

AURORA

THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:
BIG TIMES, BIG GEARS
REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES
OUR LONG RUNNING GK FICTION!



ISSUE 9.3

AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE
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SHADES IN THE NIGHT

From the Editor...

"Each of us is a book waiting to be written, and that book, if written, results in a person explained."

— Thomas M. Cirignano, The Constant Outsider

Have you ever run a game or campaign, based on an idea "ripped from the headlines?"

It's a well known trope in all sorts of media, and RPGs are no stranger to its use either. Whether it be a direct use of a conflict or situation, filing off the names of the participants and substituting plausible-yet-false names in their stead, or something more heavily obscured, with dragons and magic taking the place of fighter jets and disease. It's an easy place to get material for a scenario, one that readily gains an air of authenticity and thus visceral urgency. It can make for great gaming sessions.

Now, given how many, or most, adventures and scenarios are packaged and sold, most often it is usually the more, shall we say, explosive and disruptive headlines that are borrowed. Invasions and disasters and assassinations and pandemics and impending doom and overt hostility need little explanation and provide immediate impetus to action. They also can more easily be framed in black and white, with the valorous and the villainous facing off with an appropriate epic musical score playing in the background.

But there are many other headlines that may well also be worthy of ripping.

One of the great, and prime, functions of stories (and art in general) is to probe the human condition and to evoke that in all of us that which speaks to our humanity. Whether played with a storyteller bent or in a more straight up dungeon crawl fashion, the RPG is a story medium: the very act of interacting with things, making choices, and having character progression makes it a narrative generator. And these fables are what make RPGs a potent vehicle for exploring the themes of our times and who we are as a species and people.

This exploration includes many of those other types of headlines we see every day: how we view and treat each other; how we structure our societies; who we do or do not consider as people; how our convictions and certainties can play out in disastrous ways; our universal self-importance versus our place in the grander cosmos. With the PCs (and their players) are focussed on creating their future in the fictional world, looking at these things is a natural fit.

And this is not to leave out the tactical or wargaming side of things either – engaging with your faction's backstory is still engaging with the narrative implications of that backstory. You may have picked them because they look cool, but if you pay any attention to their story you engage with the connotations therein, confronting what's there and what's said by it. It may not be big or in the foreground, but it's still there to dance with.

There's no need for this to be the prime focus of the campaign. But as a layer, it has the potential to add richness and enrichment.

2015 is halfway over! Where has the time gone. (Semi-rhetorical question, for me it was into some major overtime at my employment :P) Here's to hoping your year has been filled with much gaming time.

Welcome to all the new readers from the Heavy Gear Kickstarter! Got a burning idea for an article? Fire it in.

And thank you all for helping to unlock the Ammon!

Welcome to Issue 9.3 of your Silhouette magazine.

Game on,

Oliver Bollmann
Aurora Magazine Editor

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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.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ghislain Barbe (<http://qosmiq.com/>) -- *Big Times, Big Gear*

[Editor: Say "Dream Pod 9" to most gamers, and the imagery that will come to mind will be the work of Ghislain. Talented and fabulous and sketching Heavy Gear once more! I'm excited to feature his newest work here in Aurora.]

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

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?

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While a dabbler in the boardgame and video game realm, few things are quite so enjoyable over a long period as the storytelling adventure created among friends during an RPG campaign. My we all embark on many such glorious adventures!

Oliver Bollmann (auroramag@gmail.com) -- *Editor*

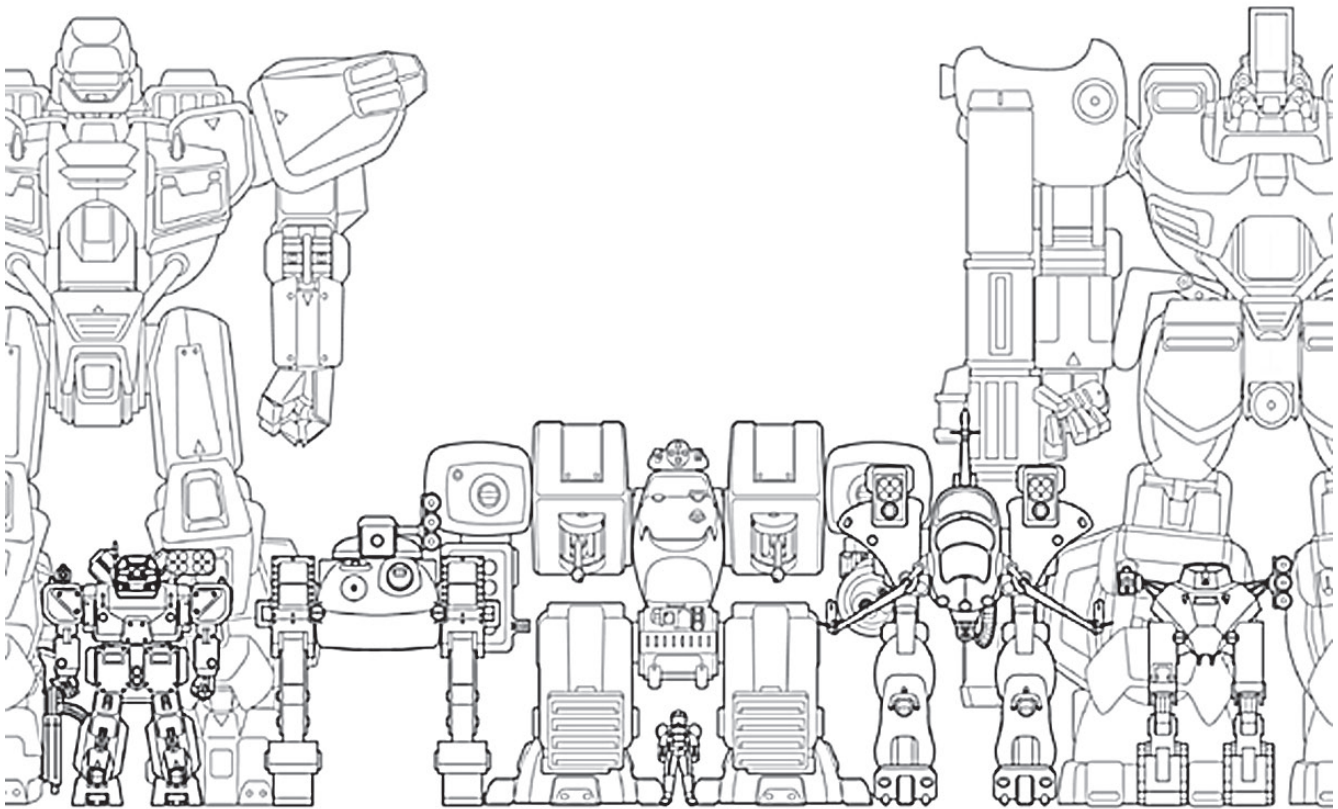
It all started in a hobby store one day twenty odd years ago with an odd box containing something called Top Secret. Since then games have just become a big part of his life. He's been in love with the DP9 universes since the first HG release and began his direct involvement with the Pod crew numerous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

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REIMAGINING THE CHRONICLES - PART 2

CHRISTOPHER GREGORY

In the first part of this series we took a general look at the current state of the solar system as it stands in 2209. Now we get to the fun part, seeing how each nation compares to the others. For simplicity we'll look at each category one by one.

PART 2 - NATIONAL COMPARISONS

Population

The population of the solar system is, despite the carnage and the ecological damage of the Fall, still centred of Planet Earth. The total global population is roughly 4.2 billion which is about eight times that of the next most populated area, the Jovian Confederation. Unlike the Confederation however, these people are not spread across an area of space with several hundred million kilometres between the two closest states and more than a billion kilometres between the two trojan states. The only thing working to keep Earth from exerting this population advantage to gain control of the entire solar system is that the people of Earth are not unified. Only two thirds of the population answers to CEGA, and even then they only do so because their governments do so. The people on Earth are mostly loyal to their nation of origin and view CEGA as a puppet. The populations of the Orbitals and Luna, totalling 485 million people, are almost universally under CEGA's control even if they are not truly loyal to CEGA itself. In this case it is a matter of practicality since Earth gained it's foothold in space by offering desperately needed supplies and then moving a large military up onto the orbital and lunar colonies to retain control.

The next largest settlement is the Jovian Confederation. With 540 million inhabitants the Confederation is the only place outside of CEGA's control with a higher population than the Orbitals. The people of the Confederation are descendants of the refugees who fled Earth at the beginning of the Fall to escape the war. Many of the refugees were highly intelligent, and the Confederation boasts a very extensive educational system. It also supplies it's citizens with everything they need to live, but does so with the understanding that certain things, like living space, must be stringently controlled by the government so that there's enough for everyone. Despite this the government prefers to take a hands off approach to it's population when possible and as a result the Confederation is full of young, eager, and patriotic people, so much so that almost a quarter of the population are either active or reserve members of the military. The high level of military personnel is primarily due to the effects of long term exposure to low and zero g environments, requiring the Jovian Armed Forces to maintain a pool of personnel many times larger than they would otherwise need so that members can be rotated back to a normal gravity environment regularly.

Venus is in third place with 417 million citizens. The people of Venus are strictly loyal to their parent corporation, work incredibly hard, and are driven to excel at anything they do. The Venusian culture was born during the Fall, when hardship, overcrowding, and supply scarcity forced the people to do more with less. Many Venusians have a strong honourable streak to them, but no small number are willing to bend that honour to suit the current situation. While living space is constricted by the need to live within the Arcrologies, there is no government control over ownership of living space meaning a person can have as large a place to live in as they can afford. It is only the extreme cost of living space that forces the people to live in the same type of small dwellings that are favoured by people living in colony cylinders. A similar attitude is taken with everything else on Venus, where one's access and ownership of anything is determined solely by their money and the willingness to spend it.

The next most populated place is Mars. An estimated three quarters of it's population of 354 million lives within the Federation or the Federation's few space stations. The remainder of the population lives within the Republic. The reason for this goes back to the genesis of the Federation. During the Fall Mars was hit almost as badly as anywhere else. The cities were only small towns at this point. Even though they were self sufficient they were not ready for the refugees that arrived. While the Martian cities survived fairly well, civil unrest was becoming a greater problem as the days went by. Then Jan Kurtz, the founder of the Federation, came up with a plan where the people essentially traded freedom for security. The majority of the Martians eagerly accepted the deal, seeing it as better than the chaos and strife that they were sure was coming from Earth very soon. Those who didn't agree were eventually forced out. The initial hold outs left willingly, then eventually people who couldn't abide by the system were forced out into what had become a glorified prison region similar to Australia of old. When the Mercurian Merchant Guild arrived and recognized both factions as legitimate governments, the Federation moved to destroy the Republic and prove that it was the sole government of Mars. This has lead to numerous wars and a hostility which exists to this day. It has also lead to a division in the population that is greater than a political line on a map. The citizens of the Federation are typically community centric, while those of the Republic carry a deep aversion to authority. The Federals live in large Arcrologies and cities while the Republicans live in homesteads and towns. The only thing they have in common is a mutual loathing.

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Mercury is next with a mere 29 million inhabitants, almost all of them on colony cylinders using Mercury itself as a shield against the heat and radiation from the sun. Unfortunately for the Mercurians, the lack of access to most resources and habitable space had limited their ability to build colony cylinders for their population. This has forced the Mercurians to be very frugal with their resources, reusing and recycling as much as possible. The Mercurians created the merchant fleet initially to gain access to the resources they need, but quickly saw that they could use the same fleet to facilitate trade between the different national powers. This has placed Mercury in the unique position of being the only government recognized as being truly neutral, a position that even the United Solar Nations isn't recognized for due to its position in Earth orbit. The Mercurians have access to just about every civilian technology in the system, but tends to lag behind when it comes to the cutting edge technologies since the Mercurians are, by necessity, users rather than innovators.

The last population group is the Nomads. There is no firm number on the population of the asteroid belt, but it is estimated at less than three million. Nomads as a whole tend to be insular, keep everything neat, and use a minimum of movement and effort to get things done. Despite being very neat few nomads will throw anything away. Rather, they would either trade off or cannibalize any devices which no longer work for things they do need. In short, nothing goes to waste, even people.

Resources

While many would consider a population to be a nation's greatest source of wealth and power, access to resources can't be understated. This is especially true in an environment like space where even the necessities of life are not readily available.

The Confederation, thanks to its location, has some of the easiest access to gaseous and liquid resources, commonly referred to as volatiles. Jupiter is ringed by thousands of sky hooks for the sole purpose of harvesting Hydrogen and other gasses from the atmosphere. Jupiter's numerous moons supply a wide variety of minerals and liquids as well. Added to this is the resources available in the asteroids trapped at the L4 and L5 points, giving the Confederation very easy access to just about any element or compound it wants. This enables the Confederation to spend excessive amounts of resources on what would otherwise be considered needless projects while still having plenty to spare. The allocation of resources is controlled by large expert systems, and there is a tendency to supply more than necessary in case the

predictive model underestimated the need. This also means that if the predictive models overestimated the need that there will be a large number of resources sitting around not being used at the time. This is true for everything from raw resources to spare parts and even manpower. While most would consider that a waste, the Jovians consider it perfectly acceptable, and even natural. There are even stockpiles of resources kept in reserve for the sole purpose of being used to supplement shortages where even the reserve supplies allocated by the expert systems are not sufficient. They have not been used yet and continue to accumulate year by year.

CEGA has the second greatest access to resources. Despite the fact that the infrastructure to access and exploit many of the resources on Earth was destroyed and efforts to limit ecologically damaging extraction methods hinders efforts to rebuild that infrastructure, the fact remains that Earth has the manpower to use even low tech methods to generate a large amount of resources. The environment is also naturally hospitable to humans unlike most any other natural environment in the solar system, although the after effects of the Fall has caused many areas to be dangerous to one's long term health. Furthermore, resource extraction on the moon was well developed before the Fall, and the lack of damaging events means that it has only expanded since CEGA has taken over.

The Venusians are third in line for availability of resources. The hostile environment hinders the ability to operate for extended periods on the surface, although the high temperatures do liquefy some metals and causes the formation of elements and compounds not easily located elsewhere. The extensive use of high tech equipment helps to offset the hostile environment somewhat, but it is still a hindrance. The Venusians have managed to become self-sufficient, even if their trading patterns would indicate otherwise.

Next up are the Martians. The resource base on Mars is, in general, very similar to that of Earth. The atmosphere is less hospitable, but the environment is less devastated by past wars and industrialization. Furthermore there is a ready enough supply of oxygen and hydrogen on Mars, which could be used as is or combined to synthesize water. The only reason for Mars to not be rated higher is the fact that Mars has a lower population over all, and have larger militaries per capita than most other powers in the solar system. Both of these factors combine to limit the total resource production of both nations, although the Federation has a very large advantage over the Republic.

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The Nomads are next. While they are not a populous people, their location in the asteroid belt does give them easy access to numerous mineral resources, and even volatiles. In fact, the Nomads can be considered to have the easiest access to the greatest number of resources of anyone except possibly the Confederation on a per capita basis. It is only how spread out the resources are, and the limited number of people to mine them, that limits the nomads ability to produce more than they already do. Unlike with the Confederation, however, resources are not allowed to sit unused. If they are not needed for the project they were allocated to another use is found for them elsewhere or they are traded away for something more useful. The Nomads trade large amounts of resources with CEGA, even though they are less than thrilled at CEGA patrols or interference in their daily lives. Mercury is another major trading partner for resources and supplies.

At the bottom of the list for resources is Mercury. Mercury itself is rich in minerals, but the proximity to the sun makes accessing these resources almost prohibitively dangerous. Furthermore, Mercury is almost devoid of any liquids or gasses, forcing the Mercurians to import those resources. The only resource the Mercurians have in abundance is solar power. Mercury's equator is ringed by massive solar collection arrays which soak up power during Mercury's day, and beams that power to the colony cylinders at night. Aside from that, every resource the Mercurians use almost certainly came from somewhere else.

Manufacturing Capability

While people could have access to unlimited resources, those resources would be useless without the ability to process them and produce usable goods and materials. While a nation's resource base supplies raw materials, it is the manufacturing capability that truly makes those resources translate to a nation's power and wealth.

The Jovians make extensive use automatic factories and assembly lines to mass produce just about anything they need or want from simple oxygen and water to parts for the colony cylinders they live in. The factories require only a minimum of human oversight and permit a small number of people to operate facilities for producing large amounts of material goods. Aside from the occasional maintenance work, the only thing these factories require is a supply of raw materials. This, combined with the Jovian Confederation's easy access to nearly unlimited resources gives them a massive manufacturing capability completely out of proportion to the number of people employed by the manufacturing industry, and even it's population..



CEGA is the next largest producer of material goods. Where most of the nations in the solar system use automation and expert systems to produce their goods, CEGA utilizes the simple approach of just having the largest workforce in the entire solar system. When combined with their favouring of low-tech and reliable goods it enables even an unskilled workforce to produce large amounts of goods. This is often supplemented with limited numbers of high tech industries and some semi-automated factories in space allowing CEGA to create large amounts of low tech goods while also producing small quantities of high tech goods.

The Venusians also has the capability to produce large amounts of goods. This is due primarily to the large number of corporations running Venus. While the majority of the Venusian population is employed in office work, Venus uses a large number of expert systems to run the same kind of automated factories that the Jovians use. It is the lower resource base and lesser number of autofacs that gives Venus a lower manufacturing capability than the two superpowers.

Next up are the Martian nations. Once again, the Federation is ahead of the Republic due to it's larger population and territory. Both use a similar mix of high tech automation and

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low tech human labour to produce their goods. While the Federation developed it's own autofacs, the Republic traded for some with the Jovian Confederation and adapt them for operation in a gravity environment. The manufacturing output of both nations is hindered by the desire to maintain armed forces for battle against one another.

Second to last is Mercury. While they have sufficient autofacs to produce goods with, the need to import almost every resource limits their ability to manufacture goods to primarily domestic use products with very little available to trade away. This leaves the revenue from facilitating trade between the various solar nations as the primary source of the income needed to acquire the resources that Mercury requires, further limiting it's manufacturing capability.

Last on the list are the Nomads. While they have access to an abundance of resources, manufacturing is typically limited to refining and processing mined materials for trade. What material goods they manufacture is almost universally for domestic use, with some set aside for the purpose of being trade items. Still though, practical items are far more often produced than recreational or other items.

Military Strength and Discipline

Every faction has a military. The role of a military in space is primarily to project their nation's sphere of control beyond the cities, stations, and cylinders that their populations live in. They are often called upon for disaster response in space as well since they are well equipped and generally have something in the vicinity. The military's primary purpose, according to most people, is to go out and engage enemies away from the inhabited areas to minimize the risk to the civilian population.

Currently CEGA arguably posses the most powerful military in the solar system. Many of it's forces are experienced combatants and CEGA possesses the largest fleet of ships in the solar system. Unfortunately the combat experience of it's personnel is based principally upon combat on Earth, and half of it's military ships are corvettes. CEGA is conducting a rapid construction program to build up their numbers of larger ships. CEGA favours the use of ballistic weapons for their simplicity, but have been playing catch up with ship based energy weapons and have managed to produce effective, if bulky and inefficient, laser and particle beam weapons. CEGA also possesses the most disciplined military in the solar system.

The Jovian Confederation also arguably possesses the most powerful military in the solar system. The Confederation has far fewer ships than CEGA, but most of the ships they do possess are designed for longer duration missions and carry heavier weapons than their CEGA equivalents with spinally mounted weapons being popular. Their real strength, however, is in their superior fighters, especially their exo armours. Their military personnel are also highly motivated, but many lack actual combat experience against anything other than over matched pirates. The Confederation favours particle weaponry for it's destructive power, but does have advanced examples of most weapon types except chemical ballistic weapons. The Confederation's military is considered to be ill disciplined in general, with a tendency to encourage a hot-shot attitude in it's exo and interceptor pilots.

The next strongest militaries are on Mars. The Martian Federation fields a much larger military than the Martian Republic, but the Republic fields a much more flexible and mobile military than the Federation. Both sides have highly experienced soldiers and both sides equip their militaries to high standards. The decision on which military on Mars is superior to the other is largely dependant on who you talk to. The Federation's army performs well in large operations, while the Republican's army performs better in smaller skirmishes and gurella operations. Both militaries rely on more advanced ballistic weaponry since it doesn't loose effectiveness in an atmosphere like energy weapons do. The Federation has very loyal and obedient soldiers, while the Republic's soldiers are very dedicated and motivated. Both tend to be roughly equally disciplined in differing ways and rank just behind Venus in terms of most disciplined soldiers. In orbit above Mars, however, their military strength wanes. Both sides field a number of corvettes, but they are small and limited warships which would struggle to hold their own against even the old Bricrius much less anything newer and more powerful.

The Venusians are next on the list of military power but it is far from next to equal to the Martians, much less the two superpowers. The Home Defence Force is a small military employed to protect Venusian space and uses older equipment. The HDF forces train very extensively and can be considered to be experts in their respective fields. Venusian space is rather peaceful however, and few consider them to have actual combat experience. Venusians make use of a variety of weapons, but tends to go for elegant over powerful. The Venusian work ethic results in having a military that is more disciplined than anyone else's, except for CEGA.

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The Mercurians are low on the list for military power for a simple reason. They have precious little of it. Recently their military was considered to be dying from a lack of funding and recruits, but recent events have caused the Mercurians to re-evaluate this policy. They have precious few ships, and tend to rely on fighters, especially the homegrown Brimstone exo armour, to defend themselves and their merchant ships. Like the Venusians Mercurians don't favour any particular type of weapon, but they tend to go for what's cost effective over what's not. This means that mass drivers and lasers are popular, although missiles are common as well for their ability to pack a large punch in a small package. Their military personnel are less soldiers and are more like very dedicated and loyal mercenaries. While they are highly effective in escorting other units, the fact is that while off duty they can do as they please and their ships have few restrictions so long as combat effectiveness is not hindered. Their lack of experience in fleet operations and the focus on escorting also hinders their overall level of discipline and coordination when compared to other militaries.

The Nomads aren't considered to have a military. When forced to fight, Nomads typically rely on converted work exo armours since they rarely have anything else. The typical Nomad response is to avoid the problem if at all possible. Most battles in the asteroid belt are typically between other forces and/or pirates. Nomads bring an eclectic mix of weapons to any fight they show up to, but generally use lasers since they are cheap and easy to maintain. The fact that the Nomads are considered to not have a military is the only thing keeping them from having the least disciplined military in the solar system.

The above list is ordered by military power with notes on discipline attached to each entry. For convenience of comparison, the order of military discipline is CEGA, the Venusians, the Martians, the Confederation, the Mercurians, and finally the Nomads.

Technology

Technology was first invented by humans to help make their lives easier. Over time it had become more and more necessary to maintain human life. With Earth as devastated and polluted as it is, and with habitats spread throughout space and on other worlds, technology has become indispensable to the continued existence of human life. Without it, people wouldn't be able to live even on Earth, much less in the less hospitable environments of the other worlds in the solar system or in space.

Despite their efforts to appear otherwise, the Venusians have the most advanced technology in the solar system. The reason they don't advertise this fact is to remain out of the spotlight and to keep a low profile. It also lets them maintain an appearance of needing the other nations for trade, something which is untrue, and keeps them out of the budding arms race between the Jovians and CEGA. It also makes it easier for the Venusians to hide any edict violating research they are doing since they would rather no one knew about those projects. The only categories where the Venusians don't have the most advanced technologies are in weapons and medical technologies. The former is a result of Jovian advances in creating larger and more powerful weapons for it's military, and the latter is due to the cost of access to medical technology which the individual utilizing it has to bear. Public perception is, however, that the Venusians are actually several years behind most other solar nations in many categories of technology.

The nation most people consider to have the most advanced technology is the Jovian Confederation. The Jovians have a very high standard of living and easy access to just about anything they want or need. The Confederation makes use of large expert systems to control and prioritize resource and manpower allocations according to complicated prediction models, and robots are extensively used to do any work that doesn't actually need a human to accomplish. It is only the restriction on artificial intelligence which stops the robots from being truly autonomous. The Confederation has some of the most advanced medical technologies in the solar system, and has a near monopoly on the most advanced and powerful weapons in the solar system. They are also highly advanced in just about every other category, with only the Martians exceeding them in exo-suit technology.

CEGA is next up. Despite preferring low tech devices and solutions, it does have access to some highly advanced technology. The biggest problem for CEGA therefore isn't having it, but for the common person to access it and/or have the education for the manufacture and use of higher technology. CEGA is considered second to only the Jovians in weapons and ships, with the rest of their technology base lagging behind. Unfortunately despite it's ranking, the fact is the gap in technologies is quite significant. In truth, if CEGA could solve it's education and access to technology problems, then it would close the technology gap quickly and would become the most powerful force in the solar system as opposed to one of the most powerful.

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The Mercurians rate behind CEGA in technology primarily because they are not innovators. The situation the Mercurians are in requires all available resources to be used as efficiently as possible and this does not leave much available for research or development. About the only area where the Mercurians have actually developed technology was in solar sail and mag sail ships. The former was an old idea that reality finally caught up to, and the latter was a leap in logic using the mag screens that the Jovians originally developed for colony cylinders, and subsequently for every other space craft as well. The Mercurians have also developed superior heat resistant materials and technologies due to their proximity to the sun.

While the Martians have a better R&D base than the Mercurians, the simple fact is that most of it is directed towards the terraforming project and developing new uses for current technologies in their military. They both do have some of the best exo suits in the solar system, with the Sabertooth and Sand Stalker both being considered tanks in comparison to other exo-suit designs without sacrificing mobility or being overly large. They are even considered superior to Jovian designs, although they don't do so well in space as they do on the ground or in ships. It is the lack of access to the higher levels of technology that hurts the Martian's technological standing.

If the lack of general innovation and access to higher levels of technology hinders the Martians, it's epidemic to the Nomads. With day to day survival the primary concern for the nomads at all times, they don't have time to invent new technologies or improve current ones. They don't have the spare resources either. Instead what innovating the Nomads do tends to be in repairing and maintaining their equipment, ships, and habitats. This often means that over time devices will drift away from their design plans as nomads improvise repairs over and over again until it is effectively an entirely new device.

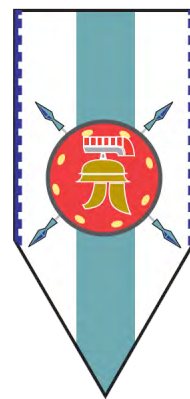
Overall Standings

Listing the factions by overall standing within the solar system is complicated. The Jovian Confederation and CEGA compete directly to be the most powerful nation, with the Confederation exploiting it's technological and resource advantage as much as it can while CEGA exploits it's manpower advantage to create a military no one else can. Behind the two is the shadow of the Venusians, seeking economic dominance while remaining separate from the political fighting between the two superpowers.

Outside of that three way tie for first place, the Mercurians are number 4 in overall standing. While they have undoubtedly become vital to interplanetary trade, in general the Mercurians lack the financial, military, or population resources needed to match any of the previous three nations directly. As such they have turned to absolute neutrality, both to prevent a conflict they can't win and to ensure the uninterrupted trade they rely on.

Next up are the Martians. While they technically have more power and resources than the Mercurians, the fact is that that their influence is centred around Mars itself and doesn't extend very far beyond Martian orbit. In fact, they only have a minimal presence in the L4 and L5 points, unlike Earth and Jupiter with their extensive colonization of those locations, and have very limited numbers of short range ships.

Last in overall standing is the Nomads. In short, they are generally outclassed in every category by everyone. That doesn't mean that they're inconsequential, however. They consider themselves masters on their own realm and won't walk away from someone picking a fight with their friends. They also prefer to be left alone, something that the brewing conflict between Earth and Jupiter may soon make impossible.



JOHN BELL

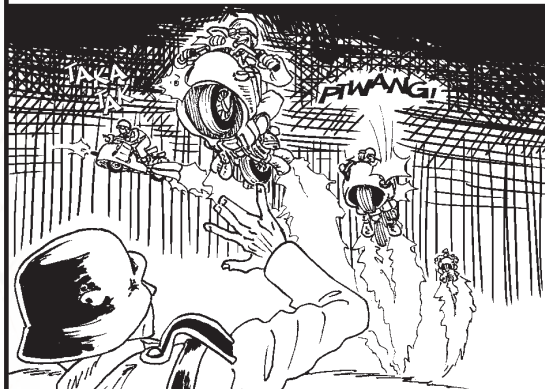
IN 1942, CANADIAN GEN. MCNAUGHTON PRESSURED BRITISH COMMAND TO LET HIS FORCES SEE SOME ACTION. VICE-ADMIRAL MOUNTBATTEN JUMPED AT THE IDEA WITH A PLAN OF HIS OWN CONCOCTION, A RAID ON THE FRENCH PORT OF DIEPPE. THIS RAID WAS TO BE LED BY MJR. GEN. "HAM" ROBERTS ON 19 AUGUST 1942 AGAINST 1500 SECOND-RATE GERMAN SOLDIERS. OR SO THEY THOUGHT...

**ALFIE'S
TENNERS**

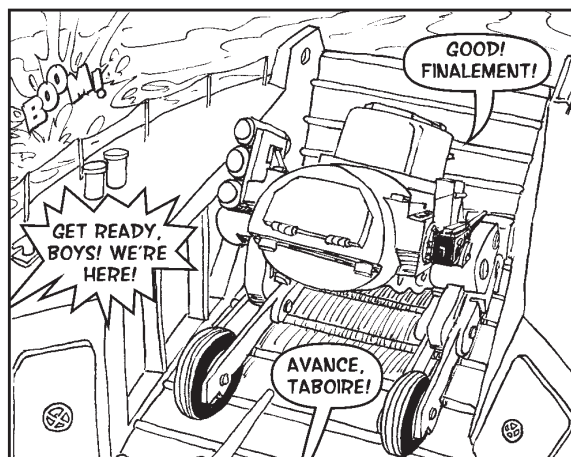
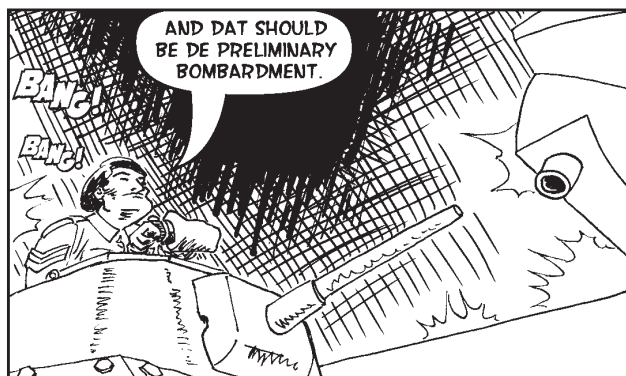
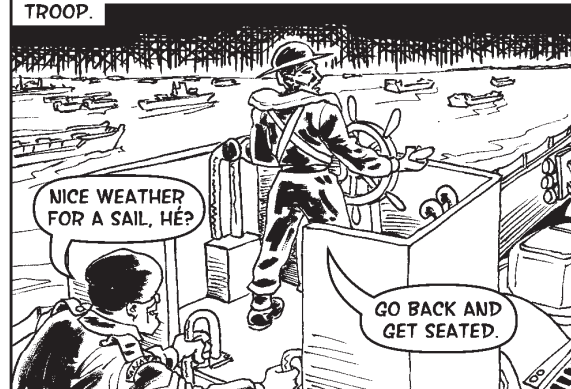
ART & STORY: JACK BELL



ON YELLOW BEACH, EAST OF DIEPPE, LT. CMDR. DEWEY AND HIS ROCKET BIKES WERE A KEY PART OF NO. 3 COMMANDO'S SUCCESS, BUT THIS IS NOT THEIR STORY...

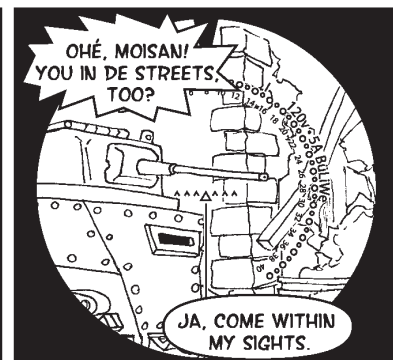
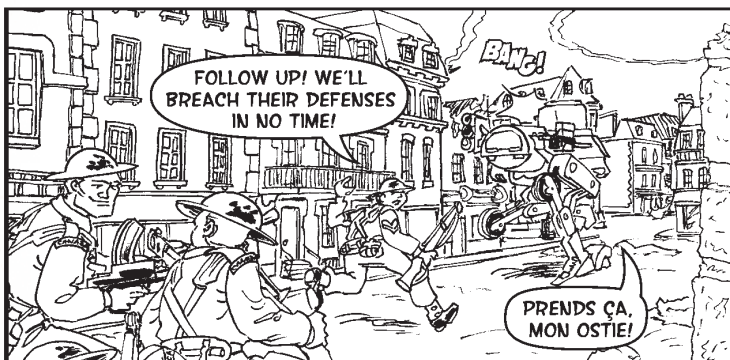
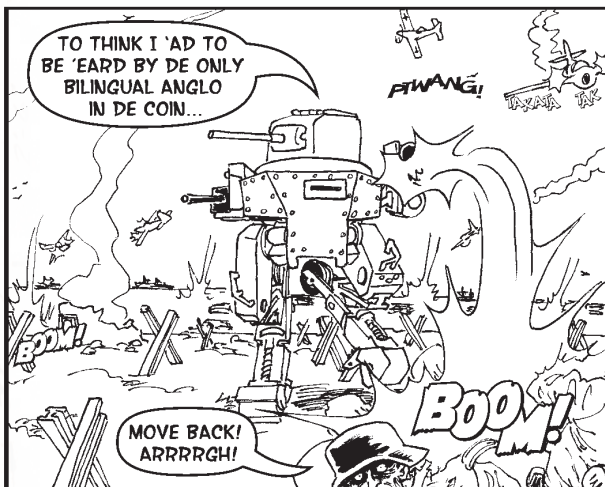
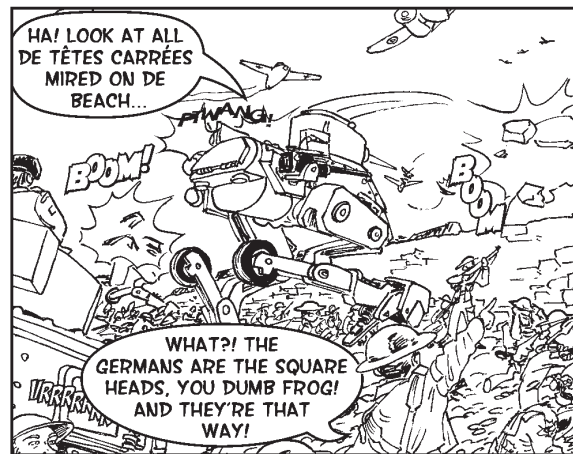
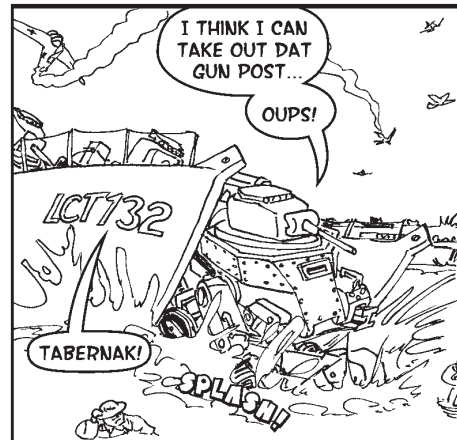


IT IS, INSTEAD, THAT OF SGT. POITRAS OF THE CANADIAN WALKER REGIMENT, WHOM WE LAST SAW LEARNING THE TRADE UNDER LT. ALPHONSE MARCH AND HIS WALKER TROOP.



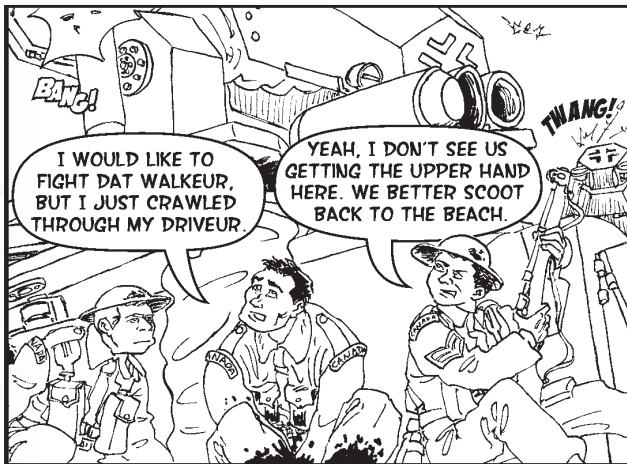
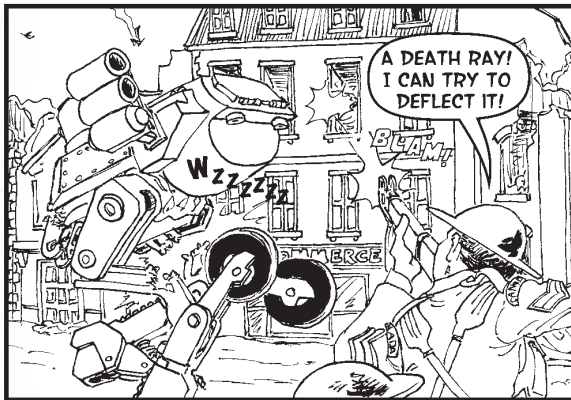
AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS

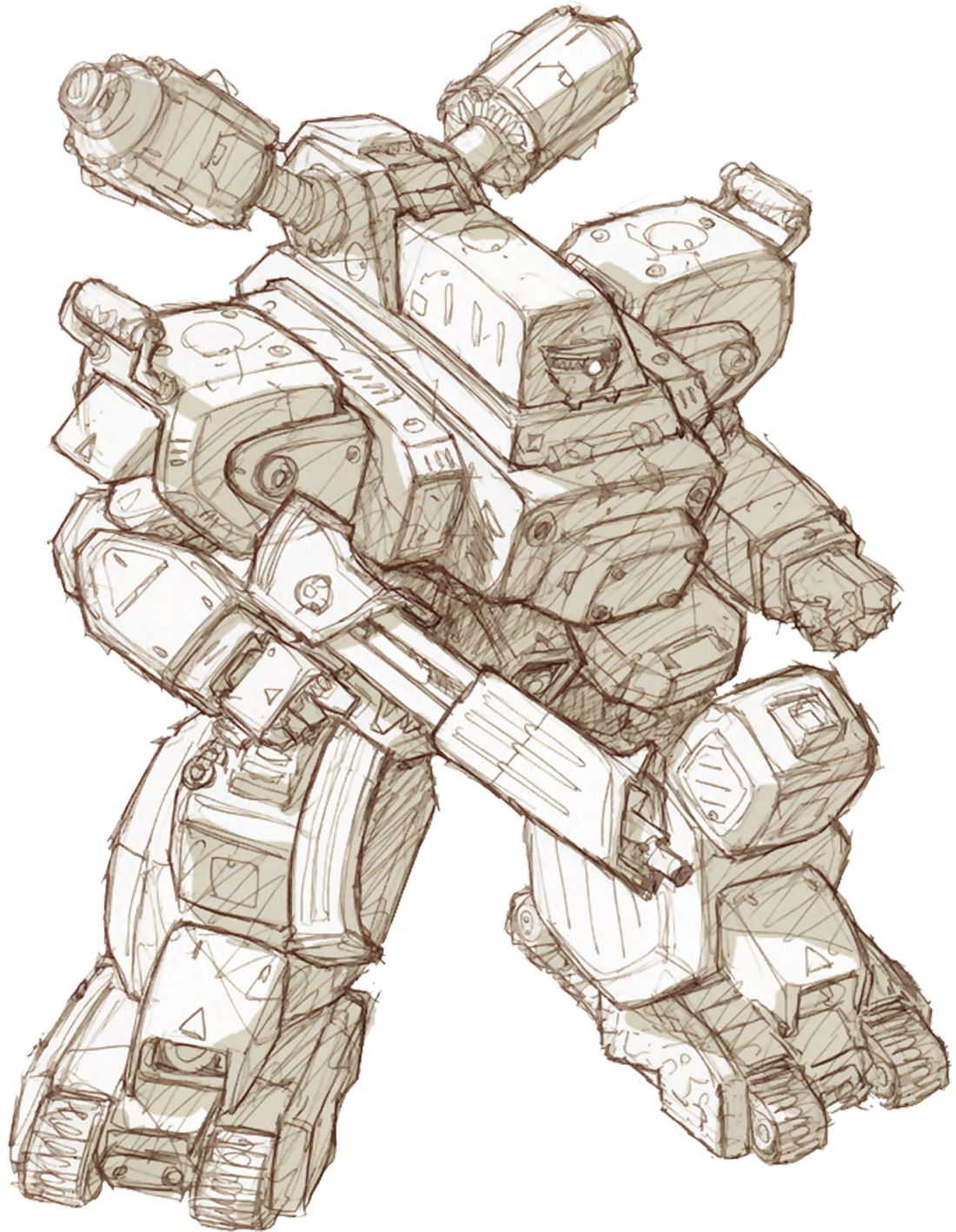


AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

ALFIE'S TENNERS



NEXT: JOIN ALFIE AND SARN'T BOYD ON THEIR LEAVE IN CAIRO. TOO BAD IT WON'T BE A BREATHUR FOR THEM!





"I'll do whatever I can to help guarantee this plan succeeds, and I'll try to make sure I'm in the right place at the right time."

"The right place and time for what?"

"If I knew that, ma'am, I probably wouldn't need to be there."

— G.S. Jennsen, *Transcendence*

Sun 8/26/2210 08:12 Ship Time

I've been worrying with thoughts about this morning's raid by the space thugs. I took a chance to talk it out with Agram while he and I were in the workout room. We were putting ourselves through the exercises shown pictographically on the wall opposite our workout stations, and to the rhythm of the motivational music playing around us.

What I told him was that I am unsettled about how things have been since this morning. He asked for specifics, so I outlined that we are still here and unharmed. We're able to continue our mission with only modest impairment. We were treated roughly, and yelled-at, but we weren't beaten. The women weren't harmed by the brute squad any more than we were, and none of us are likely to suffer from thirst or hunger anytime soon. We haven't been taken for sale into slavery. These guys could have blown us out an airlock and stolen this perfectly fine ship, but they didn't.

I confessed that it was the relative non-violence I didn't trust. I felt stupid for saying it out loud, like I should be thankful instead. But when Agram asked if I was worried they'd tampered with something worse than the problems we had found so far, I admitted they didn't seem the type to scheme.

Agram said he thought they were opportunists, here because we were, but not intent on harming people for fun. Scavenging from us is just kinda incidental to them, and though they were threatening and they took some of our stuff, what they banged up in our systems wasn't difficult to repair. We were never really in danger. I kinda got that... He and I took care of restoring the communications systems after their raid; It took a while to complete, but was simple to fix. Maybe the damages were intended only to give them more time to get away.

I had considered this as I continued working out. One of the things I like about this room is that there are no windows here. Except for the zero-G environment, I can almost convince my brain that I'm planetside. The workout room or the activity itself is damping most of the space sickness, too, and my nervous energy from the incident this morning is bleeding away. I'm really happy that Agram can be so insightful.

When we got back, Duncan gave us an update that Olivia had successfully plotted a course for us to take that would put us at our destination pretty accurately even with the ship being unpowered for a period of several hours. That powerdown will help us needle through the frontier without triggering the notice of pretty much anyone. We'll be flying blind, both without navigation and propulsion, but there are no asteroids nor other free-flying debris likely to intersect our intended course. It's a scary thought, but Olivia's confidence comes from experience and planning, not hubris.

I trust her to get us where we need to be, and that we'll be safe.

.....

Mon 8/27/2210 19:58 Ship Time

During our inspection of the ship, looking for spare supplies and checking the maintenance systems to ensure everything is green, Duncan told me of the next part of the plan: We're going fully dark, meaning no engines and backup life support for only part of the going dark window. We're going to be darker for longer than life support can sustain itself from backup power, so we'll shut it down before backup power goes critical, and we'll deal with the gradual loss of heat and thickening of the air for as long we can. The engineering compartment is large enough that we aren't likely to deplete the oxygen, and the equipment in there will remain warm for quite a while. (Turns out engines can overheat in space because the radiant cooldown in space is actually not great, so we won't be freezing within the first couple hours after turning off the hot engines.) This plan is untested, but it's drawn from experiences both Duncan and Olivia have dealt with before, and it's the best solution we can think up.

When Olivia downloaded the the latest ephemeris from SolNet, she also updated our news cache. The ephemeris updates allowed her to plot the safest course to our destination. The news updates show that our escape hasn't apparently caused any stir. There was a quiet mention a few links in from one paper about a presentation at the Venusian conference being canceled due to its missing presenter, but Agram wasn't specifically named. The other news from Earth and Jupiter was the usual stuff. I pinned a few items that I thought people might want to discuss during the several more days we have in this part of our journey. Interplanetary flight is somewhat monotonous. I'm finding that things I had found boring planetside are much more interesting out here in the dark.

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THE JOURNAL, PART 5: DARKEN

I've also been thinking about what Alastair said yesterday. I certain that his view is right, but I don't disagree with my sense that there's still something else to this we haven't seen. Duncan's leadership and Olivia's piloting got us out of immediate danger and have saved us a few times since. We couldn't have made this escape on our own, and their calm has helped make even the raiders' visit less terrifying than it otherwise might have been.

A while after we've split-up, after Duncan's debrief about our dark plan, and following my updates about major events in the news, people headed out to prepare themselves for the next phase. I, in a moment of courage (or foolishness), walked to the cabin and sat myself in the copilot seat. It took a couple minutes before I looked up and out the windows, but I found the lurching sensation I usually feel has dulled to a kind of quiet thud, and kept quiet in my stomach. I didn't feel dizzy this time. After some time soaking that in, I relaxed back into the chair.

Olivia turned to me. "After we get to the ship, you and Agram, Duncan and me -- we're going to have a conversation about what this is all about." My confusion was evident. "This was the deal with your friend: We get you safe, knowing we'd have to burn several good contacts in the process, in exchange for a huge payment and a clear explanation. The contract doesn't allow you to get into the details, but you will give us a good idea what this has all been for. I have no doubt it's worth it, but we need to know."

I told her I don't know what friend she was talking about, and she said that she doesn't know specifically who, either, but this person clearly knows me. She turned herself forward again to the starfield, saying nothing else to me.

I left soon after to slip through the ship and give myself room to think about what I could possibly say.

.....

Mon 8/27/2210 23:06 Ship Time

We're several hours from the frontier and have started the powerdown process. We've rigged the engine on a delay-start timer, which will restore life support first, then shipwide power, then engine power. When all is running again, we'll shoot away to a safe distance, then send a ping out to their ship alerting them to our trajectory. We have several days left in this part of the escape, but we'll be dark for only half a day or so.

The rigging Duncan has setup includes a failsafe switchover. If we clear the field and don't trigger it manually, the system will self-start at some predetermined time, which should be enough that we're neither corpsesicles nor suffocates. This ship's engine systems route thermal energy to the crew cabin, so while there are local heating coils that can be used, full heat will not be restored until we get the engines moving again.

So... we'll be skirting freezing and going oxygen-deprived just long enough, but not too long. That's quite a risk to take. "Hence the failsafe", Duncan reassured me.

Sending this to the people off yonder with the last uplink.

This is the last transmission I know I can expect. Whoever our benefactor is, and since you're apparently my friend, I hope you know that we appreciate all you've done for us. Thank you, and I hope we'll meet soon.

.....

Tue 8/28/2210 10:51 Ship Time

We've just been boarded by someone. Our plan of going dark to avoid exactly this has been put to the test. Without the ship's sensor systems active, we couldn't be sure who it was.

Duncan stalked them, and reported back after they departed that the men spoke French and looked like space cops. To them, this was just another ship abandoned for some reason they could only guess at. They left without investigating anything too deeply, seeing that Life Support and the engines were both offline, and expecting that nobody could have survived.

Olivia warns that we're now tagged with a beacon, and our trajectory has probably been added to the local ephemeris. Clarice asked what purpose a beacon would serve, and Duncan clarified its purpose for us all.

When he was a fleet cadet, years ago, one of their training exercises was to find derelict items in debris fields. They would find them, plot their trajectory, tag them with a beacon, and alert salvage contractors to pick it up and get it out of the way. The salvage was sold at auction, and everyone got a cut of the receipts.

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THE JOURNAL, PART 5: DARKEN

She asked why there might be ships out on their own and he told her that space travel technology is pretty good, but things sometimes break down. Maybe people can't get to help soon enough, or maybe they drop cargo to avoid dealing with raiders. Sometimes ships go adrift for other reasons, like a battle or critical collision with some untracked debris.

Olivia added that our new beacon might put some undesirable eyes on our travels, people who we wouldn't want to have thinking we're helpless. Clarice blanched as that. Agram and I glance at each other. I asked the question we all had: "So what do you think will happen now?"

Duncan said it would take days for people to catch up to us in most cases, which is better for us because we're off the typical mining path (they're always looking for ships to carry more material), but the people who would do us harm are definitely out here somewhere, and we have no way of knowing how close they might be.

So we sit in the cooling, thickening air, and we wait a while longer until the other ship passes far away.

.....

Tue 8/28/2210 17:39 Ship Time

When time came to get going again, the three of us with fewer spaceflight hours sighed with relief when the lights came back on and the core started its mechanical stirrings. We figured the plan had worked. A few minutes into the startup process, when an alert sounded. Duncan and Olivia seemed unsurprised, and moved into action immediately.

Olivia checked a nearby console for alert messages. The map showed the ship's layout as if we were standing above it, with the cockpit at the top of the console and the engines at the bottom. On the map, near the cabin, was a line snaking through a couple rooms and a section of corridor. "The fault", she said, adding that that ship power is being moderated by automated safety systems due to this issue up front. She says the alert told us the onboard computer halted boot at its current state because diagnostics failed to read a clear signal from this power junction.

The diagnostics confirmed that Life Support was online, and stable, but running on reserves. Duncan clarified that life support is almost entirely isolated from the rest of the system, but because power isn't fully on yet, it won't recharge its backup supply. They estimate we have enough energy for only a few more hours, so there's a hard limit on how long our repairs can take. When the fault is cleared, the ship computer will resume the boot process and return full power and control across the ship.

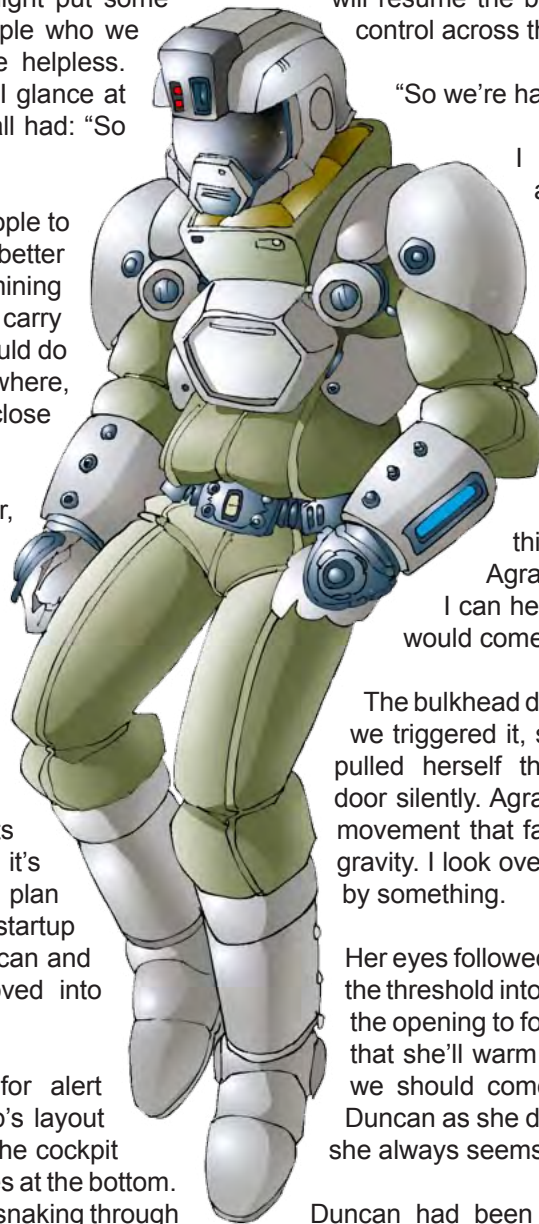
"So we're half-on?" Agram asked. Olivia nodded.

I noticed that the navigation system also hasn't acknowledged diagnostic requests from the core computer. It's not as isolated as life support, and it requires very little power, so I thought it should be working. My worry must have shown, since she explained that we can't yet know if we've been knocked off-course by the visiting ship, and if we have, we need to find out and correct as soon as possible. Course correction options are limited this far from a refueling point, so she and Agram should get the fault up front fixed and I can help Duncan with the beacon. Navigation would come after that.

The bulkhead door out of this area wasn't opening when we triggered it, so we cranked it open manually. Olivia pulled herself through the partially-opened bulkhead door silently. Agram followed her, showing a flexibility in movement that far outdoes what he could do under full gravity. I look over to Clarice, who was clearly distracted by something.

Her eyes followed her husband's rear-end until it crossed the threshold into the corridor. She pushed herself toward the opening to follow them out, and hollered to everyone that she'll warm some tea for us all in the lounge, and we should come there in a few minutes. I turned to Duncan as she disappears down the hall, smiling at how she always seems content no matter where she is.

Duncan had been at the console, shuttling around the diagram with his fingers. He'd drawn my attention to look at another part of the map. "The port exit doesn't have space suits," he says as his finger touches the airlock on the left side of the diagram, which pulls up details and statistics about the airlock. "The beacon should be just outside this doorway." He saw the empty compartment when he stalked



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THE JOURNAL, PART 5: DARKEN

the officers a few hours ago. His fingers pinched the screen and the fine details fade while the ship image shrank to show a zoomed-out view of the vessel's layout. Duncan double-tapped a section on the opposite side of the ship, with an identical-looking airlock indicator. The diagram grew and zoomed-in with a statistics pop-up described the Starboard airlock. "There should be at least one suit here."

He looked up for a moment, hesitating. He quietly confessed that he forgot to check the ship's stock of suits earlier. He assures me that any ship not in dry dock is always stocked with at least one suit just in case an emergency spacewalk is needed, but since we haven't seen it for ourselves, and long distance travel is anything but certain, we can't really know until we go there.

I thanked him for getting us so far already, and for taking time away from whatever else he was up to so he could save a couple nerds from some well-armed and ill-tempered thugs. Beside all that, I said conspiratorially, I was pretty sure Olivia would have made sure our escape vessel had what we needed. He smiled and shook his head, acknowledging the point.

"Here's the plan: You help me suit-up, and you'll run the airlocks." I must have let my worry about my in-expertise show on my face. "I'm doing the scary stuff. You just press 'open' and 'close' when I tell you to." I laughed at that, comforted somewhat with a new perspective on my not-so-simple-sounding task. He checks the console map again, and taps the deactivate button, and we head through the opening the others went through a minute ago.

We're most of the way to the airlock when a "Hey everyone," comes from the PA system in Agram's voice. "Navigation is offline. We don't have a way to manually verify if we're on-course or not, but Olivia is working on it. The power junction needs some work, but we have what we need to fix it." There's a click and a moment of silence, then he continues, "and, uhh, Clarice would like everyone to get some food and hot water in them before we get too deep into getting this place fixed."

I tap the call button on the intercom panel and give him the plan Duncan and I are working on. I overhear Olivia asking him to bring the snacks our way. With that, Duncan and I continue our prow through the ship, opening bulkheads manually where needed, and leaving them open so it'll be easier for Agram to get back to us.

Across the ship, we get to the airlock and I remember the basic lesson in putting on a space suit we had for the type of suits designed to keep us alive in life pods. I felt I had a decent handle on it at the time.

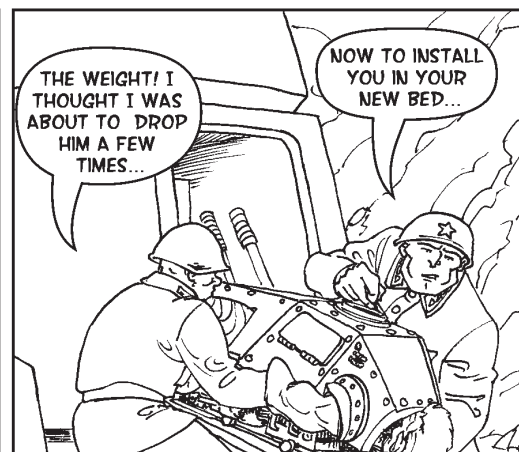
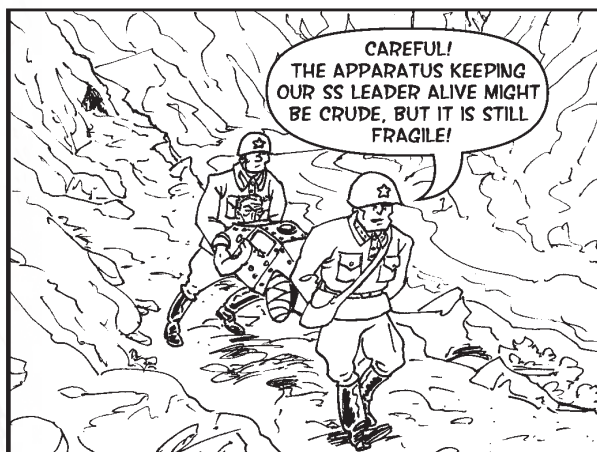
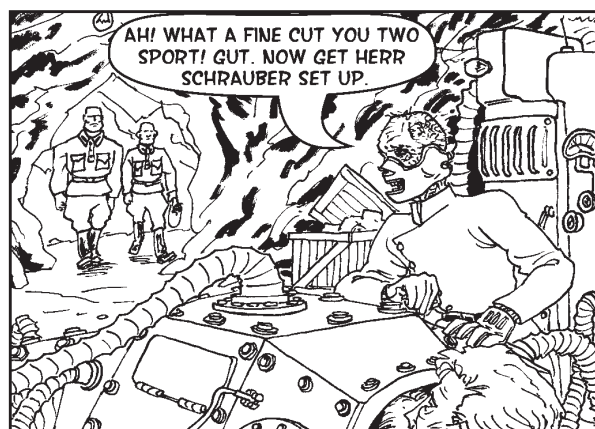
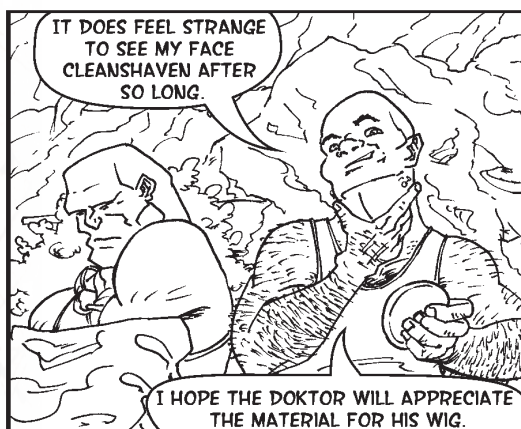
The suit I just helped Duncan get into is entirely different. There is more mechanical parts, it's thicker and more massive, and it's got twenty hardpoints and loops for hooks and flashlights and all kinds of things I can only guess at. Duncan seems a natural at it, grabbing and attaching a toolkit with a hook-and-loop strap, and linking the toolkit's built-in safety chain to an available loop. Agram arrives with the hot water and some nutrition bars for us both just as Duncan is nearly fully suited.

Duncan had given me a few minutes instruction on operating the airlock panel, taking a bite from his nutrition bar and chewing while I repeat each instruction to him. We're done with the snacks and I lock his helmet in place. The suit's diagnostics verified the suit's systems were fully prepared to keep him warm, safe, oxygenated and magnetically coupled to the ship. I use my fresh knowledge of the controls to activate seal the airlock room and gave him a thumbs-up that the suit's properly transmitting it's self-diagnostic results to us, so we're ready to go.

All airlock doors have their own backup power systems, so they're functional for even several ingress/egress events. I set Duncan's little room for zero atmosphere, and watch as he stands patiently waiting for the cycle to complete.

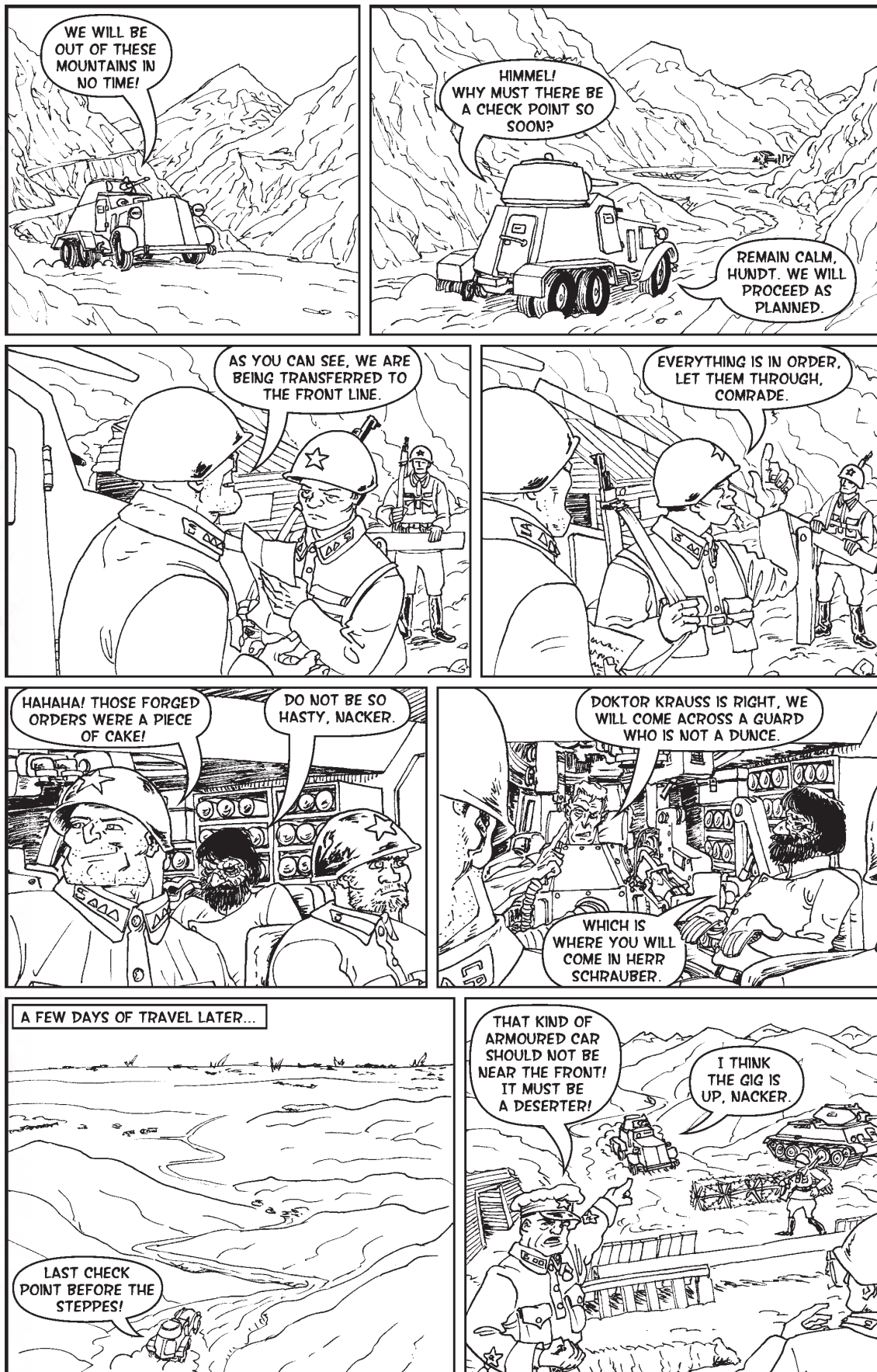
When the outer door opened, Duncan's heart rate went up, but not enough to send caution alerts to the console. He tested his magboots inside the room, then leaned out to link his safety tether to a point outside the door. He gave one look back and waved before turning and crossing the threshold to the outside of the ship. When I closed the outer door, his heart rate spiked, triggering alerts for a moment or two. I spoke calmly to him over the comm, encouraging him to think about how he knows exactly what to do, and he has everything he needs to do it. He took a few deep breaths, returning himself to something like normal before he said he's ready and the tracking system showed him making progress up and over the hull.

A week ago I would not have imagined that I'd be here, sealing an airlock on a ship intentionally set adrift in space, hoping to intersect the flight path of some mystery ship on a mission funded by a secret friend. Now, for as much as I'd like to be somewhere safer and more predictable in some lab on a planet, I can't say I've not grown in some ways that I can't even name yet, and that old life is starting to feel like a stranger.



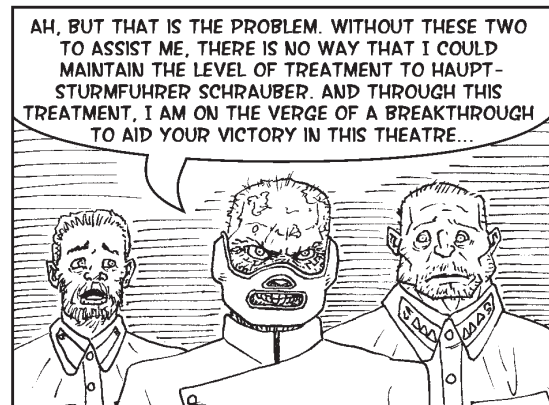
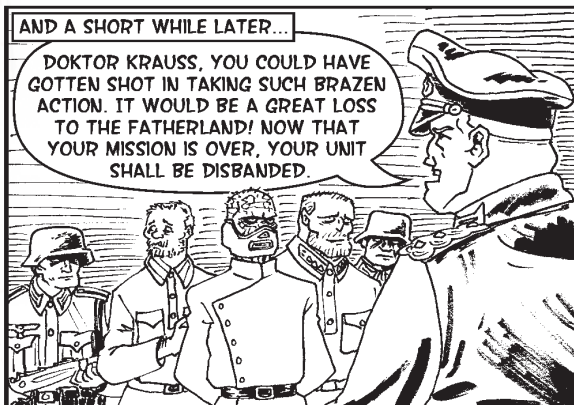
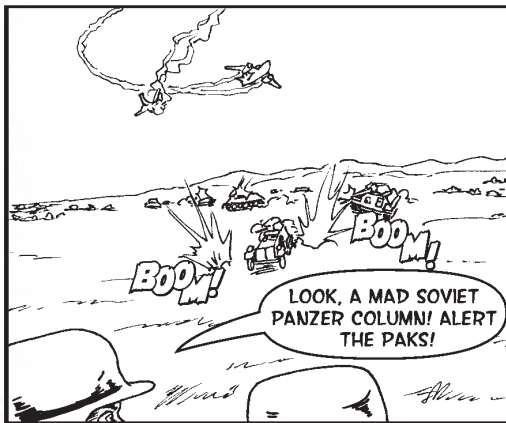
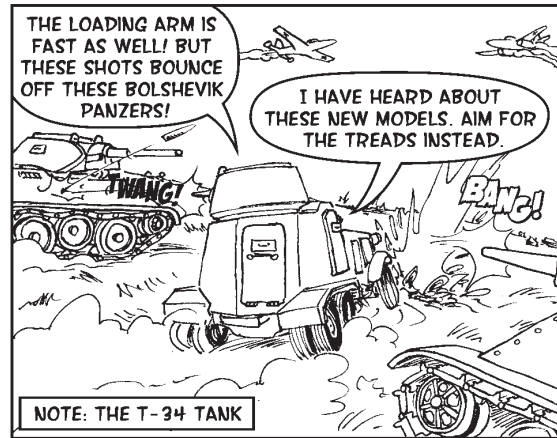
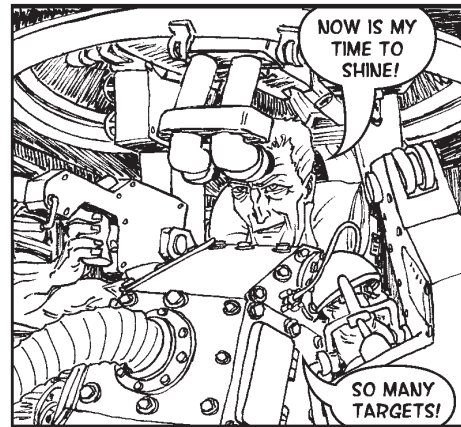
AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

KRAUT PATROL



AURORA: THE SILHOUETTE MAGAZINE

KRAUT PATROL



NEXT EPISODE: BACK IN THEIR TITLE ROLE, THE PATROL HEAD INTO STALINGRAD!

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 200dpi for greyscale or colour images, 600dpi for black & white images (1-bit). Given the size of a page, images should be no larger than 7 by 10 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 #9.4: September 24th 2015

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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!