

AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
HG, JC AND GK FICTION!
NEW CAMPAIGN SETTING
SPECIAL PULL OUT: PRAIRIE TACTICAL MAP



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
TABLE OF CONTENTS
VOLUME 7, ISSUE 3

Shades in the Night... ..	2
<i>Editor's Message</i>	
About the Authors	3
<i>The Whos and Copyright Information</i>	
Alfie's Tenners	5
<i>Graphic Novel set in Gear Krieg by John Bell</i>	
Heraklon	8
<i>Setting and Campaign Info set in Heavy Gear by Cesar Mateo Gonzalez</i>	
Jovian Koma	13
<i>Gallery Image set in Jovian Chronicles by John Bell</i>	
SPECIAL PULL OUT SECTION: Assault on the Prairie.....	14
<i>Map for any Silhouette Game by Oliver Bollmann</i>	
Crossing the Line.....	15
<i>Fiction set in Heavy Gear by Scott McIntyre</i>	
Kraut Patrol	24
<i>Graphic Novel set in Gear Krieg by John Bell</i>	
Submission Guidelines	27
<i>How to Submit Material to Aurora</i>	
Article Suggestions	28
<i>What Aurora is Looking For</i>	

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

(For starters, egg on my face from last issue's editorial – there have been *twelve* humans who have walked on the moon, not twenty four... oops!)

Welcome my fellow podders! The year is half over, Aurora is here with its third issue of Volume 7, and the games, well, we keep playing them. Hot weather or cold, rainy or sunny or snowy, even in natural disasters I'm sure, the game is what it is all about.

As I read our submissions this month, besides being excited by their breadth, I once again got just how much we players inhabit the worlds we play in, creating stories through our play, creating whole environments and locations as we develop our niche in the campaign world, altering the laws of physics through rules and rule tweaks, and the beautiful art that sometimes comes with it.

We live in shared (game) worlds, only not entirely shared, as each of our own campaigns are just that little bit different than the other. When we get together we can relate to each other the same way as meeting a fellow traveler to a far away land – “Oh, you went to {Country} as well?” As we share our unique experiences of that same land we come away richer, more present to our own travels as well as an expanded sense of that land we visited. It is an act of generosity on both sides of the table.

And then sometimes we share about our visions and travels with the world at large, like, say, in a magazine. That you are reading right now.

For all your travels, whether intended or hasty, whether across our beautiful planet or those of the mind, here's to the delight of being accompanied by everyone you meet.

Welcome to issue 7.3 of your Silhouette Magazine.

Game on,

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

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ENLIST TODAY!



To be an Aurora Ambassador, talk us up whenever you get the chance, be it on a forum, at your local game shop, your gaming buddies, online, etc. Let everyone know we are a welcoming bunch and all our material is submitted by regular readers and fans. Some of our contributors have even gone on to be hired in the industry! We are a great bunch and a great place to hone your skills while exploring the fabulous DP9 universes. Our embassy is forever open!

OFFICIAL-DP9

“Official” Dream Pod 9 rules, updates and materials can be found in the Gear Up magazine, available at DP9's store on RPGnow.com.

HOME BREW RULES

All material inside Aurora is fan submitted and are not regarded as official and do not change the games or the DP9 game-universes as written in the books. Aurora material may not be used in tournament or other official play and may differ from current or future books. Any Aurora rules or material should only be used if all players agree upon their inclusion before play.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Cesar Mateo Gonzalez (tankero@gmail.com) -- *Heraklion: A Module for the Heavy Gear Universe*

An aspiring scifi writer, and a Heavy Gear fan with (clearly) too much time in his hands. [ed: Don't we all! And it's great!]

John Bell (jakarnilson@magma.ca) -- *Alfie's Tanners, Kraut Patrol & Jovian Koma*

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?

Oliver Bollmann (auroramag@gmail.com) -- *Editor & Assault on the Prairie*

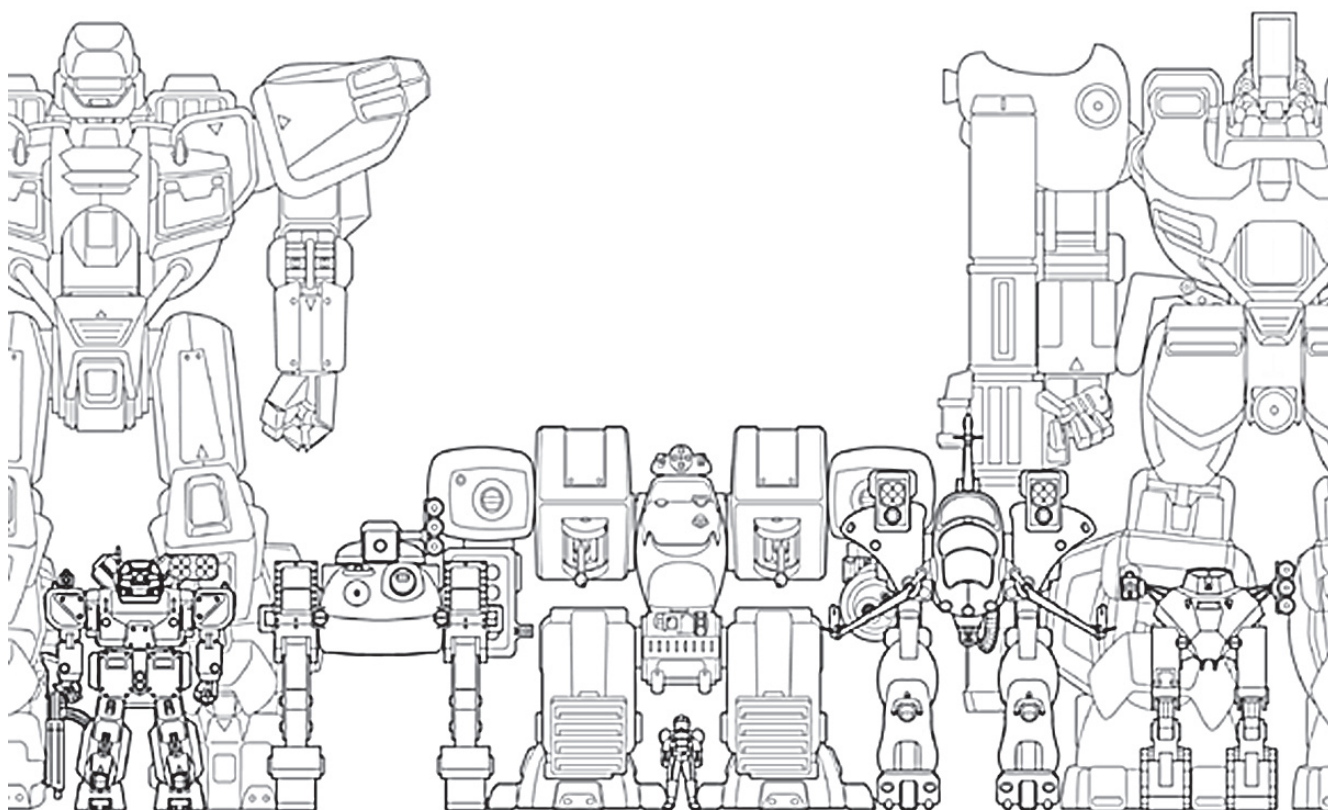
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Since then games have just become a big part of his life. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began his direct involvement with the Pod crew a couple of years ago. He also runs a gaming imprint *Kannik Studios at rpgnow*:

http://rpg.drivethrustuff.com/index.php?manufacturers_id=291

Scott "Feor" McIntyre (heat_1300@hotmail.com) -- *Crossing the Line*

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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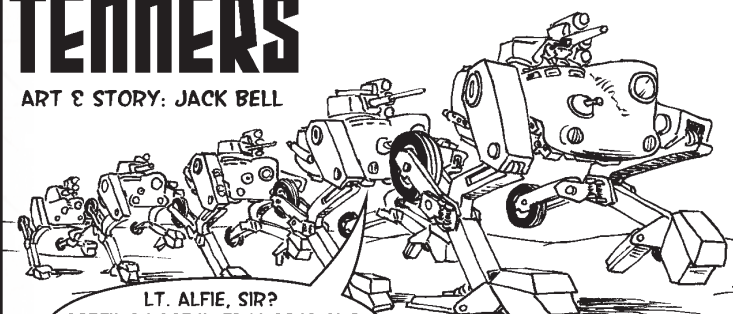
ALFIE'S TENNERS

JOHN BELL

ALFIE'S TENNERS

ART & STORY: JACK BELL

JUNE 1941, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HALFAYA PASS AND TOBRUK, LT. ALPHONSE MARCH AND HIS WALKER TROOP ARE LOST... AGAIN.



LT. ALFIE, SIR?
GETTING LOST IN FRANCE IS ONE
THING, BUT HERE IN THE DESERT...

DON'T WORRY,
I THINK I KNOW
JUST WHO TO ASK
FOR DIRECTIONS.



ZZZ...
DO YOU HEAR
SOMETHING?

YOU MUST BE
DREAMING. ONLY MAD
DOGS AND ENGLANDERS
GO OUT IN THIS HEAT.



GOOD THING THAT
I'M AN ENGLISHMAN. NOW,
WOULD YOU BE SO KIND
AS TO GET INTO YOUR
TANK?

WAS?



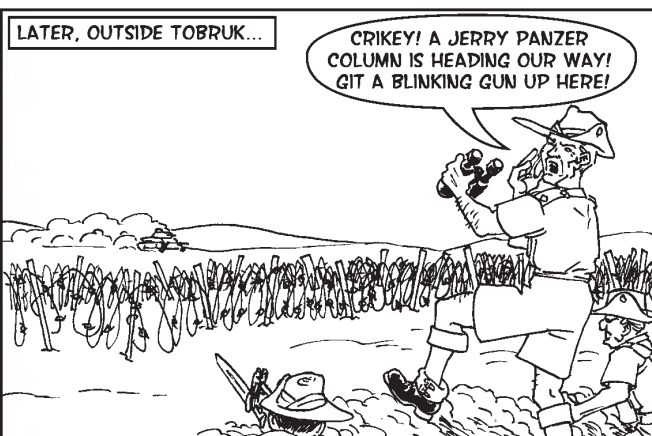
CAPTAIN,
YOU'RE GOING TO
LEAD US TO
TOBRUK.

THIS IS
MADNESS!

WHICH IS WHY
WE REMOVED ALL
MUNITIONS FROM
YOUR MARK IV.

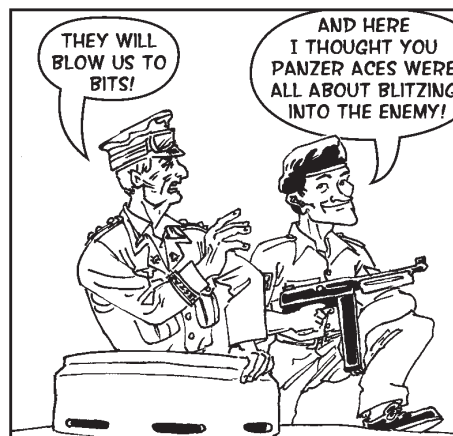


WHAT LUCK THEY
DID NOT FIND ME! I
MUST WARN MY
SUPERIORS!



LATER, OUTSIDE TOBRUK...

CRUIKEY! A JERRY PANZER
COLUMN IS HEADING OUR WAY!
GIT A BLINKING GUN UP HERE!

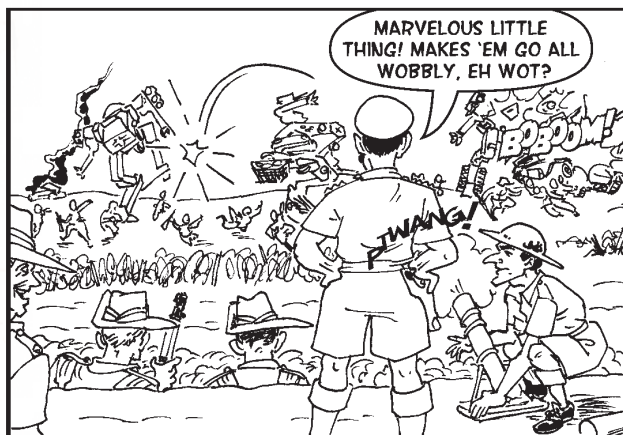
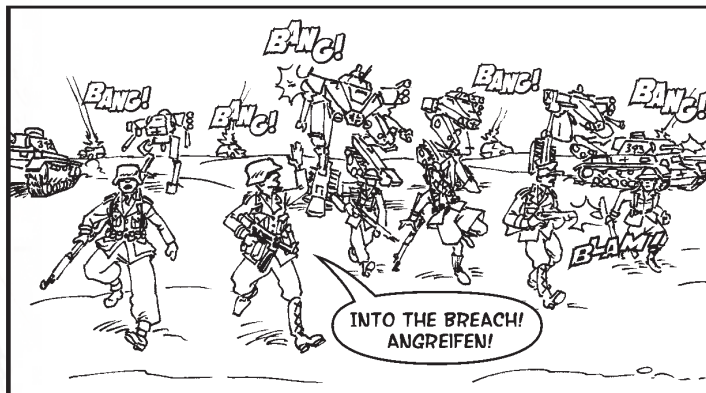
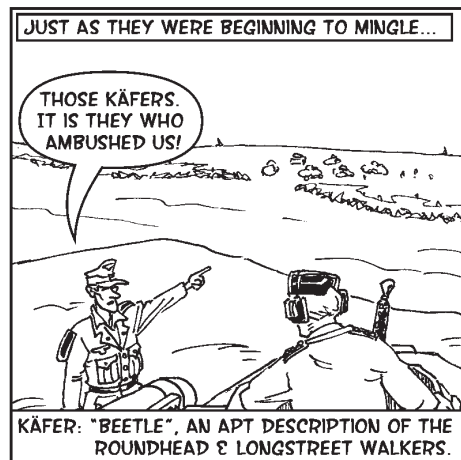
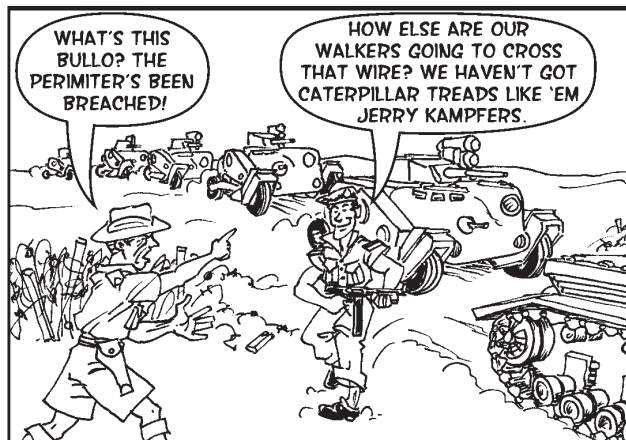
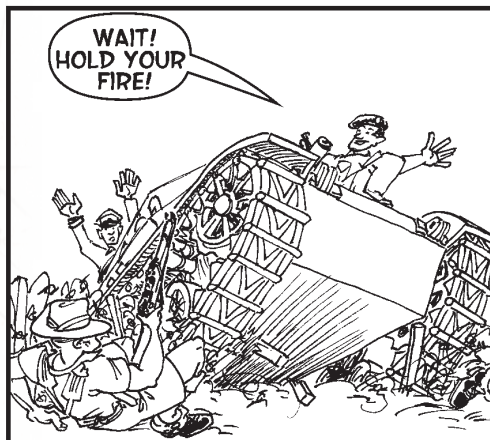


THEY WILL
BLOW US TO
BITS!

AND HERE
I THOUGHT YOU
PANZER ACES WERE
ALL ABOUT BLITZING
INTO THE ENEMY!

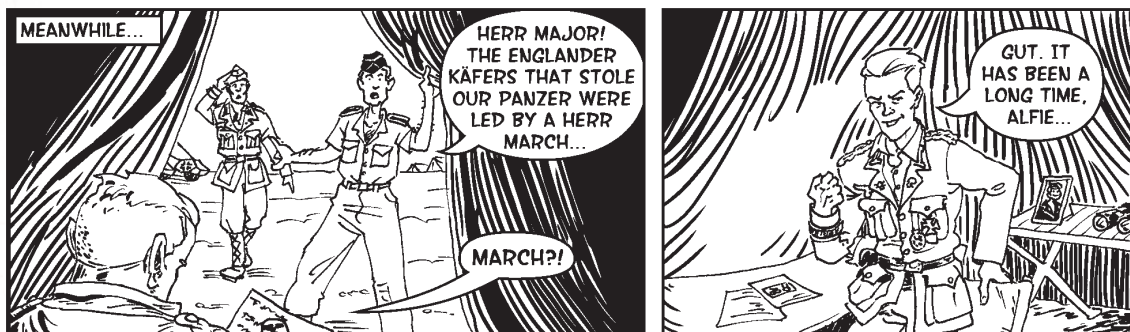
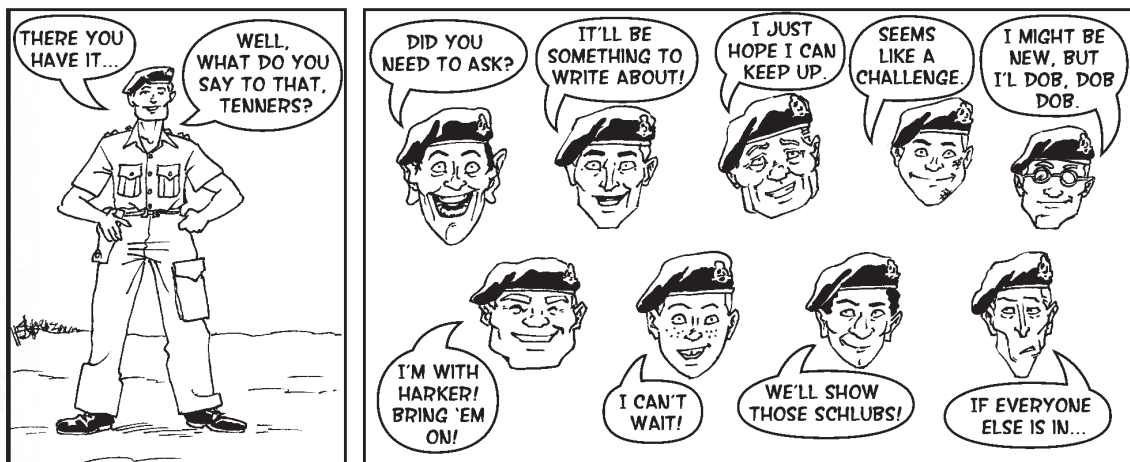
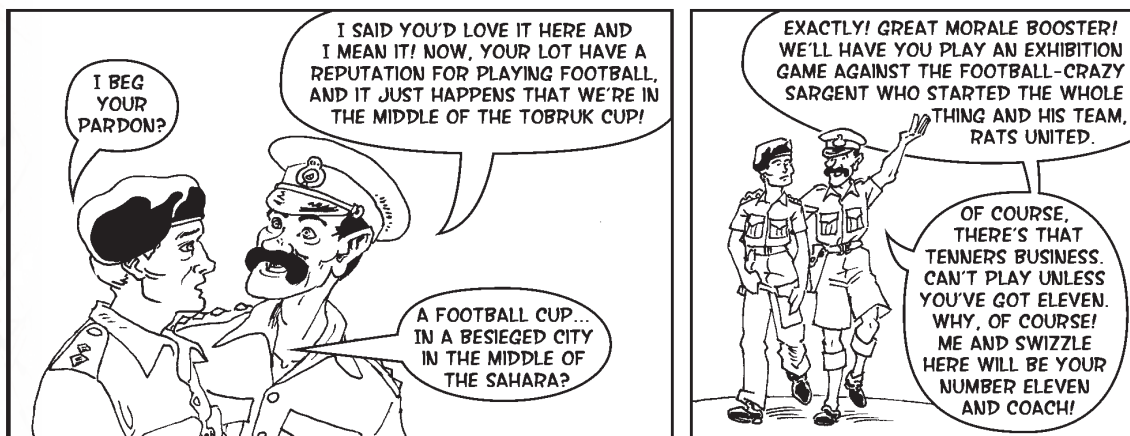
AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS



NEXT: A FACE OFF LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE! (UNLESS YOU READ WARLORD AS A CHILD...)

This is a module I've been working on for some time. It's the setting for a campaign currently being written with a scifi murder-mystery set in the world of Heavy Gear. It can also serve as the setting for any number of adventures, especially those with a gothic feel.

A module for the Heavy Gear Universe

RUN FOR IT

The sound of the submachine gun firing was like the crack of a lightning strike ripping through the rain.

Adler didn't try to aim, spraying bullets down the alley in bursts. The MILICIA soldiers, dressed in their gray body armor and drab olive ponchos, ducked behind what little cover there was. They squeezed into doorways and behind trash bins. Not all of them could be fast enough, though. Adler caught one in mid-stride, tearing into the soldier's chest with three shots, smacking them off their feet and onto the pavement. Adler spun on his heel, grabbed Remy by the collar and hauled the teenager up onto his feet.

"Keep going!" Adler growled as he shoved Remy down the alley and spun again. While the teenager stumbled on his feet behind him, Adler leveled the gun, still in its holster strapped hip at the MILICIA soldiers. The one on the floor wasn't moving. Another hand his head raised, with his carbine propped on a pipe fitting. Adler aimed vaguely in his direction and squeezed out another handful of rounds out, arm clenched preemptively against the recoil. The bullets shattered on the wall and on the pipe. Close enough.

Adler spun again on the ball of his foot and ran after Remy. The teenager, half a second ahead, went around the corner at the mouth of the alley, still holding onto the bundle with one hand. Adler made it there three strides, a second and a half later. He slid on the pavement as he tried to turn, nearly falling over.

The street Adler and Remy spilled onto was empty. Remy was already halfway across, almost to the alley on the other side when the Caiman APC came into view off to the side, at the end of the street. It slammed on the brakes, tipping itself forward while its treads yowled to a halt. Reflexively, Adler turned his hip towards it and pulled the trigger again. It was a futile act. The bullets bounced off of the troop carrier's hide as it brought its turret around to bear on Remy and Adler. It blasted them both with its floodlight, blinding them for an instant. Remy screamed

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

HERAKLION - PART 2

CESAR MATED GONZALEZ

in horror, but Adler kept moving, stumbling as he ran along the street. Even as he ran, Adler held his breath, cringing as he waited for the Caiman's gun to come alive. Two quick bursts, that's all it'd take. They just couldn't miss, not at this range.

The Caiman didn't fire. The MILICIA wanted prisoners.

Adler caught up to Remy, grabbed him bodily by the shoulders and threw him through the window of a small bakery. Remy yelped something he intended to be a curse. It sounded more like a howl before the glass shattered all around him. He was cut. He felt the sting across the back of his hands. He looked up at Adler from the floor, who had his back turned to him now. The sound of his uncle's gun going off was still deafening. The staccato muzzle flashes lit Adler's silhouette

"Go to the back!" Adler screamed between volleys, "Find the pipes! Get away from here!"

Remy scrambled to his feet yet again, snatching the bundle from the floor, and took off into the back of the bakery. He ran into a stairwell. The light upstairs was on upstairs, where he could hear someone yelling angrily. He didn't stop, running downstairs instead.

Adler saw his nephew disappear into the back of the building out of the corner of his eye. He looked back to the MILICIA soldiers closing in, catching glimpses of them as they stayed behind cover. He stood his ground in front of the broken window, with his finger pressing on the trigger without squeezing it. He could see the lenses of the night-vision goggles the MILICIA soldiers wore, glinting as they caught the light through the rain. The barrel of his small gun at his size hissed when raindrops landed on it. Nothing moved except the raindrops.

Remy found the oven. A blaze of red light that glowed around the edges of its hatch was the only light in the ample basement. He was frozen at the doorway, trying to breathe in of the superheated air. He started following the pipes. They led him to a grating he recognized. He reached to the latch and pulled it aside, crouching down to crawl through it on his belly feet first. When he was almost through, dragging the bundle he was still holding onto in his hand.

The sound of a gun firing, slower, heavier, made Remy freeze where he was. The floor he was lying on shuddered with each of the gun's reports. He lied there while his stomach sank, listening, breath held.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

HERAKLION – PART 2

The baker came down the stairs, sneaking one step after another down from his second floor home, after the really loud bangs stopped. He peered around the corner towards the front of the store. There was a body in the middle of the floor, surrounded by glass shards. The only thing holding it together was its ripped clothes. Then the boot-stomping came. The baker looked up, snapping out of his horrified hypnotism. At the very edge of his perception, he heard a sound in the basement. It was the clatter of a grate opening. Before he could think about it, a soldier leaped through the broken window. They pointed carbine at the body as they dashed past it, and then up at him. The baker's hands shot up. The soldier aiming the gun at him didn't have a face, just a mask they were yelling through.

"Where did the other one go?!" the soldier yelled a second time.

The baker shook his head, stammering. "I-I don't know!"

The soldier knocked the baker aside by slamming the carbine's gun-stock into his gut. He folded over on his steps while the soldier ran upstairs. While he was crumbled on his staircase, other soldiers ran in, going past him, swarming through his bakery. The basement was empty by the time they got there. The sack was in the middle of the floor, spilling its contents. They were uniforms, folded into neat piles until recently, names and Humanist patches stitched onto them.

Remy was still running, his footsteps echoing in the dark.

THE ENVIRONS OF HERKALION

AQUEDUCT

Heraklion was built over a river flowing through a knot of Terra Nova's MacAllen tunnels. Their engineers drilled into the river and tamed it by corralling a section of it with dams. The result is a series of natural and artificial tunnels woven together into a maze with smooth, organic curves leading to sharp-edged, geometric chambers. Most of Heraklion's machinery is down there, with a great deal of it devoted to purifying and distributing the river's water to the town above. Heraklion's technicians are able to maintain most of the systems there, following maps and markers only they are privy to, and which they guard with tremendous zeal. Maintenance of the aqueduct, in fact, is one of Heraklion's greatest concerns. Some of the machines are old enough to have the centuries-old Farchilde Industrials logo stenciled onto them, and replacement parts are not easy to come by. It's also a smuggler's haven, since parts of the aqueduct have served no purpose for decades and the technicians don't attempt to secure it all. Most Heraklionites are aware of the aqueduct but pay it little mind.

ARCHIVES

The Heraklion archives are not a physical place but a digital one. It's a network connecting all of Heraklion's systems, apparently adapted from the naval networks of the first colonial ships that ventured forth into the galaxy before the Tannhauser gates were discovered. Centuries of electronic detritus and flotsam clog it up, but it seems to function well enough to keep the town running for now. The local population use the network for simple communication, book-keeping and other such applications. Those inhabit the topmost layer of the network. The Archives were never connected to Terra Nova's global network, Hermes72, making it an isolated space, much like the town itself. It contains the town's library, which is comprised of a number of chronicles, journals, media clips and other such files. The network isn't broadcast wirelessly, however, and is only accessible through antiquated physical access ports. There are connection points in most of Heraklion's buildings, as well as out on the farms as well. There is a general belief that the servers running the network are somewhere in the aqueduct.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

HERAKLION - PART 2

MILITARY OUTPOST

Heraklion's protectors kept a base on a ridge overlooking the valley. It was no more than a few barracks and a mess hall, maintained to HAPF standards, enough to house no more than a few dozen men. Now that the MILICIA have occupied it, while being harassed by the previous occupants, the buildings have suffered considerable damage. They were used mostly as officers' mess and headquarters, while an improvised tent city sprung up around the small compound for the rest of the regiment. The grounds are a constant mud-pit, bogging down vehicles and soldiers alike, and the road leading down to Heraklion's airfield is crumbling apart. The only advantage it has to offer is that fresh water is readily available, thanks to Heraklion's aqueduct. The security of that water is in questions, but there's little the MILICIA can do about it, other than to truck water in over a prohibitive distance. With the HAPF playing on their home turf, they're carrying out increasingly bold ambushes around the outpost, which has frayed the nerves of the MILICIA forces and has worsened the mood in the camp. The MILICIA's efforts to secure their own base haven't been effective, as no amount of surveillance drones and barbed wire seem to prevent the HAPF's guerrilla attacks.

OUTSKIRTS

Heraklion is nestled in the folds of a mountain range, in a valley where the primordial jungle was hacked back just far enough to accommodate the small settlement. As a result, the region around Heraklion is mostly untamed wilds, but there are farms carved out on either side of the road that connects Heraklion to the nearest Maglev station. Some are homesteads, focused on subsistence farming rather than cash crops, with a few cawffee plantations and small grape vineyards as well. Most of them are owned and run by the researchers, used to conduct botanical experiments of various kinds. Most of the farms are connected to Heraklion's road with uneven dirt roads that become mud trails during the monsoons. The rest is subtropical jungle, typical at this Southern latitude, with vegetation similar to Earth's Jurassic flora. Wildlife, such as hoppers and watervipers, are also commonplace in Heraklion's surroundings, making it dangerous to wander off the trail. A good machete is indispensable for anyone whose mind is set on venturing out there, to clear the way as well as to fight off the fauna.

THE BIOCHEM LABS

The center of Heraklionite life, the purpose of the town's very existence, is a cluster of buildings that sit in the middle of it all, though walled off of everything around it. It's no more than six buildings on the surface, with the tallest reaching up four stories, behind a wall that is itself two stories tall. Behind reinforced gates, worthy of any fortress or prison, the reality of the laboratory's simultaneous decay and frenetic activity is displayed in stark relief. All the buildings are old, and its obvious, despite the technicians' best efforts. They're a patchwork of metal plates and concrete, bolted together where they're not fused together, fashioned into boxy shapes. The administration offices are all but abandoned to one side of the single street that splits the complex in two, while on the other the science buildings are teeming with people. They come and go in shifts, following a predictable routine day after day.

Near the entrance to the main building, standing in the middle of a flowerbed, which seems to be the only concession to nature this place has to offer, there is a statue to Owen Galanos, depicted as a middle-aged man, dressed in colonist garb, watching impassively as scientists and techs walk briskly in and out of the building that bears his name. The flowers, predictably, are the result of unbound genetic engineering, with colors, patterns and scents that are simply impossible in nature.

TRADER'S SQUARE

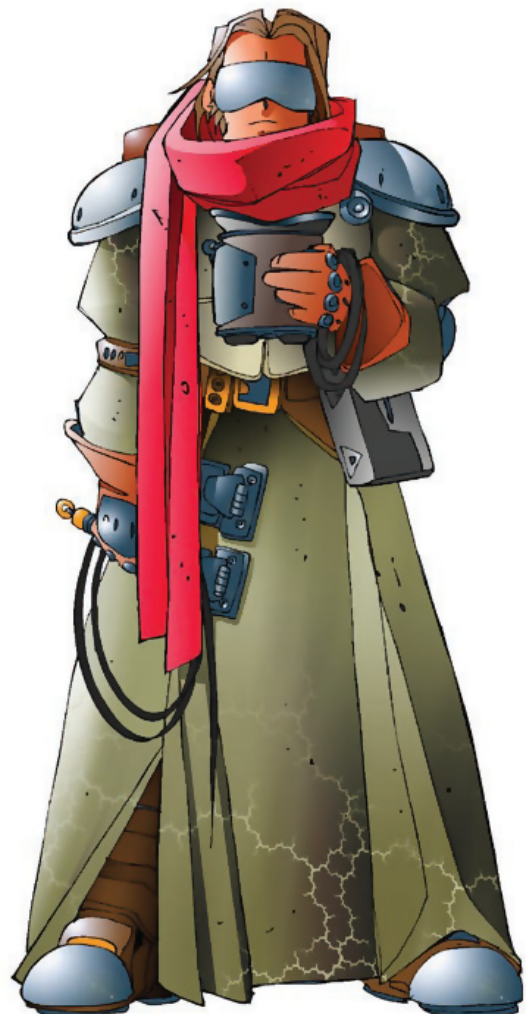
The Trader's Square is the hub of commoner life in Heraklion, sitting at the end of the main road that winds its way into the valley. Its name describes it well enough, with the few shops that have managed to survive Heraklion's self-imposed isolation surrounding it. There are enough shops to fulfill most modern needs. Everything, from the gadgetry to the fashions, are usually several seasons (if not whole Cycles) out of date. The square is at its liveliest every fortnight when the farmer's market occupies most of it, as the local homesteaders set up shop around the fountain that dominates the center of the square. During the farmer's market, most of Heraklion is there, offering a rare moment of life and color to an otherwise bitter and muted town. The farmer's market is still held as scheduled, despite Heraklion's recent turbulent times. The fountain itself is a rather large, ornamental piece, serving as throne for a statue of Poseidon, whose glare is often the first thing visitors see. No one has a ready answer as to why Poseidon is featured there so prominently, but no one has made any attempt to remove the statue. The fountain's bottom is littered with coins and baubles.

THESEUS' SHIP TAVERN

The Theseus' Ship Tavern is one of the few successful businesses in Heraklion, but that isn't particularly surprising, as it is one of the few restaurants, wineries and hotels in town. It sits on the northeast corner of Trader's Square, the largest building there, and one of the tallest at four stories high. The tavern's decor plays on a military greco-roman theme, with square shields, Spatha swords and bronze helms displayed on the walls. All the items are obviously knock-offs, some of them rather cheap at that. The Theseus' Ship is run by the owner Cedrych Charbonnet, who came to Heraklion during the Winter of 1918 TN. While Cedrych is colorfully evasive about his past and about why he settled in Heraklion, he conducts his business with a reputation of honesty and good humor. There are plenty of rumors and speculation about whatever drove Cedrych here, and in all likelihood one of the most outlandish may be true. What is indisputable is that his business has thrived where most withered away after a few seasons. It's one of the very few gathering places in Heraklion where all castes mingle, and where outsiders can feel welcome. The MILICIA's presence in town has clearly hurt business, even if a few of the officers are occasional clients as well.

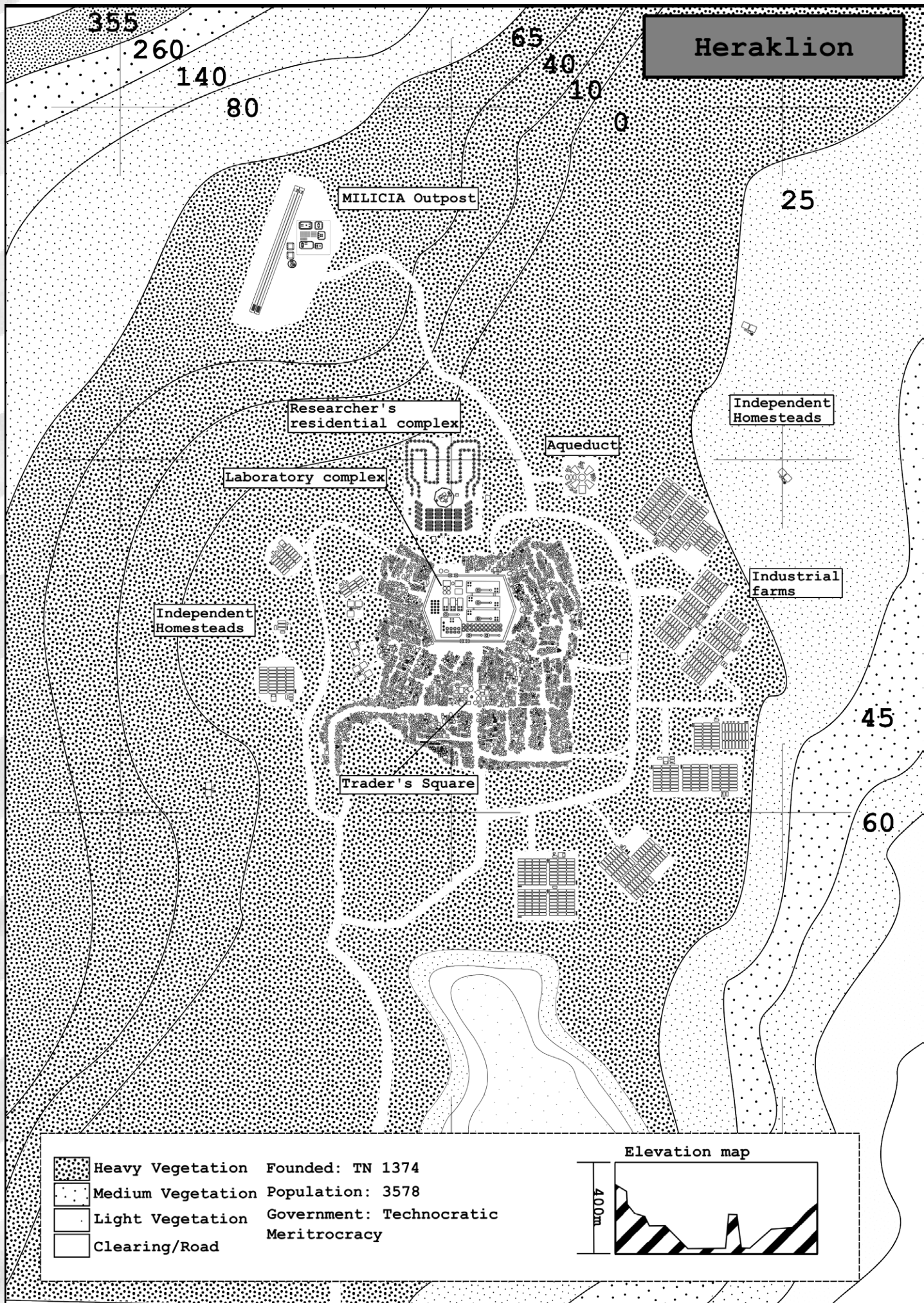
RESIDENTIAL QUARTER

Heraklion's commoners and technicians live throughout the small city. Some of them live near the core that has emerged around Trader's Square, while others live on the farms where they work outside of Heraklion's walls. However, Heraklion's administrators and researchers have their own small neighborhood, further setting them apart from the rest of the city's people. They live in what is called the residential quarter, a suburban neighborhood with luxury housing, rising up along one of the walls of Heraklion's valley. This community is protected by the Khayr-Ad-Din mercenaries kept on retainer with money from Heraklion's coffers. The security apparatus in operation there is highly sophisticated, including the use of automated surveillance drones, and even a small squad of Sidewinder and Boa gears. The executive committee's meetings usually take place in the heavily guarded chief administrator's villa that sits at the center of this gated community.



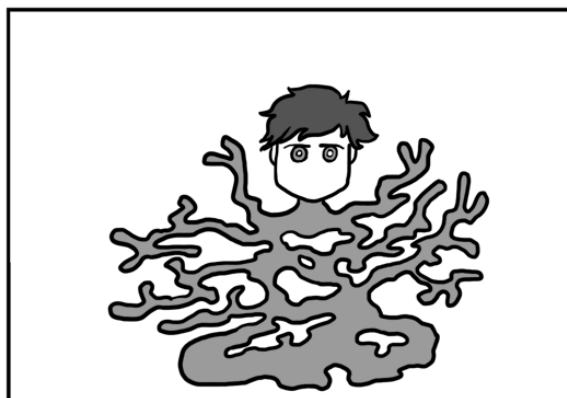
Next issue!

Meet the characters of the Heraklion campaign setting...



COULD YOU SHOW US HOW THE MERCURIAN GUILD LANGUAGE EVOLVES?

DA, NO PROBLEMO!





AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ASSAULT ON THE PRAIRIE

OLIVER BOLLMANN

Your assault will begin near Gannett, a wide prairie with several large population centers and many more regions populated far and wide with light industry, farming, and more.

This was an experiment with using real world satellite imagery (so readily available now) to create a “true to life” game map upon which to play. It isn’t fully true to life, as it has been manipulated to provide what I hope to be a good mix of terrain, buildings and more to provide a good set of tactical options for each team, leading to fun and intense battles. Even with that manipulation, though, there is something intriguing to me, something that makes things seem just that much more engaging by playing on terrain that looks real. I was about to say it would be like playing on an military briefing aerial photograph, but that is exactly, in effect, what it is!

The map is scaled for SilCore rules, at one hex equals fifty metres. It is also possible to play Blitz! battles on the map; simply play as normal with inches as the unit of measurement, and while Blitz! scale is closer to one inch equals 4 metres, as page 13 of Locked & Loaded notes, the scale is whatever it needs to be to make it interesting. A non-hexed version of the map is also included.

The only terrain feature “called out” on the map is a hill that rises near the middle of the battlefield. Otherwise, players should agree on terrain types. If a terrain occupies more than one-quarter of a hex, for ease of play, consider that terrain as occupying the whole hex.

The structures on the map are light agrarian buildings, and could be torn apart easily enough by large machines of war. If used for cover, they can sustain one hit before becoming rubble. They count as the equivalent of a heavily wooded hex for movement through them, after which they become rubble.

Enjoy stomping through the fields!

A note on printing the maps:

The maps are on an E1 sized Architectural Sheet (42” x 30”). Most local office print shops (ex FedEx Office) will be able to print these, as will blueprinting shops where you might get a better price. Print either in colour or in B&W to suit your budget, they should print fine for either.

You can also print on a regular-sized printer tiled (preferably with some overlap) and tape them all together...





"With fighting continuing to rage across the capital, we still do not have any word on the safety of the Prime Minister, the Estates General has been under siege and there is a total communications blackout. We will bring you more details as we have them, until then, I'm Diane Portier for SRN News."

Port Oasis
Intersection of Grand Boulevard and Rue Liberte
21 Autumn, 1948
22:45

Sous-Lieutenant Calvin Hobson knelt behind the barricade in his Jaeger and picked off an advancing Basilisk. The rebels were making another push against the Champs de Mars and it was his section's job to make sure they didn't make it up this street. They were far from the last line of defence, far from important enough to be the last line of defence, but by God he swore they would fight like it.

The 12th MILICIA Heavy Gear regiment was not a well respected unit, they were amazed when the Curia redeployed them to a small fire base just outside the Alliance Capital, it was a fantastically prestigious posting for such a unit. When the orders had come to deploy to the Champs de Mars for parade inspection they had spent almost the entire night before lovingly touching up the blue and grey paint on their gears by hand. Special attention was paid to the unit's few Mambas and Iguanas, though even the lowly Rattlesnakes were downright pampered by their pilots before standing for review before the Lord Protector and the Prime Minister.

He could remember standing there, proud as a peacock in the massive square as the huge screen at the end of the parade grounds came on with the face of Lord Protector Jaques Molay "Champions of the Republic, of the Territories!" his voice had been stirring and Calvin remembered his chest swelling with pride to be able to receive the address. "I stand before you today to celebrate your accomplishments. Victories against the League's enemies, stalwart defences of our borders, and other tasks too numerous to mention."

Calvin's pride had waned slightly as he tried to call to mind any accolades of the 12th. The unit had spent the entirety of the inter-polar war in Newton, the only action they'd seen was when a gear-soccer match had gotten out of hand and they'd been called in to pull the enraged civilian gears apart. They had drilled extensively, and were quite capable, but they'd mostly remained untested in a true conflict.

"I therefore call on you here, today, to carry out another glorious task for the Republic!" Molay continued and Calvin snapped his focus to the screen, were the assembled forces being sent on

some kind of campaign? A glorious mission of conquest for the league? Perhaps to bring the errant Humanists back to heel? "I call upon you to join me in reclaiming our League from the ineffective, puppet leadership of her so-called Prime Minister. I declare today that Louis deRouen is not fit to lead the glorious people of the Southern Republic and is to be removed from office, immediately!"

Calvin had stood there, dumbfounded, as the declaration was made. Looking around he could see the rest of the regiment was just as shocked. The 12th was the most junior of the assembled forces, and so they had joined the back ranks of the parade formation. Arrayed ahead of them were proud SRA Regiments, and at least a full compagnie of the fabled Legion Noire. He'd watched even more amazed as these gears hefted weapons and began to march towards the Estates General, less than a kilometre away. Infantry platoons jogging amongst the larger gears' feet.

Calvin had felt very sure they'd missed a memo somewhere, and very much regretted not being able to warn someone of this. In the distance he had seen the Fer-de-Lance of the 1st Republican, on permanent honour guard duty around the Estates General, taking up defensive positions and the first streaks of weapons fire from the defenders arcing across the space between the two forces, easily avoided at the extreme ranges they were being fired at.

Calvin had looked over at Commandant Carilla, who had looked back at him, then he hefted his own rifle. The Longbow Jaeger was not a common design, but it was potent in its capabilities. He'd drawn a careful bead and blown the back of a Snakeye Black Mamba's head clear off. As the Mamba started to topple confusion began to spread through the traitor's ranks. The commandant hadn't hesitated for a second. "Hit them with everything you've got, for the Republic!" With a roar the MILICIA regiment had opened fire into the rear of the advancing gears, catching them in a deadly crossfire against the bastion of the 1st Republican Honour Guard.

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"What went wrong?" The plan had been simple enough, shift a few regiments loyal to himself to the area around the Capital, summon them into the heart of the city for a formal parade inspection, and then unleash them on deRouen and his lapdogs in the Estates General. It was a simple plan, but the Lord Protector of the Allied Southern Territories knew simple plans were a double edged sword. For as difficult as it was for a simple plan to fail, such a failure would be spectacular.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

Cornelia seemed in an even darker mood than he was, the dragon fins on her chin flared and lay back against her jawline over and over again. "Bujold." Molay had rarely heard a single word, a name, laced with such malice. She referred of course to Consul Ashton Bujold, former republic war hero, now commander-in-chief of the MILICIA. "Firebase Clearwater was supposed to be manned by the Apes, but someone in Bujold's office dropped the ball and the 12th were assigned there, instead of the 82nd. They weren't one of our regiments and things went... well, you saw how they went, sir."

Molay shook his head. Even a coup, it appeared, could be fouled up by the damnable bureaucracy that deRouen and his hellspawn daughter left to fester. "I assume he has been suitably reprimanded."

The woman smiled cruelly. "Last night. The constant pain of his war injuries and the shame at seeing his homeland torn apart by his own comrades got to him, they found him in his bath with three bottles of painkillers, they were unable to revive him."

Molay nodded his approval. He had always found that a convenient thing about Bujold. The injuries the man had sustained at the Battle of Baja had left him in constant pain for the last thirty cycles, if the man ever needed to be removed a suicide was easy to arrange. "And how are we moving forward?"

"We've gotten word that the loyalists are going to be attempting to extract the Estates General from the city this evening. We've activated Watcher Cadre, they're already on the move."

The man nodded, said his farewells and switched off the trideo link. Now Valice, Valice he trusted. She knew how to assemble a properly devious plan.

Calvin drove a rifle round through the shoulder armour of a Boa and ducked back below the barricade as the Black Adder beside it sent a snub cannon shell into the solid concrete pillar. Across from him his Sous-Sergeant popped up and answered the powerful weapon with his own bazooka. The man signalled to the officer, who popped up to see a cluster of crimson and silver gears carving through the advancing rebels from behind. A collection of Fer-de-Lance and Gilas laid into the traitors with their vibro rapiers.

Calvin tried to raise the lead Republican gear but was met only with squealing static. The city was awash in electronic counter measures and counter counter measures. Sometimes he

swore the rebels had a chatterbox on every corner. No one in his section had electronics powerful enough to punch through the interference. He watched as the leader held up their rifle and gestured to the empty receiver, the missing magazine indicating the force was out of ammo. Calvin gestured for them to get to the barricade before signalling, mostly needlessly, for his fellows to cover the force's retreat.

His own rifle spoke again and again as the gears rushed towards the barricade, rebel fire gouging deep craters in the street, but left no telling damage on the super-elite gears and their pilots. Calvin marvelled at the skill of the pilots as he picked off an Iguana over a Gila's shoulder. Then they were to the barricade. Calvin tossed the commander a spare clip from his rifle as he reached the wall and the gear then turned to pour fire back towards the advancing rebels, not until the rest of the Pride gears had passed the barricade did the Fer-de-Lance vault the construct itself, and waved a thanks to Calvin as the gear rushed back towards the rear area for a proper reload.

Calvin took one last shot before something at his gear's feet caught his eye. He had barely a moment to turn away before the powerful demolition charge went off, shattering the barricade and leaving his gear sprawled, face down, on the street.

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Sous-Prefect Chantel Dessource, commanding officer of the 1st Republican Heavy Gear Regiment, led her party up the Rue Bouddhiste towards the Champ de Mars. An array of Fer-de-Lance, Gilas, Mambas, Cobras, and two of the Republic's new powerful Drakes escorted the collection of Caimans towards the Estates General. It was early in the battle for the city, but things were not going well. Far to the south she could see smoke curling up from the Champs de Mars.

Since the day before when Molay's initial assault had been launched, stalled only by the heroic actions of some nobody MILICIA regiment, the ruling council of the Southern Republic had been bottled up inside the Estates General building. The massive square had been a constant battlefield ever since, and the front line had formed from it as loyal and traitorous forces spread through the city.

The loyalists had held most of the North and West of the city including the Port and Maglev station, whereas Molay's cronies had managed to secure the Southern and Eastern reaches of the city, including the South Gate and the industrial districts at the east end of the port. There was also fighting outside the city as various regiments rushed to the defence of one leader or another. A glance to her left showed her the still smoking

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

wreck of the SRS Timberall, an Admiral-class amphibious landship that had been sunk in shallow water earlier that day during a terrifying naval battle just off the coast. She still hadn't been able to determine if the Timberall had been fighting for or against Molay.

She focused herself back to her current mission. The battle was not going well enough for them to trust in the safety of the Estates General building for the Prime Minister and other elected officials. They were to extract them. This far from the front line the electronic interference was negligible, but she'd still ensured she had gears strung out behind her at regular intervals to relay communications from the loyalist's headquarters in the port.

"Prefect, we've got a report from HQ, there's a group of 1st Republican gears that has just broken through one of the western barricades, we've not been able to establish stable radio contact through the interference, but they appear to be moving to reinforce your position." The report came through from her last relay unit.

Chantel smiled. "Very clever Jaques." she said quietly to herself. If anyone else had been leading the extraction it probably would have worked. But as commander of the 1st Regiment she had some knowledge that might not be that common. The 1st Republican didn't have any forces operating outside of the barricades. "Alright everyone, listen up." She began issuing orders to her men.

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Commandant Valice Pilant powered down the street in her Fer-de-Lance. All in all she had to say she missed her Green Mamba. The FdL was a nice machine but she felt... exposed without the protective stealth of her favoured vehicle. She drew some grim satisfaction from the fact that she was breaking deRouen's laws just by being inside the gear. Ahead of her one of the Gilas of the small strike force lead them through the relatively narrow side streets towards rue Bouddhiste and their appointment with the evacuation team.

She could see the intersection now, and the Gila cleared the corner ahead of her. Suddenly the air was alive and the Gila was being driven back by shells and rockets to explode further down the street.

The officer cursed, she was too close and too fast to stop. She let herself begin to fall backwards instead, feeling the vibrations as she did a baseball slide on her gear's butt-plate into the street. A few rounds sprang off her armour but the majority of

the fire sprayed over her head. With a single motion she hurled a hand grenade down the street and rolled behind the building on the far side of the intersection as the explosion shattered windows all down the block.

The others had pulled up short behind her. No point in radio silence anymore. "Watcher 3, Watcher 4, Seeker Lead, on me. Cover." It took a moment for the other gears to get organized, but then Valice and the others leaned out from behind the solidly built buildings and poured fire down the street. She sneered at the pitiful fire rate of her rifle, but made every shot count as the three officers she'd summoned darted across the street. Seeker Lead, Oliver LaPierre, was piloting a Force Fer-de-Lance and put it to good use as he made the crossing. His ace marksmanship proved its worth once again as he put a perfect head shot on one of the escort force's two Drakes. The commandant smiled grimly as the mammoth gear-strider dropped to its knees and then collapsed to the pavement. Her own shoulder mortar sang with a hollow thump and a moment later the second Drake reeled back from the concussion of the blast.

She looked directly at Oliver as he fell in beside her. The man had long since proven himself, and now commanded an entire Compagnie within Les Estranger. "Lieutenant, did you see what I saw as you crossed the street?"

The man nodded his gear's head as he leaned out and another loyalist gear met its demise. "No transports?"

Valice cursed again. "No transports. Seeker 3 and 4, S&D, Lieutenant, you're with me." She switched on her gear's powerful satellite uplink as she turned away from Rue Bouddhiste.

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Dessource shut down the uplink as she finished consulting with headquarters. At her signal the Caimen took another corner through the tight side streets. Suddenly the Iguana accompanying her exploded in a brilliant flash. She turned and rolled as another laser burst lanced past her, turning the air to plasma as it went before vaporizing a storefront behind her. The Force Fer-de-Lance reeled back from the rifle shells that drilled into its upper torso and she saw its sensor eye crack under the punishment.

She rushed forward and with a single smooth downward motion of her vibro-rapier she severed the gear's gun arm and one of its legs. As the gear toppled to the pavement she swung her blade horizontally and cleaved through both its v-engine stacks and

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

the semi-decorative sensor frill atop the gear's head, rendering the vehicle all but inert. The pilot must have practically pulled his head down between his shoulder blades to keep the top of his head attached, but the lack of blood attested to his apparent survival.

She levelled her rifle at the centre of the gear's chest, but before she could pull the trigger rifle rounds slammed into the side of the weapon, mangling it beyond function. Spinning she triggered her APGL, striking her foe with a mostly harmless, but distracting, anti-infantry weapon.

She charged and the two command gear's blades met with a flurry of sparks. "Sous-Prefect Dessource, I assume?"

The woman's voice was mocking as she turned another of Chantel's swings. "Lucky guess." The enemy's blade bit deeply into the armour of Chantel's off-hand as she deflected a blow. "And I assume you're leading this little charade?"

The woman laughed. "At your service." Chantel was sweating as she stepped back. The combatants had stumbled into a small park and circled each other uneasily. "You're pretty good for someone who never actually fights anyone."

Chantel launched an assault, the two vibro-rapiers again clashed in the air between the two vehicles in the complex thrust and parry of sword combat. "I'm the best. It's how I got the gig." Chantel had her blade swatted away, as she'd expected and spun around, sweeping the other gear's legs out from under it. But her foe rolled away before she could bring her blade down for a killing blow.

"Well, I'm just a stranger." The traitor woman's voice sounded strained as she pushed her gear back to its feet. "I might not be the best, but I fight dirty." Chantel didn't even stop to look, she dove to the side as the grenade that had been left at her feet went off.

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Valice cursed again as the enemy Fer-de-Lance shoulder rolled away from the blast and rose to its feet, blade in a defensive position. It was clearly a bit worse for wear but still quite functional. "You don't have to fight me, you know? The deRouens aren't any god for the Republic, and you know it."

Valice barely deflected the woman's assault and was forced to give ground towards the edge of the park. The foes went back to their uneasy circle. "As opposed to who? Molay? The man

wouldn't know honour if it kicked him in the balls with a Cobra." Even the staunchly loyal Commandant had to cede that point to her opponent. But then as the leader of Les Etranger she was hardly one to judge the Lord Protector's honour. "But there's one thing that will win this particular war more than all the honour in the hemisphere."

Valice narrowed her eyes, genuinely curious about her opponent's believed advantage. "Really, and what might that be?"

The woman's Fer-de-Lance suddenly pitched forward as something savaged her rear armour, alarms and warning sirens wailing through the cockpit as every display she had flashed red or went dead. She looked back over her shoulder to see a horribly damaged MILICIA Longbow Jaeger carrying a pulse laser canon that would normally rest in the hands of a Force Fer-de-Lance. For a moment an image flashed through her mind of leaving a hand grenade behind as she leapt a loyalist barricade. Then that vanished in an instant as the vibro-rapier penetrated her cockpit and passed cleanly through her right arm just below the shoulder.

The emergency medkit in her jumpsuit went into action, administering painkillers and clotting agents to keep her from bleeding out or going into shock. Though the rapidly descending drug haze she heard her opponent's voice one last time. "We have friends we can trust."

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Several ministers paced nervously around the spacious and opulent office of the Prime Minister of the Southern Republic. Behind the large desk Louis deRouen sat in his high backed leather chair and looked out the armour grade glass down towards the Champs des Mars nearly seventy meters below. There were a few marks on the windows, but they were made to withstand much more significant blasts. The central block of the Estates General, including his own office, were deceptively ornate given how sturdily they had been built. The Republic had not been founded peaceably, and the building reflected that.

Below him he saw a column of red and silver Caimen pull up to a stop in front of the building. The defenders had managed to push the fighting line nearly three quarters of the way back towards the Curia building in the far corner of the monumental square, and the Caimen were relatively unmolested. He saw a dozen soldiers dismount and run into the building far below him. "That looks like the evacuation team." one of the ministers commented, an edge of hope in his voice.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

Louise deRouen, the second most powerful person in the Republic looked across to her father. "Where's their gear escort?" She shared a concerned frown with the Prime Minister.

A few minutes later the door to the office burst open to admit a man in the regalia of the 1st Republic and a gas mask. He came up short before the barrels of three assault rifles, two belonging to other members of the 1st Republic assigned as bodyguards to the VIPs, the third in the hands of Louise herself. He raised his hands nervously "Mr. Prime Minister, we're here to evacuate you and the other ministers."

Louise clicked off the safety on her rifle in a calculated move to keep the man on edge. At least more than her appearance did. This week her skin was a dark chestnut colour, with swirling self-luminescent tribal tattoos. She knew her father disapproved of her regular trips to Atsi, but she found the body modifications to serve a purpose, often leaving those she was dealing with off balance "What's the pass phrase?"

The man raised his chin proudly, seemingly basking in the fact that he had been entrusted with this vital information. "Falcon Rising."

She put a bullet between his eyes.

Before he'd even hit the floor in the hallway Louise was in motion, leaping over screaming ministers who'd never seen anything more violent than gear duels on the trideo. She slammed the door closed and felt two heavy thumps against the armour grade durasheet followed a moment later by the dull thuds of concussion grenades.

With efficient movements she shoved the painting beside the door away and slammed her palm down on the panic button concealed behind it. The sharp crack of five centimetre thick hardened steel rods slamming into place around the door lent a powerful finality to her action. The system was meant as an action of absolute last resort. The system was entirely mechanical and spring loaded, with no mechanism for retracting the locking rods. Such a mechanism could potentially be exploited by someone trying to gain access to the room. The only way in now was with a cutting torch, but that also meant that the only way out was with a cutting torch. The office and its attached washroom and small bedchamber were designed to be self-sustaining for up to a week.

One of the ministers was comforting someone who seemed to be in mild shock from seeing the traitor gunned down in their midst. "I take it that wasn't the pass phrase?" Louise just glared at him. "Not that it matters, they'll just pack the hallway with plastique and blow us all to hell."

"No." The Prime Minister spoke for the first time since the transports had pulled up below them. "Jaques wants us alive, or at least me and Louise, and not too badly mauled. If we were mangled beyond recognition word would just circulate that we'd escaped and he was using the corpses of body doubles to try and convince the loyalists to surrender." he sat back down and turned back to the window. No, his need to parade us about will lead him to be overly cautious about capturing us. That'll give us our chance to escape." He switched on the trideo link they'd established to the loyalist HQ in the harbour, nodded at the expected static, and shut it off again. "We just have to wait for rescue."

Nearly three quarters of an hour had passed. And many of the ministers were watching the dull red glow in one corner of the door where the traitors had begun to cut through the door. It was going to take them many, many hours to cut through the thick plating, however, even with a plasma torch.

In the square below the rather fluid battle lines had been shattered. The last push by the forces holding the Champs had only been meant to buy time to evacuate the building and had clearly been an over extension. Shortly after Louise had sealed the door to the office the defenders had been seen streaming back past the Estates, the traitors in close pursuit. The Caimen still sat where they'd been parked, a few dozen gears and light tanks having joined them with perhaps a battalion of infantry.

Without warning a massive explosion ballooned past the window. Louise, sitting on the bed in the attached chamber ran out into the main room as the black cloud of smoke blocked out most of the light the window would normally provide. A moment later four figured zipped past the window. "Back! Away from the window!" The ministers scrambled to follow the direction. The forms of the four men shot back up, and Louise covered her ears against what was coming next. With a staccato report the strips of explosives went off in sequence and the window, bowed out over the Champs for added strength against ballistic attacks, shattered spectacularly. Huge shards of glass tumbled towards the ground far below and the four figures dropped back into view, alighting easily on the lip of the room's new opening. Behind them fire continued to shoot up and down. "Someone call for a lift?!" The man's shouted question was barely audible over the weapons fire and wind outside the window.

Louise's rifle snapped to the man. Like his companions he wore an utterly generic black flight suit with no markings. A compact carbine hung from his harness, though his hands stayed on the repelling rope. She repeated her earlier question "What's the pass phrase?"

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

The man took one hand off his rope to catch another as it dropped from whatever he was tethered to. This second rope had a series of harnesses, enough for about a quarter of the room's occupants, she noted. "He turned back to her as he tossed the rope to the nearest minister. "There is no pass phrase."

Louise stared him down for a moment, and clicked her rifle's safety back on. She nodded to the minister who had caught the rope. Additional harness strings were being caught by the other repellers. "Put it on! All of you, go!"

The minister who'd tried to joke about the first intruder looked at her with a raised eyebrow. "Anyone who wants to infiltrate the office is going to expect us to have a pass phrase, so we circulate one with daily briefings. But anyone we'd trust to pull us out in a situation like this knows full well it's barnaby crap." Behind her a powerful crack shook the room, and she spun around. The door was deformed from the blast, but still holding. "They're going to blow the door, hurry!"

Louise and the two bodyguards kept their weapons trained on the door as a second and then third blast further exaggerated the damage to the portal. The sets of harnesses had begun to climb, slowly at first, but she saw them accelerate quickly once everyone on the harness was clear of the window. Soon the rooms only occupants were Louise, the two Bodyguards, and the four rescuers. Louise jogged across to the leader, who had produced a second harness and tossed it to her. "Legion Noire?" She finally asked the question she had been wondering since she'd confirmed their intentions. He shook his head in the negative. "Then who?"

The man smiled and pointed up "Let's just say Sous-Prefect DeSources called in a few favours." Louise looked up through the shattered window at the Fury Shuttle hovering another 50 meters above the building. Her jaw dropped open. The massive craft was amazing to behold, matte black hull creating little more

than a silhouette against the early evening sky. Laser and machine gun fire streaked down from it, and she could pick out opened boarding doors with various gears adding their firepower to the formidable arsenal of the shuttle itself.

The Talon leader and two of his cohorts were checking her harness and those of the bodyguards as she stared skyward. Her reverie was broken with a fourth blast behind her. Spinning she brought her rifle up and opened fire on the now gaping hole that had been blasted in the armoured door. Kneeling behind the desk she put disciplined bursts of fire into the imposter republican infantry trying to press into the room. To her left she saw one of the bodyguards, still only half into his harness take a bullet to the abdomen. Without missing a beat the Talon that had been waiting to hook him up let his carbine drop to its shoulder strap, grabbed the man in a full nelson, entwined their legs together, and hit a button on his shoulder with his chin. The pair shot back and out of the window.

Behind her Louise her a reassuring click and then she two was being dragged back out of the building. She let the clip of her rifle fall away and slammed another home she had pulled

from her pants pocket. With a simple toggle she hosed the window on full auto. Just above her the Talon raised a single shot grenade launcher he had produced from somewhere. The four of them put the large slow projectiles through the window and in an instant enough wealth to feed a small town for a cycle went up in flames, along with many of the traitors.



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

Bullets had whizzed past her throughout her ascent, she was certain that at least one of the ministers must have been hit. But within a few moments she was safely on the shuttle's gear bay deck. As she unhooked herself from the harness her father ran across the bay and gathered her into his arms. Displays of affection from the old man towards her were not unheard of, but they were always calculated. Part of his public image. For just an instant she felt like this might be something different though. A feeling she'd not had since childhood.

And then it was gone. Perhaps just a figment of a wishful imagination reacting to what she'd just gone through.

The prime minister turned to the Talon officer who had pulled off his helmet to reveal an unruly mop of shockingly blonde hair, slate grey eyes and freckles. "You've done a great service for the Republic son."

The man paused in removing his harness to offer a quick informal salute the leader of the Southern Republic, "My pleasure sir. Major McCallum Robert, 82nd Talons. At your service." His name and the relative quite of the bay finally let Louise place his accent: Westerner. "But I imagine Hwan would be the one you really want to talk to."

Another voice came from behind them, "Welcome aboard Prime Minster." The two politicians turned to see a distinctly Mekongese looking man approaching from the fore end of the bay. He walked over to them and offered a crisp salute. "Lieutenant Hwan Jeong, at your disposal. I'm in command of this operation." Louise picked out the hint of sheen that indicated exertion. She suspected he had been in one of the Gears assisting in the extraction.

"Then we are in your debt Lieutenant Jeong. Might I ask our destination?" The man nodded politely. His bearing told Louise he was a former Peacekeeper.

"Of course sir, we're currently on route for Westphalia. We are already making arrangements with Sous-Prefect DeSources to determine the best place for you to go following that." The trio headed towards the nearest bay exit.

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Camp Liberation
The Eastern Outskirts of Port Oasis
41 Autumn, 1948
22:20

"-mandate is to protect the people of Terra Nova and their interests. The case was made that the deposing of a legitimately elected government was contrary to the interests of the people who elected that government. The Talons therefore stepped in to ensure the safety of that government's officials, nothing more. We have not been requested to involve ourselves in the military aspects of the insurrection, and I have been assured by Prime Minister deRouen that no such involvement will be requested. In short, our participation in this Republic Civil War is at an en-" The trideo image of the Black Talon's PR person exploded as it slammed into the floor.

Lord Protector Jaques Molay rarely let his temper get the better of him, but when he did the results were typically explosive. Cornelia fumed behind him, her more typical business suit replaced by an olive drab military flight suit. The tent wasn't air conditioned and she had pulled the zipper down far enough to reveal the upper edge of the intricate tattoos that covered most of her body. "We should never have let them fester there in Westphalia. We should have ended them as soon as we found out they existed."

Cornelia clenched her jaw, the dragon fins flexing uneasily. "They have their place Jaques, you know that. It's just... unfortunate that they decided to cross this line."

Jaques cursed fluently in three languages and sat back down at the desk. "It means they think deRouen is going to pull through this. They wouldn't assist if they even suspected I had a chance of victory. By pulling out the ministers they feel they've secured the future support of the Republic government."

Cornelia shrugged. "At least they claim they won't interfere again. We should be worried about the other leagues."

Jaques rubbed his eyes and nodded. "Agreed, Logan?"

Cornelia pulled out her computer and hit a few inputs. "Logan's still dealing with the messes we've handed him over the last few cycles. He doesn't have any military support to send, and there's doubt if Louis would even accept it. He's playing it coy, however, offering 'neutral humanitarian aid' into Port Oasis and the other cities that have been caught in the fighting."

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

Molay nodded, Taipan Logan of the Mekong Dominion was a canny foe, it had taken considerable resources over the past few cycles to ensure he wouldn't be able to interfere with Molay's plans. "And the Humanists?"

Cornelia scrolled, "Illuminatus Niklos hasn't made an official statement. We've got agents working the government there but... I don't think they're going to bite."

Molay cursed again. He had taken extraordinary measures to ensure Tanalom and White Rock appeared all but unguarded as he launched his assault. There should have been Humanist Hilions pouring across the border, hungry to reclaim lands lost during the Inter-polar war. But the Humanists, despite their name, rarely seemed to think like humans should. "I assume the Emirates are on the fence, as normal?"

Cornelia nodded. "Half of them support you, half of them support deRouen, and half of them say it's the perfect time to strike out on their own and leave you two to battle it out."

Molay pinched the bridge of his nose against the headache he felt coming on. "That's three halves."

Cornelia just shrugged. "You know what the Emirs are like." Molay could only sigh at the truth of her statement. The woman continued "Also, NuCoal has sent us a communique."

That caught Molay's attention. "To what effect?"

Looking for a moment at the shattered trideo screen on the floor Cornelia flipped her tablet around and pressed an icon on the screen. A woman's face popped into view, it took him a moment to place her as major Burkhai, one of Arthur's right-hand men in running the Port Arthur Korps. "Greetings Lord Protector. I'm Major Burkhai of the Port Arthur Korps. I trust that this message will make it's way to you, though I'm uncertain of your exact location. I've been asked to advise you that while the Coalition is not in a position to offer any overt support, the SecBurro is ready to assist with whatever covert operations you may need assistance with. We have teams in position to strike at a number of important targets, and are attempting to locate where they've moved the Prime Minister and his daughter. "If you have anything you need dealt with the message contains communications protocols for contacting us. I look forward to hearing from you." The message flicked off.

Jacques twined his fingers together and rested his hands on them. "She wants us to keep fighting." Cornelia cocked her head to the side and waited for the man to go on. "She knows that a military strike by the NSDF could swing the war in our favour. Most of Louis' support base is in the west, she could

easily strike Saragossa and pin their forces into a two front conflict that Louis wouldn't be able to properly respond to. Offering covert assistance, but not being able to strike at the deRouens would just drag it on as commanders started to get cut down. They want... Charles, you old dog." A devilish smile split Molay's face.

Cornelia sat down across from him. "Sir?"

The man shook his head. "Have you ever had the pleasure of meeting Colonel Charles Arthur the Third?" Cornelia shook her head. "He's a bombastic man, larger than life in many regards, fierce in his dealings, steadfast in facing his responsibilities. Some have dismissed him as a minor officer with a thirst for power. But despite all his posturing since the war he's still in Earth's pocket. This makes it quite clear, he's happy to see us rip each other's throats out so that we're open to another invasion.

"My god, there must be another invasion coming." Cornelia was a bit shocked, despite her fascination at watching her mentor's thought process unfold, "They know that even with the kind of support they're offering the war can't last more than a cycle, two at most. If they want us to still be tearing ourselves apart when Earth returns..."

Cornelia could see where that train of thought had lead him. "What.... what do we do? Surrender?"

Molay shook his head. "No, we can't just roll over, not now. But we can't let this get too bloody. We need to turn this to our advantage, there's no way Jacques will surrender, even if that witch of a daughter he has would let him." he closed his eyes in contemplation for a moment. "We need to turn this on them, use it to strengthen the Republic. The entire Alliance if we can. Dammit why didn't I see this sooner."

He jumped up suddenly, pacing about the room. "Put out a general order, we are to cede all urban centres to the Loyalists. Port Oasis, Marabou, fragging Bob Noone's Stead on the northern border. If it's got more than a dozen people living there we are abandoning it. Take the fight to the hills. Give Louis a reason to fortify the cities. I'll have to get a message to Logan, offer him some incentives to assist with the projects. We still have friends on the other side, even if they're rather secretive, perhaps some military contracts for the MILICIA..."

"While we are ceding the cities we can't let them sit on their arses, arrange regular raids, just enough to encourage further fortification, but carefully avoid any significant military production assets." Cornelia was writing as the man spoke, "How many of those 'bloggers' have we neutralized?"

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

CROSSING THE LINE

The woman scrolled through her computer until she found the relevant tally. "We've rounded up 190 in Port Oasis, and another 3 dozen in Marabou. And roughly another 100 in various smaller centres around the league"

"Hmm," the man pondered, "And Les Estranger?"

Cornelia knew those figures, "They've lost almost half their numbers since the fighting started. Including Commandant Pilant. Currently Lieutenant LaPierre is in command of the unit."

Molay nodded, "Have him repaint in Loyalist colours, SRA, MILICIA, whatever. He's going to organize a raid on the holding facilities for the 'citizen journalists'. Break them out so they can start fermenting public opinion against us. Let's get them all transferred to a single location as well, to simplify the operation."

Cornelia looked at the list, "It'll take a few weeks to get them all to one place, particularly if we're ceding the urban centres."

"That's fine, it will give us more time to encourage Louis to fortify his cities."

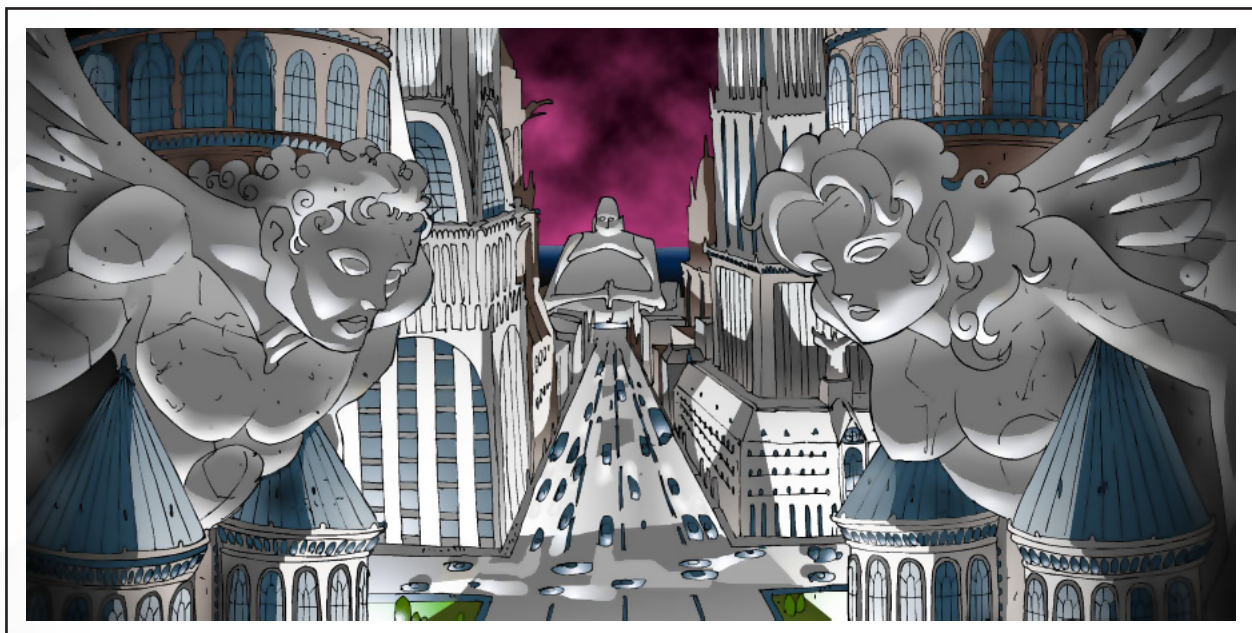
Cornelia caught his hand as he walked past her. Holding it close she stared into his eyes. "And what about you Jacques? Do you just surrender to Louis' justice?"

The man laughed, "No, my dear, I'm unwilling to leave the league open to Earth's predations, but I'm not suicidal. I will go into exile, one of those three halves of the emirs will take me in, I'm certain, or someone in the badlands. I imagine a fair number of the Estranger and perhaps even higher ups from the Legion will wish to join me."

"And some members of the SRID, of course."

Molay smiled as he stroked the woman's cheek, "Nothing would make me happier." she smiled, "but now, get out, I have some planning to do, and preparations to make."

The woman nodded and, gathering up her computer and other effects exited the Lord Protector's tent. Molay scowled at the shattered Trideo set and, lifting the edge of the tent pushed it out into the early evening air. He pulled his own computer out of the desk drawer and set it to record looking directly at the small camera on it. "Louis. We haven't always seen eye to eye, and I think it's clear I don't approve of how you run your government, and that drove me across a line I perhaps shouldn't have crossed. But today I made a discovery that changes many things. It will be some time before you see this, and I will add to it before I go, but I am going to put some things in place to help you with what is coming, now listen carefully..."

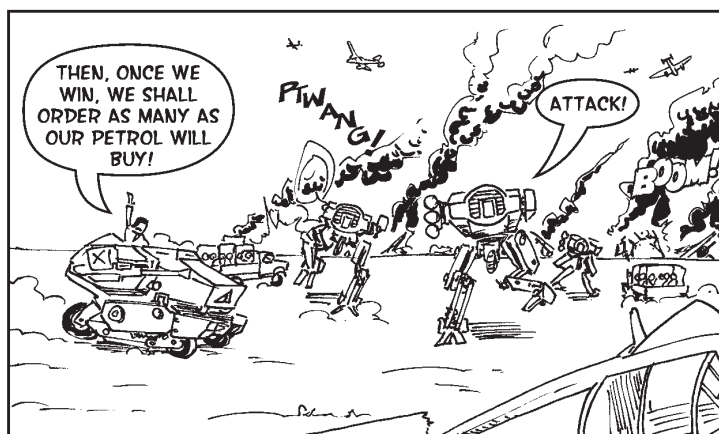
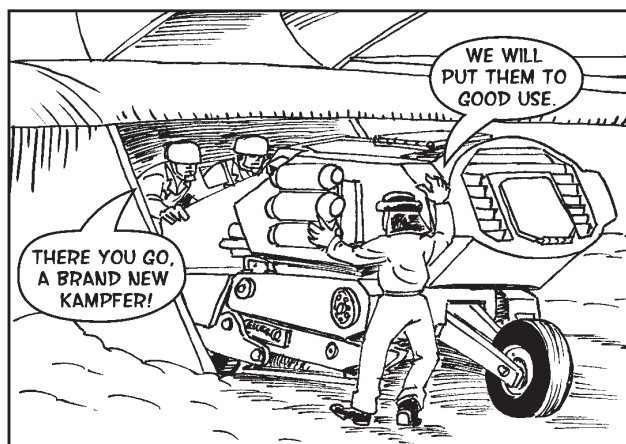


GRAND AVENUE: Port Oasis

1941 - DECLARED TRAITORS BY THE NAZI PARTY, OTTO KNACKER AND TRAUOGOTT HUNDT HAVE BEEN FORCED TO WORK UNDER THE ORDERS OF SS HAUPTSTURMFÜHRER SCHRAUBER AND THE MYSTERIOUS DR. KRAUSS. THEY ARE NOW THE...

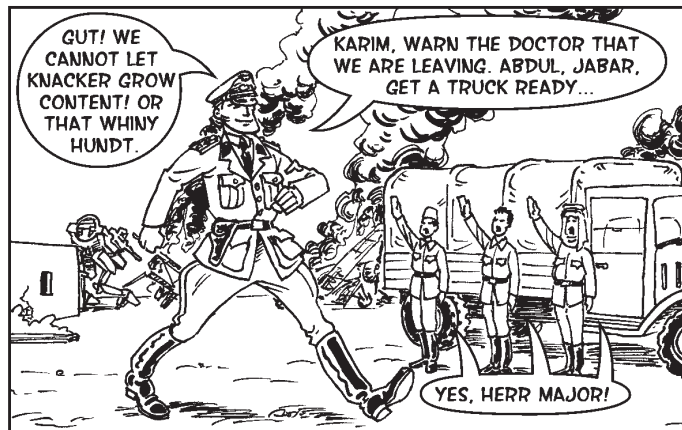
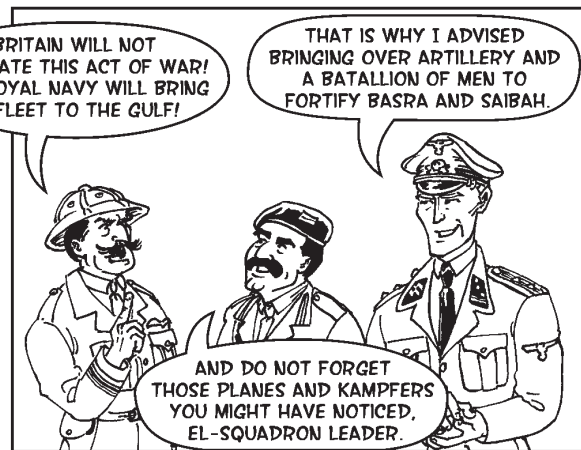
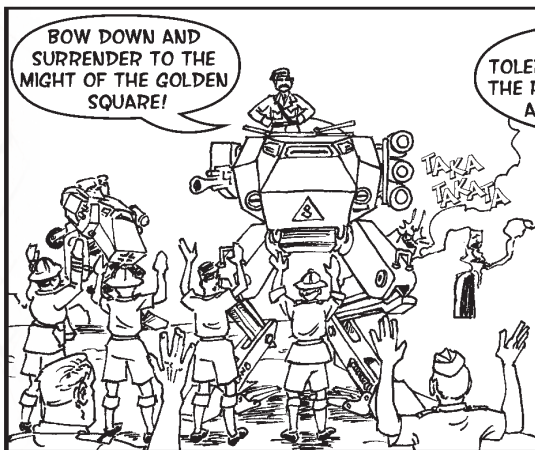
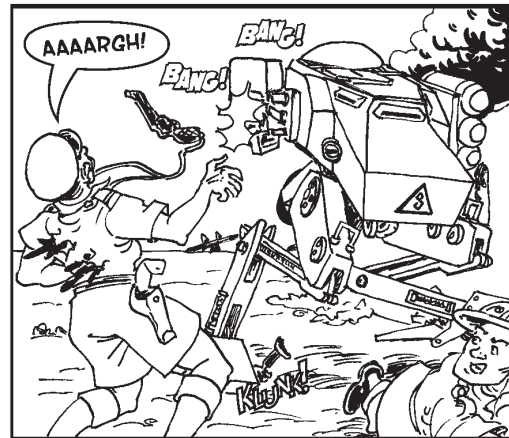
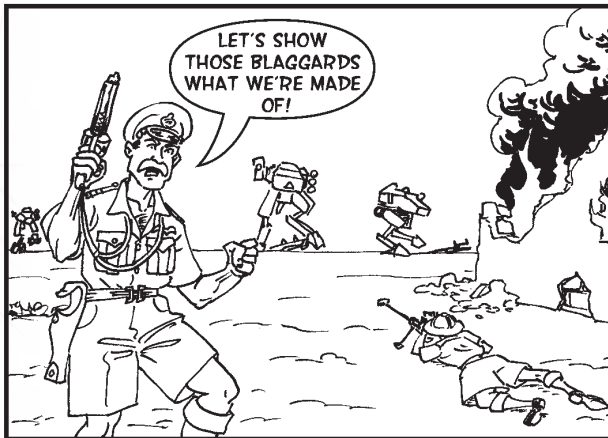
Kraut PATROL

ART & STORY BY JACK BELL



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

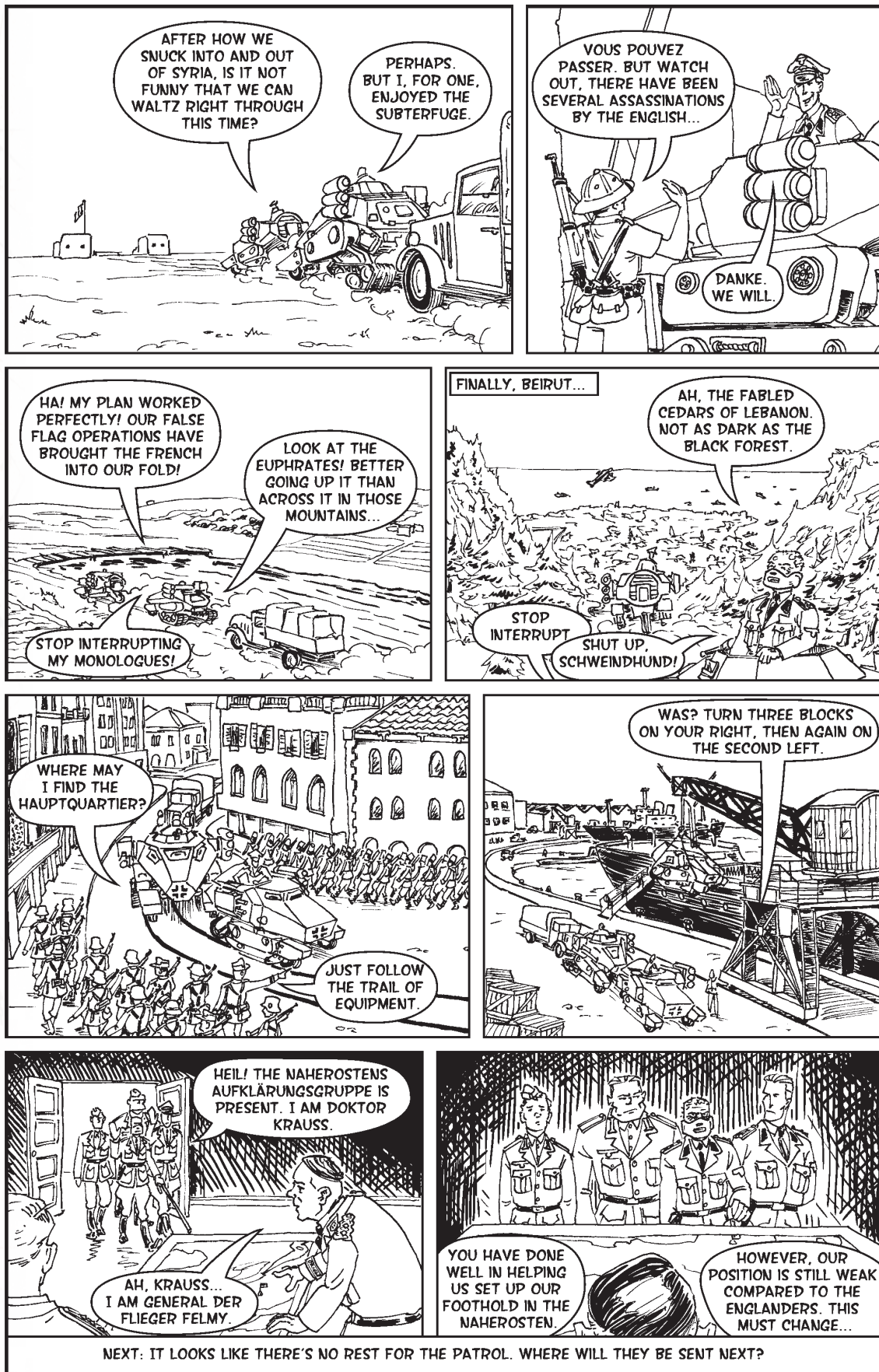
KRAUT PATROL



NOTE: IN REAL LIFE, THE BRITISH LANDED TROOPS AT BASRA IN MID-APRIL UNCONTESTED.

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

KRAUT PATROL



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 and explorations of the rules) and on fiction, mechanized designs, equipment, artwork and similar ideas that draw on the 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. Stories are encouraged to 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 however, and stand-alone pieces will be considered and published.

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

Submission Guidelines

All work for Aurora should be submitted in an .rtf or .doc 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.

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 #7.4: September 20th 2013

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. Please double check your work! You may also 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. If you are tweaking rules that exist within the game already, please clearly denote those as well as the reference to where the original rules reside. Do not copy any existing game rules text, only note what is changed from the existing rules.

Note that all rules will be clearly marked as "House Rules" or "Home Brew Rules" when published within Aurora, to distinguish them from official rules that can be used at tournaments, conventions, and etc. Around the home gaming table, however, we all love house rules!

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.

Something Else!

We pride ourselves on the creativity of our gaming friends. If you have something else to contribute that's not listed here, please submit it!