

ISSUE

2

MARCH
2007

Star FRONTIERSMAN



KORT KRAMER ©1999

COMPUTERS, YAZIRIANS, AND GUNS, OH MY!

TECHNICAL JOURNAL: COMPUTERS OF THE FRONTIER
SECRETS OF THE ARAKS SYSTEM

NEW RACE: GET MEDIEVAL WITH THE BORA-KAI!
EXPLORE THE ROCKROOST MINING COLONY – ABANDONED, OR IS IT?
CREATURES... CAROUSING... GETTING SHOT IN THE LEG... AND MORE!

Star FRONTIERSMAN

Issue 2: March 2007

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ON THE COVER:

"A scouting science vessel has discovered a large alien craft in orbit on the dark side of a distant planet. I don't know if I'd want to get too close..."

--Kort Kramer, (c) 1999

FORWARD

Thorman Raive knelt by the body and searched through the hair, certain he'd find what he was looking for. "It's got to be here somewhere!"

"What are you looking for?" came a voice from behind him. It sounded Dralosite. Thorman stood, straightening his wing membranes without thinking.

"I was supposed to meet him here, Inspector. He was supposed to give me something important to my case." Officer Raive looked around at the scene. It was messy, and he didn't want to be there.

The Inspector looked down, smirked and lowered himself, picking up a small metallic disk attached to a hairpiece. He looked at it carefully... "This is evidence, you know. You aren't supposed to have it, or even touch it."

Thorman knew he was right, by the book. He stared at the disk wantonly... four days of following this hacker madman and four days of dead ends. This informant was his last hope, and there was the evidence staring him right in the face. Lives would be lost if he didn't get that disk.

"Face or stomach?" he asked the Inspector.

"Face... make it look believable, then go catch this guy before he kills again." The Dralosite closed his eyes and readied himself as Raive smashed his fist into the man, knocking him back three steps then down.

"Thank you." Raive whispered as he bent and picked up the disk. If he stopped that killer, he wouldn't get in too much trouble for this. If not... his career was in trouble.

In this issue, with help from several others from RPG.NET, we have new technology, a new race, some creatures, and a bunch of adventure hooks. Keep the ideas flowing... I almost had enough stuff to do a theme here: Computers and Yazirians. I hope some of you actually get a chance to use some of this material in a game... if you do, let me know about it and I'll put a forum page in the next issue!

Enjoy,

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 Last Revision: 3.1.2007

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TECHNICAL JOURNAL

In this new section, we take a type of technology found throughout the frontier and expand, clarify, or discuss it thoroughly. Future articles in the Technical Journal will deal with Robots, Vehicles, Weapon Technology, and Defenses.

COMPUTERS

by Andrew Modro

Computers: one of the most standard elements of modern science fiction. It's hard to envision sci-fi without them. Computers, from the elegantly simple abacus to the mighty machines of today, have aided us for centuries, and with new breakthroughs, their development extends far into any future we can foresee.

Computers in STAR FRONTIERS are pretty much ubiquitous. They appear everywhere, running almost everything. Even on the Frontier, life in the STAR FRONTIERS universe is high-tech. Computers are essential parts of vehicles, spacecraft, and even the gear utilized by sentient beings on every world. From the office towers in the cities to the camps of wanderers in the wilderness, computers are an intrinsic factor of just about every aspect of life.

While technically any device that "computes" can be considered a computer in one form or another, for the purposes of this article, we use the common definition of the word "computer", meaning an electronic machine that can gather, store, manipulate and output data in any form, in real-time or on-demand.

DIFFERENCES WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The similarities between modern computers and those in the universe of STAR FRONTIERS are obvious. Both are electronic devices that manipulate data, utilizing programs written for them to give them instructions. Both accept input and generate output in various forms.

The differences between STAR FRONTIERS computers and those with which players and GMs will be familiar arise from the fact that STAR FRONTIERS computers are far-future outgrowths of modern technology. These differences include not just the physical and systemic, but also terminology.

For example, when a Yazirian computer programmer speaks of a "program", he does not mean a discrete, individual software application in the modern sense. When he says "program", he means a suite of individual applications unified into a functional whole for a specific purpose -- much the same way his own Computers skill is made up of multiple subskills. He may use his voice to generate input, speaking his

commands to the computer, or make gestures which the computer can "see" with an electronic eye. The information he gets from the computer can be visual, in the form of text or images on screens or in holograms, or perhaps auditory, with the computer speaking back to him.

STAR FRONTIERS computers tend to hold in their memories only a few of these complex, broad-ranging program-suites, instead of the typical modern hard drive, which can be cluttered with scores of unrelated applications.

Storage and memory of STAR FRONTIERS computers is light-years beyond our current capacities. A single "function point" is the equivalent of many gigabytes or even terabytes of modern information technology. Many of the applications within a program are larger than the more involved program suites of today, necessitating a far greater ability to store and access information.

We are beginning to explore some of these technological avenues today. STAR FRONTIERS computers use fully-realized and long-developed extensions of these ideas.



PROGRAMS

Programs are the "skills" of any computer. A program not only gives the computer instructions, but allows the computer to utilize its resources. In modern times the word "program" often means a specific software application, an individual piece. In STAR FRONTIERS, a program is a collection of linked applications, a package of software that enables a computer to perform all aspects of a task.

Many different programs exist, and there are many different versions of each program. Lightweight, small programs (with low function point ratings) take little power or space, but may not include all the software applications necessary to handle more complex aspects of a particular task. Heavier, larger programs (with higher function point ratings) ensure the computer has the ability to handle the task and any variables or unexpected developments, but also require more space and power. Those with limited access to computer memory and computational power will use the lowest-complexity version of a program that they can get away with.

A program is designed to be a self-sufficient whole. Altering a program involves a laborious search through the interconnected applications to see how they rely upon each other, which can take time and effort. Simply changing a few lines of code usually won't do; the entire thing has to be rebalanced. This is where the Manipulate Programs subskill comes into play. Without the ability to see and interpret how a program is woven together, a character will have a much harder time changing that balance.

The basic STAR FRONTIERS Alpha Dawn rules state that when a character purchases a computer, she is actually purchasing both the software and the hardware, much the same as our modern business model. However, those same rules also state that the power to run each program is a "computer circuit module". Those either unfamiliar with or uncomfortable with the early 1980s "hobby kit" hardware model, wherein a computer is hand-assembled out of circuit boards, can instead visualize it as the character purchasing storage (hard drive), memory and processor sufficient to run the purchased programs.

INPUT METHODS

A computer can have powerful programs ready to run, but without data, there is little it can do. A computer receives information from the outside in various ways: from its own program output, from connected devices, from other computers, and from users.

Programs often make use of the output from their constituent applications as part of their normal functioning. Data can also be acquired externally through sensory devices or from media readers, which extract content from portable storage media. Computer networks exchange data at high speed and

can work on multiple aspects of a task at the same time, greatly increasing efficiency and power. Finally, computer users can enter data directly in multiple forms, either providing information or making requests.

User input is traditionally performed through a keyboard. However, there are other methods, each with their own advantages and drawbacks.

One of the most popular "alternative" user input methods is voice command. A computer can easily interpret a multitude of languages (such technology is the basis of the PolyVox device, for example) and obey spoken commands. One drawback to this method is that the computer could have difficulty differentiating between an actual command and conversation spoken in its "hearing" range.

Another popular method is somatic command input, or "gesture control". The computer can observe a user through an electronic eye and, based on posture and movement, interpret silent commands. For example, the system can mimic the movements of the user's hands through a "virtual interface", approximating Virtual Reality. (This particular somatic method is often used with a head-worn visor display, immersing the user visually in the virtual interface.) A drawback to this method is that the different species move in different ways, and interpretations can become difficult if the computer is programmed to react to the gestures of a Human but is dealing with a Dralasite user.

A common variant of keyboard input is the holographic display. Rather than reacting to full gestures, the computer's sensor only records when fingers, pseudopods or other pointing devices "touch" a particular location in space, allowing the user to "type" on a keyboard image made of pure light. This kind of keyboard can be projected and follow the user almost anywhere, making it much more practical than a physical keyboard, and can be modified almost instantly to the user's preferences. The drawback is that the projector costs much more than a simple keyboard would.

OUTPUT METHODS

Once a computer has run its programs, it often has to transmit the results to the user, as well as store the information. The standard method of display is the old standby of the screen unit, but other methods exist as well.

A popular method among those with visual difficulty is audio output. In essence, the computer speaks to the user, verbally telling the results or communicating with the user. This method is much slower than visual outputs, but can be fine-tuned to give the illusion of sentient interaction.

Holographic or "tri-D" displays separate output display from the screen and allow the results to be projected in

midair. These are commonly paired with holographic keyboard input, both of which are often used in small mobile units.

Hardcopy is still an option, even in STAR FRONTIERS. Information can be printed on many different materials, including standard paper and thin plastic "flimsy" sheets which can have their contents altered electronically.

Storage can be achieved magnetically (as with modern hard drives), optically (burned to laser-read disc, or holographic recording within special crystals) or even in quantum form. Each species has its own preferred storage methods, outgrowths of their individual technologies, but the Frontier is quickly mixing and changing those methods.

THE FUTURE

While these technologies are truly amazing, there is still room for computers to grow and change even further. With the mingling of Human, Yazirian, Dralasite and Vrusk technologies (as well as those being discovered and brought in by contact with still more species), the capabilities of computers are expanding at astonishing rates. The future is wide open; such things as direct linkage between sentient minds and their machines may become reality. Anything is possible.

NEW ITEMS

These devices can be added to a new or existing computer system at any time. Installation of one of these devices ordinarily requires no skill roll, though tweaking them to link with nonstandard programming or systems may require Manipulate Program checks at the referee's discretion.

Device	Cost (Cr)	Weight (kg)
Voice Control	100	1
Speech Output	100	1
Somatic Control	300	special
Holographic Keyboard	250	special
Holographic Display	200	2

Voice Control: This package includes the module for receiving voice commands and the necessary drivers to interpret and implement them. A Voice Control module does not require any of the computer's function points. The "hearing" range of the module's pickup is approximately 10 meters.

Once connected, the module can be set to accept vocal commands from up to five "trusted" voices. Once the list of "trusted" voices is full, a voice must be removed before another can be added. Voices must be ranked from first to fifth, to avoid conflicting orders being issued. The commands of a higher-ranked voice will always override those of a lower-ranked one.

Standard Voice Control modules utilize a pair of codewords to begin and cease accepting vocal

commands. These codewords must be spoken at the beginning and end of a command or set of commands, to avoid having the computer pick up erroneous commands from normal speech. Example codewords include a name for the computer, to simulate addressing it, and the word "engage" to signal the end of a command set. An example would sound this way: "Hal (the beginning codeword), give me a full system diagnosis and shunt output to my personal display; engage (the ending codeword)." This would tell Hal, the computer, to begin checking all its systems and report to the user's personal screen.

Adding a Voice Control module to an existing computer does not disable other input methods unless installed specifically to do so.

Speech Output: This package includes a small module with programming that allows the computer to direct output through speakers in the form of spoken words. The standard output voice is a pleasant but slightly monotone gender-neutral Human voice. This can be changed to any desired voice with the Manipulate Programs subskill as if the module were a Level 1 program.

Adding a Speech Output module does not disable other outputs unless specifically installed to do that.

Somatic Control: This package includes motion sensors and a module containing interpretation software. The interpretation module itself costs 100 Cr and weighs 1 kg. Each sensor costs 50 Cr and also weighs 1 kg. A standard package includes four sensors and one module. The pickup range of a single motion sensor is approximately three meters. Sensors are often arrayed around a central location to ensure maximized, overlapping coverage.

Holographic Keyboard: This package includes a small projector unit with a single attached somatic sensor weighing 1 kg, and a receiver unit which accepts input from the projector/sensor, also weighing 1 kg. The unit is worn either as a collar or a headband, and projects a user-defined "keyboard" image into the air at a set distance. When the user "touches" the keyboard, the somatic sensor detects this and accepts the input as if the user were touching a physical input device. The input is then communicated to the computer through wireless broadcast. Holo keyboards can be greatly reconfigured to almost anything the user can conceive, so long as the input can be meaningful to the associated computer system.

Holographic Display: This device functions as a three-dimensional monitor. It projects data in light through three dimensions within a given field and in all other ways functions the same as a normal display. The device itself contains all the necessary software for utilizing tri-D display.

STAR SYSTEMS

Derived from John Olsson's software and inspired by archived data from "Roy Crisman's Universe"

ARAKS SYSTEM

(Note: Not to scale)



Araks I



Araks II

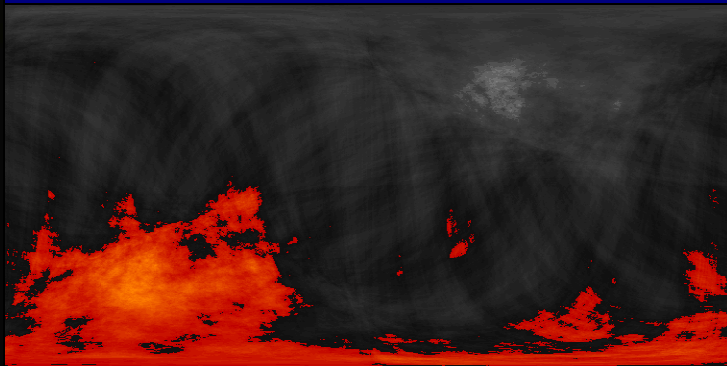


Araks III
(Hentz)



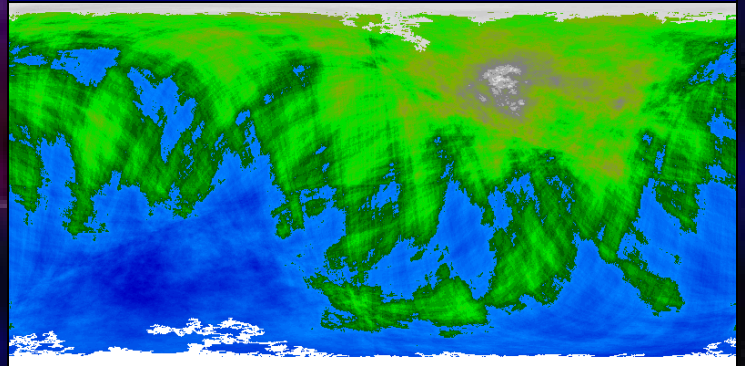
Araks IV

ARAKS I



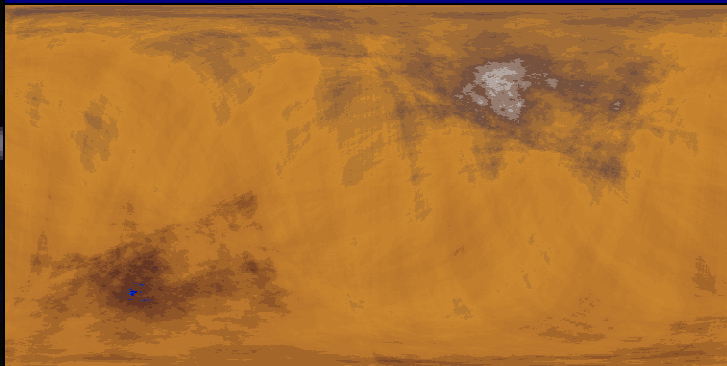
Type	Jovian
Orbital Radius	4.57×10^7 km (0.31 AU)
Year	1.62×10^3 hours (0.18 standard years)
Gravity	2.76
Notes	Ringed, many moons, 18% extremely volatile magma

ARAKS III HENTZ



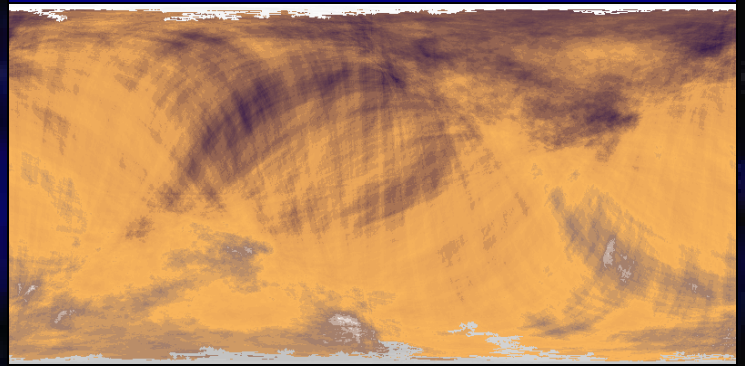
Type	Terrestrial
Orbital Radius	2.23×10^8 km (1.49 AU)
Year	1.74×10^4 hours (1.99 standard years)
Gravity	0.70
Notes	Theocratic terraformed home world of Yazirians.

ARAKS II



Type	Jovian
Orbital Radius	9.18×10^7 km (0.61 AU)
Year	4.61×10^3 hours (0.53 standard years)
Gravity	2.72
Notes	Many moons, one has trace atmosphere and polar caps but is uninhabited

ARAKS IV



Type	Rock Planet
Orbital Radius	1.10×10^9 km (7.36 AU)
Year	9.84×10^4 hours (11.26 standard years)
Gravity	2.04
Notes	Failed mining planet, crashed starship, false uranium readings.

STAR DATA

Star TypeG4 V Yellow Main Sequence
 Radius6.98x10⁵km (1.00xSol)
 Mass..... 1.66x10³⁰kg (0.83xSol)
 Temperature.....5,500 degrees Kelvin
 Luminosity 5.94x10²⁶ W (1.55xSol)

ARAHS I

Araks I is a gas giant that has planetary rings. 38 small moons and 2 large moons revolve around it in odd cycles. None of the moons are habitable, though the fourth moon (Araks Id) may have some minerals for mining. Future expeditions are necessary to verify initial scans. Araks I is 18% volatile magma, mostly on its southern axis pole (which faces the star most often).

ARAHS II

Araks II is also a gas giant. It has 4 small moons and 13 large moons. The largest of the moons (Araks IIc is the current name) has a trace atmosphere and some polar caps, but is far too hot for life to exist safely.

ARAHS III, HENTZ

Day 25 hours
 Hydrosphere..... 41% (8% Ice)
 Atmosphere.....Dense, Breathable
 Climate.....10°C-46°C, Average 20°C
 Trade.....Industrial
 Native Life..... Special
 Government Theocracy
 Population Density Heavy, 95% Yazirian

LIFE FORMS

Records show that no intelligent life originated on Hentz. During the time of the Yazirian Relocation, the planet was terraformed using the flora, fauna, and environments from Waloo (in the Pavor system).

BACKGROUND

Discovered in 341 pf, Hentz was the first colony world established by the Yazirians. It was merely a mining colony for 50 years. After the discovery of the weakening orbit of Levo, the planet became the first terraformed world during the Yazirian Relocation. This lasted, in full force, for 30 years, the first 23 during which Waloo was still intact, and the latter during which environments were still being reconstructed and synthesized on Hentz. There were some changes made due to the new environment and new geography of Hentz, as well as several environmental rejections, but aside from the change the size and color of the sun and the absence of the moon, the planet is much like the original. This was a time of great social cohesion for the Yazirians as

well as a time of great scientific learning about both systems, the life on the planet(s), terraforming, and transportation. The government of Waloo was similarly transported in whole to Hentz. At the end of the 30 years, the governments returned to their pre-disaster states.

POLITICS

Hentz is ruled by a religious clan, the Family of One. This government evolved from that of the transplanted government from Waloo (Pavor). The head of the government is a high priest, but local politics are handled by Priests, appointed by the High Priest and overseen by the High Priest's network of clandestine Overseers.

Although the Mentalist rules found in the back of the game manual are not canon in a Star Frontiers campaign, referees wishing to add some spice to their game may wish to allow the High Priest and his network of Overseers and Priests to be Mentalists with the Telepath skill (but no other). The source of their power is unknown by the masses, but they maintain they are anointed and marked by their god with these miraculous abilities.

Their abilities wane (treat their Telepath level as half, round down) when they get away from the Araks system, and may diminish further over time. Some people maintain that the mystery of the false uranium readings on Araks IV and the amazing mental powers of the High Priest and his Overseers are somehow connected.

If these rules are used, the level of Telepath skill helps define a person's political power as well as his general legal enforcement ability; use his Telepath level as the legal enforcement level shown below.

LAW

The law of Araks III is purely in the hands of the priesthood, and organized into six general levels, as shown below.

1. **Acolyte:** No political powers. Used as public servants to learn humility. Dress in a white tunic with one gold band at the hem.
2. **Templar:** Governs Towns. Has a body of 5 personal bodyguards. Dresses in a white tunic with two gold bands at the hem.
3. **Priest:** Governs Cities. Has a body of 20 personal guards and can call on 100 soldiers at any given time. Dresses in a white tunic with three gold bands at the hem and a holy symbol emblazoned across the chest.

4. **Bishop:** Governs Provinces. Has a body of 50 Personal guards with him at all times. Can call on 1,000 armed and trained Yazirian soldiers at any given time. Dresses in a white tunic with four gold bands at the hem and a holy symbol across the chest, outlined in red.
5. **Overseer:** Governs priests, bishops and templars. Feared throughout the land because they are, themselves, judge and jury and sometimes executioner, sanctioned by law and beyond contestation (except for the whim of the High Priest, of course). They dress in red tunics with five gold bands and a holy symbol on the chest. Always travel with a single Level 6 security robot armed to the teeth, but can call on the bodyguards or armies of any city or town in which he currently resides. Passage, housing, and sustenance must always be granted to an Overseer.
6. **High Priest:** Governs all of Hentz. Dresses in a red tunic with six gold bands at the hem and a holy symbol across the chest. A white cape with the same gold bands completes the outfit.

The law is swift and severe on Hentz. Hand weapons (melee, that is) are allowed to be carried as personal defense and in the event of duel challenges. Firearms are outlawed except in the wilderness between cities and towns. Special permits are available at the temples at a cost of 1,000 Credits annually, but only for those with proven legal enforcement status from other worlds.

Death due to honorable dueling is not uncommon and generally accepted with no retribution, though rivalries between various clans are entrenched. The Yazirians of Hentz often duel using the Zamira. They hold the Zamira (and dueling in general) as a sacred institution, only to be used among Yazirians.

LANGUAGE

Argonian is the language of the Yazirians of Hentz. It was believed that this language was given to all of their god's chosen. When the Yazirians finally met non-Yazirians the realization that all sentient creatures did not speak the same tongue led to a dissident group forming. This group adopted a reconstructed ancient sub-language and eventually emigrated to Yast (Athor).

ATTITUDES

As a result of the uniforms worn by everyone who lives or works on Hentz (or works for GODCo), which displays their job and social position, the inhabitants of Hentz are generally very private with all other personal information. This leads to a view of them being secretive to outsiders. Generally they

will be much more open with any beings that are of the same divisions.

PROMINENT LOCATIONS:

- **Onehome:** Headquarters of GODCo. and the only city with a star port, though it is used only for the priesthood (shuttle ports exists in several other cities to ferry cargo to Highpoint). It is said that all roads lead to Onehome. This was also the location of the original mining colony. There are rumors that under the city, in the old foundations of the original outpost, the High Priest hides secrets of an eradicated race that once inhabited Hentz, wiped out by GODCo as a form of cleansing. Of course, this is only a rumor.

- **Highpoint:** There is a fortified space station in orbit around Hentz. It acts as customs and immigration, and is a living area for many who await acceptance into the cloistered existence of The Family of One. There are several shuttles that come and go daily, but docking starships are limited to one per day. This causes a back-up of ships parked in orbit around the planet at all times, prioritized by the whim of security personnel. Security is maintained by GODCo. employees who answer to the High Priest only in theory.

- **Hullheal Station:** Bothered by the number of ships that stop on their way to other star systems, the High Priest decreed that a new station be built, in an opposite orbit to Highpoint (so the two would never be in view of one another). This station is devoted to refueling, repairing, and supplying passersby. The prices are high, but GODCo's technicians are surprisingly knowledgeable. All crew must deploy while services are rendered to ships (up to one crewman - presumably the captain - can remain behind), where they are ushered to the trading gallery, a large mall where they may spend their credits on tech and simple entertainment. Alcohol is limited, and fanatics are an eternal presence here, enlightening the weary traveler.

ARAHS IV

Araks IV is nothing but a cold, rocky mass. Its surface is covered with craters proving that it has seen much abuse in its existence. Initial scans showed uranium veins running through the rock, but mining expeditions failed to turn up anything at all.

There are ruins of abandoned mining outposts littered everywhere on Araks IV. Additionally, a mining ship (the *Ex-Cavator*) crashed on its surface twenty years ago when it had engine trouble. Araks IV is known as a miner's pipe dream, and scientists currently doubt the validity of the initial uranium scans.

NEW RULES

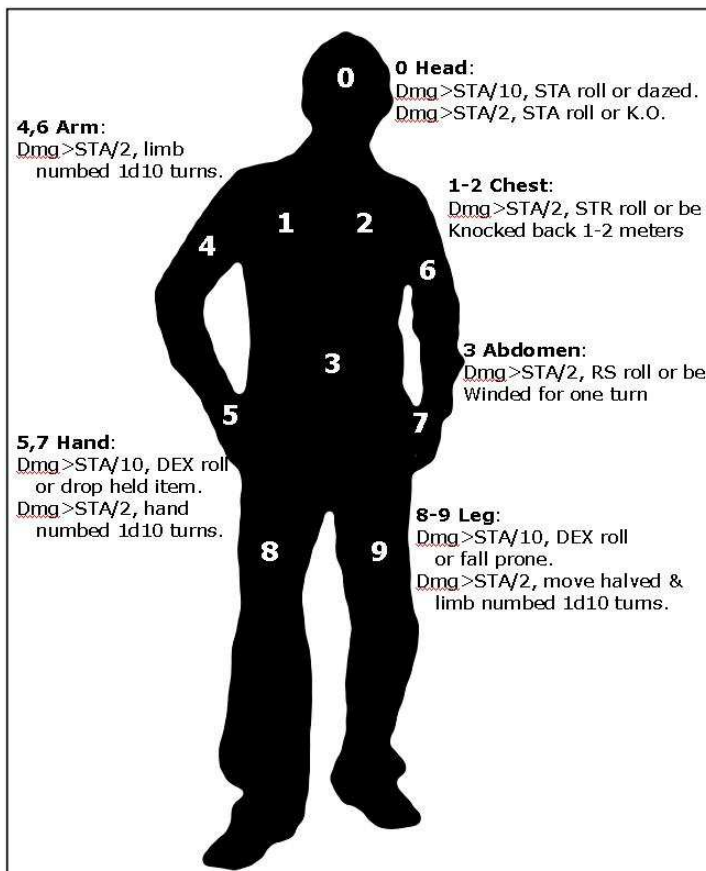
HIT LOCATION

Inspired by Andrew L. Chang – aka Fu-Man Chu

The Star Frontiers combat system is designed to be simple and general. We don't normally care exactly where we get hit, only that we got hit. The damage is rolled (independent of the level of success of the attack roll) and subtracted from Stamina (after applying defenses). But simple systems aren't for everyone. This system gives rules for governing hit locations, which adds both complexity and some realism to the game.

DETERMINING HIT LOCATION

When you roll your dice to hit your opponent, you must roll less than or equal to your success rate. When you do, you can look at the tens digit to determine hit location using the following chart:



SKILL LEVEL

If you possess skill levels in the weapon you're using, you can "bump" the hit location up or down a number of steps equal to your skill's level. For example: Firing your blaster pistol at a thug, you roll 58 and are successful. You have hit your opponent in area 8, the leg. Your beam weapons

skill is level 2, so you could bump the hit location down to 9 (the other leg) or up to 7 or 6 (his left arm or hand), as you wish.

EFFECTS OF HIT LOCATIONS

In order to keep much of the combat simple and loose, you don't have to keep track of each hit separately. If you're hit in the left arm, right leg, or forehead, you still just subtract your damage from a single Current Stamina score.

However, when you're hit with a lot of damage in a single blow to any given hit location, you may suffer an additional effect. Head shots can leave you dazed or knock you out in one blow. Hits to the torso can wind you... and leg injuries can make your character have trouble getting around. The injury effects are summarized on the hit location diagram located on this page, and these descriptions elaborate:

0 – Head: If the damage caused is greater than the tens digit of the target's Stamina score, he must make a Stamina (maximum, not current) avoidance roll or be dazed (treat as surprised) for one turn. If damage caused is greater than one half of the target's maximum Stamina score, he must make a Stamina (maximum, not current) avoidance roll or fall unconscious for d100 turns. The head is a lethal hit location; if a character sustains more damage than he has remaining current Stamina points to endure, he's dead.

1-2 – Chest: If damage caused is greater than half the target's maximum Stamina, he must make a Strength avoidance roll or be knocked back 1-2 meters by the blow. The chest is a lethal hit location; a character who takes more damage than he has remaining current Stamina points to endure is dead.

3 – Abdomen: If damage caused is greater than half the target's maximum Stamina, he must make a Reaction Speed check to roll-with-the-blow or he will be winded for the next turn (treat as surprised). The abdomen is a lethal hit location; a character who takes more damage than he has remaining current Stamina points to endure is dead.

4,6 – Arms: If damage caused is greater than half the target's maximum Stamina, his limb will be numbed and useless for 1d10 turns. The arm is not an immediately lethal hit location; regardless of the

amount of damage sustained, your character will always have at least one current Stamina point remaining.

5,7 – Hands: If the damage caused is greater than the tens digit of the target's maximum Stamina score, he must make a Dexterity avoidance roll or drop anything he was holding in that hand. If the damage caused is greater than half the target's maximum Stamina, his hand will be numbed and useless for 1d10 turns. The hand is not an immediately lethal hit location; regardless of the amount of damage sustained, your character will always have at least one current Stamina point remaining.

8-9 – Legs: If the damage caused is greater than the tens digit of the target's maximum Stamina score, he must make a Dexterity avoidance roll or be tripped, lying prone. If the damage caused is greater than half the target's maximum Stamina score, his leg is numbed and his movement will be halved for 1d10 turns. The leg is not an immediately lethal hit location; regardless of the amount of damage sustained, your character will always have at least one current Stamina point remaining.

NON-HUMANOID SHAPES

The referee will have to use common sense when determining hit location to races other than those with humanoid shapes. Races with different appendages should have a chance of being hit in those locations (for example, if hit in the arm, the referee might describe the wound as a wing injury to your Yazirian). Dralasite hit locations won't matter – since they are amorphous and can move damage freely to distribute it through their mostly homogeneous form. Vrusks normally are hit in a leg that faces his foe, unless he is hit from behind, in which case a random leg might take the damage.

Wings: if a Yazirian is hit in the wings for more than half his maximum Stamina score in one hit, his wing membrane will be damaged and he will be unable to glide until he heals. The wing is not an immediately lethal hit location; regardless of the amount of damage sustained, your character will always have at least one current Stamina point remaining.

HIT LOCATION AND COVER

When dealing with hard cover, instead of applying the normal penalties to hit, use this rule instead. If the hit location rolled cannot be bumped to a location that is exposed, then the target was protected by the cover.

For example, a Dralasite ducks behind a metal dumpster in an alley while being fired upon by Sathar agents. He pokes his head and right arm around the corner to fire. An enemy shoots at him and rolls a hit location of 9, the leg. If that foe cannot bump the hit location up to 0, 4, or 5, the shot will hit the dumpster instead.

TARGETING

If desired, you can specifically target a single hit location. For example, you might want to shoot your target's hand so he drops his gun. To accomplish this task, you'll use these rules. The following table summarizes the penalties associated with aiming at a body location.

Aim Location	Modifier
Head	-15
Chest or Abdomen	+0
Arm or Leg	-5
Hand	-10

Note that if you spend an entire turn concentrating and steadying your aim, the rules give you a +15 modifier to hit. This can be used to help offset the aiming penalties derived from this table.

AIMING AT THINGS

If your referee allows, you can aim at items held by your target, or something he is wearing or near. This would have penalties and effects determined by the referee and are beyond the scope of this article.

PERMANENT INJURIES

If the referee wants to be particularly nasty to his players, he can invoke this rule. Any time your character is hit for more than half his maximum Stamina score, he has a chance to sustain permanent injuries.

After a fight is over, and the bandaging begins, any injury you have (derived from the injury effects described above) to a hand, arm, or leg might end up becoming more of a long-term problem for your character. Roll 1d10 for each injured hit location. On a roll of 1, that injury is more severe.

From that point forward, you'll have a -5 penalty to any action that involves that hand, arm, or leg. This is additive, many injuries over time will make this penalty get worse and worse (the second injury that gets serious will turn into a -10 penalty, etc.) No amount of surgery will correct this (although if your campaign allows, cybernetic replacement or augmentation may be possible). When your penalty to a body area gets greater than half your maximum Stamina, that body part may need amputated!

GETTING DRUNK!

by Albin Johnson

Drinking is a genuine part of the adventuring lifestyle. For this reason, it seems necessary to introduce rules on drinking for Star Frontiers. One can only imagine the wild variety of alien concoctions one would encounter with so many races present. Also, the effects would be equally bizarre. Finally, it would make things much more interesting in a game if there were ways to measure drinking ability and incentives for making your character hand over hard-earned credits for something the player doesn't personally experience.

Included here is a list of drinks from the various races of the Frontier. Each one differs in its strength, its effects, and how much gusto a character earns for drinking it.

Every time a character takes a drink, he or she must pass a Stamina check. Failing a Stamina check requires a roll on the Drunk Table (below) to see if the drink had serious effects. Naturally, the more drinks one takes, the lower the chance of avoiding being drunk. A drinking character has what is called a Standing Stamina. This begins as the character's normal Stamina and drops with every drink. This is the Stamina score used to check if the character is drunk.

POTENCY FACTOR

Each drink has a Potency Factor (PF) associated with it. This is the number subtracted from the Standing Stamina every time drink is consumed. A referee must keep a running total of drinking characters' Standing Staminas, subtracting Potency Factors for every drink and rolling against the new result to see if anyone is drunk. Once a check fails, a character suffers from a random effect derived from the Drunk Table.

If a character enters combat or is injured while drinking, the Standing Stamina is regarded as their current stamina. If it is reduced to zero then the character passes out with Stamina points equaling their original Stamina minus their Standing Stamina when the fight began.

For example: Yalua enters a cantina with a current Stamina of 55. He takes three drinks at PF of 5 each. His Standing Stamina is now 40. He passes all three Stamina checks and avoids rolling on the Drunk Table. However, he gets in a fight and is beat to a pulp until his Stamina is reduced from 40 to zero. He wakes up later with only 15 Stamina points left, feeling very sore, close to death, and wishing he'd taken in a holo-movie instead.

FORTUNE POINTS

Every drink has a Fortune value associated with it. This is loosely related to the Potency of a drink and represents a reward for surviving the experience. The more potent the drink, the more respect and achievement he earns in drinking circles. This is the component that makes for a built-in incentive for drinking among roughneck adventuring types. These Fortune Points can be saved and used later as raw percentile point bonuses to any rolls the player chooses to use them on later. This is at the referee's discretion of course. Fortune Points cannot raise

the chances of a skill or ability roll above 100% and the maximum allowed to use on any single roll is 10.

DRUNKENNESS

Effects - Drinks have effects associated with them regardless of whether or not the character passes a Stamina check. These include the sensations they cause as well as modifiers to ability scores.

When rolling on the Drunk Table, it is reasonable to assume that stronger drinks will result in more drastic behavior sooner than weaker drinks. For this reason, when rolling on the Drunk Table the GM should add the following modifiers to the dice rolls, depending on the PF of the drink.

Potency Factor (PF)	Modifier to Drunk Table
0 - Very Weak	+0
2 - Weak	+5
5 - Potent	+10
10 - Very Potent	+15
15 - WOW! (not commercially available)	+20

Roll	Drunk Table
01-05	get friendly - character picks up an unattractive patron
06-10	get friendly - character gives away something of value
11-20	get stupid - character does a little dance on a table
21-25	get stupid - character disrobes partially or fully
26-30	get stupid - tries to do a trick, falls for 1d10 damage
31-35	talk loud - becomes rude, 50% chance offends someone
36-40	talk loud - shoot mouth off, 50% spill important info
41-45	talk loud - shoots mouth off, 30% start a fight
46-50	get violent - character breaks something at random
51-55	get violent - character attacks someone at random
56-60	get violent - character picks fight with multiple people
61-70	throw up - stay conscious
71-80	pass out for 1d10 hours
81-90	throw up, pass out for 1d10 hours
91-00	pass out for 2d10 hours

Drink	FP	PF	Effects (per drink)
VRUSK Drinks			
Nectraa	1	0	calms, -3 DEX/RS, +2 INT/LOG
T'Lak'Tis	2	2	nervousness, +2 DEX/RS
The Needler	5	5	Prickley sensations on skin, -5 DEX/RS
Anaphylaxo	10	10	--
YAZIRIAN Drinks			
Yazirian Ale	1	0	calms, -2 DEX/RS, -2 INT/LOG
Ponjo	2	2	mood enhanced, drinker becomes annoying -5 PER/LDR, -2 INT/LOG
Hakosoar	5	5	-5 DEX/RS, -5 INT/LOG
Berzerker	10	10	popular drink before battle, +5 STR, -5 INT/LOG
HUMAN Drinks			
Beer	1	0	calms, -2 DEX/RS, -2 INT/LOG
Wine	2	2	-5 DEX/RS, -2 INT/LOG
Whiskey	5	5	-5 DEX/RS, -5 INT/LOG
Sledgehammer	10	10	-10 DEX/RS
DRALASITE Drinks			
Shmoolak	1	0	drinker becomes friendler, +2 PER/LDR, -2 DEX/RS
Flubbra	2	2	--
Opho	5	5	--
Flat Circle	10	10	named for Dralosite's fondness for shapes. This describes the shape of a Dralosite when he's drunk!

ARCHETYPES

By Bill Logan and Andrew Modro

HUMAN SYSTEMS TECH

If it runs programming, you can make it dance. Computers and robots share many of the same systems, and you know them all. Out on the Frontier, your skills are worth a lot of money to a lot of people, and can lead you down a path to adventure!

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Robot Queen

You've always liked being the center of attention, even from your youth. Your parents considered you the cream of the crop, and your siblings were always jealous. When you went to the university to study computers and robotics, everyone had the highest hopes for you, and you didn't let them down.

After graduation, you began building yourself a little empire. You utilize your skill with computers and robots to create flexible and powerful networks with you at the center, guiding every move. You write many of your own programs instead of purchasing canned ones, to keep others from being able to easily do your job.

Unfortunately, several megacorp headhunters have recognized your skill, and are looking to recruit you for spying, security and military work. You're not sure who to trust, so you hide behind the technology you know so well. Your universe is getting dangerous, but just like when you were little -- you're still at its center.

Mr. Fix-It

You love walking into an industrial site, spewing buzzwords and techie jargon, waving your state-of-the-art tools around and typing away at the keyboard. Nothing beats that amazing feeling of walking away from the site feeling like you're wearing a big red cape, having just fixed the machine that nobody else could figure out.

If something electronic breaks down, you can repair it with little difficulty. Computer and robot systems are all the same to you, making you a whiz at keeping everything running no matter what happens.

HUMAN SYSTEMS TECHNICIAN

STR/STA	45/55	PS	+3
DEH/RS	50/50	IM	+5
INT/LOG	50/55	RANGED	25
PER/LDR	50/50	MELEE	25

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

None

SKILLS: (Technological PSA)

Computers 1, Robotics 1

EQUIPMENT:

Robcomkit, Standard Equipment Pack, Auto Pistol, 4 Credits

You like to keep a list of the programs you've worked on, edited, or created. You keep a toolkit of code snippets that rivals the most experienced programmers. When you come across a new problem that needs an innovative solution, you're all over it whether you're bringing an old solution out and dusting it off or coming up with a new one on-the-fly. You're that guy that everyone goes to when their computer isn't working, and you love every minute of it.

Some people do it for the money, you do it for the knowledge that you've fixed the unfixable, done the impossible, and saved the day.

Hacker

You went to the university, studied with the best of them, and dropped out right before graduation. Getting a piece of paper isn't important to you -- you just wanted to learn the basics. From there, you taught yourself what you really enjoyed.

Rather than repairing or modifying systems, you specialize in infiltrating them. Your ability to get past security, set up watch-guards, establish links between unrelated systems, write protocol translators and network monitor scramblers all make you valuable to any corporation that would have you.

But you don't like the idea of working for a corp. They won't let you do what you want -- and will take credit for what you do. You want to remain in the shadows of society, hiding from the masses at large,

while at the same time letting all other hackers know your work on sight.

You have a secret hacker name, a buzzword, a handle. Hacker friends – whom you've never met in person – all have one of these. It's how you keep in touch, exchange tricks, form alliances. In the middle of the night, you might get a call from "Sleeper" asking you to slam the mining servers at Strel with information requests – no questions asked. You'll do it because you'll need help from her some day. Teams of people like you are most corporation's worst nightmares.

When you hacked the Data Repository at Circe, corporate security came down on you like a nightmare, led by the noted Yazirian agent, Detective Wivol. You had suits with guns all over your apartment, as you fled the scene. They took everything, and you were mad as hell.

You'll show them, though. You'll get online today at the local library, hack into their personnel directory, and change Detective Wivol's status to "on suspension." We'll see who gets the last laugh.

DEVELOPMENT

The most obvious development technique is to work on your technical skills... but there are other less obvious ways for you to develop your character.

Developing Abilities

Begin working on your Intuition and Logic scores as you have the points to afford it. While your skills are more paramount to your career, these basic ability scores will help you with those subtle ability checks the referee throws at you to figure out what a rival hacker is up to, understand alien programming and engineering, or sense that security system before it's too late.

Working on your Personality score would be nice, to help formulate relationships with NPCs in your field of study. You never know when it will be helpful to call in a favor from some contact.

Developing Skills

You should work on your robotics and computer skills right away, but don't underestimate the usefulness of the Technician skill. It will help you use your technical expertise on vehicles and other machines.

Technology is technology, and you're good with it. In the modern day, there are correlations between all forms of tech – they all can be programmed in one way or another. Lines blur between science and technology, and you like to live in that blur.

EQUIPMENT

You need to get a computer, whether it's from a corporate sponsorship or purchased with credits. The more money you can dump into it, the better it will be. But remember you can always start off small and work your way up through upgrades.

You have a gun but you don't really rely on that much. It's probably a better idea to invest in a security bot as finances permit. Nothing beats a security robot programmed by you as a bodyguard. You can teach it secret command word recognition (your voice only, of course) to do special maneuvers or actions. With the right programming, you might even have yourself a handy assistant. Have your security robot restrain an enemy bot while you remove its security plate!

You're a techie in the purest sense, and love to accumulate gadgets. You probably like to collect various toolkits, even for skills you have no direct ability in yet. With your referee's permission, you might even invest extra money on a toolkit that might provide bonuses to your skill use.

EDGES AND FLAWS

If using this optional system found at the back of the Alpha Dawn Remastered book, you might want to consider some of these ideas.

Edge: Works Well Under Pressure

Whenever you're in the hot seat, and people are waiting for you to get the job done quickly, your concentration and innovation soars to new levels. You can call on this edge once per session to get a bonus to some task when timing is crucial.

Edge: Don't Need No Stinkin' Job

You've mastered the art of not needing a job in order to support yourself. When you need something that doesn't cost too much, and have access to a computer with a subspace link to a planet that contains a large enough network, you can get what you need and have it shipped. Of course, if you do it too often or for something that costs too much, corporate security will catch on!

Edge: Robotics Whiz

This is an example of using the Edge and Flaw system to hone one aspect of your abilities. Use this edge to get a bonus to a roll when making any one of your Robotics skill checks. Like all Edges this may only be used once per session, but having it to use at the right moment might save the day!

Flaw: Mistaken Identity

Some skilled hacker has somehow caused all of his crimes to be put in your name. You have a record and didn't do anything to deserve it! The referee can invoke this Flaw to be a general pain in the butt to your mission or adventure.

YAZIRIAN CYBER COP

The bigger computer systems get, the more vulnerable they are to attack. Your job is to investigate computer crimes and track down the perpetrators. Your familiarity with both computers and people lends you a sharp edge, sorely needed in the wild Frontier... and leads you down a path to intrigue, deception, murder, and adventure.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Innovative Street Cop

You talk your way past the thugs at the door to the warehouse, and let them search your body. You left your gun in the skimmer, just in case you were searched. Once inside you try to ignore the illegal use of minors for labor as you approach the man with which you've arranged this meeting: suspected crime lord Namon Mor. As you approach him with your fake smile, you take mental notes of the crimes going on around you. You sure hope nothing happens you can't talk your way out of...

In the busy streets of Port Loren, you are the law. You do the grunt work, prowling the cities and the undergrounds, frequenting the local crime hot-spots, checking on the legalities of local businesses and clubs. At first it was all business, dressed in your uniform and flashing your badge like everyone else on the force. But you soon noticed that your knack for computers could help you even in this occupation.

By using your computer skills to gain information – and pass yourself off as someone else through fronting an alternate identity – you've been able to gain access to locations that other street cops have failed. You're starting to gain a reputation as a force to be reckoned with, and that paves golden ways through the ranks of Star Law. Unfortunately, it also makes enemies...

Fortress Security Agent

From your seat high up in the upper offices of PanGal's corporate headquarters, you overlook the streets below and are thankful not to be a part of that droning, mindless throng. You tap at your computer, checking on the safeguards you've set on the company network, confident in your ability.

Then you notice something's changed... a security timestamp you put on a personnel file. Unsure how that can happen at this time of the day, you check for log-ins and find nothing. Was it a glitch? Or has someone gotten in and changed something?

YAZIRIAN CYBER COP

STR/STA	40/50	PS	+3
DEH/RS	55/55	IM	+6
INT/LOG	55/55	RANGED	28
PER/LDR	50/50	MELEE	28

SPECIAL ABILITIES:

Night Vision, Gliding, Battle Rage 5%

SKILLS: (Technological PSA)

Computers 1, Psychosocial 1

EQUIPMENT:

Security Skeinsuit, Gyrojet Pistol, 24 Credits

Within minutes your comprehensive scan is complete. Someone WAS in, but left no trace. The only thing that was modified, however, was the status of Detective Wivol, switched from "active" to "on suspension." Either the database was hacked or the system administrator modified it at the captain's request... either way you better set up a tracer program on that file, in case it happens again, you'll know.

The consummate computer defense specialist, you know how hackers and criminals think, allowing you to overcome their attacks. Perhaps you've done some hacking in the past, or been part of an organization that laundered money. Maybe you were even caught, rehabilitated, then recruited by Star Law. Or maybe you're just an excellent student and learned about criminal profiling and detective work while studying tech at the university. Whatever the reason, you think like a criminal and can often outthink them.

Pattern-Program Profiler

You didn't sleep again last night. You were too busy, too preoccupied. You couldn't relax as you sat at your table rubbing your head, staring at the photos of the crime scene. How could someone do this?

You know there's a pattern, but you just can't see it. Two other profilers at the office failed to see a pattern, but you are certain it's here. You pull your computer towards you from across the table and begin tapping out a program, complete with all the parameters you can think of. If you can't figure this out, more people will die.

You graduated with a degree new to the frontier: Patterned Programmed Profiling. Using computers and traditional state-of-the-art forensic and

psychological profiling methods, your job is to get into the mindset of a criminal and figure out what his next step is. You often find yourself at crime scenes, walking through the muck and applying forensic skills to help you understand the criminal.

It's a rewarding job when someone gets caught. It makes your spirits soar. But when you can't figure it out it wears you down. You've made your share of enemies, and made your share of contacts within Star Law. Some people think you're a heartless freak for surrounding yourself with all this stuff every day, but if you don't do it, who will?

DEVELOPMENT

Here are some suggestions for how to continue to develop the abilities of your Yazirian Cyber Cop.

Ability Development

Work on your character's Intuition score, it's probably the most important aspect of a detective. You need to be able to second-guess others, to sense their motivations and moods. Personality is another important ability, as it will sometimes help you to get information and valuable permissions. And don't forget that when things go bad, sometimes it's your skill in your pistol that sees you through the day.

Racial Ability Development

Battle Rage isn't all that helpful to a cyber cop. Normally, if you have to resort to raging, all of your basic abilities have failed. You like to keep in control, in order to succeed in your life's calling. Don't put a high priority in increasing this ability.

Skill Development

Depending on your general professional focus, you may want to concentrate on increasing either your Psychosocial or Computers skills, but don't underestimate the value of dumping points into a good weapon skill.

It's not even a bad idea to invest some skill points in Technician. Technicians have some valuable skills for detecting and bypassing locks and some forms of electro-mechanical security measures that you simply won't get through your computer knowledge.

Finally, you might want to consider getting the Environmentalist skill. While tracking criminals doesn't normally happen in the wilderness, it's not unheard of. Additionally, knowing how to prowl around stealthily can help any detective when he's decided to take infiltration beyond the constricting boundaries of the computer screen and keyboard.

EQUIPMENT

It wouldn't help to round out your abilities by purchasing a decent computer system and the necessary programs to do your job effectively. As it stands, you need to rely on existing systems to pull off your skills. Getting one of your own that you personalize and program would make a lot of difference.

You need to protect yourself better. As it stands, you have a gyrojet pistol for which you have no special skill. When you can afford it, get a beam weapon. Star Law agents are often trained in their use, and their stopping power cannot easily be ignored. A few doze or tangler grenades might help detain or bypass the thugs and mooks of the larger crime bosses, letting you get away... or in.

Of course, nothing beats having a good skinsuit to protect yourself, but you'd probably be better off with a holo-screen than an albedo- or inertia-screen. Being able to provide a quick disguise or attention diverter would be a good help to someone with your career.

EDGES AND FLAWS

If using this optional system found at the back of the Alpha Dawn Remastered book, you might want to consider some of these ideas.

Edge: Get Outta Jail Free

You have people high up who trust you. They know you often have to get in close with criminals, in order to do your job, and they accept that you sometimes have run-ins with the law. Because your job is important to them, they'll come get you out once per game session if necessary! If the referee permits, you can invoke this Edge to get out of any kind of trouble, somehow saved because of your value to those from whom you need saved.

Edge: Gut Instincts

You get hunches that often turn out to be right. Invoke this skill to ask the referee a single plot-related yes/no question, and he'll answer it honestly. Like all Edges, you can only use this once per session, so use it wisely!

Flaw: Outcast Cop

You're always getting the oddest cases, and people think you get them because you're odd, too. Since you're always working with crime and murder, you often have a very dour demeanor. This causes some people to treat you as an outcast, living on the outer perimeter of legal propriety. The referee can invoke this flaw to make dealing with other cops more difficult.

EQUIPMENT

PROJECTILES

by Goblinardo

In this issue, we'll take a closer look at automatic pistols and rifles. These weapons are in high demand because of the relative inexpensiveness of the ordinance. But instead of just listing a pile of weapons and their statistics, we'll first discuss one of the major players in the arena of projectile weapon design and sale...



"Presenting the new Gunnam automatic pistol! With an improved titanium body, multi-functional attachment holder for standard flashlights, laser sights and our own DIRK bayonets, (now with 180° full swivel-locking action!) high-resistance brass catcher and real wood finishings, the Gunnam is a weapon for the true connoisseur. Remember, you have a Right to Fight!"

Cepeda Kinetic Arms is one of the premier projectile firearm and related accessories manufacturers in the Frontier, serving the people and militaries of over a dozen worlds. Even WarTech, Inc., who supplies the Frontier with beam and gyrojet weapons, purchases and repackages their automatic pistols from CKA! From cheap self-defense pistols such as the Ropes Semiautomatic to high-tech assault rifles like the MR-17 and state-of-the-art big game guns (the famous CKA Hi-Ler), CKA has the right firearm for any and all customers.

The corporation also maintains a network of firing ranges, weapon workshops and support services throughout the worlds where it holds presence, and it has several links with various planetary governments: for example, many weapons safety programs have CKA advisors supervising them. Of course, such links are ripe ground for conspiracy theorists that see CKA as nothing but ruthless warmongers that thrive on armed conflict.

The current CEO is Gran Venhur, a charismatic and brilliant Yazirian that has openly declared his life-

enemy as "people's helplessness against danger." The company motto is "Your Right to Fight"

RULES

Most of the firearms manufactured by CKA are already covered by the basic rules and those appearing on the Star Frontiersman, such as the Semiautomatic Pistol, but some of their products deserve rules of their own:

CEPEDA CUSTOM

A Cepeda Custom is truly a symbol of money, power and class. The Customs are handguns designed to their owners' every specification: some of them resemble ancient muskets, while others could pass as experimental cutting-edge beam weapons until they fire their deadly bullets. Furthermore, by subjecting their customers to special physical and mental examination, CKA can produce weapons made for their particular physiques and even mental states: they are, indeed, 'custom'.

Cepeda Customs are treated as Automatic Pistols which provide its owner (the being the gun was manufactured for) a +15% to hit bonus. People other than the intended owner suffer a -15% to hit penalty, as the weapon just feels 'off' to them. The necessary exams take 1d10 days (costing 100 Credits per day) and can only be performed at a certified CKA outlet. Prices vary greatly depending on the design, but CKA policy is to never sell a Custom for less than 2,000 credits, in order to preserve their rarity.

CKA FAST DRAWING HOLSTER

Nicknamed "the Death Finger," this is a special handgun holster meant to be worn in the forearm. Special magnetic repulsors hidden inside the holster make moving the arm easier than it would seem with a gun strapped to it, and together with sensors placed in the back of the wearer's hand they provide it with the ability for which it has received its nickname.

By grasping an imaginary gun with the holster arm, the repulsors place the weapon in the hand with lightning speed, ready to fire: 'firing' with one's finger can actually achieve lethal results. The legality of this accessory is somewhat questionable, and in certain worlds it is actually prohibited to wear one, even if it's empty.

VEHICLES

by Bill Logan

In game terms, a character with a Fast Drawing Holster can ignore the -3 penalty to their Initiative modifier for having their weapons holstered. The holster needs to be adjusted before a given individual wears it: the process takes 1d10 hours, halving the time with a successful Repair check (minimum 1 hour). If a character wears an unadjusted holster with a gun in it, there is a 30% chance per hour it will misfire, sending the weapon flying away. This chance increases to 70% in combat: if it misfires, it'll bruise the character's hand (-10% to hit for the remainder of combat) and deny the Initiative benefit. A Reaction Speed check will be necessary to hold on to the gun, otherwise it'll be thrown 1d10 meters away.

EXTENDED BULLETCIPS

Offered for both rifles and pistols, these bullet clips are longer, making the pistol or rifle a bit awkward and bulky. The added benefits cannot be denied, as they hold and deliver 30 bullets to the weapon's firing chamber instead of just 20. The added bulk causes a penalty of -1 to the Initiative Modifier of the user.

PLOT HOOKS

Bad Boys: A large shipment of CKA firearms has been stolen by space pirates! The characters are hired to track them and recover the guns, but are the robbers really 'space pirates'? Why isn't the shipment manifesto matching what the characters found? And why are CKA operatives hounding their steps?

Meatshields: The Cepeda Kinetic Arms CEO, Gran Venhur, is on a grand tour of his interplanetary holdings and has hired the characters as security detail. Angry protesters, cold-blooded assassins, devious rivals within the corporation and a proud and angry Yazirian to protect: can the characters survive this gig?

Sponsored by...: Sathar agents have entered an office building and taken the employees hostage! As the characters make a hasty rescue plan, Star Law agents armed with the latest CKA submachine guns storm the building and take all the terrorists out. Though this situation is solved, crime as a whole is rising in the sector, as are police actions with CKA weaponry. Is this all a big marketing campaign for the corporation?

"A more civilized age": The characters are contacted by an antique weaponry collector to find one of the very first Cepeda Custom handguns, Olof Arski's Duel Gunner. The weapon, designed after the dueling pistols of legend, was last reported to be seen in a far-away desert planet. A rival collector has heard the rumors too, and he's not above sending gangs of thugs to retrieve it...

The main rules book covers ten basic vehicles, for land and air. These are generally civilian or industrial in nature. Some vehicles aren't meant just for toting people to and fro; some are designed for other purposes...

THE INFILTRATOR

The premier military ground assault cycle, the Infiltrator is a mean and durable street bike. It is not designed for off-road use, but is capable in those terrains as well. The vehicle comes with a specialized helmet complete with optics system and heads-up display representing potential targets (other vehicles).

Hardpoints. Within the front of the cycle is a compartment, referred to as a Hardpoint by the military professionals of the Frontier. Larger vehicles have more than one Hardpoint. This compartment may be equipped with a standard rifle or screen of any of the basic types, along with a 25% fee for the rigging and modification required to fit it in place. The ammunition/power source for the item added is accessible from the driver's seat.

For example: Your character wants to put a Laser Rifle in his Infiltrator's Hardpoint. He purchases one from the standard equipment list for 800 credits, and pays (800x0.25=) 200 Credits for the rigging and mounting.

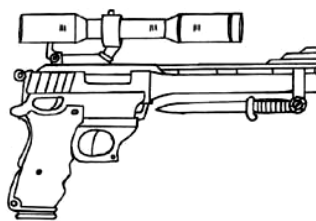
The Hardpoint is equipped with servos and linked to motion sensors in the helmet, with a cross-hair sight being displayed on the inner visor. Head movements are mimicked by the servos. The swivel and targeting system is limited; it can only fire in a 45 degree arc from the front of the cycle. Shooting to the side or rear of the cycle is up to the armaments of the driver.

The Infiltrator is powered by a standard Type 1 parattery and can go about 1,000 kilometers before needing replaced. The helmet communicates wirelessly to the ground cycle and itself is powered by a 20SEU powerclip or can be connected to a power backpack or backpack with a one-meter cord.

Benefits. The Infiltrator's helmet and swiveling Hardpoint combine to eliminate the penalty for shooting from a moving vehicle (regardless of speed). The optics in the helmet linked to the sensors on the ground cycle result in receiving no penalty for shooting at night. The durable plating nullifies the +2 adjustment normally associated with rolls on the Vehicle Damage Table.



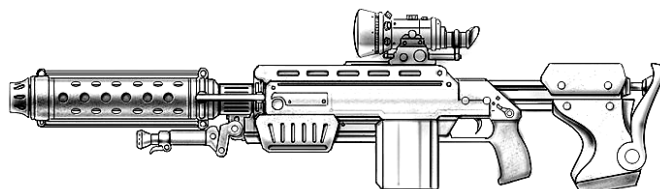
**The Infiltrator
Ground Assault Cycle**



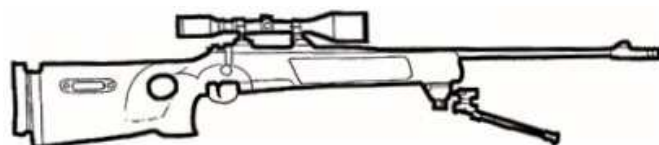
**Gunnam
Auto Pistol**



**Ropes
Semi-Automatic**



**MR-17 Heavy
Assault Rifle**



**CKA Hi-Ler
Hunting Rifle**

Miscellaneous Equipment	Cost (Cr)	Wgt (kg)
CKA Fast-draw Holster Eliminates the -3 IM penalty when drawing weapon during combat.	65	--

Ammunition	Cost (Cr)	Wgt (kg)
Extended Pistol Bulletclip Holds 30 bullets instead of standard 20, -1 to IM because of added bulk.	5	--
Extended Rifle Bulletclip Holds 30 bullets instead of standard 20, -1 to IM because of added bulk.	10	--

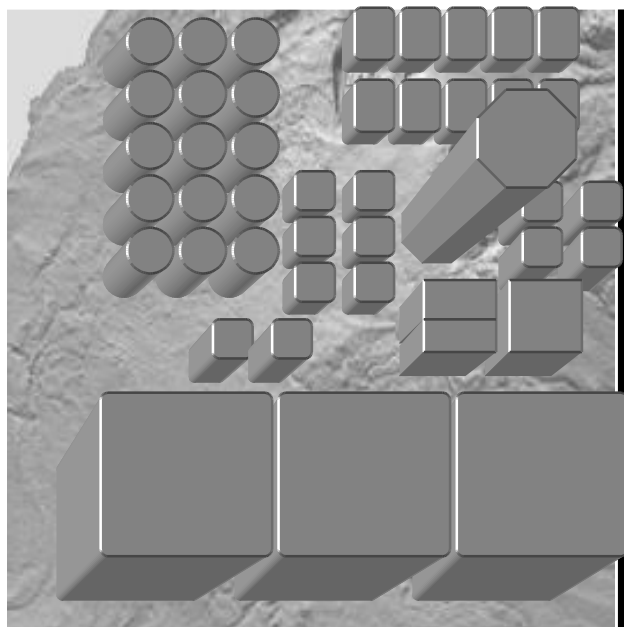
Vehicle Type	Cost (Cr)	-- Top Speed -- kph	m/turn	-- Cruise Speed -- kph	m/turn	Accel/ Decel	Passen- gers	Cargo Limit
Infiltrator Ground Cycle	4,000	120kph	200m/t	60kph	100m/t	100/40	2	20kg, 0.5 cubic meter

Weapons	Cost (Cr)	Wgt (kg)	Damage	Ammo	SEU	Rate	Defense	Range (PB/S/M/L/E)
Ropes Semiautomatic Pistol	150	1.5	1d10 per bullet	20 rounds	--	3	Inertia	5/15/30/60/150
Gunnam Auto Pistol	200	2.0	1d10/5d10	20 rounds	--	3(1)	Inertia	5/15/30/60/150
+Telescopic Sight Use range category one step better	+50	+0.5	--	--	--	1	--	--
+Laser Sight +10 to hit in PB no help past 5m	+70	+0.5	--	--	--	1	--	--
+Flashlight -1 IM due to the added bulk	+10	+0.5	--	--	--	--	--	--
+DIRK bayonet PS adds to damage caused in melee	+10	+0.5	1d10	--	--	--	--	--
MR-17 Heavy Assault Rifle	480	5.0	1d10+1 per bullet or burst of 5d10+5	20 rounds	--	3(1)	Inertia	10/40/100/150/300
CKA Hi-Ler Hunting Rifle	700	4.0	2d10 per bullet	20 rounds	--	1	Inertia	10/70/200/500/1km

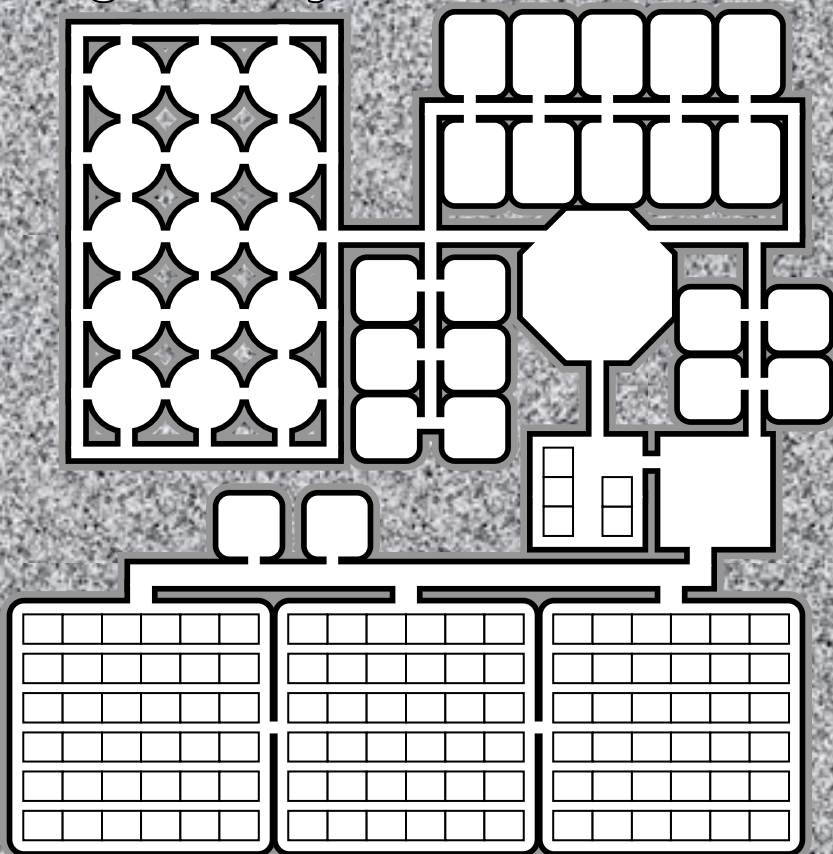
Notes:
+10 to hit when set on
a solid surface.
Use range category
one step better.

LOCATIONS

by Bill Logan



Original Layout



Remember the effects of gravity on Araks IV: Carrying Capacity is decreased 20kg... most characters will be "encumbered" all the time. The distance a character can leap or vault is decreased 5m, and the height from which a character can jump safely is reduced by 10m. If he falls from a height (such as the roof of the 20m tall Tech Center), damage is increased by +10! If the life support is energized, there is gravity compensation that reduces the gravity to 1.0g within the colony.

ROCKROOST MINING COLONY

Built entirely of drop-ship mining components and compartmentalized living arrangements, the first mining colony of Araks IV (dubbed "Rockroost" by the locals of the time) was a nightmare story with a disappointing ending. From the beginning, the residents had a lot of trouble keeping the interlocking walktubes connected, and in today's ruins only the main buildings exist.

The colony was about 250 strong, consisting of miners, geologists, laborers and chemists from all over the Frontier (although mostly Yazirian). After ten years, the uranium readings turned out to be false (but mysteriously, the planet still scans true for it today!) and the mining colony dried up. Hopeful miners have set up home here several times since, but to date no Uranium has been found.

The octagonal Tech Center near the center is from the original dropship that surveyed the planet, but scavengers have long since absconded with anything valuable there, leaving behind a tall rusted-out shell of a building. Surprisingly, the life support equipment in the Services Bay is functional if powered, because the technology was too antiquated for modern scavengers to find useful.

If you listen hard in the right social circles, you'll hear people whisper that the pirate captain Marshum Braiss has set up a hideout here, and his crew keep kidnapped women in the old living arrangement pods to the south, for their idle pleasure.

ADVERSARIES

CREATURES OF HENTZ

by Bill Logan

This issue's Adversaries section covers a handful of the many animals found on the planet Hentz, in the Araks system.

AMBRIKAHN



Type	Medium Carnivore
Number	1-2
Move	Fast (90m/turn)
IM/RS	+6/60
Stamina	80
Attack	70 two front claws and one bite
Damage	2d10 each claw, 2d10 bite
Special Attack	Rake with rear claws for +3d10 if both front claws successfully hit.
Special Defense	None
Native World	Hentz mountains

DESCRIPTION: The ambrikahn are grey or reddish in color, and have tough skin stretched tightly over large muscles. Their body is almost feline in shape, though their heads have long muzzles more like a canine. Large ears sweep back when in action, but flop simply when the beast is at rest. Its powerful front claws are obvious, and do not retract. When attacking, the ambrikahn is a graceful awe-inspiring work of art.

The ambrikahn were not transplanted to Hentz during the great Yazirian Relocation. They were native to Waloo (Pavor) where they were a constant source of worry for young children playing outdoors in the mountains. The engineers and terraformists omitted them from the migration process.

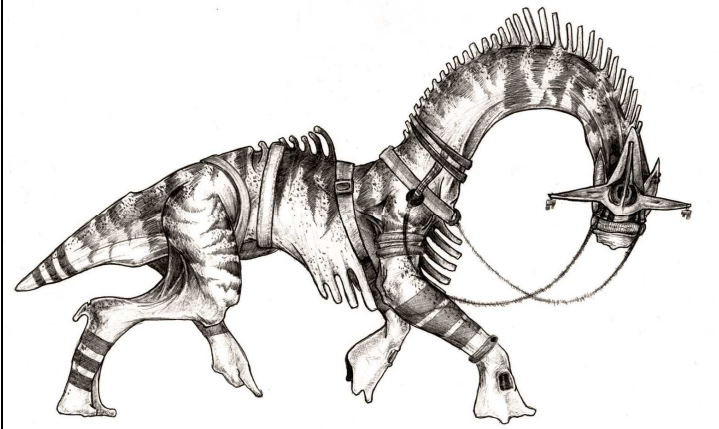
Unfortunately, they kept the population of ground shanks in check, and since the shanks were transplanted, their numbers spread unchecked across the land, devouring valuable resources.

So the ambrikahn was brought over and allowed to flourish, and lives now in the mountains, coming down only to hunt its preferred prey: the ground shank.

The ambrikahn are stealthy, and prey have a -20 to their Intuition roll to avoid surprise. Their senses are keen, as they are natural predators, so they have a 70% chance to avoid being surprised.

If both front claws hit successfully, the ambrikahn can automatically rake with its rear claws for an additional 3d10 damage.

GROUND SHANK



Type	Large Herbivore
Number	10-100 herd
Move	Fast (90m/turn, 25km/hour)
IM/RS	+5/45
Stamina	80
Attack	45
Damage	1d10 nip
Special Attack	a herd can stampede for 10d10 damage (half if RS avoidance roll)
Special Defense	none
Native World	Hentz, plains

DESCRIPTION: Ground shanks are large creatures with soft fur covering their bodies. Their coloration varies dramatically, but all possess striped rings around their ankles of dark color – typically dark brown or black. A series of spots covers their necks and backs, to help camouflage them in tall fields of drygrass in which they graze. The long necks of the shank can reach low trees for additional nutrients, and they are fond of urishanuts that grow naturally throughout Hentz.

These creatures have been the Yazirian premier beast of burden since the beginning of the species' existence. It originated on Waloo (Pavor) and was transplanted to Hentz during the relocation.

Today, ground shanks numbers are so high that ambrikahns had to be introduced to keep their numbers in check. Because of how plentiful they are, the cost of a ground shank is now under 100 Credits.

The ground shank had an aerial cousin, the air shank, that seemed identical other than the ringed markings around the ankles and tail (and of course, wings). The air shank was hunted to extinction for food and leather long ago.

Shanks alone are pretty harmless. They can nip at their enemies with their small teeth, but the strength of their jaws is designed to chew grass, not meat and bone. But in a herd, their numbers can be spurred to stampede by fire or proximity of a predator. A living being caught in a stampede takes 10d10 damage, but a successful Reaction Speed check will cut that damage in half (round in favor of the character).

They are called tunneler "queens" because mature tunnelers carry a sack of eggs around in their underbellies, awaiting fertilization. If two tunneler queens meet up and battle, the victor eats the sack of the victim and this begins the fertilization process.

YAKA BEARS



Type	Medium Omnivore
Number	1-5
Move	Fast (90 meters per turn)
IM/RS	+4/40
Stamina	45
Attack	45
Damage	1d10 two claws, 1d10 antler bash
Special Attack	once per day: spray debilitates (-15 to all actions) for 1d10 turns if RS avoidance roll fails.
Special Defense	none
Native World	Hentz, jungles

DESCRIPTION: Covered with fur, the yaka bear has a tan coat that sheds regularly. It has small claws on the end of its dog-like feet. The face has a pair of antlers that curl around from the top of the head, around the side, to point forward. Rivals tend to clash their heads together, rattling their antlers in opposition to one another.

Yaka bears are not native to Hentz, like most native life they were transplanted from Waloo (Pavor).

Yaka bears are harmless, tending to eat the flora of the jungles in which they dwell. They are territorial, however, and will defend their dens with all they have, which admittedly isn't much.

Yaka bears are able to release a stench from a gland located under their necks. Being sprayed by a yaka bear is like getting pepper spray in the face... very debilitating. Anyone caught by a yaka bear spray will gag and choke and their eyes will water horribly. This lasts for 1d10 turns, during which time they have a penalty to all actions equal to -15. A Reaction Speed check can avoid the spray. It takes about one full day of rest for a yaka bear to regenerate its spray gland.

TUNNELER QUEEN



Type	Small Carnivore
Number	1-10
Move	Medium (Slow burrowing)
IM/RS	+5/50
Stamina	60
Attack	70 (four tentacles)
Damage	2d10 per tentacle
Special Attack	none
Special Defense	chitinous shell acts as skeinsuit
Native World	Hentz, underground

DESCRIPTION: The tunneler queen is a small insect-like creature found in subterranean locations. It has four long barbed arms that end each in hooked spikes, and a long snake-like tail. Its entire length is covered with overlapping chitin, except its softer underbelly that it slithers about on. The creature is yellowish in color when seen in the light, which seldom happens.

First discovered by miners looking for valuable resources, the tunneler is able to burrow and move about fairly quickly through solid ground, even hard limestone. It normally feeds on the larvae and carcasses of other underground critters.

CHARACTER RACES

BORA-KAI

by Bill Logan

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE

The Bora-kai are bipedal, with two arms, similar in external shape to humans. Their skin is leathery, grey, dense and covered with fine bristly hairs (much like the skin of an elephant). They grow no larger thicknesses of hair anywhere on their bodies.

Their heads have a single row of ridges that begin at the front of their foreheads and trail down the back of their necks, then all the way down to their tailbone. These ridges are bony protrusions that have no known function.

Although their bodies are not meant for speed, they are strong and durable, able to carry heavy loads and do so for a very long time.

On the inside, they are very different from humans. The bora-kai possess a complex web-like network of interconnecting bones and cartilage that serves as a powerful protective layer against outside harm. They have two hearts, one that takes over for the other at even intervals (a monthly cycle), though if one fails they can operate off the other indefinitely. Several other organs are redundant as well.

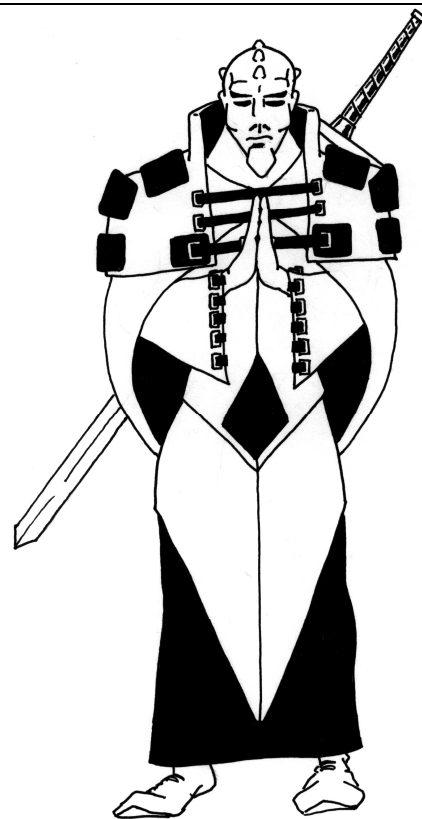
Bora-kai females have four breasts, and men have four nipples. They often produce two or more children per birth and the mother requires this level of nutrient provision to care for her young.

SENSES

The Bora-kai have poor senses of touch; their dense skin lacks any decent level of tactile feedback. This also increases their tolerance for pain. The fine hairs on their bodies can sense slight changes in air current and pressure, however.

The Bora-kai have narrow eyes with all-black cornea, retina, and pupil. These dark pools of ink see well in the dark, yet have very little trouble in full daylight. Even by starlight, the Bora-kai can see as well as in the daytime. They cannot see in total darkness.

Their senses of hearing, smell, and taste are virtually the equal of humans.



Characteristics

Average Size	2.1 meters male, 2.0 meters female
Average Mass	125kg male, 95kg female
Average Lifespan	80 years male, 120 years female.
Reproductive System	heterosexual, viviparous
Body Temperature	31 degrees Celsius

SPEECH

These beings have a traditional larynx and vocal system capable of producing normal ranges of sound, but their voices tend to be extremely low in frequency. Their deep baritones make incredible melodies when they choose to sing the songs of their homeland. Their speech is slow and careful-sounding, giving the impression of wisdom.

SOCIETY AND CUSTOMS

During the second Sathar war, several Sathar ships and outposts were destroyed, many of which crashed on various worlds. In order to prevent their technology or the mysteries of their existence from being known, they all self-destructed... except one.

On 87PF during the siege of Sathar Outpost #1 (a fortified space station with its own moons), Strike Force Nova noted two large escape pods that jettisoned. They sent detachments to eliminate the escape vessel but were surprised to find not Sathar inside, but something else entirely.

The Bora-kai were a captive race, used for a hundred generations as slave labor by the dreaded Sathar. These bora-kai were all that remained, and they wanted to live. Strike Force Nova took them captive and tried in vain to learn some secrets about the Sathar from them.

The Bora-kai were never a star faring race, and their understanding of space and its physics is limited. They come from a world long destroyed by the Sathar (no remaining Bora-kai has any memory of his homeland). Their society was feudal, and their king and queen are long dead. The living remnants of this once proud if primitive society are all descendants of knights once in the employ of their queen.

The Bora-kai of today were raised in tyranny and treated poorly for ten years by UPF, before political pressure encouraged their release. They all agreed to split up and explore the Frontier, learn from these people who have conquered their enemy the Sathar and secured their rescue. They hope to find a place for their people to thrive, and seek any evidence that others of their species survived the destruction and captivity of the dreaded worms.

Bora-kai are honorable and intelligent. They are primitive only in their political views. Bora-kai of today have learned to get along in a Frontier society, even if they still think Void space is a magical place.

They prefer the use of melee weapons over anything else, and tend to shun technology in preference to simpler things. Battling with a great sword (modifier +0, damage 4d10, Initiative Modifier -1) is a matter of personal expression and strength, and the Bora-kai knights make their own (a craft passed on through the generations, even in captivity).

ATTITUDES

The Bora-kai get along well enough with all races they encounter. Because of their antiquated viewpoint, they often draw parallels to ancient wisdoms that modern people would miss. Because of this, many people consider them more warrior poets or scholars than military assets.

Vrusk have taken a special interest in the Bora-kai, and there is a non-profit organization called the VBO, Vrusks for Bora-kai Organization, dedicated to

the understanding of this ancient people and aiding them in their pursuit to seek roots or plant new ones.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Night Vision. The Bora-kai can see well in the dark, like a Yazirian. Unlike a Yazirian, though, they are not penalized for bright lights. Their eyes adapt too quickly to be flash-blinded and their dark eyes absorb errant light and keep it out of their pupils.

Durability. Probably the main reason the Sathar used them for slave labor is their incredible durability. Their redundant organs and advanced network of bones and cartilage result in being able to sustain more damage than their Stamina score would normally allow.

In game terms, they can take 5 more points of damage than their actual Stamina score. This racial ability can be increased just as other race's abilities, up to 100. A very powerful Bora-kai with this racial ability maxed-out and a Stamina score of 70 would be able to take 170 points of damage before dying.

When asked to make Current Stamina checks, players of Bora-kai characters must use their Stamina score or their current stamina, whichever is lowest.

For example: a Bora-kai has Stamina of 55 and this special ability at starting level (+5). This means his Current Stamina is 60. If he had to make a Current Stamina check, he would roll against 55. If he took ten points of damage and then had to make another Stamina check, they would roll against whichever is lowest (in this case, their current stamina of 50).

BORA-KAI CHARACTERS

Ability Scores	
STR/STA	+10
DEX/RS	-5
INT/LOG	-5
PER/LDR	+0

Movement	
Walking	5 meters per turn
Running	20 meters per turn
Hourly	4 kilometers/hour

Special Abilities	
Nightvision	Can see equally well in all but complete dark.
Durability	Current Stamina maximum is +5 higher than STA score would normally allow.

ADVENTURE!

ROGUE PLANET

by Andrew Modro

Presented here are several different possible adventures growing out of a single seed. In each of these adventures, a minor planet that was ejected from the solar system of its creation has been discovered wandering through space. What secrets the planet holds are left to the characters to discover.

THE WANDERER IN THE DARK

For several weeks rumors grow among space travelers of a ghost planet drifting in the dark between the stars. Eventually word spreads around that expeditions are being mounted and are looking for crew to recruit. The Wanderer has been located, and the race to discover its secrets is on.

There are several candidates for an expedition. PGC is one of the most likely, but other corps looking to get a leg-up (or even local entrepreneurs) could also take an interest in this "ghost planet". Experienced characters who are in possession of a vessel of their own, or part of a group with a ship, can also attempt to mount an expedition of their own.

The characters may arrive first, but others will be hot on their heels.

THE SLEEPERS

In this version of the adventure, explorations beneath the surface of the rogue world reveal signs of intelligent inhabitation -- cavernous, tomb-like complexes burrowed deep below. Advanced power plants keep computers and machinery just active enough to maintain the lives of cryogenically frozen aliens. How many aliens sleep deep within the planet? Who are they? Where do they come from? What happened to their world?

WAR IN THE NIGHT

Whether or not the rogue planet is inhabited, in this version of the adventure it is rich in resources, a treasure trove floating free and waiting to be exploited. Several rival groups arrive to lay claim to the planet, and in short order their disagreements and posturing become a multi-way shooting war. Do the characters work for one of the disputants? Do they have their own claim to stake and defend? Do they work for the Pan-Galactic Corporation or the Federation, seeking to achieve a peaceful solution?

CARNIVAL

(This idea is inspired by George R. R. Martin's masterful novel, "Dying of the Light". The author highly recommends this novel to all science fiction fans!)

In this variation, the planet has been discovered because it is wandering close to a star system and, eventually, will drift close enough to become temporarily habitable on the surface. PGC and several other large corporations have quickly laid claim to the world and are set to begin creating a wonder of the Frontier -- a vacation carnival planet, where they can use tourist revenues to fund terraforming and technological experiments. The opportunity for mystery and adventure in such an environment is boundless.

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

As above, the planet is drifting close to an inhabited star system, but this time it's on a collision course with a major world. When an expedition to the rogue planet discovers that it seems to be filled with ancient technology -- but no sleeping inhabitants -- what will be done? Is the rogue planet in actuality a "world ship" and can it be diverted in time?

WAYLAID

by Bill Logan

Note: The characters start the session at a market on any planet the referee desires, looking for a tavern or casino to spend their credits, or seeking a specific thing known to exist in this market for an eccentric employer who has trusted them with the money needed to purchase the item.

A nervous Vrusk approaches the characters and asks to talk to them in private, heading into a hole-in-the-wall cantina and hoping they'll follow.

The Vrusk is T'kita, and she's afraid because she says she's being followed. She asks the characters if they'll sit nearby at a table and keep an eye on her for a few hours, and that she'll reward them if they do.

The characters have a seat, and T'kita sends drinks over to their table, delivered by a large man wearing an apron two sizes too small. She sits nervously and tries not to look at the characters.

About a half hour after the characters partake of the drinks, they must each make a Stamina check with a penalty of -20; the drinks are poisoned with a powerful sleep aid. Anyone who remains conscious is attacked by three humans (one was the fake waiter who brought the drinks) who seem to come out of nowhere with electrostunners, while T'kita screams and tries to get away... they should all get stunned.

When they awaken, they're in an alley behind the cantina. All equipment is gone, even some of their clothing. T'kita is nowhere to be found. Inside the cantina, the owner and employees are locked in a closet pounding and yelling for help (they were stunned by the three humans when they saw T'kita duck into the bar). It looks like the characters failed to protect the young lady Vrusk, or themselves.

One of the characters notices T'kita dropped something during the scuffle... a small note addressed to her, opened and easily readable. It says:

T'kita -

They're on to us. I had to hide the money at the train station, under a garbage bin near the kiosk. I'm going into hiding and suggest you do the same. If they find out what we've done, the project will all be for nothing, and the hatchlings will be killed because of what they are.

*Be careful,
-Bastion*

Who is Bastion? What project were he and T'kita working on? Who were the three humans and just who is the good guy in all this? And what's so important about some kind of hatchling that is worth all this violence? All the characters know is they alone hold the knowledge that some money is stashed in the train station, and they're all now quite broke... sounds like the next step to the adventure will take place near a garbage bin by a kiosk!

CROM'S RETURN

by Ashley Raburn: izlear@gmail.com

Editor's note: This adventure assumes the characters begin on a starship. If they're starting-level characters, this could mean they work as crew on some ship owned by a mega-corp of your choosing. If they're advanced characters, they may be pilots, engineers, or gunners working for a starship owner. They might even have their own ship.

The crew are on their return trip home from a long stint on the job and are asked to check out a distress call that has recently been picked up. The call is a faint "help me" and has been traced to an archeology mission that lost contact several days before. As the crew finds the ship and boards, they are greeted with a strong stench and a dim red emergency light. As they begin to explore the ship they find body parts of the crew. Further exploration will find service robots that appear to have been killing the crew off.

In a small closet there is a crew member who has hidden himself away and is now suffering from a fear of robots. In the bridge the image is more grizzly than even the rest of the ship: there is a body of a young female (the captain of the ship) with her head opened up. On the control panel of the ship near the body there is a sealed container with a brain. The container is wired into the control console.

Why are the robots killing the crew? Who is controlling the robots? What were the archeologists looking for?

The Archeologists were investigating an early robotics factory that had long been lost due to war and destruction on the particular planet 200 years earlier (in 94PF, during the "Age of Adventure" when many corporations raced to explore the stars – often in direct conflict with one another!). It had taken 200 years for the atmosphere to once again become hospitable. The society of the planet had long been the subject of debate as the center of a cult. A cult of robotics so to speak, people who worshiped robots. Alistair Crom had long been said to have been a high lord in the cult. Alistair lived a long lonely existence; with the help of robotics he was now no more than a robot with a hand full of organic parts – a Cyborg of the highest form. As the Archeologists began to make noise he woke. He programmed the ship robots to kill the crew and make sure their findings never reached civilization. He also ordered them to bring the brain of the captain of the expedition.

What did the Archeologists find?

The cult had not only been a cult of robots, but were also practicing self perseverance with the assistance of robotics. They were practicing a complete rebuild of humanity into cyborgs to survive what they called "the downfall of humanity." Their research had been based on an ancient civilization known only as the Cys who had long been thought extinct. The archeologists found the ordinance to their resting place.

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