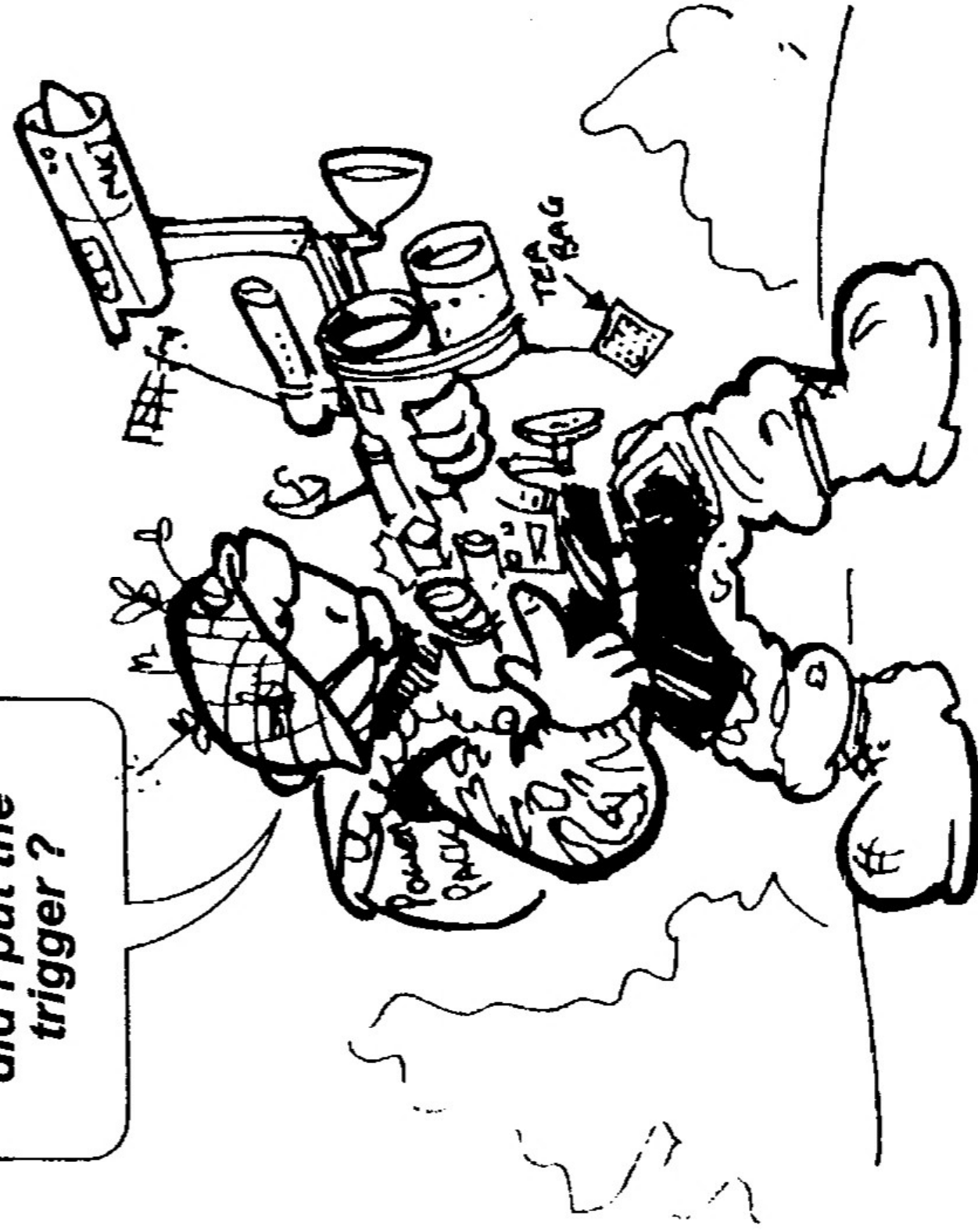


///FIREFIGHT///

AUTUMN 1997

ISSUE 7.1

*Where the Hell
did I put the
trigger ?*



///FIREFIGHT///

The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Magazine

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If you would like to write a short article or letter for FIREFIGHT then just send a typed or clearly written transcript to the editor at the subscription address.

Longer articles may be submitted on a 3 ½ inch disk in most word processor formats.

The editor reserves the right to alter any material submitted.

The trade names in this magazine are used for descriptive purposes only.

Any alterations made by readers to their own property are entirely at their own risk.

**THE FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF
ARTICLES OR ADVERTISEMENTS FOR**

FIREFIGHT 7.2 is

DECEMBER 15TH 1997

TAGGING DIARY 1997/8

Just when you thought it was safe to put down the soldering iron and reach for the TV's short range IR blaster (remote control to non-taggers) the horizon lights up with muzzle flashes. Late in this season we have a veritable banquet of delights for all and sundry. Feast your eyes on this lot.

SEPTEMBER

26th-28th - **High Frontier 'Second Contact'** Overstone Northampton

Contact : Paul Watson (0114) 2440565

OCTOBER

24th - 26th **Menace Unseen 'Star Wars'** - Overstone Northampton

Contact : Paul Watson (0114) 2440565

31st - November 1st **"Semper Fidelis" Space .. Above and Beyond**
organised by Black Watch at Overstone Northampton

Contact : Liam Thompson (01604) 710837

NOVEMBER

15th **"If you go down to the woods today..."** organised by BAD Company
Downgate Woods, Kent.

Contact : Andy Smith (0171) 6202800

1998

FEBRUARY

28th **TAGCON 8** - Nuneaton Arts Centre, Warwickshire.

Contact : Dai Rees (01203) 453673

APRIL

17th-19th **'ALLIANCE' Battletech** organised by BAD Company
Downgate Woods, Kent.

Contact : Andy Smith (0171) 6202800

MAY

22nd-25th **DROPZONE '98** **THE** National Tag Event
Thoresby Park, Nottinghamshire.

Contact : Tim Atkinson (0181) 4022724

If you are planning any tags please get in contact. Remember adverts
are free in **FIREFIGHT**

Good Luck to all game organisers.

Editor's Bit

And which bit is that pray?!

Ok somewhere between light dark there comes a balance in our lives. For every Yin there is a Yang. To be blunt this edition was supposed to be out at the beginning of September but between new game popping up all over the place and me being too lazy to write anything for myself it has staggered on to the end of September. This will no doubt upset those masses of you who have article brimming up inside you ready for the original copy deadline of 13th of October. Well the next one is a XMAS EDITION so get your thinking caps on.

I must also apologise to those running game early in September for the lack of publicity. However, from accounts I have received the Tags at Merdon were very much enjoyed despite a threatened downpour that never materialised.

This edition again has Chris's Herculean efforts to educate us all in the intricacies of the WILD CARD 'Shared Universe'. He is also going to be a key element in the running theme for next years DROPZONE God help them all.

There still appear to be plenty of tags around the Brigade are going to have a couple more training sessions with some of the Old Gang sticking their heads above the parapets.

If you have been to a tag recently and or those in the near future please write down what you feel. It doesn't matter whether it is an article a documentary or just a letter. Everyone still needs to know there are other nutters out there trying to IR each other to fake death.

A last couple of points. TAGCON 8 set for 28th February 1998 will not go ahead unless some people come forward to talk demonstrate or present something at it. If everyone feels they know everything and don't want to talk to each other in a warm convivial atmosphere then fine. The last point is that of the starting of a Small Ads column. This fine by me as many people may benefit coming in or leaving the hobby. Nigel Carr first enquired as he has some personal kit he would like to sell. As ever there will be no charge to advertise.

Well that's enough waffling on with the show. See you soon (thro' a 'scope)

Dai

(aka CAMO KING, aka BUSH)

PS. I appear to have mislaid my first ever tag pistol, It is plain black with a flexible stock, cord sling, 4x20 'scope added and a white 007 on the bottom of the grip. This is my first ever gun and it has great sentimental value to me I've changed the batteries once since 1989. Please could people keep an eye out for it

DropZone '97

as seen by
David A Harvey

As is usual, I spent the late May bank holiday weekend (23rd to 26th) at DropZone which was held at Thorsby Park, the same site as last year. The event this year had an overall theme with all but two games set in the Star Wars universe but unlike the Stargate games last year the scenarios were not linked together to form a campaign.

Thanks to a lift with the redoubtable Dave Bodger we arrived in good time to pitch tents, book in and say hello to a few people before the DropZone committee gave their welcoming address.

In keeping with the Star Wars theme of the weekend the Friday evening game concerned an attempt by the Rebel Alliance to conduct a covert reconnaissance of an area in Imperial hands prior to a major attack preferably without alerting the Imperial patrols.

Since I fancied some sneaking around I signed up with the Alliance and was assigned to Blue squad, one of six colour coded five man squads. We were detailed as a support unit to

provide backup, if necessary, for the units on our flanks sent to check out Imperial supply dumps and the potential landing site.

The mission went badly for the Alliance who were unable to coordinate their large number of small squads in the dark without radios over unfamiliar ground. Even with a number of native guides to get us from place to place the lack of communication and squad maps cost us dearly. As was inevitable the squads lost contact with each other in the dark and then found it difficult to re-group or identify others in the darkness especially because we hadn't organised recognition phrases, even the coloured tabards weren't much help because people (myself included) didn't think of or were afraid to use torches in case they gave themselves away. Eventually each Alliance squad became an isolated hardpoint which was picked off by the less numerous but better coordinated Imperial units. Still blue

squad managed to give the storm-troopers a bloody nose with an adhoc ambush. But overall a decisive Imperial victory.

The Saturday morning game, clear. Unfortunately I was just The Future is in your Jeans, was finalising a deal with the prison forger another Dai Rees production (he must be a glutton for punishment). Set in a prison camp where the usual routine of the staff and prisoners (self interest, petty corruption and wheeler dealing) is upset by the arrival of an Imperial Research team interested in testing and collecting the genetic material of the prisoners.

Having signed on as the prison doctor I set up shop in the paintball fort and proceeded to do a little genetic testing myself to try and discover what the research team was looking for. It turned out that they were there to pick out potential telepaths and conduct a little practical eugenics by eliminating the weak and stupid (Hmmm, better keep my head down). Having discovered this I came up with a plan to make some money and stop the researchers from denuding the camp of prisoners. After all it would be the distinctly out numbered camp staff who would have to deal with any troubled stirred up by the summary execution of prisoners.

In collaboration with Alex Clark (Camp Commandant and man with contacts) we arranged to, for a small fee, screen any volunteering prisoner and let them know whether the researchers would be interested in them and if so they would be offered the option of buying a fake ID which would put them in the

company, in the guise of Gamma

Enter, stage left, the reason for the shuttle crash namely The Fifth Brigade, a long established mercenary company, in the guise of Gamma

Enter, stage left, the reason for the shuttle crash namely The Fifth Brigade, a long established mercenary company, in the guise of Gamma

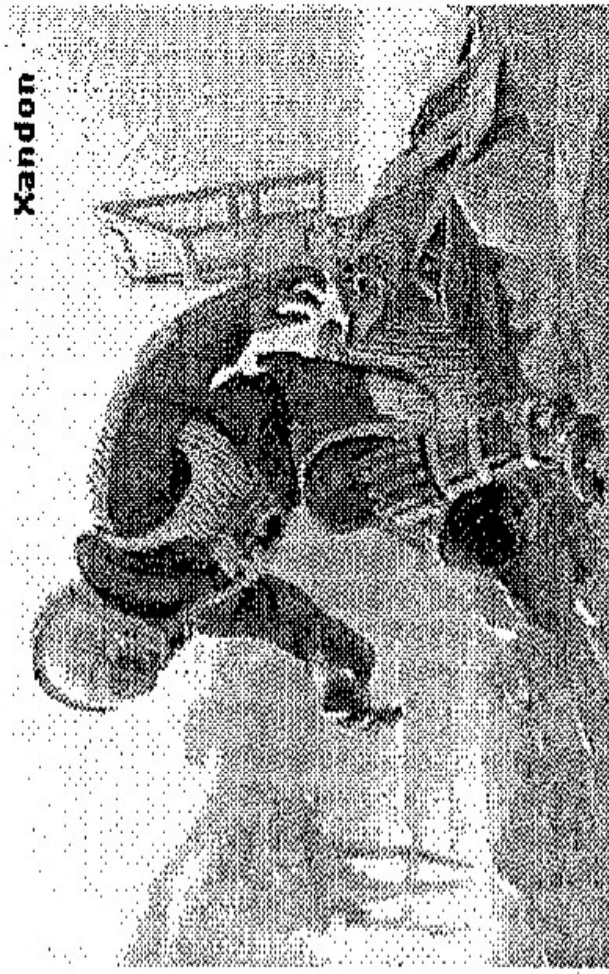
Squad sent in to retrieve the computer core which the shuttle was carrying.

Following our briefing we were conveyed by transit-van class shuttle down to the surface of Heewa 3-4. Having, under the guidance of our commander Graham

Parton, divided ourselves into us and shoot us to bits. Thankfully, fireteams and headed out towards the despite fifty percent of our force crash site. We soon found the nipping off for an hour to raid the abandoned shuttle and followed the Imperial base because they were bloodtrails which lead us to the bored!, the wait for the dropship went mortally wounded crew who were without incident and we all got back trying to escape with the core. Our safely. Chalk up another successful technician took a look at the core and mission for Fifth Brigade.

after some field repairs pronounced it fit to travel but noted that its heavy duty power cell was very fragile and if damaged prone to making its immediate surroundings distinctly hazardous and we couldn't leave it behind because without power the core would be nothing but an enormous doorstep (and embarrassment when we got back).

Slowly and carefully, mainly because the core was big and heavy, made our way back to our dropsite and when our radio window opened Graham called for our extraction. Surprise, surprise when we finally raised the ship we were told that the shuttle would be with us in ninety minutes. So we formed a perimeter and waited for everyone else to close in on



Xandon

Overall, a rather relaxing game and although I wouldn't want to play too many games where we won because we didn't encounter the opposition it was actually quite pleasant to not only successfully complete a mission but to do it by more than the skin of our teeth. Had we made contact with the Imperials, who were equipped with nerve gas grenades, it could easily have been an entirely different affair... as I know from leading the Fifth Brigade team in the first incarnation of this game at the Fiat Lux! Merdon Weekend last year. Still I understand that when the Imperials encountered the Rebel Alliance they misjudged the wind direction and had their gas drift back over their own lines...



To spice things up the natives were lights out and the defenders only had limited power for the searchlights and limited medical supplies.

Although a very simple scenario it worked very well and no one was more surprised than I was that we held the base to

Saturday evening was barbecue the end. Very atmospheric and tense time and a splendid spread, including especially when the medical supplies some great kebabs, was put together by Jenny Watson with the help of small team of hard working volunteers. Same again next year please.

The Saturday evening game All Alone In The Night was a collaboration between Alex Clark and Dai Rees (this chap must run on Duracells, err... scrap that, lithiums) with Dai providing the idea and Alex running it.

The game was a Rourkes Drift style scenario with a small group of heavily armed Rebel Alliance troops attempting to hold a firebase against numerous lightly armed hostile natives until a shuttle could return to evacuate them.

Although I thought the Alliance side didn't have a prayer of holding their position for a extended period, it sounded a like an interesting challenge as long as it lasted so I signed up with the Alliance.

the end. Very atmospheric and tense especially when the medical supplies ran short.

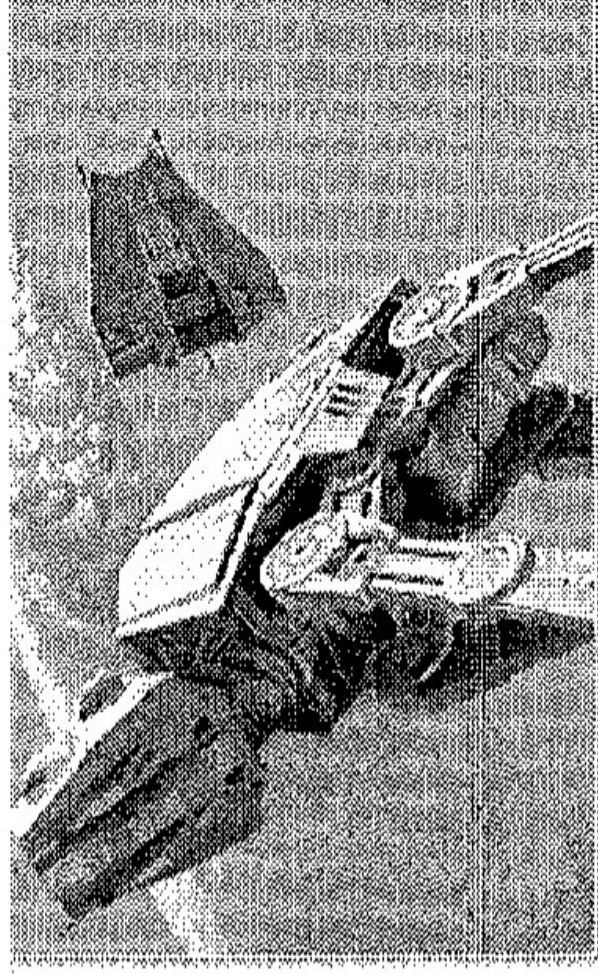
I hadn't actually planned to play Chris Ward's Sunday morning game, Star Trek - The Forgotten Generation, not because it didn't sound fun but because it sounded far too energetic. Plans changed suddenly when Chris knocked on my tent flap and said that he needed someone to play an invulnerable incarnation of the force and my name was top of the list. In the face of such overwhelming flattery what could I say.

The game was a great deal of fun, very silly and a perfect excuse to let off some steam with highlights including a Benny Hill style chase around the woods with Alex Clark trying to hit me with a very large axe, the one item in the game to which I was vulnerable, whilst being chased himself by a long line of others both on his side and mine trying to get the axe from him.

After lunch Nigel Crouch ran by the judges. This lead to more some flag games for the very keen but novelty teams but less tension which the lure of sun, tea and conversation meant that things ran very slowly at was too strong to resist.

Late on Sunday afternoon we got ready and made our way to the paintball fort for The Asda Own Brand Margarine National Pillage A Village Finals. This was a firm favourite in its first incarnation at DropZone'94 when Chris Hannaford offered us the chance to play groups of bandits attempting to extract the maximum amount of loot from a mildly defended village within the framework of a low rent action gameshow such as, the thankfully long dead and buried, Run The Gauntlet and Scavengers. The most successful tactic being to shoot everyone in the village (the penalty for killing civilians being insignificant compared to the trouble it saved) and then spend the remainder of your five minutes grabbing as much loot as possible.

This time there was a change of pace with the strict time limit replaced by a gong show style vote of boredom



by the judges. This lead to more novelty teams but less tension which meant that things ran very slowly at times. Especially since the Sadiators who replaced the civilians weren't allowed to fire until fired upon.

The style of the game was also different because the players had tasks to accomplish within the village to gain access to the more valuable pieces of plunder such as haggling with the Jawa (Chris Ward) for a key and finding the rocket launcher to kill the Predator guarding the other tower which gave things a more Crystal Maze feeling which was good.

It was fun to see this game again. Cheers Chris.

Having got back to camp, eaten, got changed, eaten, and drunk I copious amounts of tea and coffee I finally felt up to playing the Sunday evening game and I'm glad I did.

Put together by Nigel Carr
Twilight 2000 was set in an alternative near future where sectarian war in eastern Europe continues with the Balkanians and the Transilvanians at each others throats. Currently the Balkanians have the upper hand and are poised to assault an important road junction.



Well we found the injured man and discovered that a shipment of arms and supplies were being flown in for the Transilvanians to an impromptu airstrip at the other end of the site but the British had flown the coop. As we moved out a pair of individuals made

On the sidelines, the French have withdrawn their forces, British troops are acting as observers and taking no active part in the conflict and rumour has it that the Americans are trying to get the leaders of the two sides together for peace talks.

I was part of the Balkanian force and once we had worked out a series of recognition phrases to avoid shooting upon members of our own team Graham Parton, our commander, opened up our sealed orders and we discovered what we were actually there to do. The orders gave us a series of objectives to attain together with time limits within which to achieve them.

Initially we had twenty minutes to find an injured Balkanian soldier who had escaped from the Transilvanians with information as to what our opponents were up to. Whether or not we found him we had until insertion plus 40 minutes to make contact with the British in an area adjacent to the search area so we could take part in a joint reconnaissance mission.

their way up the path as we hid off to the side and having failed to reply correctly to a recognition call attempted to run when called upon to lay down their arms. As they attempted to run away firing we dropped them, they had no ID on but by their appearance we believe that they were Transilvanian irregulars.

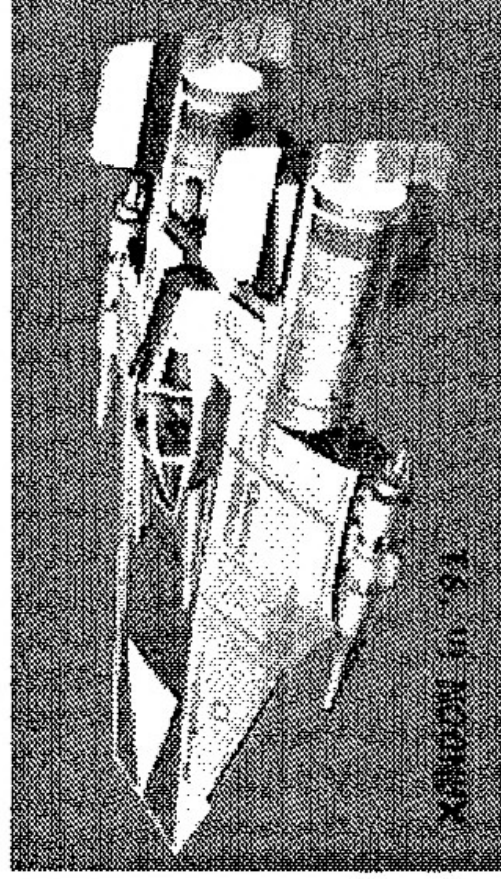
In the absence of any extra information from the British, who with hindsight must have been the people we heard moving past whilst we were searching for the casualty, we moved out in three fireteams to make for the airstrip in order to prevent the drop.

Eventually we reached the airstrip although not without incident. Whilst we were halted at a major junction Graham reasonably enough decided to check the map with his torch to see which path to take and a number of people crowded around him in the middle of the path to see what he was up to when suddenly about thirty feet up another path a second torch

came on revealing two heavily armed people who very definitely weren't with us.

Thankfully for us on the two of a 3,2,1 countdown to opening fire one of Gary Swanston's contact lenses had popped out preventing him and Steve Trent from hosing down about half our force who were clustered around Graham and wonderfully illuminated by his torch. If there is an angel who protects fools and innocents he and a bunch of his buddies were working overtime on our behalf then. Thankfully Gary found his contact lens.

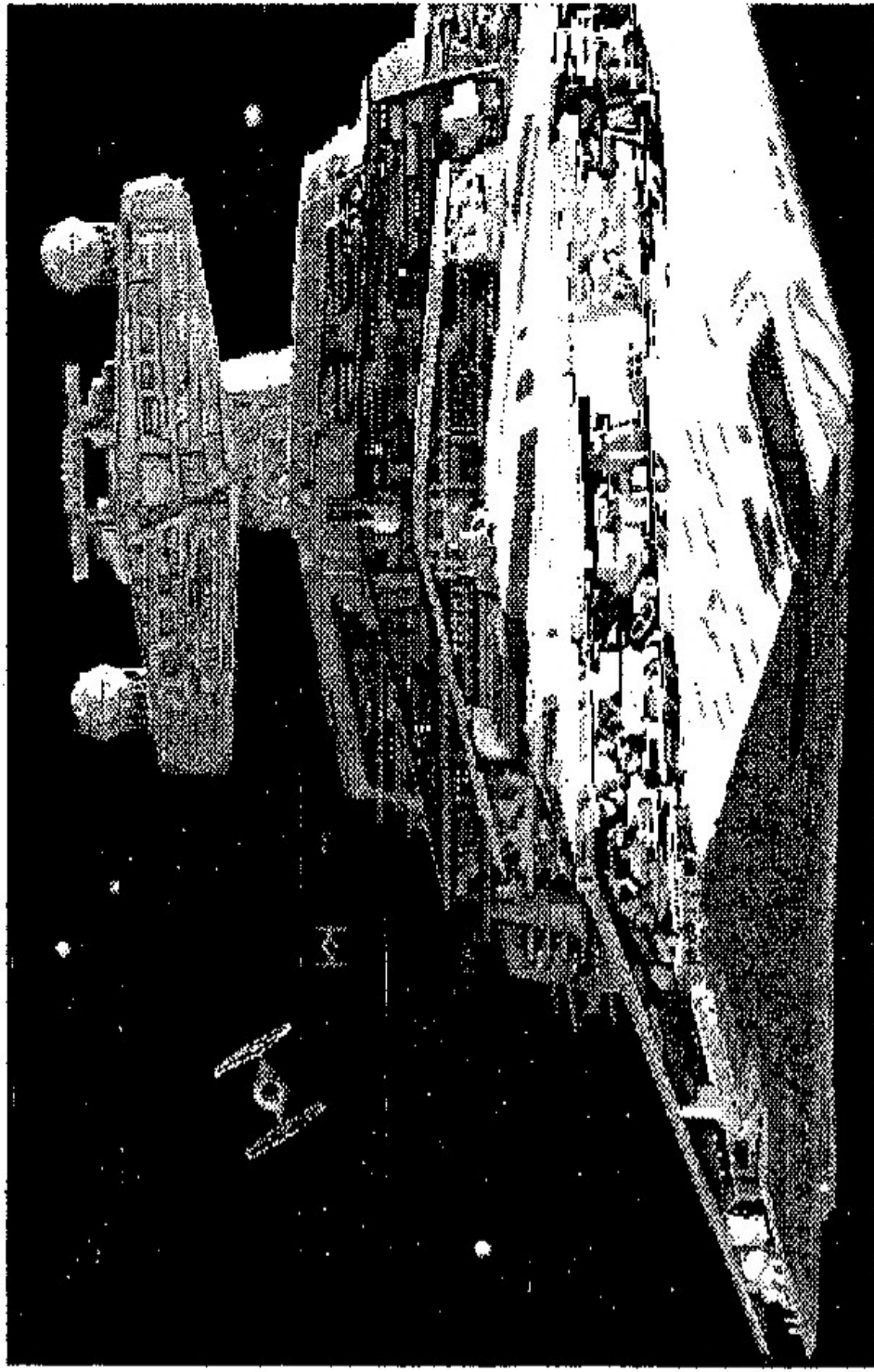
We made our way cautiously down to the landing field and my team worked our way across one of its edges and having spotted a group of the enemy we made a pop-up attack around a corner and pulled back losing my armour hits in the process. As we retreated one of the non-player umpires announced that while we had been moving around the strip there had been a successful landing and take-off. Golly these new stealth planes are quiet...



Actually the organisers had prepared and played a sound effect tape of a plane landing and taking off but the cassette player they had used wasn't loud enough for anyone to hear it. A nice idea but as I discovered when I tried the same thing several years ago a hard one to pull off, a slow moving van with its lights on so it doesn't run anyone over does the job better and in keeping with our mission you can see it to fill it full of lead.

Having failed to stop the supply drop it was suggested to Graham by the British whom we had found skulking around the perimeter of the strip that we should collect evidence of the illegal supply drop so our leaders could gain political capital from it. With this in mind some brave fellow dashed out and picked up the landing lights before the Transilvanians thought to do anything about it. We started to pull back slowly up the path. Far too slowly for my liking because the newly armed and equipped Transilvanians would soon be pouring up the path after us to recapture the evidence. Eventually we reached the junction at the top of the path and set an ambush for our pursuers.

Unfortunately, the first person to walk into the ambush was one of the umpires with a seriously bright torch so believing that we had been mistaken in thinking that we were being followed we broke ambush and set out again just as the real Transilvanians



arrived at the junction. A confused Person whose shuttle has crashed in running battle broke out which was the woods. To keep things balanced ended by the game over whistle.

I enjoyed this game. It has been a long time since I played a lights out military game and in the process been scared half to death through being an untrained soldier in unfamiliar territory in a gaming environment where there was no convenient dust off to a secure base for a few beers and a good nights sleep if things got hairy. A seriously enjoyable experience. Thanks Nigel.

With the game over it was back to camp for much beer, and frothing around the camp fire until well after dawn.

Sarah Clark's Monday morning game VIP invited players to form teams and "rescue" a Very Important

Person whose shuttle has crashed in the woods. To keep things balanced teams were built using a simple point system with extra points given at the organisers discretion for good costumes and team identity. I didn't play this game but I was amused to see that the VIP in question was Darth Vader frozen in carbonite and although frozen he could express his dislike of rough handling because when bumped a terminator gun in the prop was set off. Reports which came back say that a good time was had, and that Lord Vader ended the game in the hands of a Rebel Alliance snatch squad.

Thank you to the DropZone committee and all the game organisers for putting the event together. See you there next year.



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Hi Ranger II gun circuit board:

ammo counter, uses LEDs to display mag status
reload delay
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two emitter IR outputs
single or auto fire select
amplified sound
automatic switching between single or auto sound

Hi Ranger II gun circuit kit, with fine trigger:

power switch
reload switch
switch covers
speaker
fine quality wire
battery connector

solder

fire select switch

micro trigger switch (requires trigger to fit the gun, not supplied)
muzzle flash LED

mag status LEDs

Hi Ranger II gun circuit board

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Grenade lens unit, short range wide spread.

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made from ABS plastic.

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Please note that a soldering iron is required with a tip temperature of 310° for connecting wires to the circuit board.
Target Ranger performance may be affected if fitted to a non Hi Ranger circuit board.

Order Form

Please tick

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Please send the completed order form with payment to: Nigel Carr, 37 Test Road, Whitechurch, Hampshire, RG28 7LP.
(Tel. 01256 896738) Enquiries welcome. Netscape search for 'laser tag'.

DROPZONE '98

There was a meeting for all interested in the next Late May Day Bank Holiday, 7th Annual National Tag event. Taking place at the Nuneaton Arts Centre 12.30-6.00 pm Saturday August 2nd 1997.

Represented were The Barking (Mad) Wardogs, Fiat Lux, Light Brigade, NOAG 2500, South London Warlords and Third Age Adventures.

Therefore the Committee consists of:-

Chair -	Sarah Clark	Secretary -	Tim Atkinson
Treasurer -	Graham Parton	Games -	Alex Clark
Site -	Nigel Crouch		

Further posts of note are:-

P.R. - Chris Ward Chief Marshall - Ros Day Main Script - Chris Hannaford
Recycling - Mark Stevens

Further help to be recruited on or before the weekend including more Marshals for general house keeping duties, sensor checks etc.

The Thoresby site it was agreed, would probably be used for the last time next year if the Proteus Camp near by was unavailable as suspected. However anyone who knows of a site for the 1999 Dropzone, in the southern half of England please contact the committee.

The camping site and facilities are to remain the same as last year.

The gun and sensor hire will also be run much the same as this year, with both a charge and deposit paid in advance with advance notice if at all possible.

The cost is £25 until **TAGCON-8**, £30 until the end of April and £35 thereafter.

This includes the now legendary BarBQ on the Saturday evening.

The attendance last year after last minute drop ins & outs was 75. It was felt that although some games could cope admirably with such numbers a few smaller games may not go amiss. The general format after much discussion is likely to be:-

Friday night	1 game
Saturday morning	Themed game
Saturday afternoon	1 or 2 games parallel
Saturday evening	Themed game
Sunday morning	1 or 2 games parallel
Sunday afternoon	Themed game
Sunday evening	1 game
Monday morning	Themed game

The unenviable task of linking and theming the main games is being borne by the Wild Cards. The loose brief at the moment is some form of Horror / Sci Fi, X-files ish.

Alex Clark appeals to all would be games organisers to get in touch with a brief outline of their game and preferred time slot, as soon as possible.

DROPZONE '98

22nd-25th MAY 1998

probably Thoresby Park - Cost £25 rising to £35

Contact: Tim Atkinson 0181-4022724

THE ADVENTURE'S OUT THERE

THE WILD CARDS

Who are we?

The Wild Cards are a team of experienced live role-players specialising in SF-LRP using Laser Tag. They have come together from some of the leading Laser Tag clubs in the country. The Wild Cards itself is not a club, but rather a union of like minded individuals. All of us have organised scenarios at both local and national level. We try to make our games as 'hands-on' as possible, but roleplaying isn't sacrificed for action.

The Wild Cards Roll Call:-

- ♦ Bloodworth, James R 18, Rivermead, Cotgrave, Notts.. NG12 3LQ (0115) 9893192
james@runabout.demon.co.uk
- ♦ Watson, Paul D & Jennifer A 51, Vivian Rd., Fir Vale, Sheffield. S4 8GN (0114) 2440565
- ♦ Hannaford, Christopher 12, Victoria Road, Norwich, Norfolk. (01603) 615444

STAR

THE REMAINING GAME 1997

MENACE UNSEEN

Who is the Real Enemy?

Part 2 of the Aftermath Trilogy

When:

October 24th to 26th

Where:

Overstone, Northampton

Cost:

£25

WARS

At the end of Aftermath a specialised Rebel Commando team left in a Prototype Alliance Starship 'Liberator' in pursuit of an Imperial Grand Admiral. The search has led to a remote planet on the edge of the known frontier. Can even the sophisticated technology of the Liberator truly protect the Rebels from what awaits them.

Carrying on the new trilogy of events that started at 'Aftermath' in March 1996, 'Menace Unseen' carries forward the story and sets the scene for the conclusion. You do not need to have played Aftermath to enjoy Menace Unseen.

A deposit of £10 will hold you a place on any event with the balance being payable 4 weeks before the scheduled date. Please make cheques payable to Norwich Outdoor Adventures

Group and send to Chris Hannaford

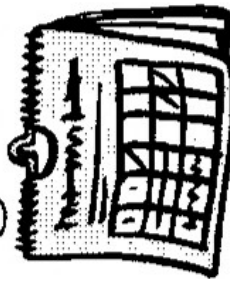
TAGCON

8th Annual Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Convention

28TH FEBRUARY 1998 - MOUNTAIN ARTS CENTRE

TAG/BIG GUN VIDEOS

Tag details



for '98

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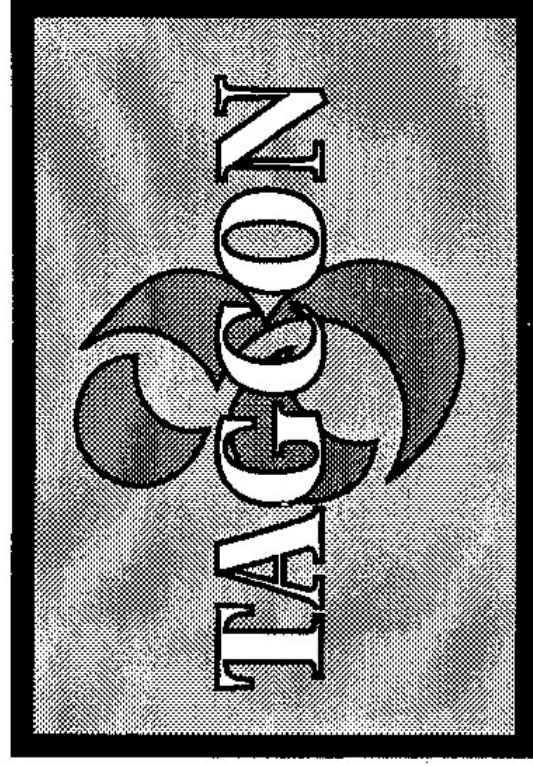
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BOOKING FORM :-

FEBRUARY 28th NUNEATON ARTS CENTRE



8th Annual Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Convention

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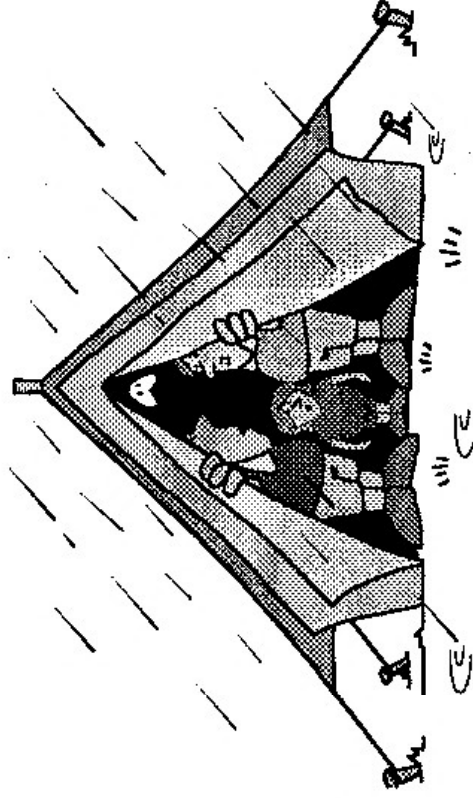
Mr Katt's Camping Aversion Guide

(How to survive without Bayou Bob)

The majority of LRP events that I have had the pleasure of attending, are largely self catering, and a few things have become clear.

The Weather

British weather-blokes are amongst the best weather-blokes in the world, there prediction qualities leave Mystic Meg staring at her crystal ball blankly, if they say its going to be, sunny with light showers, believe them, so switching on the babble box and actually listening to the weather is not a bad idea, it is this prudent first move that motivated me to by a teeny tiny one dog tent (pup tent).



The Site

Unlike weathermen site organisers are not amongst the best in the world, they spend so much time worrying about plot props and costume that, they forget that, the crappy little map that someone wrote on the back of a cornflake packet is not acceptable as directions to the site, so grab a map work out your route even car share so someone can be the navigator, phone up those people you met at the last event they might not know the event is on but still want to go, great for company and petrol money, it also allows you to arrive in time to put your tent up in some daylight, so you don't lose those tent pegs, that you bought on the way down, and invariably will end up under your sleeping bag, if you didn't drive it gives you someone to winge about, when your map reading has been less than poor.

The Gear

A tent, and all its bits, sounds stupid but the amount of people who forgot there tent its pegs or poles and ended sleeping in my BBT (Bloody Big Tent), is impossible to count on one hand well not without an hand containing at least twenty digits.

A sleeping bag, I found the Dutch army ones great, acrylic filler so if they get wet they dry before you have to clamber into them the following night. A wet sleeping bag is right in the things I hate to get into, beside Bathrub full of cold beans. Anyhow these sleeping bags usually have a waterproof outer, good for those flash floods running through the tent, a cotton liner so if you forget to take your boots off (Not unusual when I'm drunk) you just have to wash the liner not the whole thing, and they come with a carry case. Not bad for 15 quid. A not so unpleasant alternative is plenty of blankets, horse hair is good, it traps plenty of air and cost around £3 each, and are great for sitting around the fire with.

Something to cook with, you cannot always expect there to be a camp fire, and people get real touchy about you using up all the gas, to cook your mini sausages & beans, so once you have invested in one of these you can moan at someone else using all your gas.

Although it might seem like a good idea cooking in a tent; it can leave you more than a little charred, so try to cook at a safe distance away; and two inches is not a safe distance.

Food to eat, raw meat keeps safely in a cold bag with ice blocks for approximately 18 hours, 24 at a push, after that you enter dodgy foodville, keep cooked and raw food apart, Botulism isn't nice I've seen it, people have a tendency to die.

Cutlery, a mug, a plate and a can opener, best hang it round your neck. The humble queen was invented 50 years after the can, and is the most forgotten item in the world, don't hang everything around your neck just the can opener, you'll sound like a heard of cows.

A spare change of clothes tied in a black bag, as well as extra costume, just in case you go mud wrestling, or the weather bloke was wrong. You will not believe how many people think its funny to bundle a journalist into the biggest mud puddle they can make. Actually it is kind of funny.

A water container, those polyurethane ones ain't bad, the water tastes funny if you leave it in the sun cost upto £5. because the walk to the stand pipe is just to much to bear with a hangover.

A small but lethally sharp penknife, always useful especially for getting stones out of boy scouts hooves.

A torch, a back up torch, and a 5000 Watt halogen floodlight that appear to be in possession of every tagger, candles blow out, and oil lamps blow up, so torches it is.

Optional items

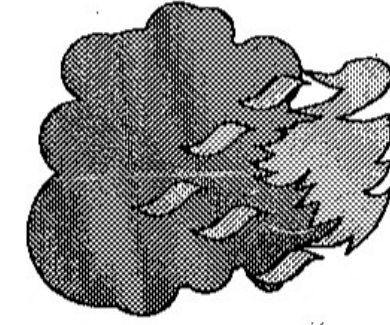
Pain killers lots of, if you hunt real hard you can find boxes of 100 tablets; a first aid kit good for those stings, cuts, bruises, and nicking the bandages for phys reps; small axe good for cutting your fingers off, alternatively f or cutting wood; an inflatable bed not simply - to impress the girlies but the ground can be a damn hard place particularly when you get to my advanced years; bin bags make good ground sheets, waterproof footwear, and even for putting rubbish in; 50 ft of rope (sorry old D&D hang up) some string; a wash kit, to feel slightly human in the morning and get rid of the smell of last night booze and a ten foot pole for those that don't have a wash kit; and finally a boy scout always useful, for lighting fires, putting up tents and campfire songs, unfortunately only available in green.

Now that you have the essentials, perhaps a few choice words on:

Pitching our tent

I like to use a Boy scout but if one is unavailable, figure out which way the wind is blowing, just check out which end of the field the dome tents are blown to turn 90° and that is where your entrance should face, try not to pitch it under trees, rain will still drip onto it hours after it has stopped raining, and if a branch should decide it just cannot take any more it won't land on you, try not to pitch at the bottom of a slope, you could end up with a river through the centre, and all your gear doesn't end up at the bottom.

Fires



Things you can burn, Wood, needs to be collected, dead wood burns best, chopped into manageable sizes, without the loss of limbs, and watched so it does not get out of control, gas or oil needs to be brought with you, you have to pay for it, and you never bring enough.

Things you cannot burn, Drunk taggers, they tend to scream and stumble away; tents particularly your own this is terribly antisocial and not very environmentally friendly; cans and bottles they don't actually burn, I've spent many hours experimenting and beer cans vaporise at 6000 C and bottles at 20000 C.

If things go pear shaped

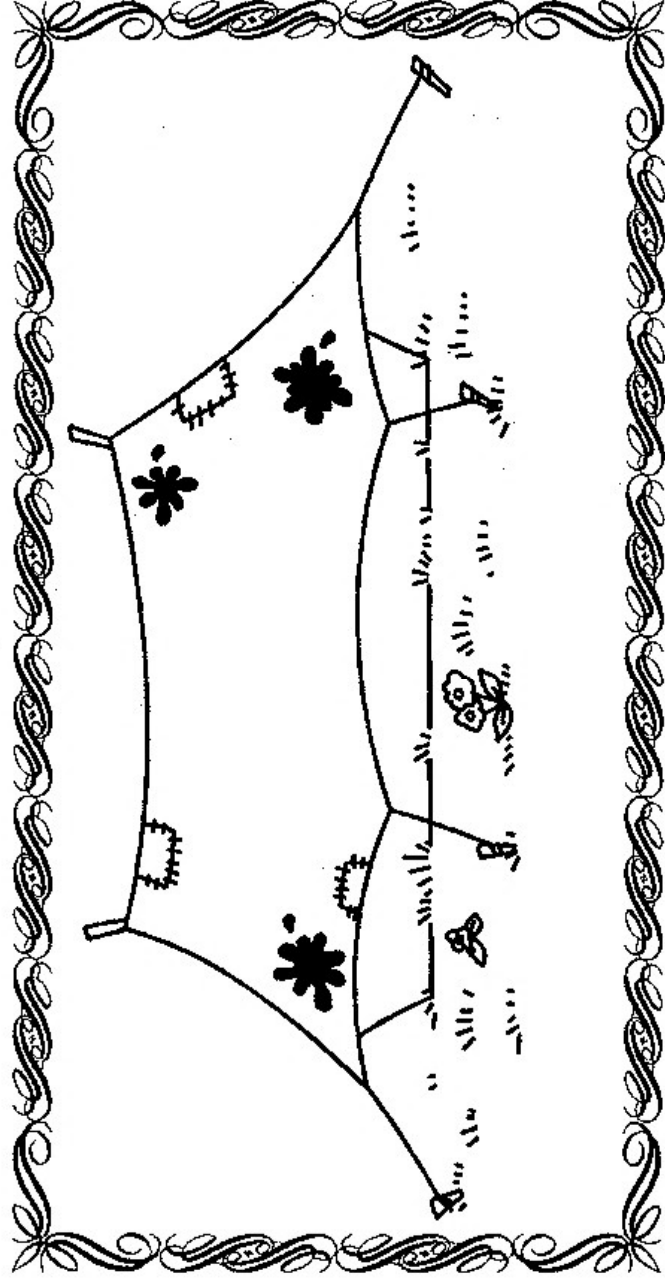
In the glove box of my car, I keep clear instructions on who to contact, there number, and what medication I am allergic to or taking at the time, sadly all this information fits neatly onto half a A5 sheet, so if things really fubar at least someone can tell the papers, it also makes a paramedic's job a lot easier, also keeping some spare medication in the car has saved more than one or to peoples lives.

Getting bundled into the mud, retire to your tent, dry off, put on something dry, and curse the filthy sinners.

Getting too wet, see above with cursing, the damn filthy weather bloke.

Falling ill or being injured, if you are still mobile, locate a first aider, explain what your symptoms are and what medication you are on. They should be able to help in some way. If you discover an obviously injured and immobile body, the best thing to do is summon help as soon as possible.

When you finally pack all your gear into your car, just walk across where your tent was pitched and pick up any last bits of rubbish. Apart from keeping the site clean, you also find really interesting things. Last time I found 50p two bits of string and a red LED. All this goes into my "Things I found whilst camping" collection.



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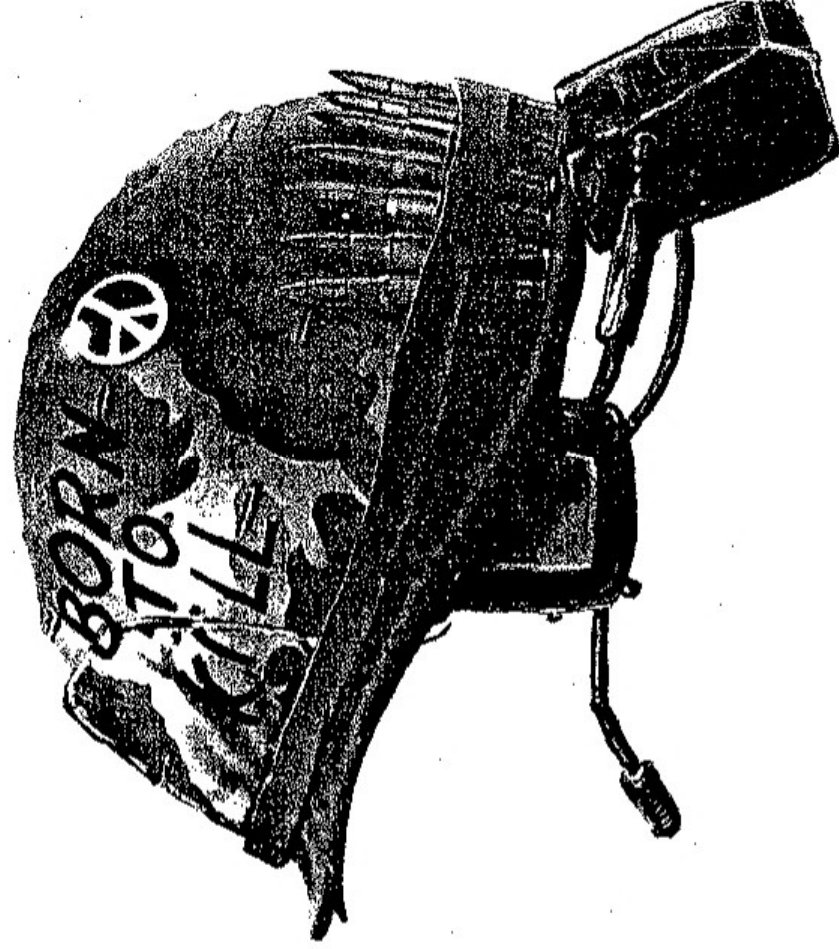
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'YOU WALK THE WALK, BUT CAN YOU TALK THE TALK?'

THE U.S. COLONIAL MARINES IN SF LIVE ROLE-PLAYING

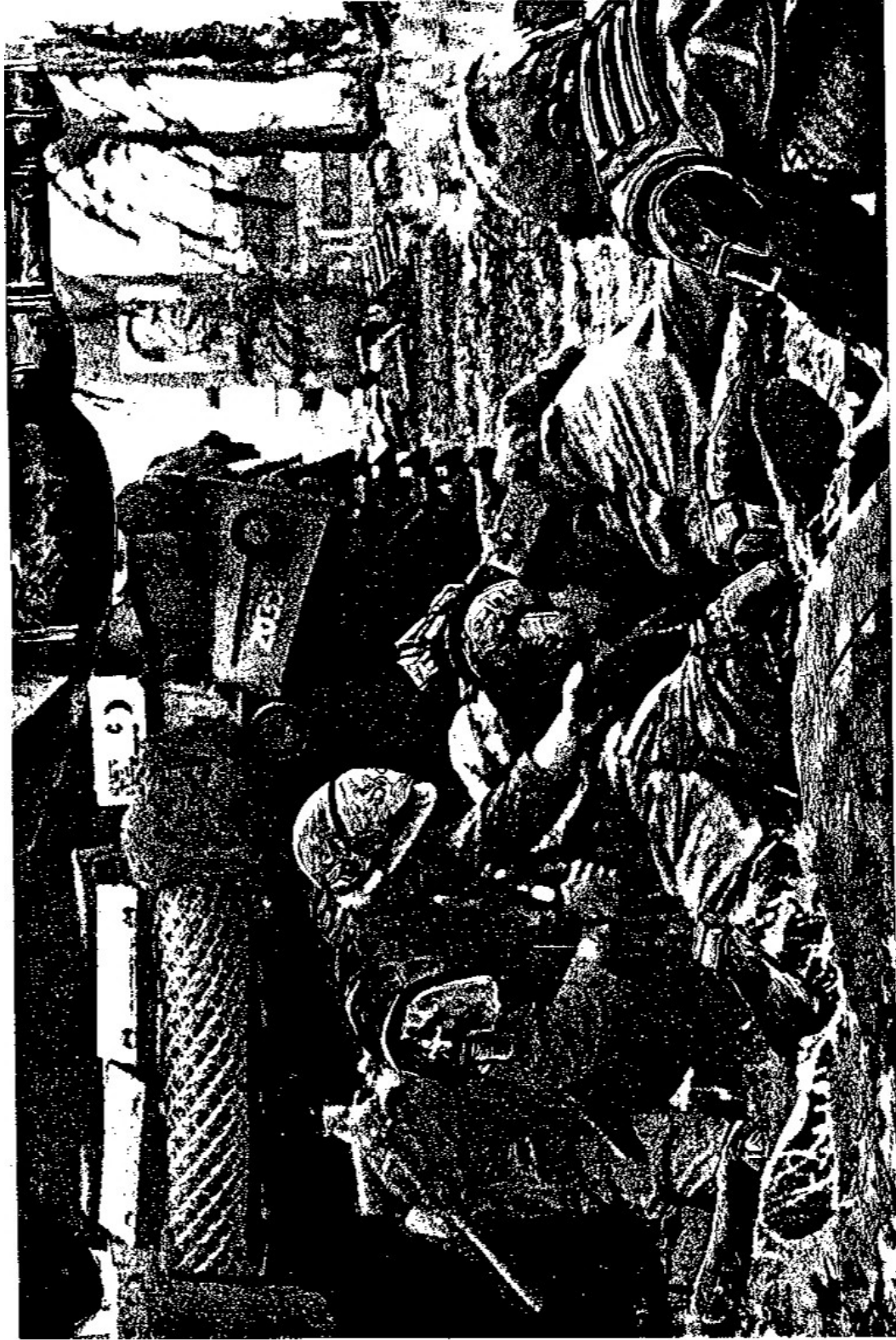
By Chris Hannaford



A RE-INTRODUCTION

This article is a continuation of that found in FIRELIGHT 6.4 and is intended as a mini source book for the 'HIGH FRONTIER' campaign background first presented as the 'Shared Universe', a Science Fiction LRP setting encompassing popular films like 'ALIENS', 'PREDATOR', 'OUTLAND', 'BLADERUNNER' and the like. All these movies share a common atmosphere and style, and can easily be integrated to provide a larger setting for our games. The setting is being used by the loose confederation of LRP'ers known vaguely as the 'Wild Cards', but it would be nice if other people in the hobby could contribute to the background and events of the setting to build up a unique universe of role-playing opportunities.

[SEE ALSO ARTICLE ON THE "EVENT HORIZON" LEGEND ON PAGE .ED]



PART 4: 'WALKING THE WALK': CHARACTER CLASSES

CREATING COLONIAL MARINE PLAYER CHARACTERS

Following is a list of character classes that players can choose to play. No skills lists and points systems are included, as I suspect everybody will want to run character generation in a different way. As a guide, each character class notes the kind of abilities each profession should have.

EVERY MARINE A RIFLEMAN...

Every Colonial Marine goes through the same basic training at the recruit depots at Parris Island South Carolina or San Diego. The Marines age old axiom "every Marine a Rifleman" demands that even a fighter pilot, if shot down, can pick up a rifle and fight alongside the Grunts with the same skills:

MARINE BASIC TRAINING

After going through basic training, it is assumed that all Marine characters can:

- Fire most pistols, shotguns, SMGs and Assault rifles.
- Use basic communications systems like 49 meg, radios and walkie talkies.
- Render basic First Aid to casualties on the field (bandages etc).*

After basic training, your Marine character will choose a particular speciality, and transfer to one of the following arms:

INFANTRY REGIMENT:

The backbone of the Corps; ground troops and specialists

ENGINEER REGIMENT:

For people who like things wot go bang.

MARINE AIR WING:

For flyboys and girls.

- * Subject to terms of the medical system in play.

CHARACTER CLASSES:

1: INFANTRY REGIMENT

RIFLEMAN/WOMAN

Despite all its vehicles and spacecraft, the Corps still believes its ultimate weapon is a Marine and his or her rifle. They are the heart and soul of the Corps: Artillery, tanks and air support can pulverise a target, but it will always be the grunt and their M41 that takes and occupies the ground. Riflemen start as E-2 Privates.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None. However, some characters will be given command responsibilities as Fire Team and Squad Leaders.

WEAPONS SPECIALIST

Fire support for the Riflemen comes from weapons specialists using Smart-Guns, Flame Throwers and Grenade Launchers. These characters tend to be the tough nuts in a Platoon. Weapons Specialists start as E-2 Privates.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: None, but this role is perfect for players with really big guns who like role-playing psychos.

COMTECH

The 22nd century is a high tech nightmare, so and Comtechs fill a vital role by providing technical support in the field, both in maintaining and operating Marine Corps electronics, and defeating and evading enemy systems. Comtechs start as E-2 Privates.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Comtechs can operate satellite up-link radios, motion trackers, portable welders, computers, and are skilled in repairing damaged electronic equipment. A Comtech can also defeat electronic security systems such as door locks. To some extent, Comtechs can also repair and re-program Synthetics.

COMMISSIONED OFFICER

Each Marine Expeditionary Unit is led by an officer who co-ordinates all the different elements on a mission. However, in these days of high casualty rates, most officers are 'butter bars' straight out of OCS school. They usually have to learn their trade the hard way and win the respect of the Marines under their command. Seasoned field officers command fierce loyalty from their troops, and know when to listen to the advice and opinions of NCO's and enlisted troops.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Officers are trained to use satellite up-link radios, such as are found in command posts, to receive and send orders and reports. All Commissioned Officer characters start as a 2nd LIEUTENANT (O-1).

2: ENGINEER REGIMENT

Marines from Combat Engineer regiments are sometimes assigned in small numbers to an MEU if the terms of the mission require their support.

COMBAT ENGINEER

Engineers traditionally support the ground combat element of the Corps by, for example, building bridges and by supervising the construction of defences and fortifications. They are true specialists, and also have other useful skills...

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Engineers can lay demolitions charges to destroy structures like bridges, building and Allen hives. They can also disarm and defuse enemy demolitions charges and booby traps, and are specially equipped to clear mine fields.

They can also perform complex civil engineering repairs on broken generators, reactors, water purification plants and so on. Engineers start at the rank of Private (E-2), but promotion for these specialists is fast.

3. MARINE AIR WING

Marines graduating flight training are assigned to a squadron in one of the Marine Air Wings. Elements of these wings, often just one or two Dropships, are then assigned to support units of an Infantry Regiment.

The only PHYS-REP Dropship the Player characters are likely to encounter are the older 'Slick' type (Transit Van) Dropships, which is not armed as standard. (Sometimes a single smart gun is acquired and fitted to a pintle by the main sliding hatch for the use of the crew chief.

That said, MAW player characters might be required for some scenarios.

MARINE CORPS SPACE AVIATORS

PILOT

Pilots occupy a glamorous role in the Corps. They are the flyboys, the glory-seekers; vital to the rapid deployment nature of the Corps, and boy, they don't let the Grunts forget it! Almost all Pilots are career Marines. The job combines the thrill of flying with good promotion prospects and good pay.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: A Pilot can fly any U.S. military Dropship or fighter, and, with about 30 minutes familiarisation, master the controls of any civilian shuttle or foreign aircraft. They can also operate the onboard radio and sensor systems of said vehicles. Pilots always start at the rank of 2nd Lieutenant (O-1), but do not theoretically have authority over any element of the operation not concerning their aircraft.

CREW CHIEF

Crew Chiefs are the unsung heroes of space flight, the fussing power behind the throne of the hot-shot pilot. They are responsible for supervising the maintenance, repair and pre-flight preparation of a Dropship. They concern themselves with the correct loading of ordinance, the stowing of cargo, and the safety of passengers during flight. They also act as weapons officers and door gunners on these aircraft.

SPECIAL ABILITIES Crew Chiefs can repair damage to grounded Dropships and some spacecraft systems. They can also set up and use satellite up-link communications systems and repair some general electrical and mechanical faults. Unlike pilots, Crew Chiefs are enlisted personnel, and start as E-2 Privates. However, many serve an apprenticeship as Crew Chiefs and then apply for a commission to become Pilots.



Unofficial Insignia of the Marine 8th Air Wing.

THE U.S. NAVY

It is a strange anachronism of the Colonial Marines that some of it's field personnel come from the Navy, whom the Corps has strong links with. There are two Navy characters that players can choose:

CORPSMAN

Marine Corps medics are drawn from the Navy, but undergo a basic training program similar to the Marines. The 'Docs' fight as well as the Marines, but are better employed in the rear rendering aid to the wounded.

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Corpsmen can stabilise or heal many wounds with the medical kits they carry, and are also trained to treat more serious injuries using the facilities of field hospitals, sick bays, and Starship infirmaries. As with enlisted Marines, they start at the rank of Private (E-2).

SYNTHETIC

The HYPERDINE 120-A6 MODEL SYNTHETIC HUMAN is a tough ANDROID used in hostile environments like outer space. They look identical to a human, wear the blue jump-suit uniform of the U.S. NAVY, and usually hold the post of EXECUTIVE OFFICER. They are gentle, non violent machines and CANNOT USE GUNS OR MELEE WEAPONS.

Each USCM Connestoga class landing ship is assigned a base complement of one of these models for starship piloting and engineering duties, although others can be on board for other more specialised tasks like medicine.

SYNTHETICS WITH STANDARD PROGRAMMING MUST AT ALL TIMES OBEY THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIVES:

- 1: THEY CANNOT BY ACTION, OR OMISSION OF ACTION, ALLOW ANY HUMAN BEING TO BE HARMED.**
- 2: THEY MUST TAKE ALL REASONABLE STEPS TO PRESERVE THEIR OWN EXISTENCE, UNLESS DOING SO WOULD INFRINGE THE FIRST LAW.**
- 3: THEY MUST OBEY THE ORDERS OF THE HIGHEST RANKING CHARACTER, EXCEPT WHERE DOING SO WOULD INFRINGE THE FIRST TWO LAWS.**

SPECIAL ABILITIES: Synthetics can operate satellite up-link radios, motion trackers, computers, and are skilled in repairing damaged electronic equipment. They can also defeat electronic security systems such as door locks, (if under orders),

A Synthetic can fly any U.S. military Dropship or fighter, and, with about 30 minutes familiarisation, master the controls of any civilian shuttle or foreign aircraft. They can also operate the onboard radio and sensor systems of said vehicles. A Synthetic cannot use any onboard weapons on a Dropship.

A Synthetic character can repair damage to grounded Dropships and some spacecraft systems. They can also perform complex civil engineering repairs on broken generators, reactors, water purification plants and so on.

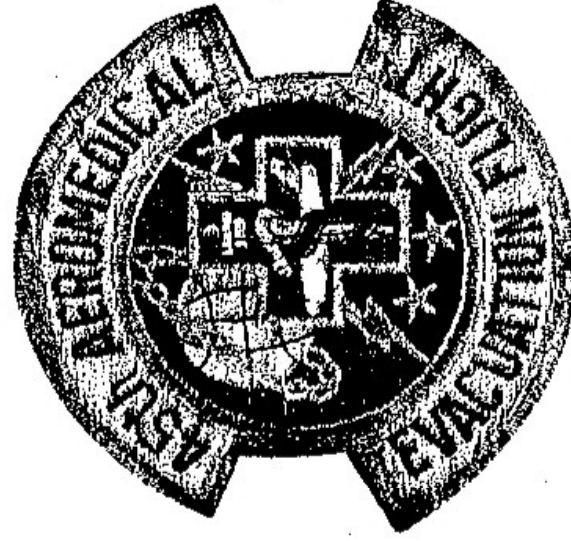
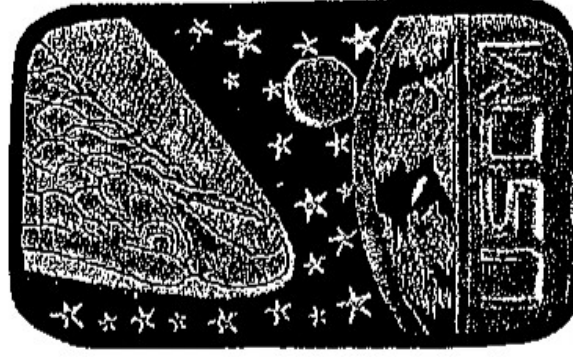
Synthetics have medical programming as standard, and can stabilise or heal many wounds with a medical kit, and are also trained to treat more serious injuries using the facilities of field hospitals, sick bays, and Starship infirmaries.

Synthetics are fully INSULATED and are IMMUNE to ELECTRIC FENCES and other high voltage dangers.

Synthetics are also IMMUNE to RADIATION, DISEASE, POISON and other effects of BIOLOGICAL and CHEMICAL weapons.

A Synthetic cannot re-program themselves or other Synthetics.

As a starting point, I would suggest Synthetic characters start off with six hits.



OTHER UNITS

Following are some miscellaneous Marine and Space Command units. In certain scenarios players might be able to play characters from these outfits, or may encounter N.P.C.s from them.....

MARINE CORPS:



FLEET MARINE FORCE RECONNAISSANCE COMPANIES: 'FORCE RECON'

One of the Elites of the USCM are the troops of the "FLEET MARINE FORCE RECONNAISSANCE COMPANIES" also known as "FORCE RECON" or the "RECONDOS". They have an organisation separate from that of the normal USCM chain of command and are nominally part of 'Space Joint special operations Command

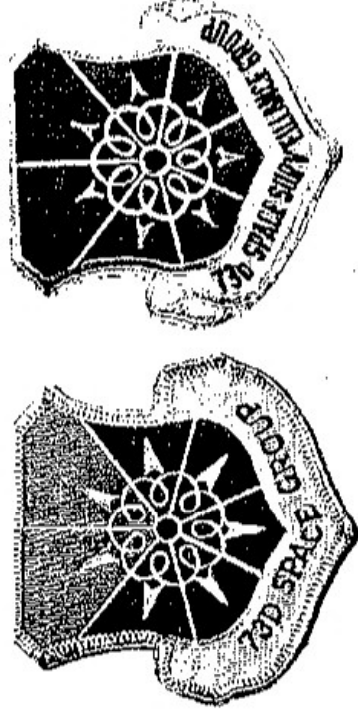
The soldiers of Force Recon provide the Corps with close target reconnaissance, Patrolling, surveillance, and raiding capabilities.

RECONDOS are commonly inserted on to a planet's surface using modified DROPSHIPS are DROP-PODS, and operate in small 4 man groups without fire support. They are the eyes and ears of the USCM, often acting as pathfinders; securing landing zones for the DROPSHIPS of an invading fleet.

MILITARY POLICE

Universally unpopular, the MPs maintain order on USCM facilities, break up brawls, search for looted contraband and so on.

SPACE COMMAND:



73rd SPACE GROUP

Identified on Insignia as either the '73rd Space Group' or the '73rd Space Surveillance group', this unit is something of an enigma.

As part of Space Command, it is known to be involved with monitoring 'Sight' (Signals intelligence) and spy satellites, as part of some intelligence gathering duties. However, it seems to be involved with other, more shadowy operations, although no-one appears to know quite what else it is they do.

It is not uncommon, where sensitive prisoners have been taken or unusual documents, experiments or facilities captured, to have officers of the 73rd turn up and confiscate physical evidence. In the Marine Corps, people know not to ask too many questions.....



3301st SPACE TRAINING SQUADRON

The 3301st runs refresher courses in Colonial warfare techniques and trains Marines in the use of new equipment and weapons. They are also tasked with the operations of the USCM Penal units, to which hardened offenders are sentenced. Scuttlebutt has it that these Penal units are being used on the High Frontier as virtual suicide squads.



5: CHARACTER PROGRESSION

Ideally, all characters should have some kind of advancement system, to fit in the progressing story line of a campaign universe. This shows their standing in the mythos and presents a sort of history of the character. Referees and game organisers might choose to consider some of the following.....

REWARDS

EXTRA HITS:

As Marines become veterans and get tougher, extra sensor hit points may be awarded.

QUALIFICATIONS:

COMBAT INFANTRYMAN BADGE:

The CIB is a rectangular patch of a Musket worn over the upper left pocket flap on the jacket. It signifies the Marine has spent over a month in solid combat, and is the mark of a veteran. Any player whose character has survived THREE GAMES may wear the Combat Infantryman's Badge.

DECORATIONS:

Phys-rep medals may be awarded to players showing exceptional qualities. Some of these are:

BRONZE STAR:

For valour

SILVER STAR:

For exceptional valour above and beyond the call of duty

CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOUR:

For an act of suicidal bravery or duty.

All medals can, of course be awarded posthumously.

PROMOTION:

Players showing the right stuff may be promoted if they so wish.

PUNISHMENTS

REPRIMAND:

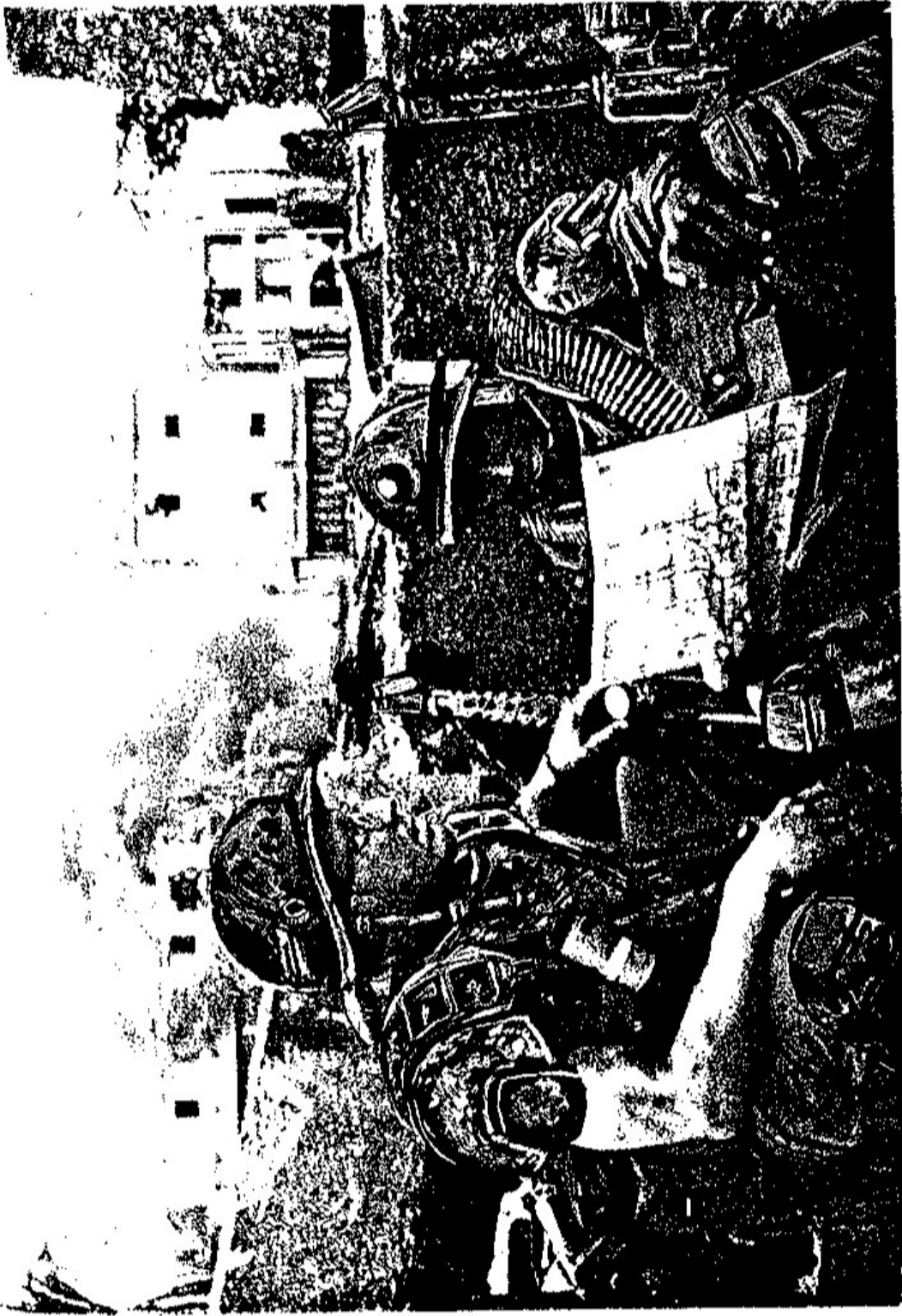
For minor infractions: Loss of pay etc. Will go down on a Marines record, and may affect promotion prospects and the way officers/NCO's treat them in future. In the field, reprimands tend to involve being sent on point to be shot at.

DEMOTION:

Players can of course be busted down in rank for screwing up.

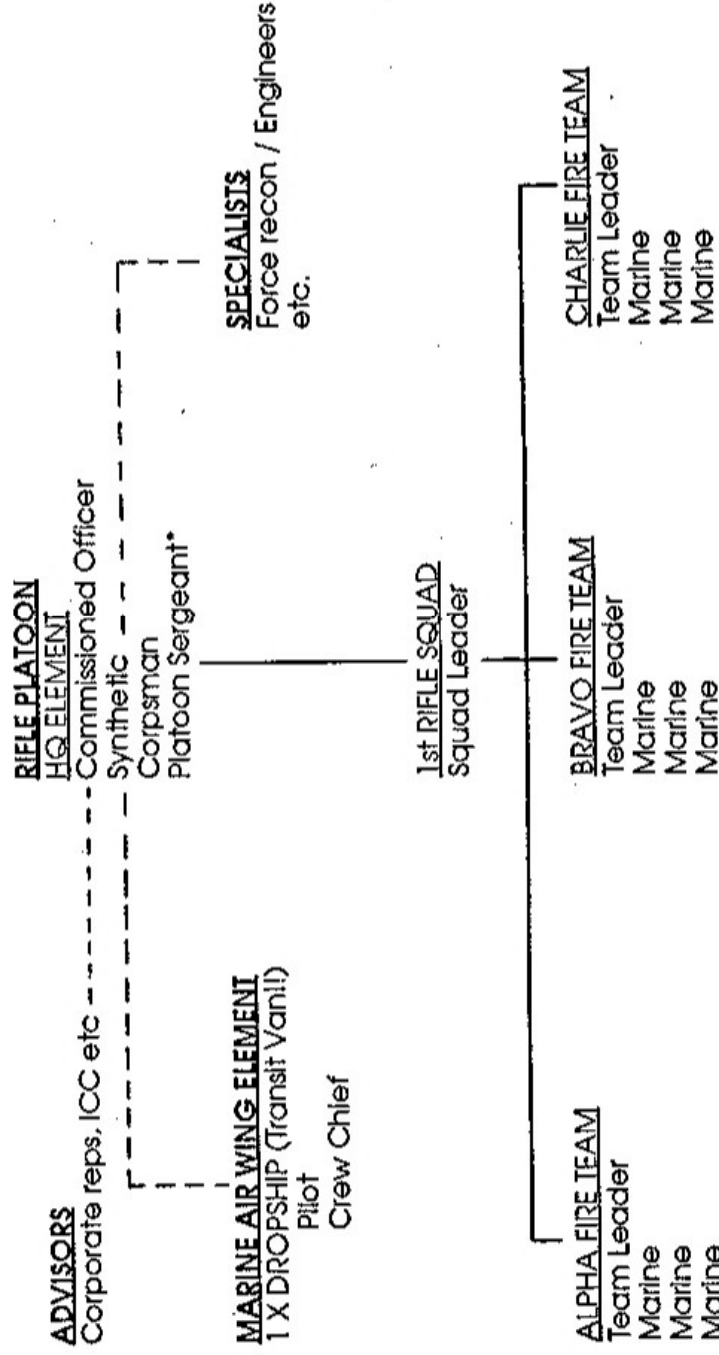
COURT MARTIAL:

For murder, looting and other serious offences. Punishment can be dishonourable discharge (loss of character from the campaign), or sentencing to one of the USCM penal units. (See 'Awakenings' trilogy).



6: MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNIT COMPOSITION

Following is the basic model of a MEU, showing where your character class fits in. This formation will, of course change, depending on how many players are involved.



Squad and Team Leaders are selected RIFLEMAN player characters.

Team members denoted as 'Marine' can be players who are COMTECHS, CORPSMEN, WEAPON SPECIALISTS or RIFLEMEN.

- * Platoon Sergeants are only appointed if there is more than one Rifle Squad to manage.

NOTES:

RIFLE PLATOON

The RIFLE PLATOON is a basic infantry or 'leg' unit, operating in the field with little or no armour, aerospace support or artillery, perfect for LRP use. This is the type of platoon most Marine player characters will be assigned to. It ought to contain 3 Rifle Squads, but in these days of budget cuts and high casualty rates, they usually only contain 1.

FIRE TEAM

This is the basic group a Grunt character serves with, containing 4 Marines, and operating more through team work and familiarity with your buddies than by leadership and discipline.

Marine Fire Teams are expected to operate with some autonomy and think for themselves, whilst supporting the operations of other FIRE TEAMS. One member of the team is assigned as TEAM LEADER. The groups are denoted as ALPHA, BRAVO or CHARLIE FIRE TEAMS.

RIFLE SQUAD

The three FIRE TEAMS; ALPHA, BRAVO, and CHARLIE make up a SQUAD. The operations of this SQUAD is co-ordinated by a Marine appointed as SQUAD LEADER.

SQUADS are usually named 1st 2nd or 3rd, but names are sometimes substituted, (such as the LUSTHOG SQUAD from Full Metal Jacket)

HEADQUARTERS ELEMENT

The RIFLE SQUAD/S, is/are commanded by an HQ element, which stays back from the fighting to co-ordinate, communicate, and deal with wounded. The PLATOON COMMANDER (Officer) is in charge, with a PLATOON SERGEANT (Senior NCO) as the 2IC.

A SYNTHETIC will be on hand as a scientific advisor, and to help with the duties of the CORPSMAN, (the platoon medic), who treats wounded in the rear.

'LEADERS'

Coherent organisation can be a great help in a game, since information can be disseminated much easier down a formal chain, and tasks achieved with greater efficiency.

The key is for the players in the roles of the 'Officers' and 'NCO's' not to withhold info from the others, and not to be too authoritarian: Winning a firefight and achieving a mission is more about TEAMWORK than it is about leadership and 'command'.

REMEMBER: Unpopular officers and NCO's get tagged.

That said, Marine RIFLEMEN characters should appointed leaders depending on their experience and willingness, with the basic starting rank of:

TEAM LEADER

Lance Corporal / rising to Corporal.

SQUAD LEADER

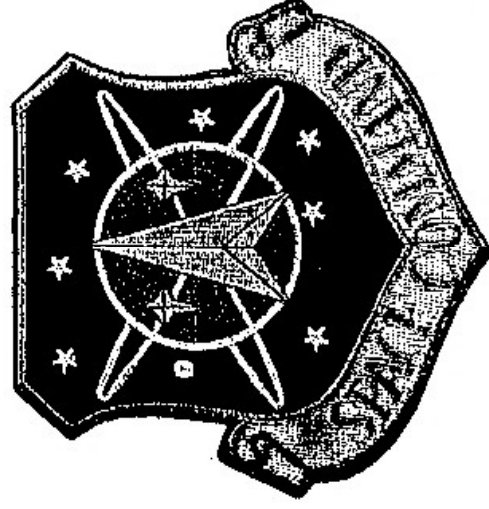
Sergeant / Staff Sergeant / Gunnery Sergeant

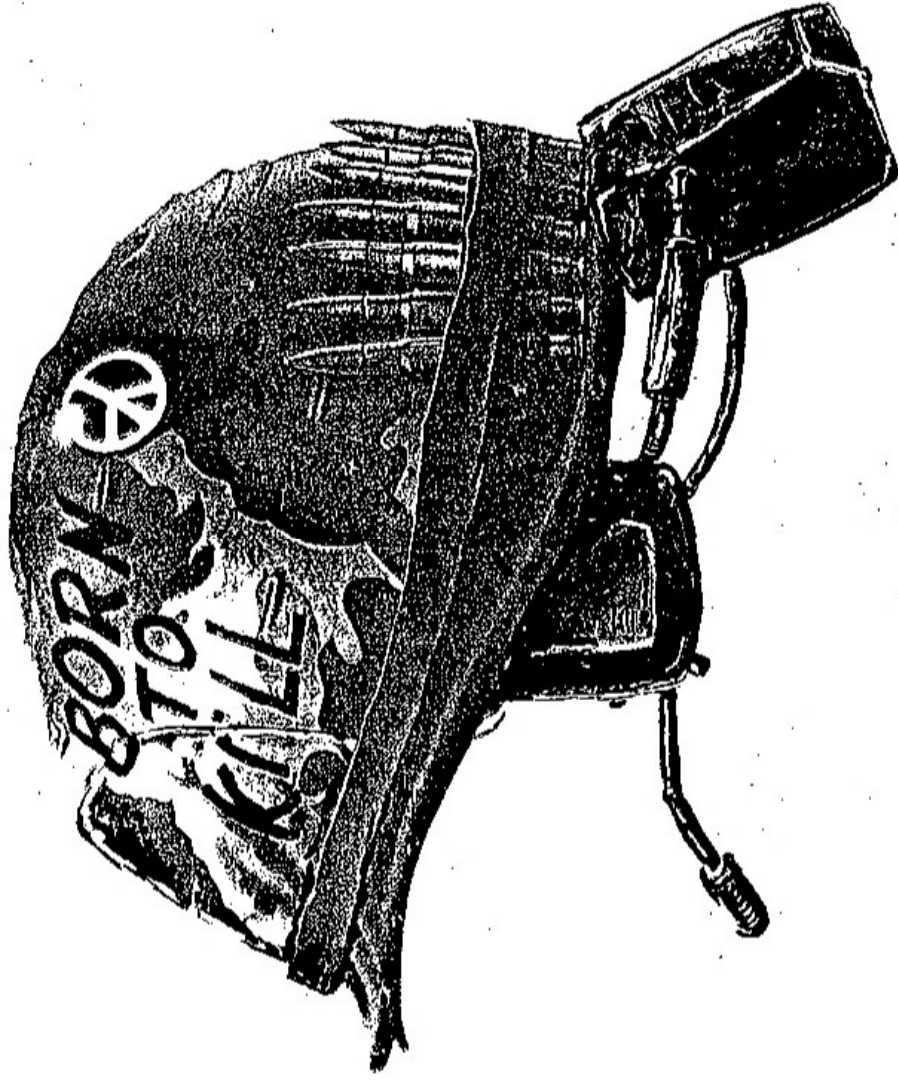
PLATOON SERGEANT

Gunnery Sergeant / Master Sergeant / Sergeant Major

COMMANDING OFFICER

A Commissioned Officer character starting as a 2nd LT.





7: LOOKING THE PART: COSTUME AND EQUIPMENT

Although there's no way I can be completely dictatorial about the costume you should wear as a U.S. Colonial Marine, it would be nice to achieve a certain 'unit look' to distinguish the group from Corporate troops, mercenaries and Colonial Marines of other nations that might turn up. As a rough guide, wearing U.S. clothing and equipment would help with a certain unified image. The cost isn't any greater than for British or other nations gear, so if you're looking for a new combat jacket, why not buy an American one?

Below is a list of recommended items you might like to consider using. A trawling of Army Surplus shops may be called for. Prices given are average ones, but shop around for the best deals.

7&1 GEAR: MARINE FIELD ISSUE KIT

JACKET / TROUSERS, 1 X SET:
American Woodland pattern BDU's

£15-£30 a set.

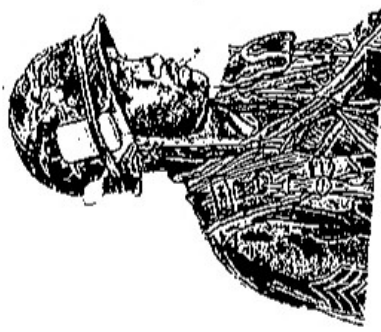
BOOTS, 1 X PAIR:
U.S. issue Jungle boots or leather boots

£15-£25 a pair.

CAP, XL:
Distinctive U.S. Marine Corps 'cover'

£4-£7

HELMET, XL:



U.S. M1 Steel Helmet £5-£15
(As worn in 'Aliens' movie)



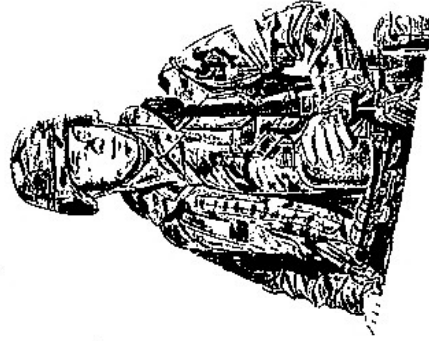
U.S. 'FRITZ' Kevlar Helmets £20-£40
(As worn in Space: Above and Beyond
& in Dark Horse 'Aliens' comics).

BODY ARMOUR.

1 X SET:

German Army 'Flektarn' Body Armour (Very similar to USCM armour)
British DPM Body Armour covers (without filler: Add carlmat)

£3-£60
£5-£10



U.S. Kevlar Body Armour:

£30-£50

U.S. M69 'Flak Jacket' £20-£30
(As worn by Drake and Spunkmeyer in 'Aliens').

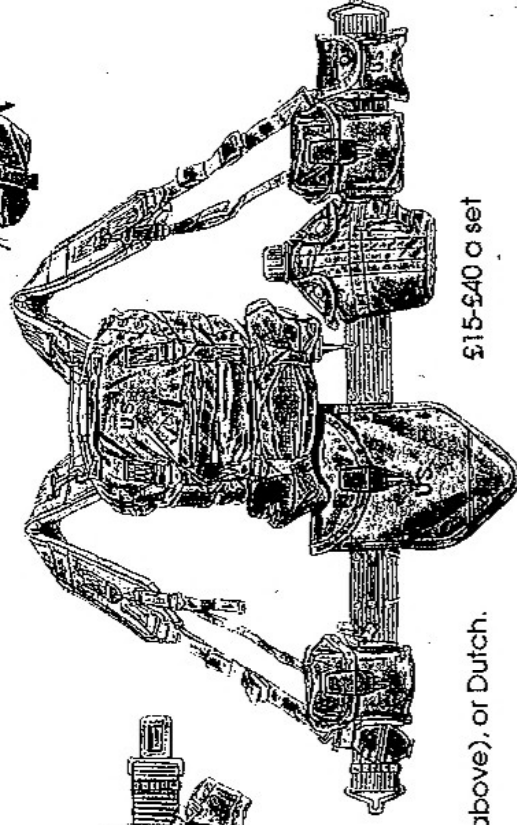
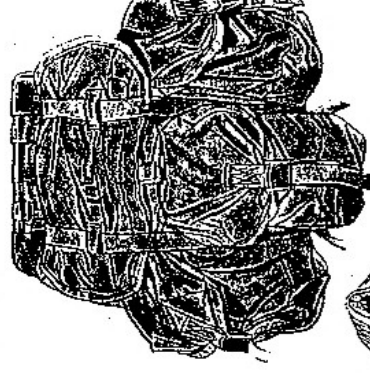
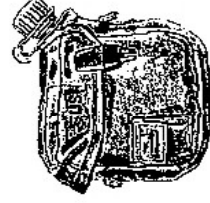
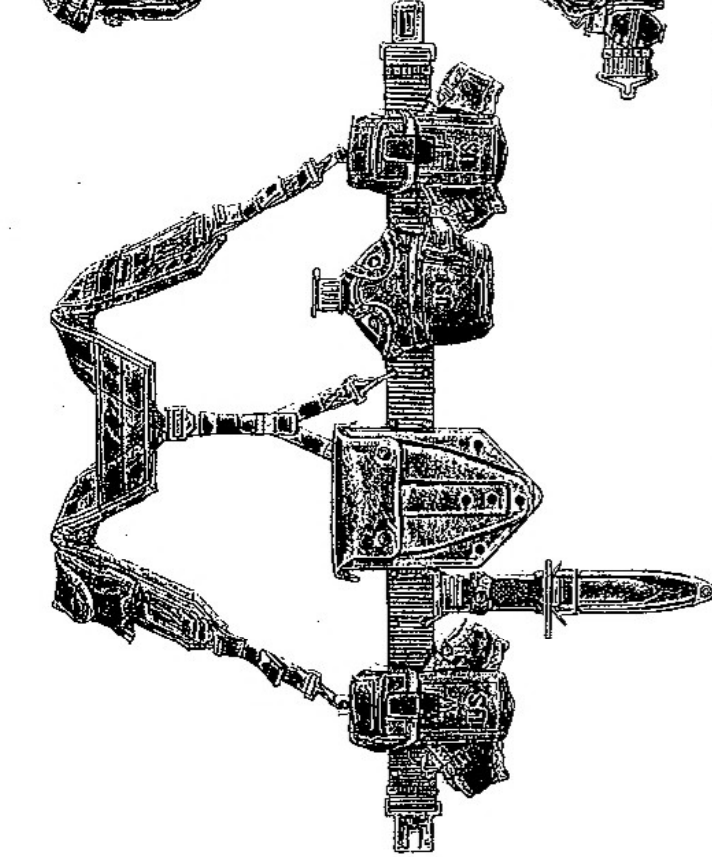
GREAVES.

1 X PAIR:

Police/British Army issue riot greaves (sprayed camo)

£5 a pair

LOAD BEARING EQUIPMENT. 1 X SET:



Recommended is the American ALICE gear (above), or Dutch.

£15-£40 a set

PERSONAL WEAPON:

The M41 Pulse Rifle is standard issue, but after months of service in the Colonies, many Marines discard them for locally acquired SMG's, Carbines, and other weapons which take their fancy. (Basically, whatever gun you've got).

SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT. MISSION VARIABLE:

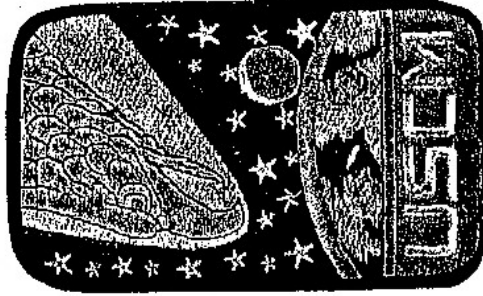
Characters like Comtechs and Corpsmen are likely to have Up-Link Radios and Medical packs issued to them on a game, but there's no reason you can't make up bits of miscellaneous gear as props: Mock up portable welders, dummy 40mm Grenades to hang on webbing (mini Pritt sticks sprayed red make particularly fine ones) and medical sensors using Star Trek tricorders are all bits of kit that help you feel more like a Marine and help you get in to the atmosphere.

AFFECTATIONS Also think about Graffiti on your helmet/armour, lucky charms and mascots etc.....

RECOMMENDED MARINE INFANTRY UNIFORM AND INSIGNIA



MARINE COVER
Traditional cap with either Globe & Anchor stencil or pin on metal badge



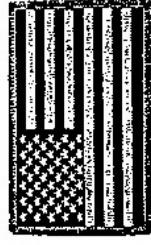
USCM FLASH
Always worn on the right shoulder.

PREVIOUS UNIT

Other units which the Marine has been posted or assigned to temporarily



RANK
Metal pin-on Insignia



NATIONALITY PATCH
It is felt important to reinforce national identity and loyalty to far flung Colonies



PRESENT UNIT INSIGNIA

Always worn on the left shoulder. In general service the 'Space Command' patch is worn. Certain special units like the Force Recon companies replace this with their own insignia.



NAME TAPE



SERVICE BRANCH TAPE

WOODLAND BATTLE DRESS UTILITIES (BDU'S)



POSTING INSIGNIA

Breast pockets are usually used to denote a ship or facility the Marine is serving on. In this case the Marine landing ship U.S.S. Sulaco. Posting insignia is sometimes worn on the left shoulder.



TIPTREE'S WIGWAG

A USCM insignia fastened on the Corps by a previous Defence secretary. Always worn on a breast pocket.

JUNGLE BOOTS
(Some Marine Battalions are still using the older leather boots)



USCMARC

Can be worn under the Tiptree's Wigwag, Posting insignia, or under the Space Command patch on the left shoulder.

DOG TAG

One laced in to boot (in case of decapitation).

NOTE: This is the official approved inventory and layout of patches. In practice, with the exception of the Space command patch, national flag and USCM flash, patches tend to get swapped around or even omitted in field units.

A (VERY) ROUGH GUIDE TO A BATTLETECH GAME

Part the First:- This Is Not The Battletech Your Father Knew!

1) Ideals and aims

The purpose of this article is to act as a primer for the Battletech weekend being run by BAD Company next April **[1998 for those chronologically challenged. ED]** What we are trying to achieve is roleplaying in a military style, with scope for both player interaction and firefights across the course of the weekend. To aid in the suspension of belief that is necessary to any successful role-playing event, we are aiming to make the first 24 hours of the event "total immersion **[But I can't swim. ED]** - that is, in character at all times. We will also be providing patches for everyone attending [A very satisfying characteristic of Fiat Lux Star Wars games] as well as other props to help characterisation. This leads nicely into ...

2) Putting In & Getting Out

As the old saying goes "You get out what you put in" and that holds for this game. Whilst we can help by furnishing props, patches and the like, you lot have to put something in, as well. What we'd like to see, is each group wearing a uniform agreed amongst themselves, perhaps also the various groups having their own code-signal systems and suchlike. This is where you, the players, can really go to town and help, make this game something really special. On a personal note, what I DO NOT want to see on the weekend are any inappropriate badges and regalia W.W.II or USCM etc., as I believe if everyone else goes to the effort to suspend belief, it is unethical **[?ED]** to "not be bothered" (Rant Over).

If anyone has any particular character concepts that they wish to play get in touch with us and we'll sort something out.

3) Mechanics

In order to help the game concept run smoothly, the weapons will be restricted to Starlyte™ pistols or equivalent for officers and lensed terminators or equivalent for other ranks. If you do not possess anything like these, then give us a call and we'll sort something out. (I for one, will not ban anyone from attending a BAD Company event just because they don't have the right sized gun.)

The medical system will be a two tiered system, with a simple smartie-type system for the recently shot. Those who have been down longer than 5 minutes will require surgery, a skill only practised by a Medical Officer. We will also be thieving the idea of constitution from the Shared Universe. (I thought it worked rather well in First Contact). Simply put, the more often you get shot, the less able to function you become, until eventually you geek out. (Careful on those trigger fingers!)

Also worth mentioning is the "Coup de Gras" will be in effect at the weekend as a character skill. Only those so briefed will be able to assassinate people.

Well that's about all for now folks. Hope these fevered ramblings have given you some idea of what to expect.

Next issue (hopefully) The (Battletech) Universe according to BAD Company - Background information to guide you through the 31st Century.



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A weekend of role playing in a military style, based on the
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17th-19th April 1998

at

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Join one of the five Great Houses of the Inner Sphere as they try to reach agreement on a way to stop the incursions of the Clans - fierce warriors from beyond the Periphery.

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Cost includes a barbeque on Saturday evening. A deposit of £ 5.00 will secure a place on the event, with the balance being payable by 31st March 1998.

Please note that all player places must be booked by March 31st.

Make your cheques payable to **IAN PALMER** and send them (together with your name and address) to:

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ELEPHANT AND CASTLE
LONDON
SE1 6JZ

For more information call **ANDY SMOOTH** on (0171) 620 2800

PS There will be a small number of NPC places that will need to be filled. Call for details

OPERATION : SEMPER - FIDELIS

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1997

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**COST £15 - PLAYER
 £10 - NPC**

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NPC.**

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**RETURN TO :- LIAM THOMPSON, 1ST FLOOR FLAT, 36, THE CRESCENT, ABINGTON, NORTHAMPTON.
NN1 4SB FOR FURTHER DETAILS PHONE. (01604) 710837**

BEST OF FIREFIGHT

This item is taken from Issue 1.2 p46-47 Summer 1990

ROLE PLAYING [What not to say in battle]

by Matt Whiting & Sean O'Connor

This article is intended as a guide for all those people who thought they would get into SF live roleplaying just so they could wear silver wigs, long Darth Vader style black cloaks and wander round woods making funny little bleeping noises. Well at least you can do the latter. But what of the predictions of the future made by such films and programmes as 'Star Wars', 'Flash Gordon' and 'Lost in Space'? Obviously, 'The Clangers' was rather closer to the mark, but anyway, let's look at what the films thought we'd say and compare it to the tripe that we actually come out with in the field:

Never said:

- Use the force!
- That's illogical, Captain.
- I love you Flash.
- To boldly go where no man has gone before.
- A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.
- Warp Factor 6 Scotty.
- Captain the engines'll no take it.
- Look at the size of that thing!
- Think of the spondoolicks!
- Newt! Newt! Come Back!

- Take me to your leader.
- We're in the pipe 5 by 5.
- Red Five to Red leader.
- It's life Jim, but not as we know it.
- Set weapons to 'stun'.
- An Acturain Megadonkey steak and a Pangalactic Gargle blaster.
- See you on the other side of the airlock
- I've got a brain the size of a planet and you want me to carry the equipment.
- I'm completely operational and all my circuits are functioning normally.
- On my Planet ...
- I'm sorry Dave I can't do that.
- My phasor pistol is malfunctioning.
- Dilithium crystals.
- RV in the Nutri fluid vending area at Betelgeuse, stardate 22052090
- Stay frosty.
- We come in peace.
- Board the lander, we're going down.
- Dispatch War rocket Ajax to bring back his body.
- These aren't the droids you're looking for.
- My God, it's full of stars.
- The Hitch Hickers Guide to the Galaxy.

Too often said:

- Use your gun!
- Bo**cks, Captain.
- You're a fat ba**rd.
- Another squirty down the wood then?
- Last week down the wood...
- Put your foot on it Mikel
- Dean, My car's knackered.
- Stop staring at my weapon.
- It cost a few quid.
- BANG Oh sorry Newt. Didn't see you there. Serves you right for being an over-cute American stereotype.
- Anyone seen Dean?
- We're lost
- Oil You!
- Look Pete's wearing a funny mask again
- Switch guns on.
- Big Mac and a Coke
- See you in the Car park
- S*d off!
- Perhaps I won't have another pint
- Down my Local ...
- S*d off Dave!
- My batteries have fallen out
- Mars Bars
- Pub on Tuesday?
- Panic!
- Shoot to kill
- Get in the car, we're off to the pub.
- Tell Jim to go kill him
- These aren't the silver boxes with robot faces on, you're looking for.
- My God, it's full of mud.
- FIREFIGHT!

THE 'EVENT HORIZON' *A folk legend from the 'Shared Universe'*

By Chris Hannaford.

As with the ocean going ships of old, our space travelling culture has thrown up its own irrational but picturesque myths and legends. Certainly the most nostalgic has to be that of the 'ghost ship' 'Event Horizon'. This exploration vessel was dispatched in to deep space over a hundred years ago, and disappeared without trace beyond Neptune.

Seven years after its launch, signals from the 'Event Horizon' were suddenly detected, emanating from behind Neptune. A U.S. Navy Search and Rescue ship from U.S.A.C. (U.S. Aerospace Command - as Space Command was then known) was dispatched. This ship, the 'Lewis & Clark' reported finding the ship intact, then promptly disappeared, never to be heard from again.

A second U.S.A.C. rescue ship, the 'Poindexter', sortied to investigate the silence. Their last comms transmission back to Earth announced they had located part of the 'Event Horizon' adrift in deep space, and that they were preparing to board the wreck. That was the last anyone ever heard of the 'Poindexter' - It too disappeared without a trace, along with the 'Event Horizon'.

Since then, there have been many reported sightings of the 'Event Horizon'

Doom and ill luck is said to follow any vessel sighting this 'Flying Dutchman'. It is certainly true that the four vessels which have attempted a boarding of the wreck were either destroyed with all hands or simply disappeared. (These disasters were of course attributable to docking accidents).

According to space-crew scuttlebutt and rumour, several vessels have sighted the 'ghost ship', but steered away from it because of its evil reputation. As a result, sightings of the 'Event Horizon' are rarely reported now since under interstellar law, all space-going craft possibly in distress must be investigated. Ship's Logs are presumably wiped and the crew hush the sighting up.

It is said in whispered tones that even vessels which have simply sighted the 'Event Horizon' are plagued with accidents, suicides and in certain cases murders. Mechanically, some ships are never the same again, being jinxed with constant equipment failures, and in one 'supposed' case, a haunting. (Allegedly, the crew of the Weyland Yutani freighter, 'Nostromo 11' * sporadically report hearing footsteps when no-one else is there and banging noises in the bowels of the ship that the engineers cannot trace). However, deep space long-hauls are stressful, and such reports are not uncommon.

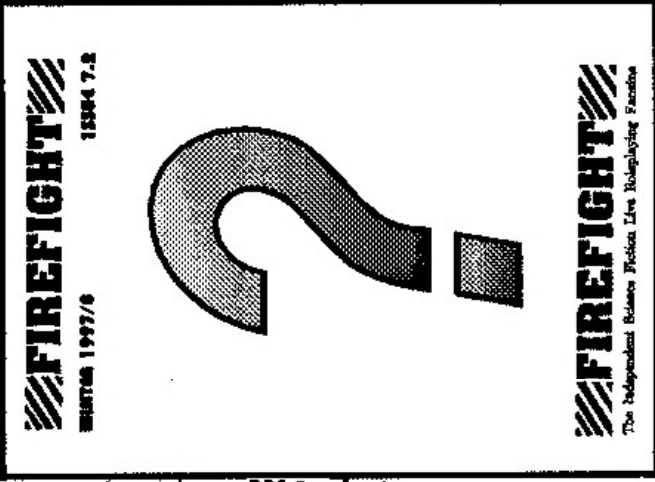
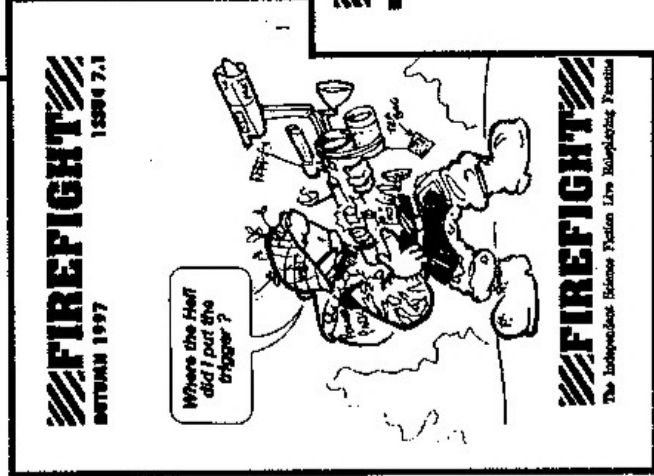
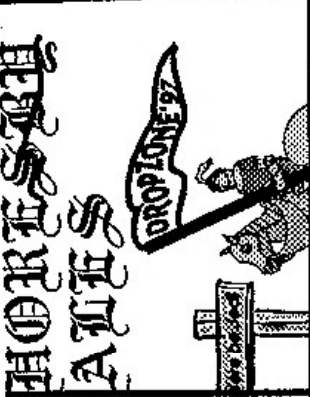
Differing descriptions of the ship seem to indicate the 'Event Horizon' must be in two separate pieces drifting in different areas of the galaxy. The front portion of the ship - the Command decks and crews quarters - seems to be drifting through the outer Eastern rim, according to correlated reports. The rear section - the engineering and drive section of the ship - has been sighted all over the galaxy, and there seems to be no logical pattern to its course.

'Spaceman's superstition' claims that the two halves of the ghost ship are doomed to spend eternity searching for each other through the darkness of space, but if they ever reunite, disaster will befall the galaxy.

The 'Event Horizon'. A tragedy? Certainly. But is the ship really haunted? Of course not. But, it is surely a tribute to the wonderful human imagination, that these gothic and fascinating superstitions survive, even in the high tech world of 2179.

* The 'Nostromo II' has always been considered a jinxed ship, ever since the original vessel was lost in mysterious circumstances back in 2132 over LV-426

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The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

THE LASER TAG CONFEDERATION:-

WHY WE SHOULD HAVE ONE

By D.Harvey & A.Smith

There has been much talk of ours being a 'Hobby in Crisis' - the aim of this article is to point a possible way forward and to promote discussion of this idea. We feel that the idea of a Laser-Tag Confederation would be a more profitable debate at next year's TagCon-8 than yet another technical discussion. We are not saying 'this is how it should be done', what we are saying is 'this is a possibility, what do you think?' We hope that others will air their ideas also.

One of the first things such an organisation could do would be to co-ordinate the efforts of the various groups within the hobby and thus avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Knowing who has the background information/prop/costume/raving psychopath that you're looking for would save a lot of time and probably drastically reduce your phone bill as well.

The co-ordination of tag events throughout the country could also be a function of the confederation. This could prove most useful in preventing game clashes and the 'famine and feast' scenario that has been played out this year, i.e. nothing before Dropzone and hardly a clear weekend in September, October and November, with very little on the map for next year. Since many taggers have both other commitments and limited financial resources, it would seem more sensible to make sure that people are given a reasonable amount of time so that they can make any necessary arrangements to enable them to attend.

Another purpose that could be served well would be that of a central point of contact for people interested in the hobby. Answering their questions and pointing them in the direction of their nearest club or just keeping them informed if they're interested in the hobby but have no wish to join a club. Tied in with this idea is that of promoting and publicising the hobby. There are a number of possible ways of doing this, but that is the subject of another article (or the letters page!).

The provision of a real organisation to back up the LaserTag confederation insurance policy could prove useful also, whilst maintaining a mailing list of all current taggers and tag groups would assuredly be met with great appreciation by any game organiser trying to contact potential players.

A possible step on from that would be to send out a monthly event diary complete with flyers for forthcoming events, thus allowing organisers to save money on postage. As a rough idea, membership of such a mailing list costs £6 per year (to cover postage and photocopying). This works out at 50 pence per month. When compared to having to phone around half of the hobby to find out what's going on, 50 pence per month isn't a lot to ask. If the cost of a mail drop were to exceed 50 pence in any given month, then the extra cost could be split between those sending things out in it.

A possible format for the Laser Tag Confederation :-

Chairman (person): To deal with outside queries and promotion.

Treasurer: To deal with insurance and mail shot fees.

Secretary: To deal with mail shots and flyers.

In order to elect these people as with the Dropzone Committee, one vote per group.

[OH GOD! I WAS SO LOOKING FORWARD TO A QUIET XMAS AND AN UNCONTROVERSIAL TAGCON-8. ED]



The SMART'SENSOR electronic tag board.

Designed by, built by, and obtainable from: Dave Bodger.

Features and User Guide for version 1.0

Worlds of Wonder compatible sensor with 360° hit acceptance and sensitivity better than a Starcap.

Hits counter easily adjustable between 1 and 99 hits at power-on (without having to shoot it!).

Setting is remembered across power-down-reset(s), so only needs adjusting at beginning of each game to match armour worn. The hits can be changed during the 6 second power-up cycle..

An excellent choice for a NPC sensor due to the high hit settings and adjustable hit cycle time. 3 switches (Up, Down and Select) provide a simple menu-style user interface.

16 built-in configurations, plus a custom slot, easily loaded at power-on-reset time.

Accepts custom configuration via RS232 interface, remembered in custom slot.

Config 0 is a functional 6 hit WoW Starsensor 'clone'.

The specially designed analog front-end guarantees WoW compatibility and sensitivity.

Other configs allow for ablative armour (standard armour is retained across resets), regenerative shields and variable hit acceptance rate (cycle time). Shields regenerate at one hit every 32 seconds of inactivity (not in a firefight!) and are seperately counted from armour and body hits.

The circuit drives multiple piezo sounders to high volume. You won't miss this one in a firefight !.

It can also drive a crystal earpiece as well, if required.

Easily distinguished 'ready', 'hit' and 'dead/stunned/not feeling very well' sounds.

'Heartbeat blip' *not* supported (sorry, I refuse to implement this feature as it drives me mad).

Plug & socket on head unit allows helmet to be easily removed if required.

Constant alarm sounds if sensor is turned on without the head unit connected.

The physically seperate double-digit LED display may be mounted wherever desired. It performs an auto-power-down after 30 seconds to preserve battery. In normal mode it will light again when you are hit, so you can see the hits remaining.

The 'Up' key can be used to illuminate the display at any time, the 'Down' key turns off the display but lets the hit light flash, the 'Select' key activates Lights-Out mode.

The hit LED flashes once per second in normal mode, until one hit is left, when it lights solid.

Lights-out mode extinguishes all lights, but the hit led flashes briefly when sensor is hit and comes on solid when there is only one hit left (medics warning).

When down to zero hits, the display lights up and flashes and the siren sounds. Pressing any key stops the siren and generates a random number between 0 and 7 on the display, which can be used as the basis of a 'hit location' or 'wound severity' within your medical system.

A 'Lockout' *input* allows the sensor to be temporarily disabled by an external signal (SmartGun firing, for example).

The 'Lockout' *output*, active when on zero hits, can be used to prevent (SmartGun) firing, or drive external low-voltage devices (pyros, etc.) via a relay, etc.

A 'flat battery' light illuminates when the battery reaches 6 volts and resets the sensor. It will not allow the sensor to start with a battery voltage below 7.2 volts. Can be powered from PP3 or 6 AA nicads.

Low battery consumption, average 10mA, designed to run all day on a freshly charged nicad PP3. Go a whole weekend of game time on an alkaline PP3.

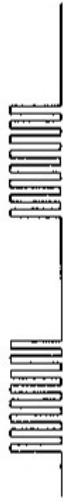
High quality circuit boards, components and construction.

Available as an uncased kit with pre-assembled circuit boards for £50 (US\$86) from:-

Dave Bodger, 35 Trelawn Road, Brixton, London, SW2 1DH, U.K. ☎ +44 (0)171 737 2794

<http://www.cix.co.uk/~lasertag/lasertag.htm>

davebodger@mail.bogo.co.uk



The SMART'SENSOR electronic tag board.

Designed by, built by, and obtainable from: Dave Bodger.

Key Switch function changes with mode.

	Power-on-reset	Config	Game-On	Dead
Up	Increase armour hits	Increase config number	Illuminates display and terminates Lights-Off mode	Stops siren sound and selects random number
Select	Selects Config mode	Selects configuration and returns to Power-on-Reset mode.	Selects Lights-Off mode	Stops siren sound and selects random number
Down	Decrease armour hits	Decrease config number	Immediately turns off display digits, but flashing led still functions.	Stops siren sound and selects random number

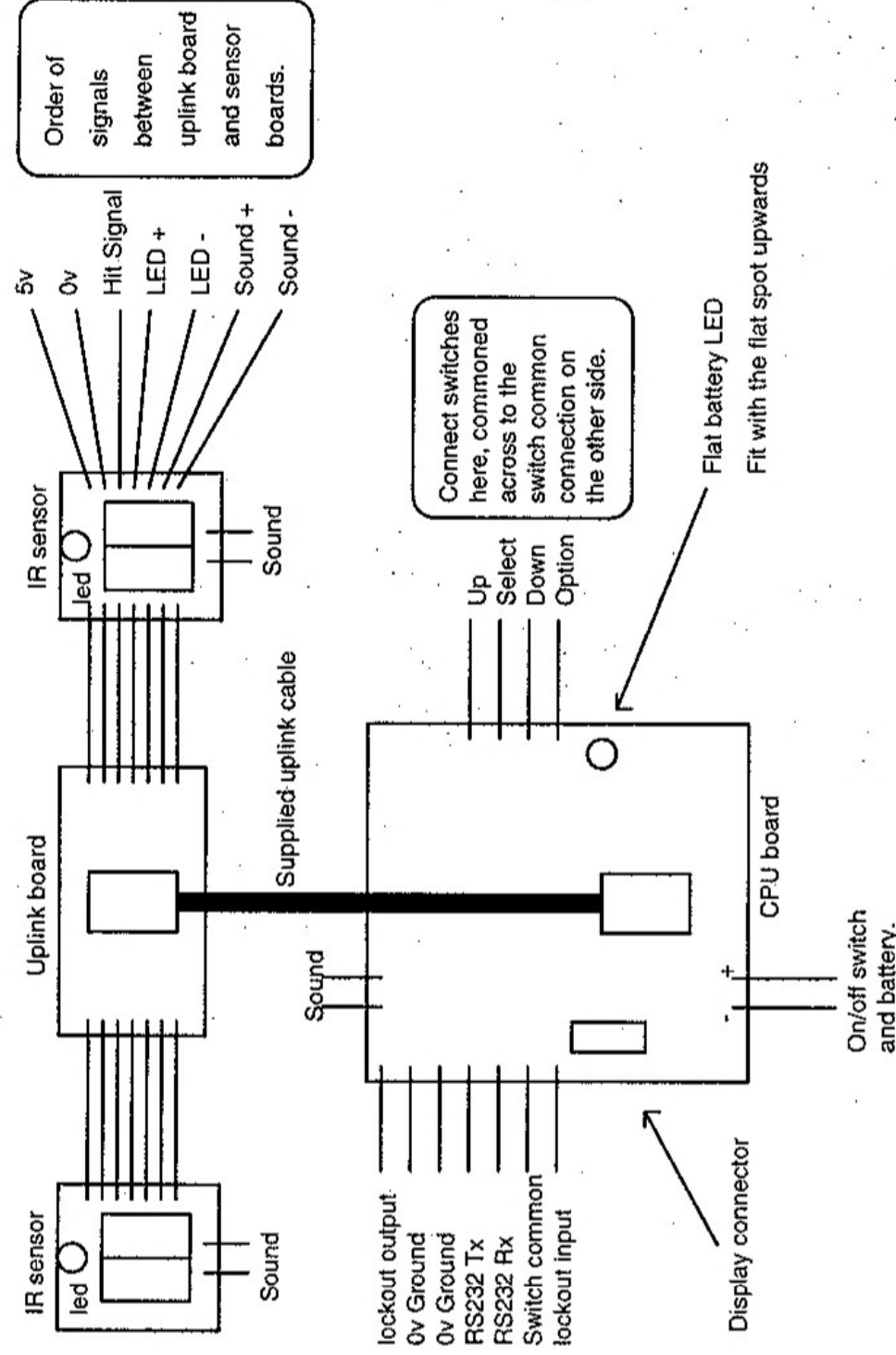
Config Number	Config Name	Body Hits	Armour Hits	Regenerative Shields	Abative Armour	Cycle Time
0	WoW Starsensor	1	5	0	No	1 sec
1	Chief of Admin	1	5	0	Yes	1 sec
2	Technician	2	4	0	Yes	1 sec
3	Officer	3	3	0	Yes	1 sec
4	Marine	4	2	0	Yes	1 sec
5	Medic	2	2	2	No	1 sec
6	Sergeant	2	2	2	Yes	1 sec
7	Rogue Trooper	5	5	5	Yes	0.75 s
8	Super Trooper	3	6	6	Yes	0.75 s
9	Starship Trooper	4	10	2	Yes	0.75 s
A	Princess Liea	4	6	6	No	1 sec
B	Han Solo	8	4	8	Yes	0.75 s
C	Chewbacca	10	2	10	Yes	0.75 s
D	Luke Skywalker	6	6	20	Yes	0.75 s
E	Terminator	20	79	0	Yes	1 sec
F	Well 'ard	30	59	10	Yes	0.25 s
c	Custom Slot	?	?	?	?	?

The SMART'SENSOR electronic tag board.

Designed by, built by, and obtainable from: Dave Bodger.

Installation Guide

The SmartSensor is made up from circuit boards which need to be fitted together in this order:-



The wiring between the sensor boards and the uplink board can be kept to a minimum by just connecting up the wires for the functions you need. I.e. if you fit the sounder to the uplink board you do not need to run the two sound wires out to the sensor boards. If you only have a hit led on the front sensor, you do not need to run the two led wires to the back sensor. etc. The hit/flash led can be fitted to either or both sensor units.

The piezo sounder(s) can be fitted to any or all of the boards (maximum 3 sounders).

Normally most people will not fit 3 sounders, so there will be spare sound connections on the edge of the uplink board if you want to fit a sounder there instead of either of the sensor boards. I recommend always fitting a sounder to the main cpu board, as this will then warn you if you do not connect the uplink cable to the uplink board when you put your helmet on.

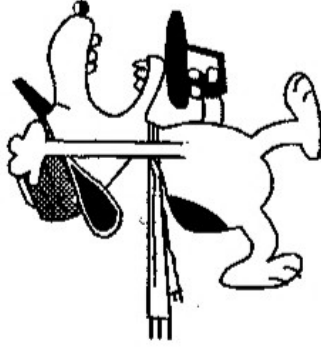
CLUB DIRECTORY

BAD COMPANY



Contact: Andy Smith,
10 London Road,
Elephant & Castle,
London SE1 6JZ
(0171) 6202800

BARKING (MAD) WARDOGS



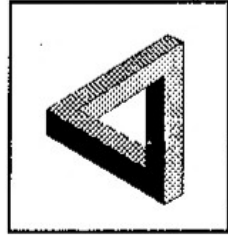
Contact: Paul Watson,
51, Vivien Road,
Sheffield.
S5 6WJ
(0114) 2440565

BROTHERS IN ARMS



Contact: Richard Weremiuk,
10, Melville Court,
Clayton,
Newcastle,
Staff.,
ST5 4HJ
(01782) 636783

DOMINION



Contact: Paul Haugh,
32, Priory Road,
Grimsby
S. Humberside.
DN37 9QH

FIAT LUX



Contact: Alex & Sarah Clark,
74, Bluebell Rd.,
Southampton,
SO16 3LQ
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AJC4@SOTON.AC.UK

FIAT LUX !

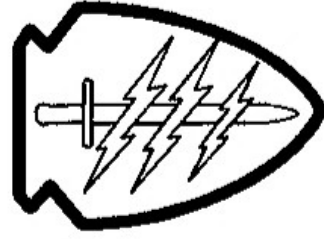
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Clwyd.
N. Wales.
LL15 1PH
(01824) 704735

LAZERQUAKE

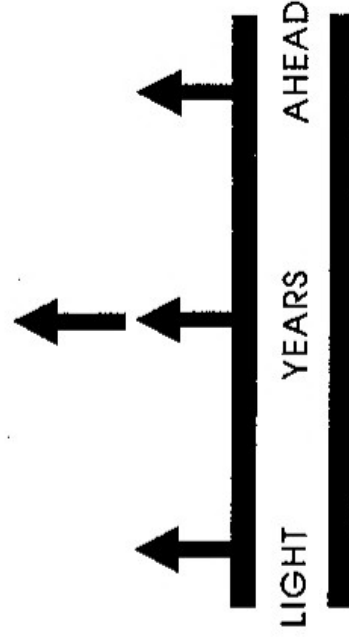
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OX1 1RS
(01865) 728695

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(01203) 453673

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Northiam,
East Sussex.
TN31 6QU
(01797) 252537
(0860) 314857

N.O.A.G. 2500



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West Sussex.
RH10 7LY
(01293) 889642
Bill@Chivcons.demon.co.uk

http://www.chivcons.demon.co.uk/~ve_info.htm