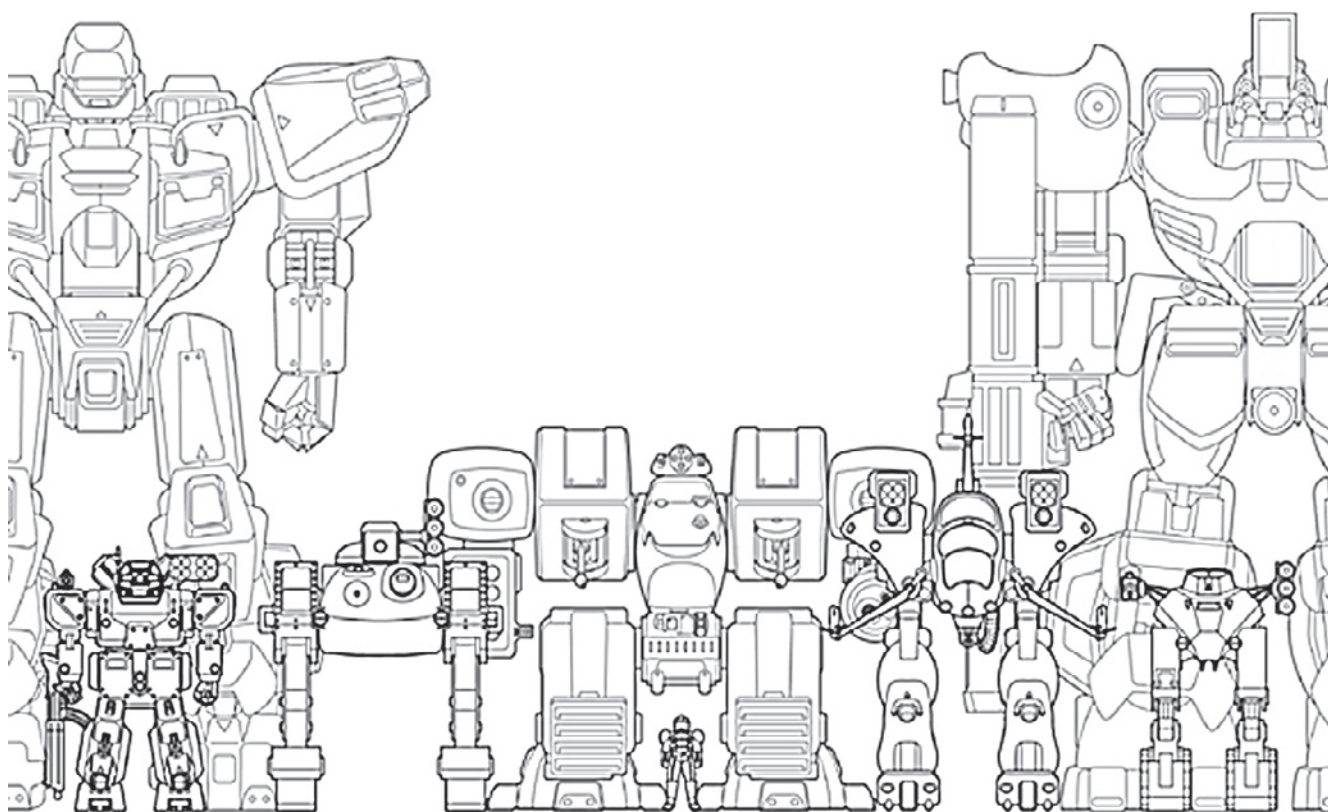
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Almost as soon as he began gaming he began writing, tinkering and adding for and to them, which led to self-publishing and e-publishing several supplements. In the times he's not playing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

Poh Tun Kai (ptikachu@gmail.com) -- *Chess On Terra Nova, Old Tyme Review*

Poh Tun Kai has worked as a technology writer, a two-fisted editor, and a wild-eyed game designer. His first experience with Heavy Gear was with a RAFM Iguana in a free-for-all tactical scenario in 1997. He was taken out by a kamikaze Jager with a hand grenade.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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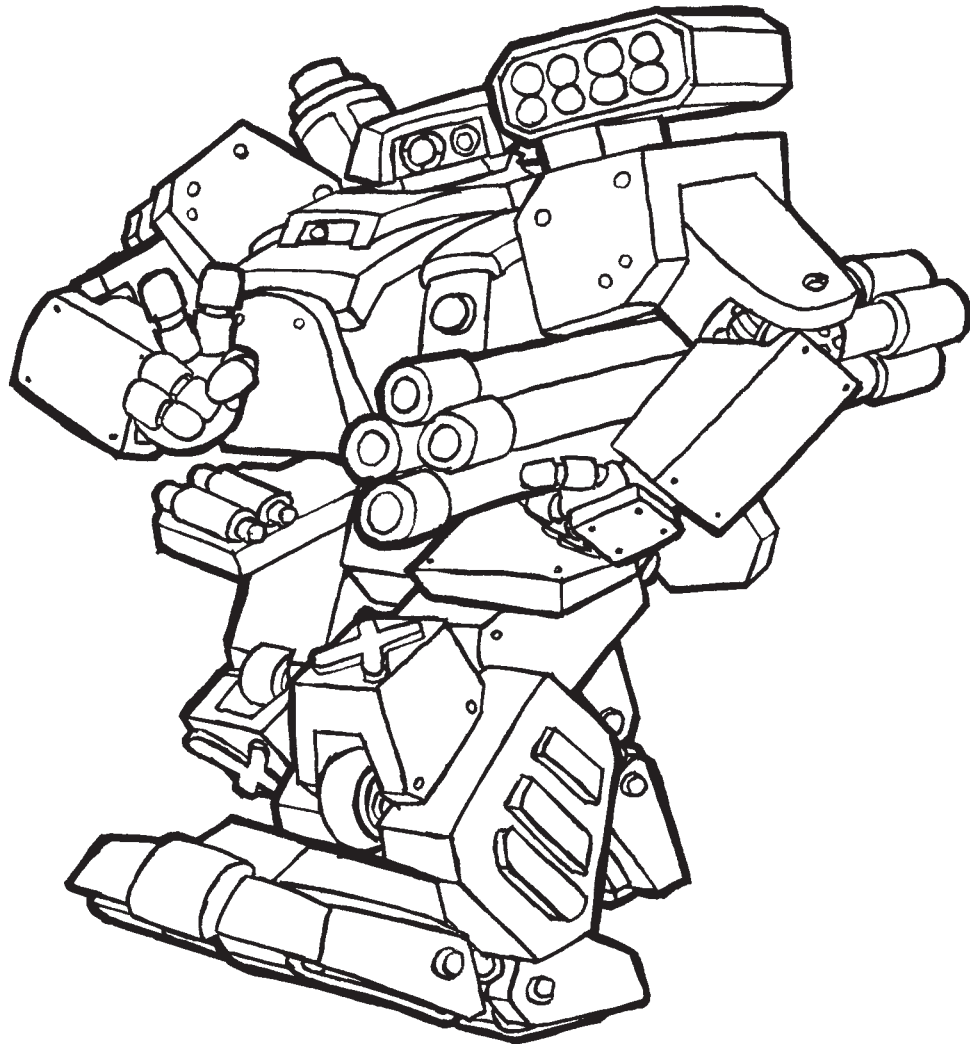
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JB '06

"Cannons overhead / Knight comes riding / Tank sortie / Officer advances." – Last words of Prefect Arland Longchamps to Grand Marshal Anders von Breslau, (apocryphal)

Games of strategy and cunning have long been popular on Terra Nova, a planet that has seen its share of wars and conquest. While Terran chess is widely played, the most popular strategy board game since the formation of the polar confederations has been a variant of Mekongese xiangqi known as Terra Novan chess.

TERRAN CHESs

Terran chess, also known as Western chess, is perhaps the most well known variant across the colony worlds. Played on an 8-by-8 checkered grid, each player controls a King, a Queen, two Bishops (known among Northerners as the First and Second Followers), two Knights, two Rooks and eight Pawns. The two sides are called Black and White, and White always goes first, with the players taking turns to play White in tournaments. The objective of the game is to force the opposing player's King into a position of "checkmate" where there is no possible escape from capture.

Military academies in both polar confederations encourage cadets to play the game in order to gain a better understanding of strategy. Indeed, Terran chess is a fairly popular dueling game for some of the more intellectual members of the officer corps, and the honor and reputation of many a regiment or academy class has often revolved around the checkered Terran chessboard.

THE CHESsPIECE SYSTEM

Terran chess also influences the discourse of Terra Novan historians and socio-political analysts, who often rank individuals according to their historical or societal importance using what is known as the "chesspiece system." The King or Queen is used to refer to historical individuals who have already left their mark on world history, while the Rooks are used to represent powerful movers and shakers who are considered critical to Terra Novan politics in the present day. Knights are merely Very Important People who do not play a central role in world events, but who still may have some influence on current events. Bishops are the "social" or "background characters" in major social and political movements, and are not expected to

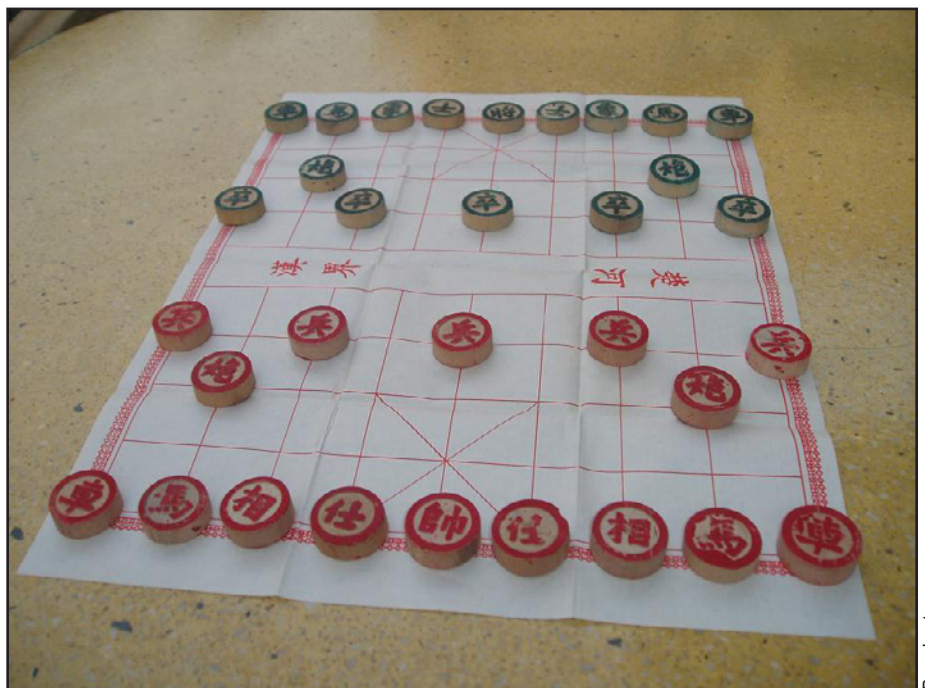
have any impact on current events, but are considered symbols of larger trends. Finally, there are the faceless average citizens, Pawns, often referred to by scholars by the derogatory term "expendables."

TERRA NOVAN CHESs

The original settlers of what would become the Mekong Dominion brought with them a traditional board game known as xiangqi which has grown to eclipse Terran chess in popularity, due to its fast pace and its topical theme.

Terra Novan chess is played on a board 9 lines wide (the ranks) by 10 lines long (the files). Pieces are played on the intersection of lines rather than the squares that they form. Each side has a Fortress or Capital consisting of a 3 rank by 3 file square area centered on the back of their side of the board, and certain pieces (the Marshal and its Officers) may only move within the Palace along certain fixed lines. In addition, there is a space between the 5th and 6th files known as the River or Badlands which also restricts the movement of certain pieces (the Striders and the Soldiers).

The two sides are called North (usually colored blue or green) and South (red), and South always goes first, with the players taking turns to play South in tournaments. Northerners consider this rule to be representative of "Southern aggression and ruthlessness" while Southerners say that this rule represents "Southern boldness and initiative."



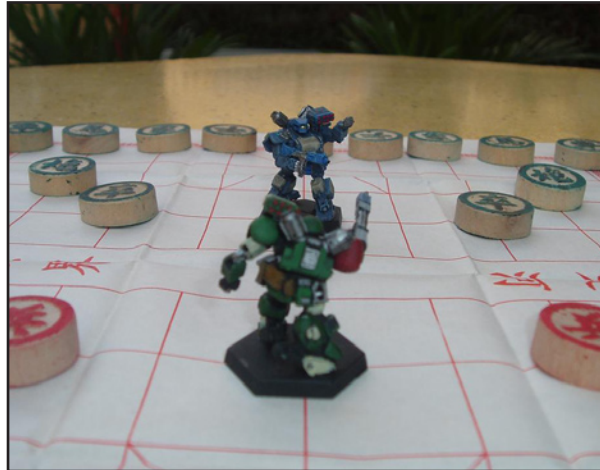
Board setup

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CHESS ON TERRA NOVA

Each player controls a Marshal, two Officers, two Striders (or Elephants), two Gears (or Knights), two Tanks (or Chariots), two Cannons and five Soldiers. The Northern Strider is also known as the Mammoth, while the Southern Strider is often called the Naga. Northern Gears are known as Rangers, while Southerners prefer to call them Knights. Southern Soldiers are known as Soldats.

The Marshal and Officers may never leave the Fortress, and the opposing Marshals may never enter a position where they can openly face each other across the board with no intervening pieces. The Strider moves diagonally two steps at a time and may never cross the Badlands, while Gears are identical to Knights in Terran chess except that they may never jump over intervening pieces. Soldiers may only move forward until they cross the Badlands, after which they may move sideways or forwards. Unlike Pawns in Terran chess, Soldiers can never be promoted. Tanks behave identically to Rooks in Terran Chess. Cannons are among the most unique pieces in Terra Novan chess – they may move horizontally or vertically, just like Tanks, but they only capture an enemy by jumping over another intervening piece, either horizontally or vertically. This makes them very difficult to defend against, especially when two Cannons line up along the same rank.



The objective of the game is to force the opposing player's Marshal into a position of "checkmate" where there is no possible escape from capture.

UNIQUE FEATURES

The powerful abilities of Tanks and Cannons, as well as the relatively open starting positions, make Terra Novan chess a very fast-paced and aggressive game, as it is easy to launch attacks against the opposing Marshal very early on. Tanks and Cannons, supported by Gears and Soldiers, take the battle across the Badlands to the enemy. Meanwhile, Officers and Striders are used to defend home territory around the Fortress.

OPENING STRATEGY

One of the most popular openings is for South to move the right Cannon to the central column (the "Cannons Overhead" maneuver), for which the most common counter is for North to move the right Gear up to guard the middle Soldier (traditionally

known as the "Knight Comes Riding" maneuver). This popular opening is followed by moving South's right Tank up one file, which is known as "Tank Sortie." There is no castling in Terra Novan chess, but one of the most common defensive responses to the "Cannons Overhead-Tank Sortie" opening is for North to advance the right-hand Officer diagonally forward to shield the Marshal from attacks. After the War of the Alliance, the Officer defense became popularly known as the "Arland Longchamps" maneuver.

Because Terra Novan chess opens without the need for a great deal of development of the board, the entire strategy of the game is considered to be the equivalent of Terran Chess "midgame strategy."

THE BLITZ ERA

One of the most popular versions of Terra Novan chess is known as "Blitz." Each player only has two minutes to make their move. Blitz became extremely popular in games between Northern and Southern troops who were stationed together on front lines in the War of the Alliance. Since an attack or a sudden troop movement could come at any time, soldiers learned to play their games as quickly as possible, and gameplay became a matter of speed and reflexive instinct. After the war, returning

veterans popularized Blitz chess back in their home leagues, and it remains a favorite today.

IN POPULAR CULTURE

While Terran chess is a game for "officers and gentlemen" on Terra Nova, Terra Novan chess is more popular among enlisted soldiers as well as average citizens, from the ranches of the Western Frontier Protectorate to the slums of the Eastern Sun Emirates. The battle of North and South, divided by the Badlands, is simply something that more Terra Novans can relate to. According to popular myth, near the end of the War of the Alliance, Grand Marshal von Breslau was starting a game of Terra Novan chess with his friend Prefect Arland Longchamps, when a CEF assassin attempted to kill him. In the ensuing chaos, the chessboard was overturned, as Longchamps shielded von Breslau with his body and was fatally wounded. After the assassin was stopped, von Breslau turned to his dying friend, and it is said that with his last words, Longchamps whispered the opening moves of their unfinished game.

Corporal Johlson flinched as the explosion to his front temporarily blinded his omnicam. The round from the enemy tank's main gun hit his teammate's gear dead centre, vaporizing the torso and sending appendages spiraling in every direction. Speeding through the debris, he launched a panzerfaust into the flank of the behemoth. The explosion was satisfying, but the glancing blow merely scorched its paint and buckled some plating. He swerved into the foliage with autocannon rounds nipping at his heels as the tank's turret tracked him relentlessly.

He spared a thought to his morning briefing. When his Group Leader announced their assignment involved can opening, this wasn't what the Corporal had in mind.

Recently, the forums saw a lively debate on the effectiveness of tanks in Locked and Loaded. This quick scenario is designed as an introduction to the use of tanks in Heavy Gear.

HEAVY GEAR BLITZ GENERAL SCENARIO

Sitrep:

A tank is controlling the approaches to an important waypoint that hinders your Task Force's advance. Your group has orders to destroy the tank ASAP so your army can continue its offensive push.

Setup:

Playing Area Size: 2 feet by 3 feet.

Terrain: 4 solid two-level elevation terrain pieces and 4 other terrain pieces, each approximately 3"x6" in size and spread evenly around the table.

Table Effects: None.

Deployment: Deep.

Support Points: Attacker and Defender are limited to 1SP each. "Sorry Commander, but that's all we've got."

Playing Time: 5 turns, approximately 60-90 minutes.

Attacking Forces:

Assemble 500 TV worth of combat groups. Build the force to any Priority Level.

Objective: Assassinate the Defender's Army Commander in the Heavy Tank.

Defending Forces:

Assemble a Heavy Tank or Tankstrider Squad and screening combat groups for 500TV or less. Build the force to any Priority Level.

Objective: Protect your Army Commander in the Heavy Tank.

EXAMPLE DEFENDING ARMY BUILDS

MILICIA Force (PL3) 500 points

Tank Cadre (Visigoth, Hun) (180)
Options: Swap Hun for Visigoth (+135)
Add +1 Leadership to Visigoth (+10)
Visigoth is Army Commander 325 points

Recon Cadre (2 Iguana, 2 SD Jäger) (260)
Options: Swap 2 Iguana for SD Jäger (-70)
Swap 1 Iguana TD, ECM, LRP/24 for LRP/32 (-15) 175 points

Northern Guard Force (PL3) 500 points

Heavy Tank Squad (Aller) (285)
Options: Add +1 Leadership (+10)
Aller is Army Commander 295 points

Draagoon Squad (Jaguar, 4 SD Hunter) (305) <NAF, Veteran>

Options: Swap Rabid Grizzly for Jaguar (-30)
Swap 2 Hunter for Cheetah (+50)
Swap 4 Cheetah for SD Hunter (-160)
Add HPZ and HMG to 4 SD Hunter (+20)
Upgrade Jaguar to +1 Attack/Defense (+10)
Swap Jaguar LRP for AGM (+10) 205 points

PRDF Force (PL3) 500 points

Support Tankstrider Squad (Red Bull Mk II, 2 Warrior) (170)
Options: Add 2 Warrior (+90)
Red Bull becomes Army Commander (+30) 290 points

Anti-Rover Squad (Skirmisher, 2 Pit Bull, 2 Warrior) (130) <Veteran>

Options: Add Pit Bull (+30)
Swap Pit Bull for Skirmisher (+15)
Swap 2 Pit Bull for Warrior (+30)
Swap LAC for FGC/HHG (+5) 210 points



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ADVENTURES IN TANK HUNTING

Victory Conditions:

At the end of Turn 5, if the tank is still alive it is the winner. If the tank is destroyed, the attacker is victorious.

Tactics:

Attacker: You have to destroy that? Well at least they haven't had time to construct a blind. Prepare to accept casualties while closing, as tank main guns can be frightening. But don't just assault the front, try to edge as close to the target as you can and flank it using every scrap of terrain as cover. Smoke would probably help. You will need two or three units with large xDM weapons for redundancy, then let 'em have it with coordinated crossfire.

Defender: Your tank is tough, but not indestructible. Make use of cover and hull down for protection and pick your shots with care. Aim for the units with the lowest defensive modifiers first and save your more accurate secondary weapons for more maneuverable opponents. Remember your sensors aren't that good so don't let them sneak up on you. Keep your screening forces between the tank and enemy combat groups, being thankful that every shot at them is one less shot hitting your tank.

Variations:

It was a Dark and Stormy Night: Roll a die to include Table Effects in the scenario.

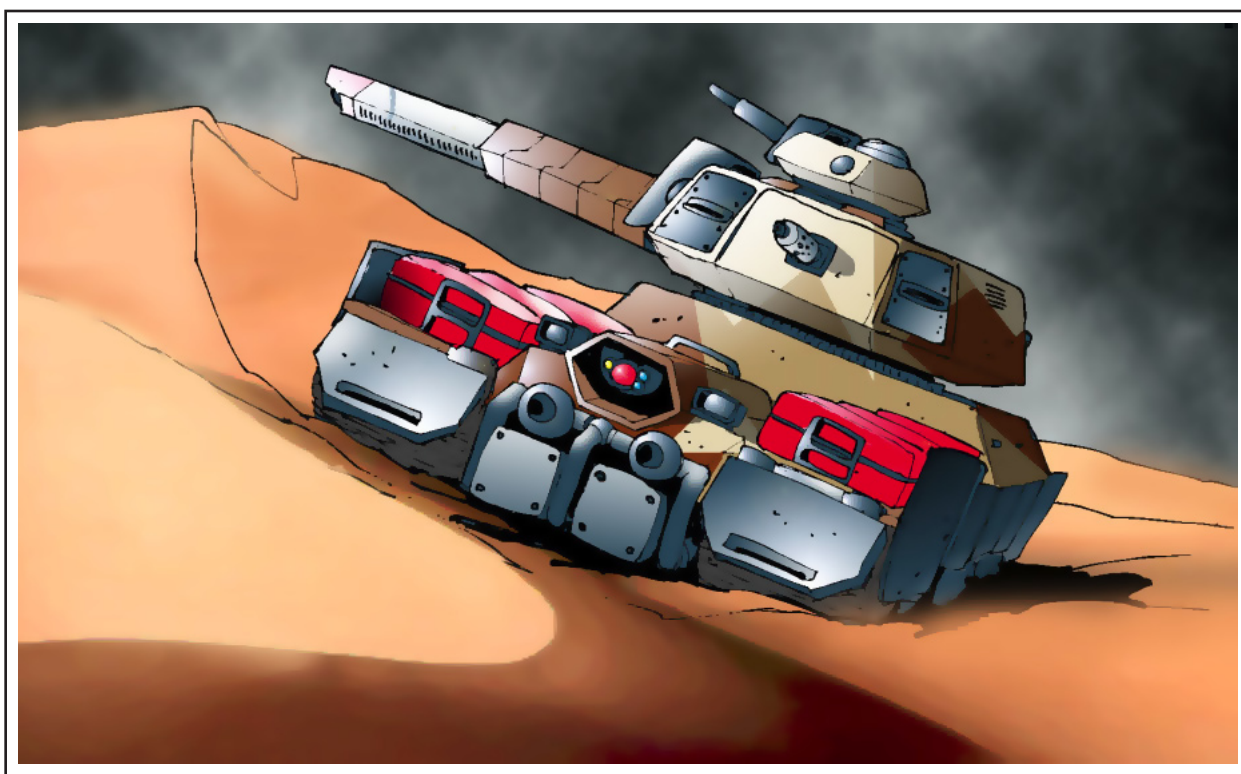
Less is More: Add or remove terrain pieces in the playing area. Observe how that influences tank effectiveness.

Lighter Armor: Replace the Heavy Tanks with a pair of lighter tanks (Bandit Hunter Klemms, Huns, Coyotes). The new objective is to destroy both light tanks before the end of Turn 5.

Mutually Assured Destruction: Have two of the tank forces listed above face off against each other. The winner is the Tank that survives to the end of turn 5. Break ties as per the Locked and Loaded rulebook.

"Support is on the way": Allow both sides access to support points equal to their Priority Level. Beware, as this allows the tank to use a blind.

Vat-Grown Nightmare: Replace the Tank and Screening forces with a pair of HT-68 Hover tanks with GREL Crews. Destroy the Army Commander's hover tank to declare victory, if you can survive that long.



Hull Down! "Come and get it -- we'll wait."

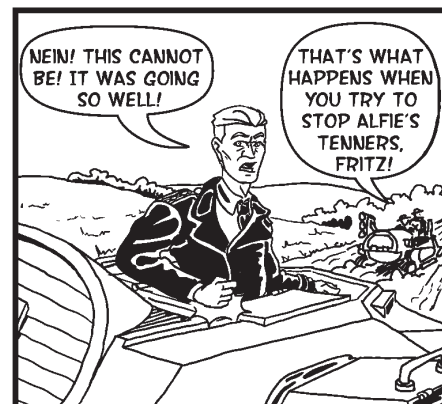
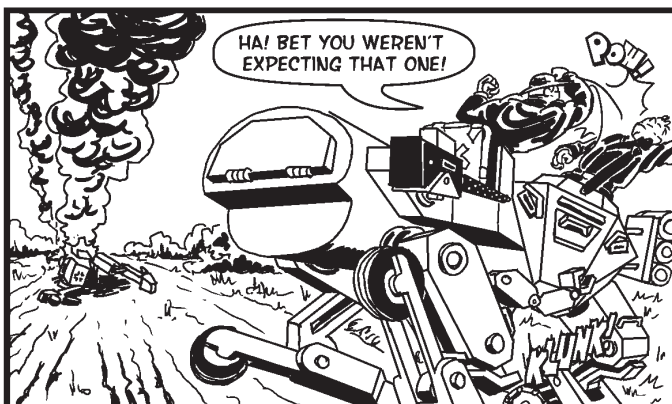
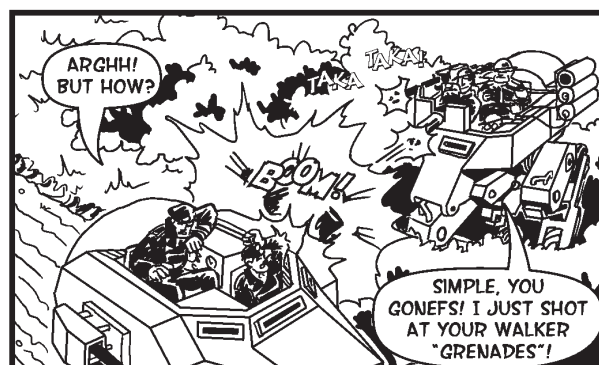
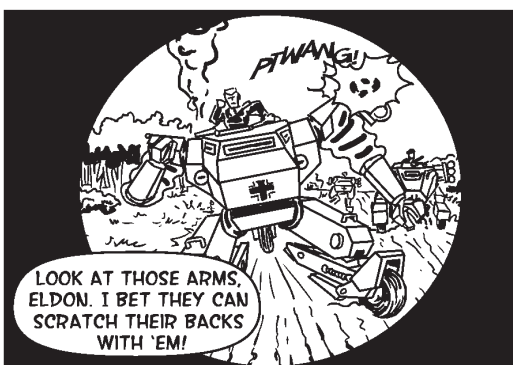
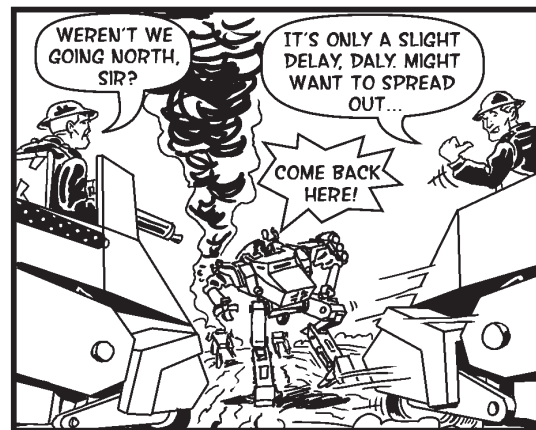
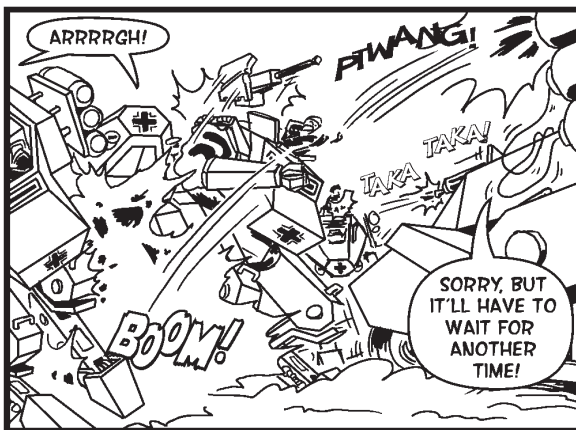
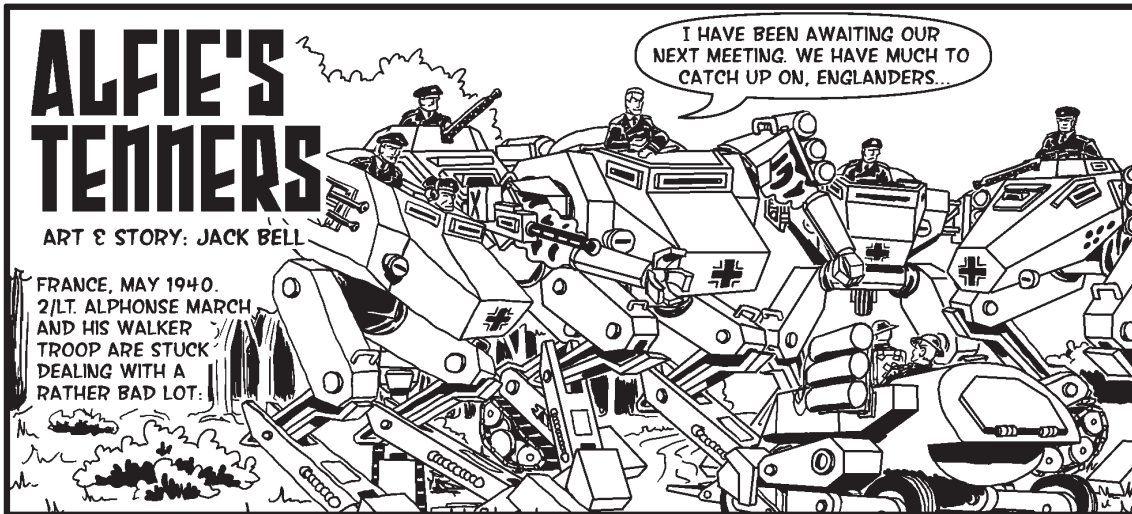
ALFIE'S TENNERS

JOHN BELL

ALFIE'S TENNERS

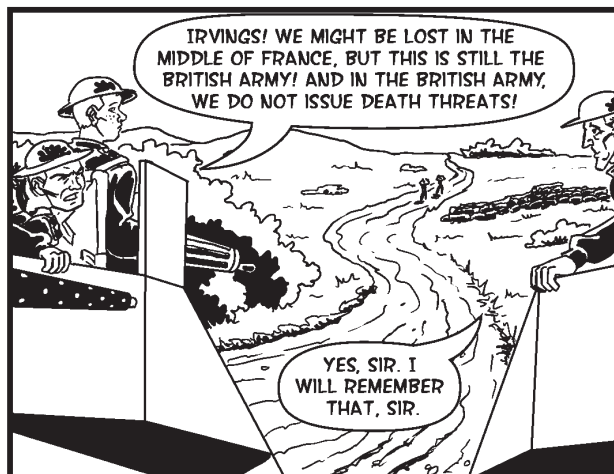
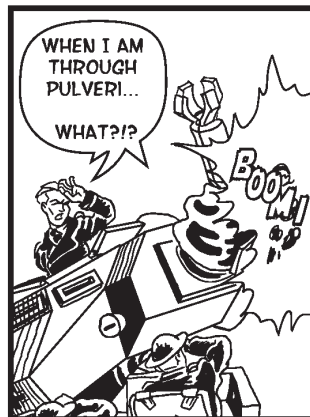
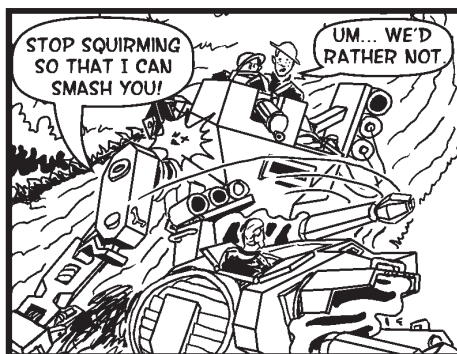
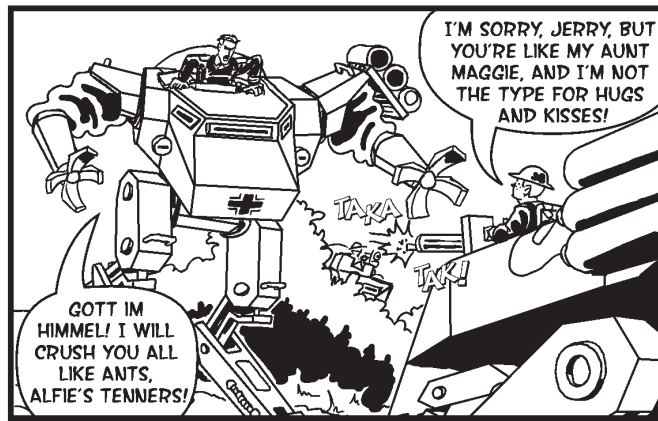
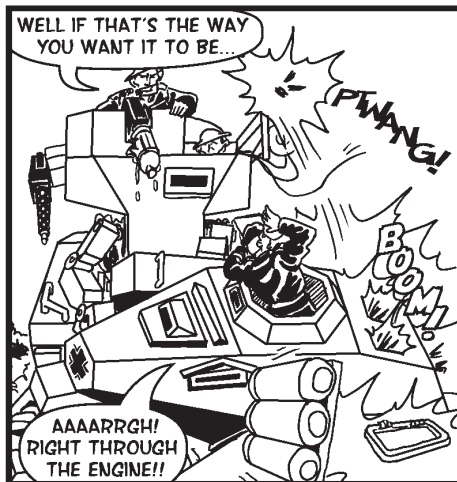
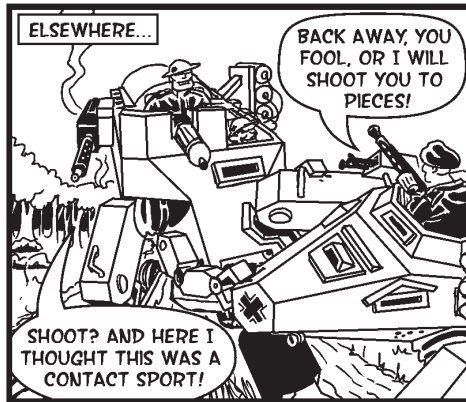
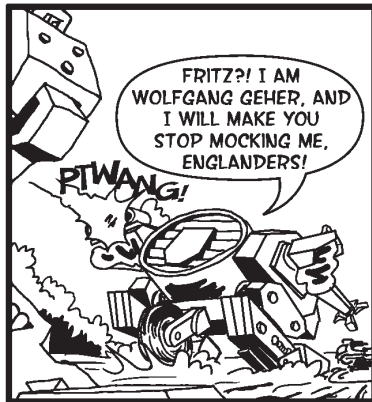
ART & STORY: JACK BELL

FRANCE, MAY 1940.
2/LT. ALPHONSE MARCH
AND HIS WALKER
TROOP ARE STUCK
DEALING WITH A
RATHER BAD LOT:



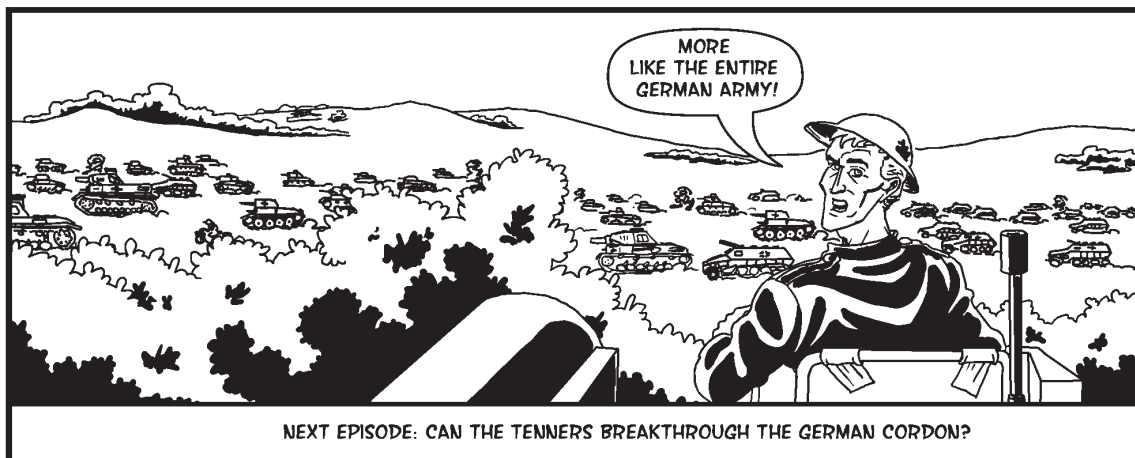
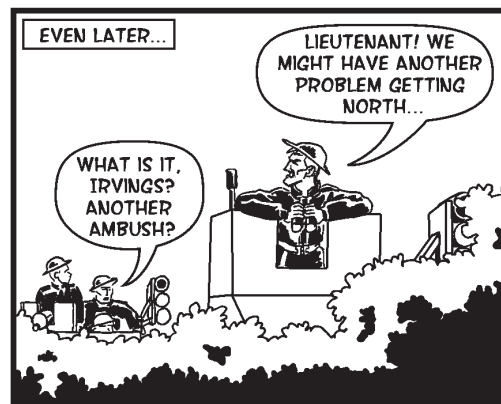
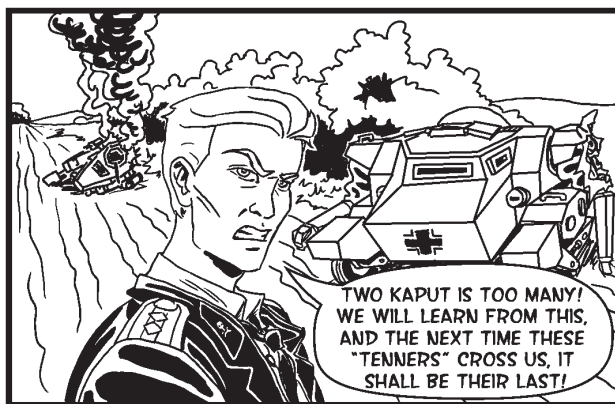
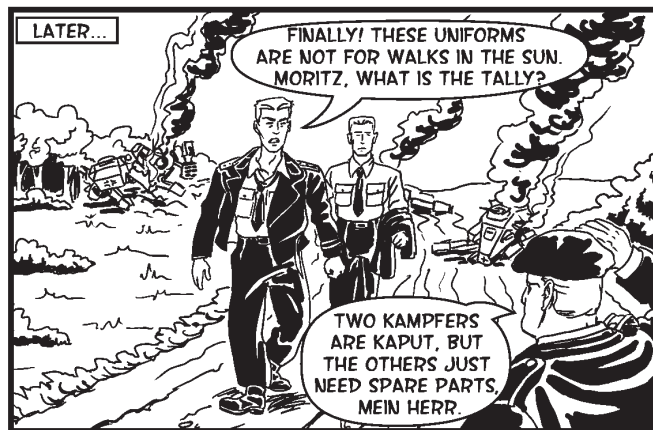
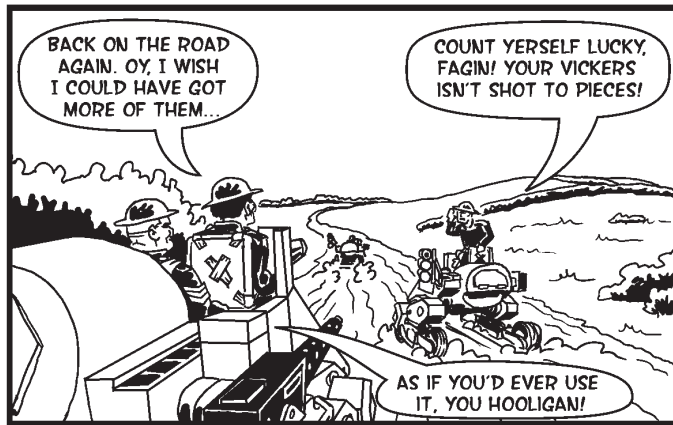
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ALFIE'S TENNERS



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ALFIE'S TENNERS



My scouts found the gears sitting in a scrapyard along the Gamma maglev line, cannibalized for parts, paint stripped by sand erosion, weapons gone except for a few old dueling blades, maces and shields. After the cancellation of Heavy Gear Championship Tournament™ these once-mighty dueling gears had been stored away and forgotten. It was a crime to leave them here like this. In my regiment, these gears would live again!

OLDE TYME REVIEW, PART 1: VANGUARD OF JUSTICE (DP9-271)

I was looking at the non-Blitz section of the website a while back and the duelist gear packs caught my eye. It seemed that they offered a pretty good bargain by Blitz standards - 4 gears for less than 30 Canadian dollars - and the Vanguard of Justice pack included a Grizzly and a Kodiak! Those two gears in Blitz would look cooler and beefier, but they'd also cost nearly 40 dollars on their own! Since I already had a pretty decent collection of Southern gears for my Red Shoulder Mekong Peacekeepers, I wanted to start collecting a Northern opfor as well as having a variety of Northern gears for roleplaying purposes.

And so, some days later, my Vanguard of Justice arrived in the mail, and I began assembling the gears:

There are 4 gears in this set, all duelist gears from the short-lived Heavy Gear cartoon series:

Major Drake Alexander Wallis III: Grizzly - "King of Sting"

Yoji Kirakowa: Cheetah - "Punk-Fu"

Serge Garpenlov: Jaguar - "Hammer"

Sgt. Gunther Groonz: Kodiak - "Crunch Muncher"

These minis are 1/144 tactical scale, which means they're about the same size as the newer Blitz gears, although there are some differences in proportions, less articulation (can't turn the waist, butt plate is part of the V-Engine) and older, slightly smaller weapons. There aren't enough weapons to arm all the gears in their normal configurations, but they do have a nice selection of dueling weapons, which I'll get to in a moment.

There was a small amount of flash to remove on most of the gears, in some waist crevices as well as on the Cheetah's footwheels. The Jaguar and the Grizzly have very visible mold seams, with the halves of the mold seemingly half a millimeter out of joint along the Grizzly's right leg. Despite this the Grizzly comes together quite nicely and looks very impressive - even more than the Kodiak. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the Jaguar - the mold seams along the top of the torso are very visible and hard for a less experienced collector to remove. Also, the side of the left foot was slightly malformed, and there was significant flash filling up the arm and neck holes that had to be cut out.

The Grizzly doesn't have quite the stature of the Blitz Grizzly, but it's still pretty cool. The standard weapon loadout is not included - there is no mortar or heavy autocannon in the set, although there are 4 old-style box rocket packs, enough to give one to each gear. You'll need to arm this gear with weapons from your bits box if you want to field it as a regular Grizzly in Blitz. Also, instead of having the normal Grizzly head, Wallis' Grizzly has a Headhunter head, which actually looks really good on it!



Vanguard of Justice, painted and armed as regular Northern Guard gears

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OLDE TYME REVIEW

The Cheetah is slightly taller than the new Cheetah in Blitz, and has a wider torso, too. Apart from that, it's no different from the regular Tactical Cheetahs as far as I can see. Still, when stood up against the new Cheetahs the difference in size is quite noticeable. There is a pack gun included in the set so that you can arm it just like a regular Cheetah.

Serge's Jaguar came with a Hunter head, which is an odd choice but matches the look chosen for his gear in the cartoon. I wonder if there's supposed to be an antenna that attaches to the knob on the side of the head, and I may have thrown it out, mistaking it for a piece of flash. The Hunter head was impossible to attach, because the "chin" of the head creates an arch under the head that cannot fit onto the top of the Jaguar torso. I found a spare Headhunter head from a Blitz North GP Squad and glued that on instead, and lo and behold, the resulting gear looks fantastic! There is no Medium Autocannon in the set to arm the gear with, but I have a few spares so that wasn't an issue.

The Kodiak appears to be the same standard Kodiak as the one converted into a Chaplain in the Hammers of Faith army list - it comes with a light particle accelerator and backpack-mounted anti-gear-missile launcher, so once you stick on one of the rocket pods on the shoulder, it will be a fully-armed stock Kodiak.

These gears did not all come with their standard weapons, because they are duelists, and so they have a heap of dueling weapons. There are 4 big vibroswords, which I think will make good substitute vibrokatanas in my Mekong Peacekeeper army. As my friend Ivan reminds me, "katana" is just the word for "sword," after all. There are also 4 rounded shields with tabs at either end - these can be glued onto any flat forearm surface and actually look pretty cool as additional Sturdy boxes in Blitz.

The 4 spiked maces might not see so much use, but they do look impressive enough that I should find some use for those spiked mace heads somewhere. There are also 2 vibroclaws, which look too cool not to use, and I'm thinking of mounting them on a Cheetah's arms, since the tabs on the claws won't fit some larger gear arms. The sprue with the LPA and DPG also had some sort of weapon with twin spiked wheels on it, which seems like some sort of insane mauler fist. I ended up using this for a Peacemaker Razorback, in lieu of its CR weapon. Finally, there are 2 sexy-looking sporting autocannons, or at least that's what they look like. If I remember correctly they should be the same as the one you see Marcus wielding on his Command Hero Jager in the cartoon. They're quite small - about the size of the older Tactical scale LACs, but sleeker, and they come without any grip, just an empty space where the grip ought to be, so you can just glue them onto gear hands without any chopping. They may look a bit small on Blitz gear hands, though.

Finally, each gear has its own decal sheet, with numbers, team insignia, pilot name and hazard stripes for the rocket pack as well as the V-engines.

One other purchase which might work well with the Vanguard of Justice is the North Weapons Pack, which includes extra alternate heads for several gear types including the Jaguar and Cheetah, as well as alternative mortar, head and uplink for the Thunder Grizzly - just what Wallis' Grizzly is lacking.

Apart from the problems I mentioned with the Jaguar, I haven't had any trouble assembling these minis and arming them with the newer, larger Blitz weapons, as you can see in these pictures. Until then, remember: Vanguard Equals Victory!



Comparison of Yoji's Cheetah and the new Blitz Cheetah. Notice how much larger the old cheetah is.

OLDE TYME REVIEW PART 2:

TACHI'S RATTLESNAKE (DP9-270)

The Loyang Red Shoulders had a long tradition of arming their gear pilots with the cutting edge of gear design. This Rattlesnake was part of that tradition. It had been the cutting edge of gear design...back in 1731!

To be honest, I wasn't planning to use Tachi's Rattlesnake for dueling - I wanted a distinctive looking Rattlesnake to act as my squad leader for my existing Red Shoulder Rattlesnakes. As such, Tachi's dueling weapons aren't really put to use - he had a shield, a big vibrosword, and a mace, two armored greaves for the forearms, as well as the vibrokatana. Now, the vibrokatana is closely attached to a sprue, but it's really, really thin - like half a millimeter in width, and even thinner edgewise - so just removing it from the sprue left it jagged and bent in places, and it looked really fragile and unsuitable for any use whatsoever once I had it separated. In the end, I decided not to use it at all. I've mentioned the usefulness of the other dueling weapons in my Vanguard of Justice review, but let me just say that while the armored greaves fit the forearms perfectly, they block any attachment of a gun with a stock of any kind, so I didn't use them. Tachi also came with a set of decals which I did not put on at the time.

Tachi's gear itself is your standard old Tactical-era Jager body with a nice alternate head, but there's just a little gap at the back of the head where it meets the torso, so it doesn't fit on quite perfectly. You can't tell from the front, though, so it isn't such a big deal. There was virtually no flash except for tiny, easily removed bit on one foot, and the details are pretty clear and come out well in painting. The arms are swung out from the torso enough to easily accommodate a variety of melee and ranged weapons - In this case, I had no trouble putting on a Blitz LAC. There is no shoulder mount for a rocket pod - again, this is characteristic of the older Tactical gears. I swapped the old-style LRP for one of the newer Blitz MRPs I had, and the result is that Tachi's Rattlesnake, while recognizably different from the newer Rattlesnakes, has a matching weapon loadout to the rest of the squad.

For Blitz purposes, this gear is just fine for standing right next to the newer gears. And if you're not getting the South Weapons Pack, this mini is a good way to just get one Rattlesnake mini to add to your army.



The Kodiak and the Rattlesnake, side by side.



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CORE INJECTION: VARIANT RPG RULES

OLIVER BOLLMANN

Core Injections are meant as supplements to the existing set of rules and expansions; an addition of material to enhance game play. For the most part, these rules can be used piecemeal at will; that is, one does not depend on the other in order to function correctly. What rules to include also greatly depends on what RDL level being used, and also the tone of the campaign. Whether you call it variant rules, alternate rules or house rules, lay some down and expand your campaign to its fullest.

Character Attributes

The choosing of what attributes to use in a game system is a balancing act between excessive detail and lack thereof. Each genre of game will, of course, have their own thresholds (the singular Badassness stat, anyone?), and within those thresholds the question then becomes _what_ to model. The base SilCORE game has 10 attributes, some of which to this player seem odd in what they're modelling, what they cover, and whether they should be attributes at all.

The system presented below creates a new set of attributes to be used in the SilCORE rules. Rather than 10 stats, there are now 8; additionally, there are modifiers that are, in some ways, like Specializations are for skills (though they can, in this case, be negative). Taken together, this model provides a total measure of a character, without being bogged down or too loopy-goopy. Some attributes are similar or overlap those from basic SilCORE, others are new or altered.

The eight attributes are organized under four groupings:

- Mental aptitude
- Physical aptitude
- Psyche aptitude
- Metaphysical aptitude

CHARACTER POINTS

	Joe Average	PC	Major NPC
Gritty	8	16	24
Adventurous	8	24	40
Cinematic	8	40	56

PRIMARY ATTRIBUTES

Knowledge (**KNO**) is a measure of how well the character remembers things. It is both straight up memory and also the ability to retrieve useful items from said memory. This stat can also be used as a gauge of a character's overall education level and/or worldly experience.

Intellect (**INT**) is a measure of a character's reasoning, logic, deduction and mental prowess. It is one thing to remember things, and another thing to put those things together in useful ways. Problem solving, investigations, navigation calculations and straight up polynomial math all fall under the purveyance of Intellect.

Fitness (**FIT**) is a measure of body conditioning and prowess. Flexibility, strength, and endurance all fall under Fitness' umbrella. This could represent straight up muscle and effort, or it could be the development of the body through structure and alignment and artful body mechanics as done through eastern martial arts.

Agility (**AGI**) is a measure of the character's hand-eye coordination, balance and quickness. For some this is inborn, a natural since birth, while for others years of training and practice have trained them to amazing levels of ability.

Ego (**EGO**) is a measure of willpower, self-assuredness mental and emotional fortitude. For some characters this will be displayed in sheer stubbornness and hard-boiled determination, for others it comes through as inner peace and being present. Low-valued Ego characters will crack easily under stress, may be withdrawn and in the worst cases may lack any self-motivation at all.

Empathy (**EMP**) is a measure of the bond and relatedness between the character and other living beings. It is not just congeniality, it is the ability to connect with someone, to be in their world, to be in a relationship with people (and animals). High Empathy characters can see into your soul; low empathy characters make people wonder if they have a soul.

Intuition (**ITU**) is a measure of a character's perception and awareness, ability to notice when something is off, 'gut' feeling or sixth-sense. Searching for something, noticing an ambush, determining when someone is bluffing or lying: these all are measured by Intuition. It could be from amazing acuity of the environment or a more loose general instinct, and even luck.

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CORE INJECTION: VARIANT RPG RULES

Creativity (**CRE**) is a measure of how well the character can dream up the new. This applies, of course, in an artistic sense, but also thinking on one's feet, inventive battle plans, jury rigging, and other feats of ingenuity. Often Creativity can aided by Intellect, and vice versa, while other times Creativity really is pulling something out of one's butt.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Health (**HEA**) is a measure of a character's constitution, fortitude and general health (natch). Stress and general disposition play a big role along with one's physical attributes, even more so when the body is tested by poisons and other nastiness -- how well one reacts greatly depends on both attributes.

Stamina (**STA**) is a measure of the damage a body can take before it breaks. It is used to determine Wound Thresholds.

The Close Combat Value (**CCV**) is a measure of a character's aptitude when confronted with hand to hand or melee weapon combat, both for offence and defence.

The Ranged Combat Value (**RCV**) is a measure of a character's aptitude when confronted with hand to hand or melee weapon combat, both for offence and defence..

Initiative (**INI**) is a measure of a character's ability to survive and function in an intense situation, such as exemplified by combat.

Group Initiative (**GIN**) is a measure of a character's ability to effectively lead and direct a group of people/vehicles across a battlefield. (This is used for mechanized initiative for the commander's Leadership initiative roll.)

(Note that UD and MD have been removed and are not used in this system -- UD and MD used both skill and attributes to generate a bonus to a result that was already governed by both the skill and the attribute. Use 3 as the based damage for an unarmed strike, and adjust accordingly in your games.)

(Note also to not average INT, CCV, RCV or GIN. These are used in opposed rolls and not averaging them out allows not only for greater variety/spread, but also do not run into trouble compared to the Task Difficulty chart.)

ATTRIBUTE SPECIALIZATIONS

While the basic eight attributes covers most situations for most characters, there are those characters who have the gift (or are saddled with) unusually good or bad traits in specific areas. To model these areas, there are "Specializations" that can be taken. Any time a skill or attribute Test is made that falls under the domain of one of these specializations, the modifier of the specialization is added to the roll.

Attribute Specializations can be bought with either leftover Character or Skill Points.

A list of possible Specializations follow:

Hardy/Sickly (Illness)
Endurance/Easily Winded (Endurance/Staying Power)
Ample Reflexes/Stunned Snail (Quickness of reaction)
[If applied to Initiative (INI) score as well, double cost]
God(dess)/Slug (Appearance)
Sure Footed/Dizzy (Balance)
Limber/Inflexible (Flexibility)
Strongman/Bad Back (Lifting)
Encyclopedia/Google Save Me (Obscure Knowledge)
Charismatic/Disliked (Leading Others)
Mental Calculator/Needs Fingers (Calculations)
Quizzler/Puzzled (Logic)
Large Stature/Tiny (Close Combat)
[If applied to HEA and System Shock score as well, double cost]

Others are possible; the GM has final say.

SECONDARY ATTRIBUTE GENERATION

HEA	(FIT + EGO) / 2
STA	8 x HEA + 25
CCV	FIT + AGI
RCV	ITU + AGI
INI	ITU + EGO
GIN	ITU + CRE

ATTRIBUTE SPECIALIZATION COST

+3	9
+2	4
+1	2
-1	-2
-2	-4
-3	-9

“Success flourishes only in perseverance- ceaseless, restless perseverance.” - Baron Manfred Von Richthofen

*Peace River, Badlands
 PRDF Headquarters
 20 Autumn 1937*

Captain Tiber Stahl checked his dress uniform one more time before opening the doors to General Katrina Hiroshi’s office and entering.

“Captain Tiber Stahl, reporting for duty, ma’am!” Tiber said as he saluted. The older woman seated behind the desk stood and returned the salute before offering the young lieutenant a seat and returning to her own.

“Before we begin, Captain, I would like to extend my congratulations on your recent promotion, I’ve seen your file and you more than deserve it.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

“Now on to business. As you know, your tour in the Paladins is over, and you are due for reassignment. We’ve decided to reassign you to the Seventh, on maneuvers in the Karaq Wastes. Good unit, I’ve known it’s Commander for quite a few cycles. Now, the Seventh is a heavy assault regiment, so the gear is heavier than what you’re normally used to working with in the Third. As a matter of fact, we’re actually in the process of upgrading the regiment with the new Cataphract Gears, which is why I called you here. We’re shipping out three new Cataphracts, including a Lord variant, via cargo plane tomorrow at 1645, for the Seventh. Now I’m not normally a big fan of flights through the Badlands, but weather will be clear for at least a thirty six hours and I want you and those replacements out there quickly. The problem is that the flight can’t make it all the way out to them; it can only go as far as the Mol Oasis before having to take the rest of the way via transport trucks. With the war going on and both the Snakes and the NorGoons starting to sniff around that area for an offensive, I don’t want them traveling unescorted. And since you were headed out that way, I thought we could kill 2 daks with one stone.

“Your assignment once you touch down in Mol is to take charge of the Cataphract Lord and escort the other two to the Seventh’s current location. There will also be an Anti-Rover squad at the oasis tower waiting for you, Sergeant Redgrave commanding. I’ve uploaded the particulars onto this datachip. Are there any questions, Captain?” General Hiroshi handed the datachip to Tiber, who tucked it into his dress jacket pocket before replying.

“No, ma’am.”

“Very well, your flight leaves in five hours. Dismissed, and good luck, Captain.”

.....

Tiber returned to the temporary quarters he had been assigned and began undressing, folding, and packing his dress uniform, making sure to remove the datachip first and set it on the nightstand by the bed. After changing into his pilot’s suit and ensuring the rest of his gear was packed and ready to go he pulled out his computer and inserted the chip. The information contained on the datachip was very thorough; mission details, area overviews and statistics, and even data on the Cataphract and Cataphract Lord variant. There was also information on his new regiment, the Seventh PRDF Regiment, as well as the company he would be taking charge of when he arrived. Tiber decided he would save the mission briefing and stats for the flight and pulled up the data on the Cataphract. He had seen photos and vids of the Cataphract before, and had a general idea of its capabilities, but he had never gotten such a detailed understanding of the machine until now. Pound for pound, or in this case, ton for ton, it was a heavy assault Gear unmatched by anything even remotely similar. With its heavy armor, multiple backup systems, wide variety of weapons it could carry, and sheer size and appearance made it clear to Tiber why PRDF soldiers had nicknamed the Cataphract the “Monster.” The Lord variant was even more impressive, featuring an upgraded communications system and ECCM to help defeat enemy jamming. The control scheme appeared to be similar to other Paxton Gears, which Tiber had become familiar with over the cycles. The cockpit also seemed to be a bit roomier than most Gears, even the Cobras and Grizzlies he’d piloted during his time with the Paladins. He wasn’t that surprised, however, given the overall massive size of the machine and Paxton Arms’ growing trend for their vehicles to be capable of longer patrols.

Tiber continued to study the Cataphract’s schematics and controls for another hour before shutting the computer off and slipping it into his duffel bag. He grabbed the only thing left that wasn’t PRDF property, an old, worn photograph. In it, a much younger, happier Tiber stood with his arm around the waist of a young woman, her long black hair whipping in the desert wind, a haphazard and wildly-painted Longrunner behind them. Tiber held the photo for a long time, remembering events long past, before tucking it into his webbing. Grabbing his duffel, he took one last look around the room before walking out, turning out the lights as he left.

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HARLEQUIN KNIGHTS – CHAPTER 1

As soon as the lift doors opened to the hangar, the first thing Tiber noticed were the Cataphracts being loaded into the cargo plane. He was awed by their massive size, and no amount of blueprints, photos and schematics for preparing to see it up close and personal. He felt a kid getting a peek at his birthday presents and could not wait to take one out and put it through its paces. He was so awed and entranced with the gears that he hadn't noticed the plane's crew chief had come up to him.

"Captain Stahl!" The pug-nosed crew chief barked, startling Tiber out of his reverie, "You are Captain Stahl, correct?"

"Yes, I'm Captain Stahl, and you are...?"

"Master Gene Smith, sir," the crew chief came to attention and saluted. Tiber returned the salute and pulled out his transfer papers. Master Smith took the papers, verified the information on them, and handed the papers back. "So, I take it this is your first time seeing one of the Monsters up close, sir?"

"It is. I take it everyone is a little awestruck their first time, Master Smith?" Tiber grinned sheepishly.

"Yes, sir. But you handled it better than some."

"Only some?" The stout crew chief chuckled at the question, but changed the conversation. "Once we get these babies stowed and safe, we'll get you strapped in and ready to go."

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It had taken some time, but soon enough the flight got underway and Tiber had busied himself studying the mission briefing and area reports. He had finished with the briefings and was preparing to examine the dossier on the Seventh when the plane suddenly jerked to the side. Almost immediately sirens and warning lights began flashing and wailing their alarm, and while not an aircraft pilot, Tiber was experienced enough to realize when that many lights were flashing that many shades of red, the aircraft was in dire straits.

"What the hell happened?" The pilot shouted over the din of the alarms as he wrestled with the controls. His co-pilot, busy trying to engage the on-board fire suppression systems, replied, "I don't know. Possibly long-range AA laser fire! Losing starboard side engines, fuel tanks are ruptured!"

"Great! Master Smith!" the pilot shouted as the navigator began broadcasting a distress signal. Smith came forward, steadying himself on the back of Tiber's jump seat. "Sir!" the airman acknowledged.

"Master Smith, get our passenger secured down below!" Smith replied with, "Sir, yes, sir!" and immediately began unstrapping Tiber from his chair and hauling him to his feet. Tiber quickly followed the crew chief out of the cockpit and into the cargo hold, surprised he was able to even stand in the violently rocking aircraft, much less run after someone.

"Where are we going?" Tiber shouted after Smith as he practically fell down the ladder to the cargo hold. Smith didn't immediately answer, but instead scrambled over to one of the Cataphracts and popped the hatch.

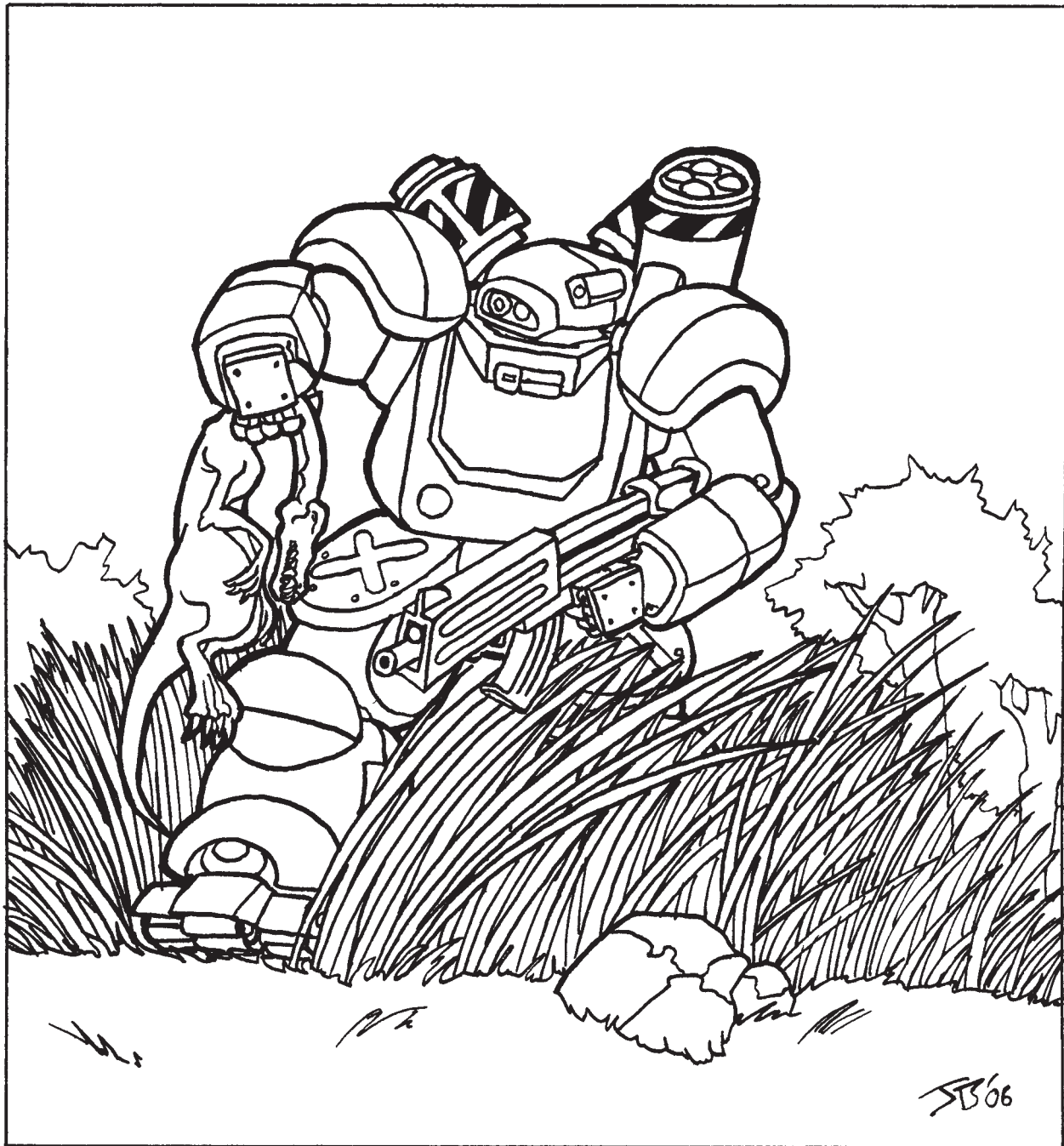
"Get in, sir!" Smith shouted as he held out a hand to help Tiber in. Tiber didn't fully understand why, but deferred to the more experienced crew chief.

"In here?" Tiber shouted as he heard the remaining engines begin to increase in whine and pitch, "Why in here?"

"It's your best chance, sir! With a little luck this bird will bear the brunt of the crash and the rest will be absorbed by the Gear!" Smith explained as he helped strap Tiber into the Cataphract's cockpit. When finished, the two men locked eyes, a silent understanding neither wanted to acknowledge. Smith leaned back out of the cockpit and put his hand on the hatch to shut it. "Good luck, sir!" Was the last thing Smith said before he and everything outside of the cockpit was consumed in a massive fireball as the aircraft finally crashed into the desert. Tiber thought about grabbing the cockpit hatch and shutting it, but it was all he could do to grip the armrests tightly to prevent his arms from flailing about the cockpit. Suddenly, the Cataphract began tumbling and shaking violently, as if it was a chew toy in a dawg's mouth. Tiber screwed his eyes shut and began praying fervently for this horrific ride to end. Several seconds later, his prayer was answered in a strange way as his unprotected head was thrown into the corner of the headrest and knocked Tiber unconscious.

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Ayanah watched the dramatic crash of the Paxton plane from only several dozen kilometers away, saw the doomed aircraft plow into the desert sand, burst into flames, then break up, disgorging three massive Gears which then proceed to tumble further away from the wreckage, coming to a stop several meters away from the majority of the wreckage. From just glancing at the wreckage, she knew that nothing would have survived that inferno, but the Gears might have pilots inside who survived. Spurring her barnaby on, she headed out towards the Gears...





From the rules monkey...

OFFICIAL-DP9

Here's some additional material for your Blitzling pleasure!

Optional Rules for Heavy Gear Blitz!

Post TN1940 Army Upgrades

The following are optional rules for players to use in home games to represent upgrades to vehicles and forces post-TN1940. These upgrades are only for the forces listed due to the increased focus on Planetary Defense during this era. They may be made official upgrades for tournament use later on, depending on the reception. All upgrades must be visually identified on the Model.

Northern Guard:

A number of Squads equal to the Priority Level of the Army may upgrade basic Hunters to Jaguars and Headhunters to Thunder Jaguars for +20 TV each. If this is done, the Jaguars or Thunder Jaguars can take any upgrade allowed by the rules for the squad.

Any Grizzly or Variant in a Veteran Combat Group may be given the Roaring Grizzly Upgrade Package. Increase the Armor by 1 and improve all Defense modifiers by 1 for +5 TV.

Southern MILICIA/SRA:

Any Black Mamba in a Veteran Squad may remove the Weak Facing Flaw for +5 TV.

The number of Jägers or Command Jägers allowed to be upgraded to Black Mambas is increased by 1 in each squad(+25 TV each, +20 to upgrade a Command Jäger). If the Squad does not allow Black Mambas, no Black Mambas may be taken. Additionally, the limit is based on the number of Mambas allowed in your level (normal or Veteran). If the Combat Group Leader is in a Black Mamba, it may be upgraded to a Razor Fang Mamba for +5 TV, regardless of Veteran level.

PRDF:

It is recommended that players avoid the use of the Growing Pains rules.

Any Crusader IV may be upgraded to a Cataphract at +10 TV.

Unit: Killer Bunny Commando Cadre

The Hermes 72 satellite network left behind by the CEF and "appropriated" by the Terran expatriates at Port Arthur has created a vast market for inter-League satellite trideo broadcasts, particularly those that violate local censorship or decency legislation. Dominion corporations have found this to be a particularly lucrative market, as they can also evade advertising regulations in this "must-see trid". One of the most popular programs is the Killer Bunny Commando Cadre Show, a reality show about a Cadre of young, female veteran MILICIA Gear pilots produced by Mekong Development Corporation.

Members of the Killer Bunny Commando Cadre are carefully selected. They're almost always exotic young beauties from the lower classes of the vassal Leagues, though rich Republicans, Emirate heiresses, and Mekong executives are occasionally used to add variety. Killer Bunnies rarely last more than a season or two. MDC CEO Aaron Logan's MILICIA ties allow the producers to ensure that the Bunnies are transferred from hot spot to hot spot. The frequent combat and accompanying high casualty rate, combined with the usual pressures of stardom, create a very stressful and highly emotional environment. The show's producers encourage the formation (and dissolution) of romantic relationships or close friendships between the Bunnies, and the resulting drama is always good for ratings.

Despite the unhealthy work environment, there are plenty of applicants. Death benefits for a Bunny's families are large enough to catapult most lower-class families into the upper middle class, and those Bunnies that do survive are often invited to join prestigious special ops regiments after their psychological treatment is completed. The Bunnies' trainer, Oliver Inaif, is disturbed by the direction the show has taken, but feels compelled to continue his job for fear of what would happen to the Bunnies in the hands of a less competent trainer.

Color Scheme:

Oliver has insisted that the Bunnies use proper camouflage in the field, much to the producers' dismay. They do have an identifying marking to allow them to stand out on trideo feeds: the Killer Bunny Commando Cadre Show logo is always painted on the Gears somewhere, usually on the forearm or head armor.

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MESSAGES FROM THE POD

Cadre Information:

The KBCC may be used in place of any Veteran Paratroop Cadre in a MILICIA Army, but May not be the Command group, nor contain a Political Officer. They Are built as a Normal veteran paratroop Cadre. Additionally, the KBCC grants certain benefits due to the live Trideo feeds following them and their willingness to give “personal attention” to noteworthy warriors (mostly for increased ratings) after the Battle. The cadre pays +15TV per member and counts as having Ld 1 for each member as well as once per turn, one member may spend an action and add a CP back to the Commander’s pool, as per the Satellite Uplink Perk.

Unit: The Cat’s Claws

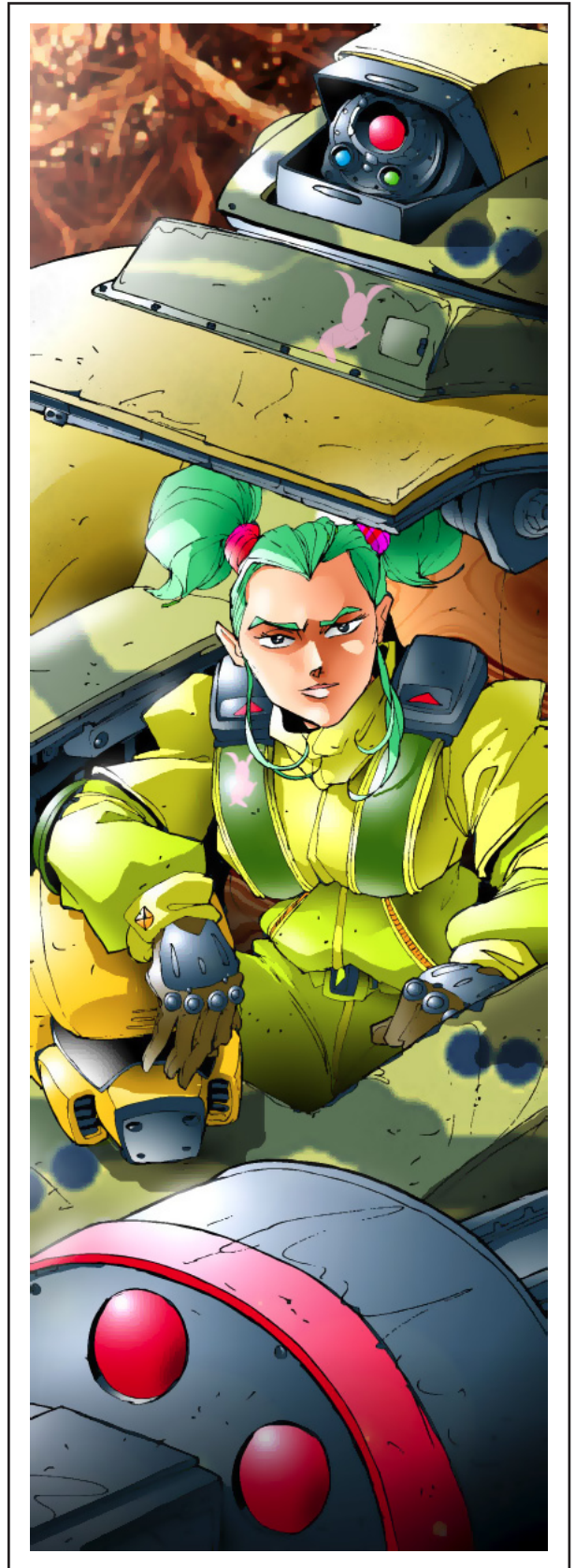
Many people wonder how the 7th Northern Guard Gear regiment, the Cat’s Paws, manage to stand up to and beat the Légion Noire. The fact of the matter is, despite the Northern Guard’s and the Norlight Armed Forces’ claims to the contrary, the Cat’s Paws have within them a sub-regiment outfitted with specialized equipment that operates covertly to provide the Paws with the backup they need. Within the Cat’s Paws, these specialized troops are known as the Cat’s Claws.

Color Scheme:

As per the Cat’s Paws.

Organization:

As per Cat’s Paws, however all Combat Groups are Veteran and the force is always PL 3 or 4. They may only take Cadres wholly capable of being Airdropped. Each model in the Force without Stealth must take Stealth 2 for +10 TV.



The Killer Bunnies

HEAVY GEAR TO RETURN TO ROLEPLAYING

Dream Pod 9 and Steve Jackson Games announced an agreement today for a new line of roleplaying products based on DP9's best-selling Heavy Gear.

"The world of Heavy Gear was always intended to support multiple gaming formats," said Robert Dubois, Licensing Manager for Dream Pod 9. "We've focused our efforts on the miniatures line, with Heavy Gear Blitz! We are overjoyed that a publisher with the experience of Steve Jackson Games is interested in continuing the RPG material."

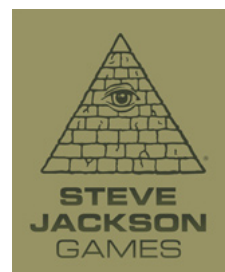
The line will launch with a new edition of Heavy Gear, bringing the Silhouette mechanics to their fourth edition. This core game will contain everything needed to create characters and roleplay in the world of Heavy Gear. Further releases will update Heavy Gear's best-known places and personalities, bringing the story up to date with the miniatures line. New releases will explore military hardware, locations, factions, and the whole universe in greater detail than ever before. The line will primarily be released in PDF via e23.

Heavy Gear is set on the world of Terra Nova, over 4,000 years in the future. On this war-torn world, the elite armor units are giant humanoid battlesuits known as Gears. City-states battle for position within their leagues, the leagues battle for control of Terra Nova, and everyone battles against the malevolent Earth forces who are trying to retake their lost colony.

"Heavy Gear has the deep background and rich setting that brings excellent roleplaying," said Paul Chapman of SJ Games. "We're excited to be able to bring the world of Terra Nova to a new generation of gamers, and to support the fans that have been following it for the past decade."

The fourth edition of the Heavy Gear RPG will be released in 2009. Watch for updates at www.heavygearrpg.com.

For more information, contact Paul Chapman (paul@sjgames.com) at (512) 447-7866 x207.





Will the announcements ever end? We hope not! After a brief hiatus, Dream Pod 9 is returning to the world of RPGs with the announcement of the 4th Edition of Heavy Gear, in conjunction with Steve Jackson Games. I (virtually) sat down to have a few words with the lead designer on the Pod end of the table...

Aurora Magazine - From announcement to interview! Thank you for taking the time today for this.

John Buckmaster - Delighted to.

AM - Jumping right in, how did it feel to be a ninja, sneaking along within the secret workings, stealthily awaiting the time to spring it on the world?

JB - Painful. I wanted so badly to say things, but I couldn't in case some legal thing came up and the deal couldn't be made.

AM - It's pretty exciting indeed. Who's got creative control, between the two companies? How will the division of labour happen?

JB - SJGames does the books and marketing, I supervise canon and write the rules.

AM - Right off the top of your head, what's the first thing you want to say about this new edition, or the deal?

JB - Woohoo! Seriously. I've been waiting *forever* to get a chance at doing Sil. Around 10 years of FAQ and system monkeying leaves a lot in your mind if you can't actually fix anything. (grins)

AM - Will this be Sil4 as we know it, or something else entirely?

JB - It will be Sil. You'll recognize it, but we will have differences. I've had a lot of time to think and ponder about how to manage things better and I hope you'll like what we will be doing to make Sil better.

AM - So... what's the biggest thing you're excited to work on in taking on Sil4e?

JB - Ooh... tough one.

Making Character creation and XP work together so you can both make characters

faster, and integrate new characters into existing campaigns easier. Psrt of this involves how we're handling Skills, but the key is getting players into the game faster.

AM - Of all the things, what's the one thing you'd like Sil4e to accomplish?

JB - Well, keep in mind, this is Heavy gear 4th, not Generic Sil 4th. As such, it will be tweaked and streamlined to give the best HG experience we can give you. And in doing so, I hope it helps new players enter the game easier.

AM - To clarify, then, does the deal cover any other DP9 lines?

JB - Not at this time.

AM - What are the overall plans going forward, with regards to books, supplements, etc?

JB - It's a bit early to say, but the main book(s) will be in print, the rest will be available as pdfs through e23, and as such will probably be available with POD (Print on demand) as well.

AM - One of Heavy Gear's biggest assets is its extensive backstory; will the storyline be advanced in 4e?

JB - Yes, but to let new players get into the game, the base books will be set at a "starting point" and we'll provide storyline info to update the regions as the GM sees fit (or so the plan goes.)



AM - When can we expect to see the book on the shelf?

JB - Some time in 2009, we hope.

AM - Any secret teaser you want to leave with people, to whet their appetites and keep them guessing until release day?

JB - Dang, I dropped most of my comments about that earlier in the interview. Oops. I guess I can tell you to expect some attribute shuffling as we concentrate on "effects based" and "end result."

AM - Well, for us fans we now have the inevitable tortuous wait. I'll let you go so you can get to it!

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Article Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

Submission Guidelines

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

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

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

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

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

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

Copyright Guidelines

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

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

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

The End Print

Please send all submissions to the following email address:

auroramag@gmail.com

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

Deadline for Submissions for Issue #2.6: October 15th 2008

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ARTICLE SUGGESTIONS

Historical Articles

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

Fiction

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

Modules

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

Scenarios

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

Note: Historical Accuracy

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

Designs

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

Artwork

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

House Rules

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

Note: Blitz! Rules

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

Tactics

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

Miniatures/Modeling

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