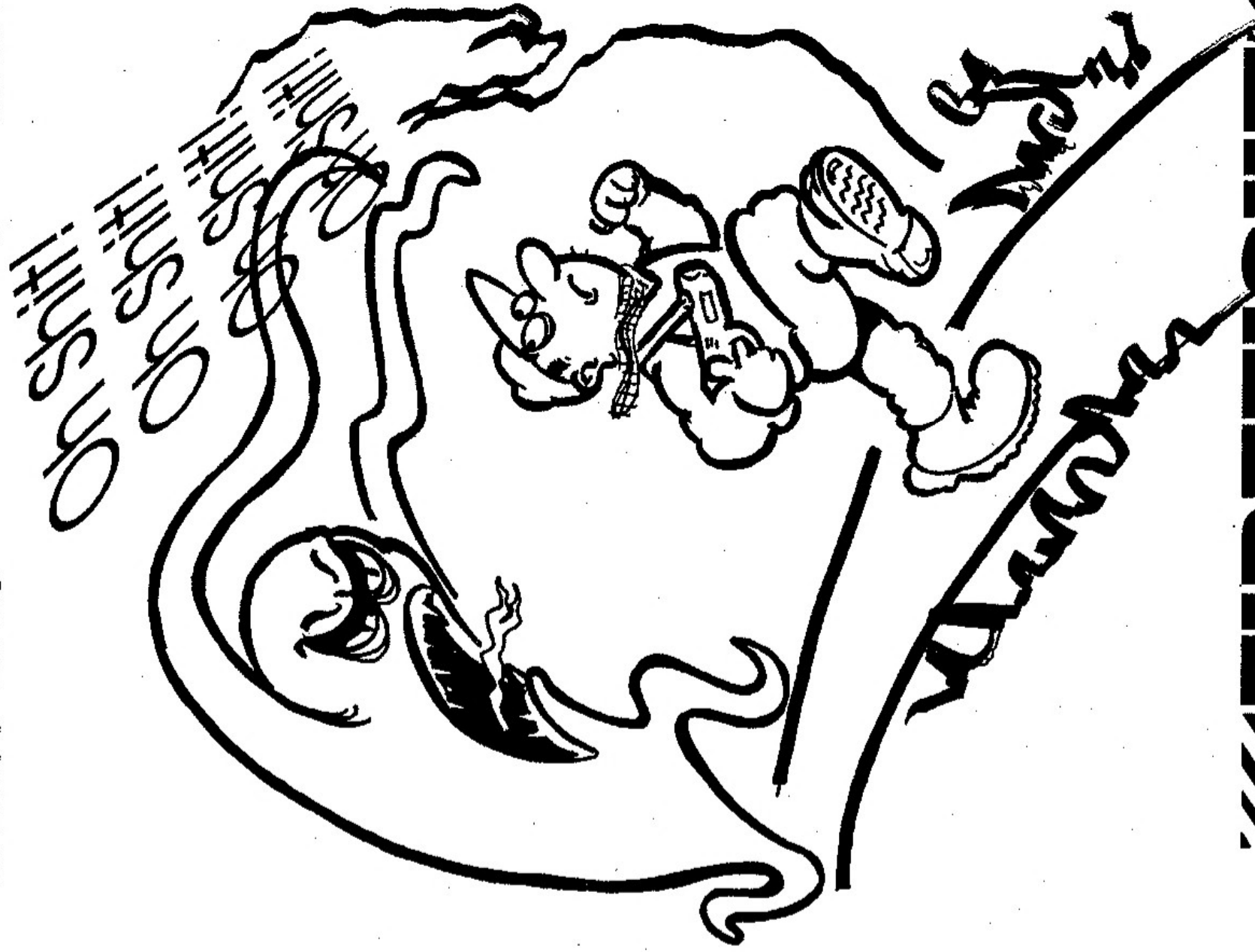


FIREFIGHT

SPRING 1998

*** ISSUE 7.3**



FIREFIGHT

The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

* with apologies to Terry Pratchett

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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.

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

FIREFIGHT 7.4 is JULY 6th 1998

UK Lasertag Calendar

thanks to Sarah Clarke for maintaining the flow of information. See <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~ajc4/index.htm>

Date	Event	Cost	Site	Contact
May 2nd	"Hunter-Killer" Warlords day/evening event	£12.50 (£10 Warlord members)	Downgate Woods, Kent	Dave Harvey 7 Nutt St London SE15 6LD 0171-701-8981
May 8-10th	Virtual Eclipse: May Training Mission & AGM <u>see VE</u> <u>website for full</u> <u>details</u>	£17 VE members, £20 non VE members, Deposit £10 before 1st May	Priory Wood Scout Campsite, Next To Stansted Airport	<u>Graham Field</u> 01252 614119
May 17th	Light Brigade - Sunday evening game	£3:00 guests £2:00 members	Fox Coverts, nr Coventry	<u>Dai Rees</u> 01203-453673
May 22/25	"Dropzone '98"	£25 rising to £35	Thoresby Park, Nottinghamshire	Lasertag Confederation <u>Graham Parton</u>
June 14th	Light Brigade - Sunday evening game	£3:00 guests £2:00 members	Fox Coverts, nr Coventry	<u>Dai Rees</u> 01203-453673
Jun 19-21st	Virtual Eclipse event	£2:00 members	(see website)	<u>Graham Field</u> 01252 614119
Jun 26-28th	South London Warlords: "A Weekend in the Country"	£22.50 to 1st May £27.50 thereafter (£2.50 discount to SLW Members)	Merdon Castle, Hampshire	Dave Harvey 7 Nutt St London SE15 6LD 0171-701-8981
July 5th	Light Brigade - Sunday evening game	£3:00 guests £2:00 members	Fox Coverts, nr Coventry	<u>Dai Rees</u> 01203-453673
August ??	Light Brigade: "GHD3"	£15:00	Coventry	<u>Dai Rees</u> 01203-453673
Sep 4-6th	Virtual Eclipse event	<u>see VE</u> <u>website for full</u> <u>details</u>	(see website)	<u>Graham Field</u> 01252 614119
September 13th	Light Brigade - Sunday evening game	£3:00 guests £2:00 members	Fox Coverts, nr Coventry	<u>Dai Rees</u> 01203-453673
September 25th-27th	Fiat Lux! at Merdon	£2:00 members	Merdon Castle, Hampshire	Fiat Lux! <u>Alex Clark</u>
Oct 16-18th	Virtual Eclipse event	<u>see VE</u> <u>website for full</u> <u>details</u>	(see website)	<u>Graham Field</u> 01252 614119
Nov 27-19th	Virtual Eclipse event	<u>see VE</u> <u>website for full</u> <u>details</u>	(see website)	<u>Graham Field</u> 01252 614119

Editor's Bit

Well hello again, Television broken is it? No washing up to do? Surely you can find something better to do than read this old thing?

Right that's got rid of anyone half hearted about the hobby. Now commence au festival 1998:

From the ashes, a fire shall be woken,

A Light from the shadows shall spring...

with apologies to JRR Tolkien

For those of you who attend multiclub tags and scenarios, the year is getting off to a cracking good start. TAGCON -8 was well attended, despite the appearance to the contrary, with 2 "new" groups attending. Similarly a number of "new" people joined the players and NPC crew at Black Watches "Sic Semper Tyrannus". One of the "new" groups Virtual Eclipse also ran an event "Mission Silver Birch". The rest of the year already looks good (see Tagging Diary). The showcase has to be however DROPZONE '98. There are a number of articles as with Dropzone that are historically based, although set a lot earlier than the 1940's that represent the first themed game at Thoresby.

For those who still bemoan the loss of TAGRAG all I can say is that last years DROPZONE was one of the most relaxed and friendly tags I've ever been to. There are still plenty of events to go (see the calendar) and if you have any ideas yourself for running an event get in touch.

The technology is not being deserted either with several adverts and articles on the arcane art of tag creation.

This edition is however lighter by several pages as there are several articles 'out there' (sorry Chris Carter) which remain unknown to the tagging community at large. If you've got an article in you then let's have it. You don't want to have to read my drivel all the time do you? There is of course the ultimate weapon I could use, ie sending Nigel round to tell you of the battle of Drum Hill until you jump out of a high storey block of flats. (Don't think for one minute that my ethical code prevents me from such action)

For those of you who rather keep yourselves to yourselves please drop us a line anyway as with new people popping up it would be nice if we could direct them to their nearest bunch of loonies with torches.

See you soon thro' a 'scope



(aka CAMO KING, aka BUSH)

CAUTION

* LAZERS

A WARNING

It has come to FIREFIGHT notice that some people still like the idea of real lazer-tag. ie. use of pocket sized lazer red dots. Designed to be used as laser pointers for A.V. presentations or as alignment devices, the temptation to slap them on our Tag guns as night/dusk sighting aids is proving to much for some taggers.

IN SHORT.....DON'T

Since our target sensors are on our heads a major risk of exposure to the axis of the beam exists. Exposure to the beam of any of these units since they are Continuous Wave AND lensed under 100m will cause minor eye damage. If the proposed target is using a telescopic sight to look back along the beam axis the possibility of serious eye damage is great. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED!!

This warning is in addition to that of the Maplins build your own AV pointer lazer diodes. The problem is far more urgent since 1) these devices are very cheap and 2) the fear of damage alone could result in physical damage to the device, gun and/or user if it were thought there was any malice involved.

Since no one else has written up this entertaining little weekend I thought I'd better put something down on paper about...

THE 1997

COLONIAL MARINES GAMES

Over the weekend of the 15th to 17th August 1997 I attended the second annual US Colonial Marines Games. Although the games themselves didn't start until Saturday morning I, like most of the other participants, arrived at Overstone Scout Camp on the Friday evening and spent the night socialising.

By previous arrangement I was part of a team with Alex Clark, Simon Russell, Steve Alcott and Wendy (sorry surname forgotten) called The Part Timers. It was going to be The Short-Timers (after the novel Full Metal Jacket is based on) but unsurprisingly no-one wanted to be Handjob...

Our opponents were The Extreme Right, Blackwatch, The Teletubby Revolutionary Army, and ...err, another team whose name I can't remember.

The contest revolved around a series of military exercises with each team trying to amass as many points as possible. The games were:

Capture the flag.

For this one each team was sent off at one minute intervals along one of the three paths into the woods with thirty minutes from the first insertion to seek and destroy the other teams. Since each team had a flag and there were bonus points for each member of the team still standing at the end of the

game there were thankfully more options than just charging gung-ho at the opposition.

Field strip the M16.

For this fun little interlude Chris Hannaford* risking his rather splendid replica M16 by recklessly putting it in the hands of the players. In Generation Game fashion Chris gave us a demonstration and then against the clock a volunteer from each team had to repeat the process.

With the Mission Impossible theme playing in the background and Chris giving the contestants some pointers everyone managed to get the job done in times ranging between one and two minutes. Chris was then encouraged to show us how to do it properly and put us all to shame by doing it in under 20 seconds.

*whose name my spell checker wants to change to "unafraid" or "hangover"... surely some mistake.

Hogan's Alley.

Armed with a Starlite a volunteer from each team had to shoot 20 targets which popped out one at a time, under the direction of Jenny Watson, from cover somewhere in a rough circle around him or her against the clock.

Cas-evac.

Armed with whatever they cared to carry one team had to transport a stretcher-bound dummy through

enemy held territory to a predetermined pick-up point. Tactics varied from the Dan Taylor dash, to the Extreme Right who slowly and deliberately searched out and eliminated all the defenders before carrying in the casualty unopposed.

Inspection.

Sunday morning brought us the most nerve racking part of the weekend, an inspection by Andy Smith in full drill sergeant mode. We had a huge advantage thanks to Simon Clarke who, although he didn't play, had with this in mind brought four matching white shirts and black ties leaving us only to find black trousers and polish our boots. Cheers Simon. The inspection was a lot of fun and it was fun to roleplay being on parade. It certainly brought back memories anyway.

...and the winners are...

The final order of things was decided by a tie-breaker (well a penalty shootout really) which let Blackwatch snatch the trophy from The Extreme Right, with whom they had been running neck and neck all weekend. We, The Part-Timers, came third with The Teletubby Revolutionary Army in fourth followed by that bunch whose name I can't remember (which is probably for the best).

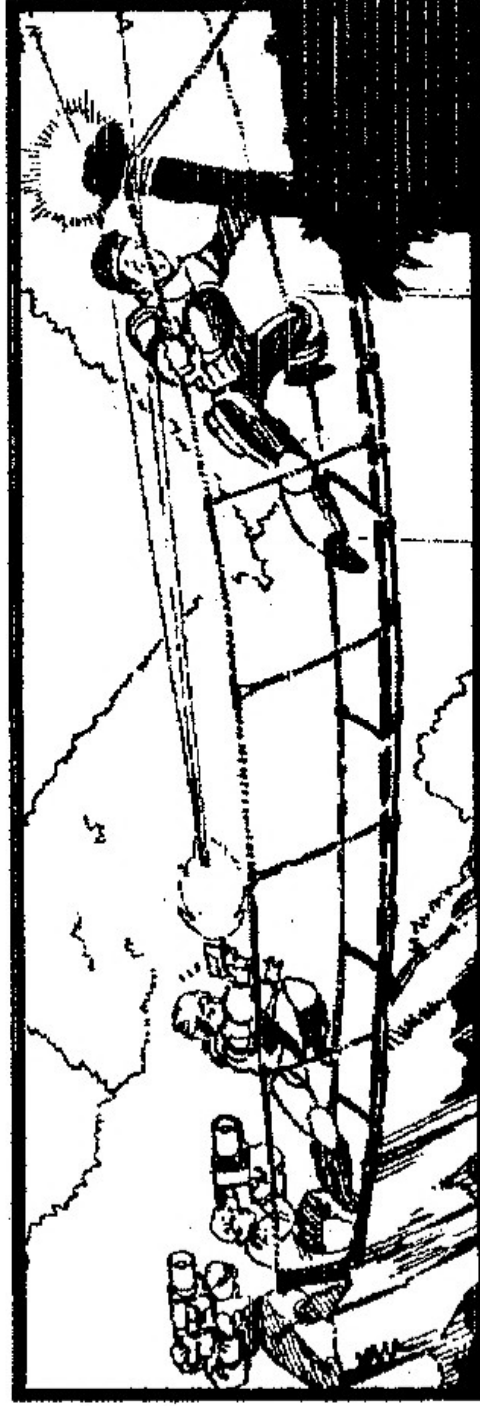
Good and bad points about the weekend

Given that during the day the weather was very hot and fairly humid the format of multiple short games with a 30 minute time limit was sensible and stopped anyone from running themselves into the ground. Another hedge against people keeling over from dehydration and exhaustion was the very pleasant surprise when Paul Watson filled the freezer with lollies and icecream and issued a general order to help yourself. An especially generous gesture since he was only there as a player and wasn't one of the organisers.

However, on the Saturday evening it was cooler and it would have made a good change of pace to have had a roleplaying game (even just a minimal roleplaying game) and in my opinion would have given the event a bit more substance. I have been told that one was written but it was decided that it would be more fun to watch a film on Steve Alcott's projection TV so the game was shelved which was a shame.

Overall this was a pleasant little get together which meant there was something happening in August rather than the usual lull and at ten pounds, included indoor accommodation, good value too.

Unpretentious military fun.



"You know Paul, building an M16 Tag gun is like making love to a beautiful woman..."

I was pleased to see the article by Nigel Carr on turning the M16 Colt Commando water pistol (?) into a tag gun. I have done the same thing but using far simpler techniques. With this in mind I would like to share my experiences during which one M16 body gave its life so that others might live!

First of all why use the M16 water pistol. Well here are a few of my reasons:

- It's life-size. The M16 Commando is an ickle gun in reality. The toy version is, as far as I can tell, a 1:1 scale replica so it feels right and shoulders reasonably well.
- It looks the part. I have built several guns, many from scratch, but most did not have selector switches, neat mouldings etc. etc. that make the gun look purposeful, the M16 has all this.
- It's cheap at £15. Even if you trash one it is still cheaper than most other possible donor bodies.
- They are easily available through Toys 'r Us (they do still sell them don't they).
- It is easy to work with. Plenty of space inside and the material is easy to drill/cut etc.

Anyway on with the detail.

1. Trigger: (*yes Del?*) I used the original trigger mechanism. This is certainly cheaper than buying other switches and is definitely easier than trying to fit them. For those of you not familiar with the internals (*Ooh Errr*) of the toy gun, the trigger is a simple (and very rugged) pivoting mechanism that pushes a metal plate onto a contact to complete the circuit. It works, it's there, why not use it?
2. Strengthening: "*This season I 'ave mostly been using none*". The gun body is very sturdy, there are no loose components that chip off (as a gun kit possibly could) The only possible weak spot being the barrel. But, unless you intend fitting a bayonet and using it (!!!) I suggest that no reinforcement is necessary at all. Especially as Nigel had trouble strengthening the gun with some of the panels buckeling and working with fibreglass is definately a pain (literally).

3. Lens assembly: This I admit was a bugger. I am a fan of the two inch lens mounted in grey waste pipe (why do you think I'm called two inch Dave... Oh hang on that wasn't Tagging was it). In the past I had successfully used the traditional underslung grenade launcher. Being imaginative I stayed with it. The problem was attaching a round thing (the waste pipe) to another round thing (the forestock of the gun).

In the real world, waste pipe is attached to walls by fixing brackets. These have two components of the same material as the pipe, the first is a plate with a tab making it look in profile like a squashed capital letter "T" which is screwed to the wall (*Oooh* .. oh forget it). The second is an open ring that goes around the pipe, each end of which ends in a tab (looking like a capital letter "Q" but without a squigly bottom. *Ooh Matron!*) these sandwich the tab on the "T" plate allowing them to be bolted together. Using two of these rings (discard the "T" plates) I had the waste pipe held firmly and could insert the tabs into the underside of the forestock (carefully cut the forestock on both sides of the seam so that the tabs are gripped when the screws on the gun body are tightened). However, the grenade launcher wobbled slightly when held (it becomes the point at which you hold the gun) destroying the zeroing of the weapon.

After much pondering on glue, tape, resin, nuts and bolts etc. I realised that I had another point of contact with the gun, the magazine housing and magazine. By cutting a slot in the back end of the waste pipe (again done carefully and trimmed to fit tightly) I could get the rear of the grenade launcher to slip back around the magazine housing and magazine. This gave the whole thing tremendous stability **WITHOUT GLUE** or any other means of attachment other than friction. This means that the grenade launcher lens assembly can be popped off after loosening a couple of the screws that hold the body together (*Brilliant!*). The only disadvantage with this is that the magazine cannot be removed to represent reloading.

4. Battery pack: Having made guns in the past where the only way of changing batteries was to unscrew the whole gun I tried to get the battery pack accessible. The original water pistol used three large 1.5V batteries in the stock, which is basically a tube with an end plate. Access to the batteries is

via the small end plate at the rear of the stock. In its original form a six pack of AA batteries can't quite fit so split the stock into it's two component halves to reveal a false bottom and top to the tube inside. If this is cut and sanded away the six pack will fit (snugly I admit). Those of you who use more batteries will have to look elsewhere. However, for those who use rechargeables. I understand that these are slightly larger than the "normal" AA's and a six pack of rechargeables may not fit here, try it and see. The wires from the battery are then fed into the gun body from inside the stock straight to the original trigger mechanism.

5. Speaker: Even I could work out that a two inch speaker would fit into the same waste pipe as a two inch lens. Mount the speaker exactly the same way as the lens (a small peice of the waste pipe with a section cut out to allow it to fit inside the original pipe works) but pointing backwards, towards the magazine housing. The end of the pipe is not blocked completely by the magazine housing so the sound flows freely out (??) this removes the need for a speaker grill. The wiring for the speaker and emitter is fed down from the forestock between the tabs on the rear fixing ring and then forward to the emitter and backwards to the speaker.

6. Muzzle flash: As per Nigel a bloody great LED in the muzzle.

7. On/Off switch: There is just enough room on the stock (tucked away on either side as it enters the gun body). Having said that there are many places where it could be mounted. The choice is yours.

8. Telescopic Sight: [Please note the page referring to the sight mount in my issue of FIREFIGHT hadn't copied well so I may be repeating what Nigel had written]. I removed the carrying handle as I wanted to change the appearance of the original M16, the carrying handle with integral rear sight and the foresight are the key visual features of the M16. My gun now looks more like the Israeli Gahil. To be honest you may want to keep the handle and foresight in place and rig up a workable sight (the toy has no useable sighting mechanism). This is my next project I want to see just how cheap a good lensed gun can be made for, latest estimates under £60.

My telescopic sight is clamped to a piece of curtain rail (reused from my original 1989 Uzi based tag gun.... *Which was nice!*). The curtain rail is attached to the gun body by two nuts and bolts. The top of the gun body narrows and a chunky square bolt (not hexagonal or you won't get the grip) can be slotted under the top of the body just as the body screws are being tightened. The nut and bolt are loosely done up through the rail to allow some freedom of movement to do this. Now as the bolt is tightened the nut cannot turn (it fouls on the inside of the gun body) pulling the rail onto the gun. Another alternative would be to glue the nut in place on one side of the gun body so that the fiddley bit of slotting the nut and bolt into a gap is avoided.

9. Painting: Halfords matt black (incidentally the same paint makes excellent primer for metal wargames figures). Having said that there is a nice choice of other colours available. Either way its done in a couple of minutes need no lacquer (*I said use it on your hair dear*) just leave to dry overnight. *It's Gripped!* The paint on my gun has worn off in a couple of exposed places but after three years that's not bad.

10. Making holes etc.: Don't burn, drill. Drilled or cut holes are easier to control. I was fortunate to have access to a "Hobby Drill" available from Maplins, Texas and Homebase at about £30 I think?? It's the same thing as the "Dremel" as advertised on TV by Alexi Sayle. This was so useful that I am seriously considering buying another, as having moved house I can't find the original. In all honesty it is a great bit of kit and saves time, effort and blood (try cutting thick plastic with a Stanley knife). If you do any plastic modelling [*this week I am mostly being a piece of sprue!*] or assembling models for wargames you will find it useful for that as well. I recommend a saw blade, sanding block and assorted drill bits.

If you can't afford this I suppose you could use the saw and sanding blocks in a normal drill but it will be difficult to handle, and you won't be able to adjust the speed as on some hobby drills, so if you loose a finger or two don't blame me. You could always go manual with hacksaw files Stanley knife and a bit of time.

11. Other bits: The rest depends on what circuit you choose to use. I have a Bodger Board (*aren't Bodger Boards Brilliant!*) which has served me well and is located in the main body this leaves the magazine and forestock empty. See what I mean about plenty of room in the gun.

Nigel talks of melting away the top of the magazine. This I imagine is messy. My prototype was going to have the batteries in the magazine so I cut the top off with a hacksaw. As long as you leave the retaining notch on the front of the magazine (for the release switch to locate in) I don't think you will have any problems with cutting the top off which allows greater access to the magazine space.

My ammo counter, is a two digit affair mounted on the right hand side of the gun it is easier if you mount all internals onto one side of the gun only. Then the opposite side acts as a cover and is not complicated by wires crossing over.

Nigel seems to use a lot of fibre glass and resin to hold things in place. Nasty smelly and irritating (*hellooh the agony of choice*). Use super glue or Araldite it works almost as well and if components fail they can be prised out without damaging the body.

Going back to the cheap lensed gun mentioned above this is where my £60 lensed weapon comes from:

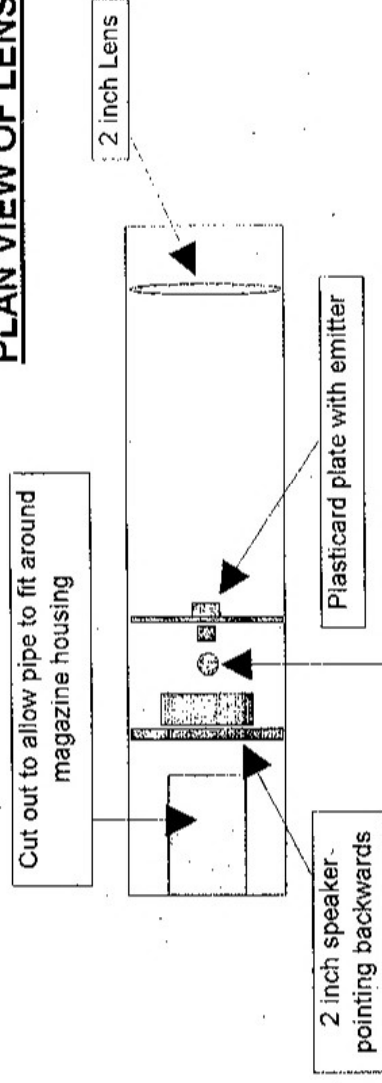
M16 body	£15
Basic Hi Ranger circuit	£29
Two inch lens (magnifying glass)	£3
Paint, wire, solder, waste pipe etc	£13
Total Cost	£60

As for a sighting mechanism, what about simple "V" notch cut in the back of the carrying handle orcome on half the fun in tagging was building your own kit and overcoming the problems encountered.

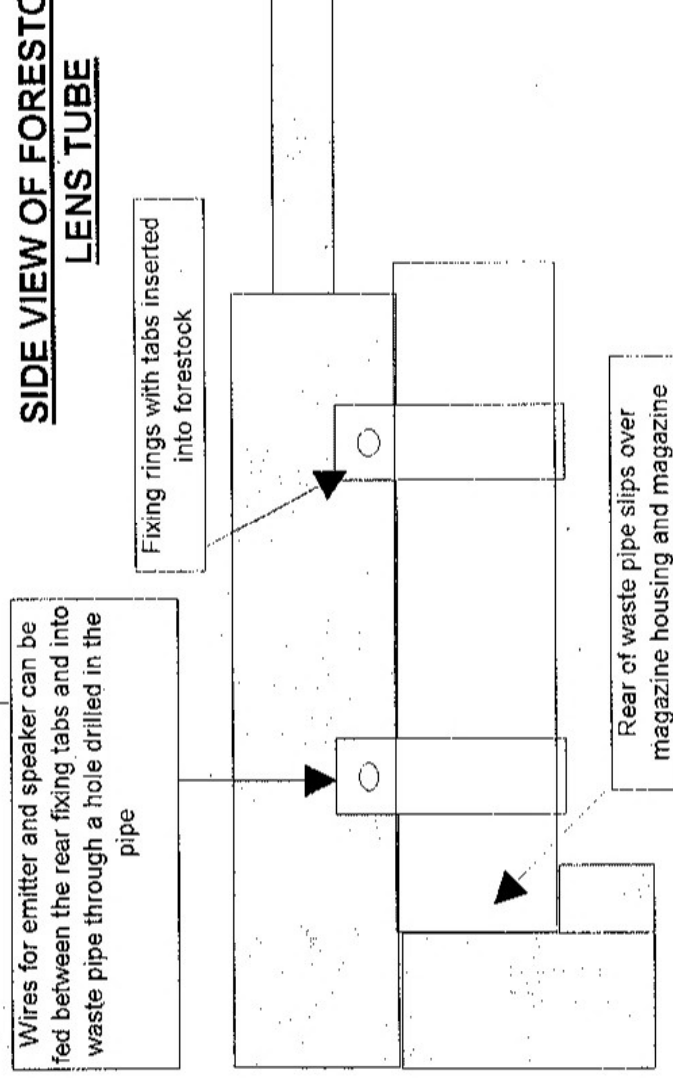
If people were interested I am sure a club could have a build session and turn out a gun per member in a day and reduce the price slightly. We did this some years ago and built half a dozen Dornfords in a day and they were made of wood!!

Now all we need is some games where we can use them (what about the Starship Troopers genre pre bugs).

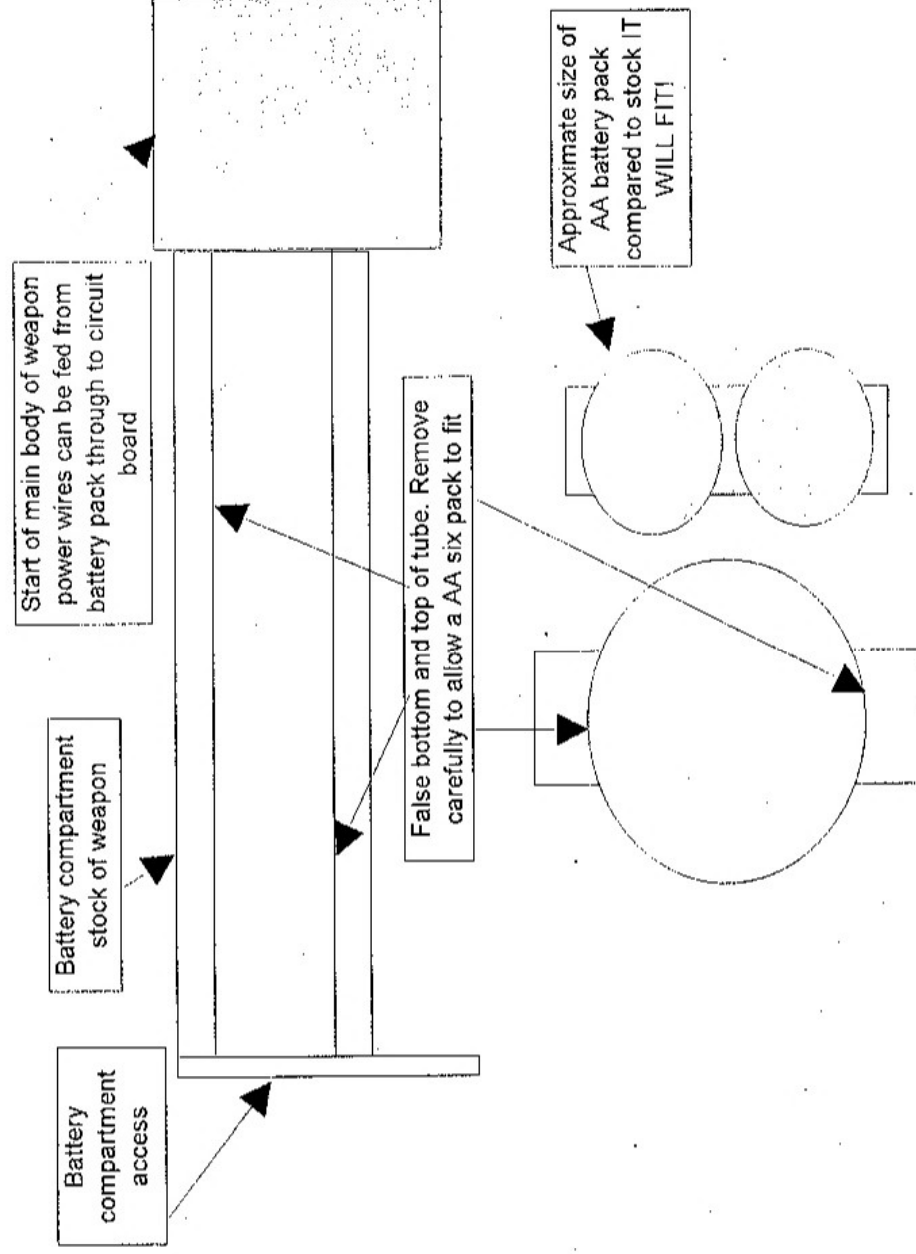
PLAN VIEW OF LENS TUBE



SIDE VIEW OF FORESTOCK & LENS TUBE



BUTT STOCK SIDE AND REAR VIEWS (below)



NORSE MYTHOLOGY FOR BEGINNERS

BY TIM ATKINSON



Recently I became interested in Norse mythology, not from a historical perspective as such, but through my science fiction interests in, of all things, Doctor Who. I won't bore you with the details but a week or so ago, a group of us attended a Doctor Who convention held in Hawkhurst Kent, the site of some of the filming of one of the last Who stories to be made, "The Curse of Fenric". Set in 1943 in and around a fictitious Yorkshire coastal town, it tells the story of Ragnarok, the end of the world according to Norse mythology.

After this and my reading on the subject (plus some prodding from Kevin Dallimore) I decided to write a sort of beginners primer for Norse Mythology, concentrating on the beginning and end of the world.

The Norse universe is centred around "The World Tree"; a great Ash tree called "Yggdrasil" (ig dra sill). The World tree has three roots, each of which connects to one of the worlds below. One into the well of Urd in Asgard, one into the Fountain of Mimir in Midgard (Our Earth), and one into the Spring of Hvergelmir in Hel (The Underworld).

Asgard is the home of the Gods, ruled by Odin the Allfather, a powerful but somewhat unstable god, wise but prone to jealousy. Asgard is connected to Midgard by "Bifrost", the Rainbow Bridge, which is guarded by Heimdal.

Midgard is where the humans live, along with other mortal races such as giants, dwarves and Dark Elves. Midgard is encircled by a great ocean in which swims Jormungand the great Serpent.

The lowest level, and is composed of two separate kingdoms, Muspell a land of fire, and Niflheim a land of ice.

In the beginning were the two lands Muspell of fire and Niflheim of ice, in between was a great nothingness called the Ginnungagap.

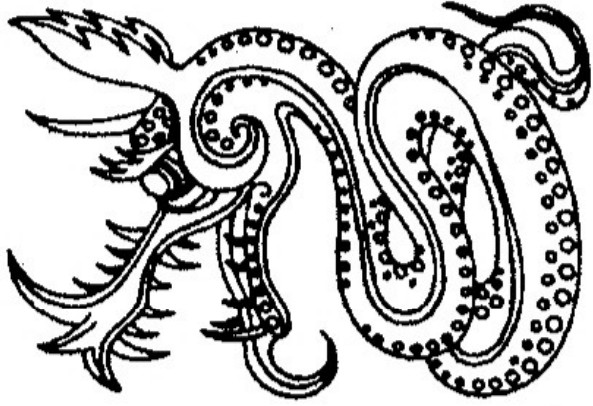
Eleven rivers flowed out from Niflheim into the nothingness until Heat from Muspell started to melt the ice, the first drops forming Ymir, the frost Giant, and a huge cow called Audumla.

The first god was formed by Audumla, licking him out of the ice. This was Buri who in time had a son called Bor. Bor married Mestla, a frost Giantess and had three sons, Odin, Vili and Ve.

Ymir was killed by Odin and his brothers, because he was brutal and evil, they dragged his body into Ginnungagap to form the world. The gods took sparks from Muspell and cast them into the sky to form the sun moon and stars. The first humans were fashioned from an Ash root for man and an Elm root for Woman.

After this Odin's brothers Vili and Ve simply faded out of the mythology, leaving Odin as the Allfather of the gods.





Norse mythology is very bleak; the world ends in a great battle between the giants of Midgard and the gods of Asgard. It is signalled by a great war on Midgard ending in Midgard freezing, killing all humans except one pair that climb into the branches of the World Tree for refuge. A pair of great wolves will catch and swallow the sun and moon, plunging the world into darkness.

Loki (god of mischief) and Fenrir will break the chains that hold them, and join sides against the gods, Jormungand the great serpent, leaves the ocean and invades the land. Loki leads the attack on Asgard, joined by fiery beings from Muspell, and also Hel with all the dead souls from Niflheim at her side.

A giant plain called Vigard is the site of the battle, where the forces mutually destroy each other.

Fenrir kills Odin, and is then killed by Vidar (another of Odin's sons), Loki and Heimdal kill each other, while Thor will destroy Jormungand the great serpent, but dies from the serpents venom. Surt (ruler of Muspell) flings fire in all directions, destroying Asgard and Midgard. The earth sinks into the sea and all life ends.

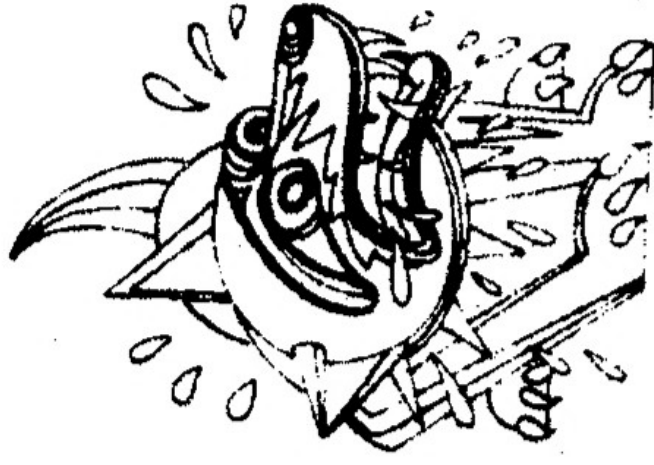
This is not the end, the World Tree Yggdrasil survives, and before it was eaten, the sun has a daughter, which returns to provide light to the new world, which eventually rises out of the sea. The couple who hid in the World Tree climb down to restart the human race. Various minor gods survive to start a new race of gods who live in peace.

If you've lasted this long....

I have of course butchered the legend to fit in a small space, but I hope I've captured the general gist of the story.

To conclude, the "Curse of Fenric", the story of Ragnarok is transposed to fit the contemporary times of 1943 wartime Britain, Odin becomes the Doctor of course, Friga his wife becomes Ace, the Doctors assistant. The naval camp commander Millington is Loki, while Captain Sorin of the Russian Army becomes Thor. The great serpent becomes an ancient Haemavore, or vampire, pulled backwards in time from the end of life on earth. The Haemavore has passed across central Europe giving rise to the vampire legends that proliferate there. The army of the dead is of course an army of Haemavores.

Of course the similarities between the traditional legend and the who story become a bit strained at times (all right, most of the time!), but in general the theme fits. The "Curse of Fenric" is in my opinion possibly the best Who story made, drawing as it does from historical and legendary sources rather than dodgy silver painted cardboard spaceships.



Tips from the :- *Horror Film Survival Guide*

Rae Day

I extracted these from the Readers' Digest who I suspect had, in turn, taken them from someone else. Some of them may be of interest to Taggers! [Some have been amended to be more appropriate. ED]

1. If you are searching for something that caused a noise and find out that it's just a squirrel. Leave the area immediately if you value your life
- 2.. When you have the benefit of numbers never pair off or go it alone.
3. Do not search the scout hut; particularly if the electricity has just gone out.
4. As a general rule; do not solve puzzles that open portals to hell.
5. Never stand in, on, above, below, beside or anywhere near a grave, crypt, tomb, mausoleum or any other house of the dead.
6. If appliances start operating by themselves, move out.
7. Stay away from certain geographical locations, some of which are listed here:-
Amityville, Elm Street, Transylvannia, Thoresby Park, The Bermuda Triangle.
8. Beware of strangers bearing tools such as chainsaws, hedge trimmers or soldering irons.
9. If your car runs out of petrol at night, do not go to the nearby deserted looking scout hut to phone for help.
10. When you have killed the monster, NEVER check to see if it's really dead.

"... Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of some dream. Yet in a second afterwards (so frail may that web have been) we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return to life from the swoon there are two stages; first, that of the sense of mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of physical existence. It seems probable that if, upon reaching the second stage, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find these impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And that gulf is, what?..."

"... I had observed that although the outlines of the figures upon the walls were sufficiently distinct, yet the colours seemed blurred and indefinite . These colours had now assumed, and were momentarily assuming, a startling and most intense brilliancy, that gave to the spectral and fiendish portraiture an aspect that might have thrilled even firmer nerves than my own. Demon eyes, of a wild and ghastly vivacity, glared upon me in a thousand directions where none had been visible before, and gleamed with the lurid lustre of a fire that I could not force my imagination to regard as unreal..."

From Edgar Allan Poe's The Pit and the Pendulum

Be Careful what you dream at DROPZONE '98

HIRANGER MKII

The standard laser-tag gun equipment

Hi Ranger II gun circuit board:

ammo counter, uses LEDs to display mag status
reload delay
size 3cm x 6cm x 2cm approx.

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

Hi Ranger II gun circuit kit, with firm trigger: as for 'Hi Ranger II gun kit, with fine trigger' except push switch trigger instead of fine trigger switch.

Target Ranger II lens unit, range 300m, 1m spread at 300m.

Grenade lens unit, short range wide spread, size approx. 30mm x 13mm diameter.

Sense Ranger sensor unit. (? available July '98)

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.

DROPZONE 98 possible Y-rigs for sale £26-28

Order Form

Please tick

Hi Ranger II gun circuit board
Hi Ranger II gun kit, fine trigger switch
Hi Ranger II gun kit, firm trigger switch
Target Ranger II lens unit, range 300m
Grenade Lens unit

Solder connections

£29
£42
£39
£21
£4.50

Clip connections

£33
£49
£46
£21
£5

Cheque/Postal Order/Money Order to the value of

Name

Address

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Please add £1 postage for orders excluding a gun shell or £4 for orders including a gun shell. Please allow 14 days for delivery.
Please do not send cash. Cheques/Postal Orders/International MoneyOrders payable to Nigel Carr.

Please send the completed order form with payment to: Nigel Carr, 34 Cornish Close, South Ham, Basingstoke, Hampshire,
Enquiries welcome. Netscape search for 'laser tag'.

Some Help for the 'Electrically Challenged'

"Everybody duck - Bodger's on his high-horse again !"

Mental Health Warning

People of a minimally technical disposition should skip to the next article

'Propeller Heads' read on !

Try to think of it this way and you should be able to figure out electricity anytime you need to:-

1. Each cell in a battery 'burns' a chemical 'fuel' to create a 'potential pressure' or 'force' (voltage) in a 'liquid' (mobile electrons).
2. Different types of battery cell use different chemicals to achieve different 'pressures', which are determined by the nature of the chemical reaction which takes place.
3. The 'pressure' is fixed for each type. (i.e. zinc-carbon cells are 1.5v, nickel-cadmium cells are around 1.2v, lead-acid cells are around 2v, etc. - notice they always tell you the chemicals used in the battery because from that you can deduce its voltage even if it wasn't printed on the side of it, and each chemical mixture has it's own predictable characteristics)
4. The pressure forces the 'liquid' (electrons) through a 'small hole' (the internal resistance of the cell) and this limits the maximum 'flow' (current).
5. The more pipes (wires) and constrictions (resistances) that the 'liquid' 'flows' through, the less the 'flow' through the circuit and the longer the fixed amount of 'liquid' lasts for before running out (capacity). Conversely, if there is little resistance the battery runs out real quick and the 'flow' rate is very high.
6. The higher the 'flow' through a resistance, the more 'heat' (power) is generated in the resistance and it gets hotter. Because most resistances are fixed (resistors), to increase the 'flow' you need to increase the 'pressure'. Because the 'pressure' of each cell within a battery is fixed, you can only increase the 'pressure' by standing one cell on top of another and raising the 'pressure' in fixed steps (i.e. with zinc-carbon batteries you go 1.5, 3, 4.5, 6, etc.) which is the number of cells in the battery. This is connecting batteries in series. You get the same current capacity but more voltage.

7. If however your problem is that because of the 'small hole' at the outlet of the battery you cannot get the amount of 'flow' that you would like through the circuit, then you may need to use extra cells to add their 'flows' together until you have enough capacity to fill the 'pipes'. This is done by standing several cells side-by-side and connecting them so all their output 'liquid' goes into the same 'pipe'.

This is connecting batteries in parallel.

You get the same voltage but higher current capability.

This problem is often encountered when using small batteries (AA or smaller) because the smaller the battery the smaller the 'small hole' is (the higher the internal resistance is).

Remember, all batteries are just stacks of cells connected together inside to produce a particular combination of voltage and capacity.

We measure voltage in units of "Volts", current in units of "Amps" and resistance in units of "Ohms".

Heating effect, or "Power", is measured in units of "Watts".

In the following section I will use "*" to denote multiplication and "/" to denote division.

Following the earlier analogy, it is easy to calculate how electricity in a circuit will work if you remember that a person called Mr Ohm studied this a long time ago and found out that :-

Pressure = Flow * Constriction

or in other words.....

Voltage = Current * Resistance.

This is known as 'Ohm's Law' and is more often quoted as $V=I*R$ (because he decided to use the letter "I" to represent the measure of current which we call "Amps"). Therefore if you know any two of these values you can calculate the third.

$$V=I*R.$$

$$I=V/R.$$

$$R=V/I.$$

It was also found that you could calculate the amount of heating effect produced in the process by :-

Heat = Pressure * Flow

or in other words.....

Watts = Volts * Amps.

This is often quoted as :-

$$P=V*I. \text{ (Power=Voltage * Current)}$$

You can then use this formula in conjunction with Ohm's Law to calculate other combinations depending on what value you want to know :-

$$P=V*V/R$$

$$P=I*R*I \text{ or } P=I*I*R$$

$$R=P/(I*I)$$

$$R=V*V/P$$

$$I= \sqrt{P/R} \text{ or } I=\text{square root of } P/R$$

$$V= \sqrt{P*R} \text{ or } V=\text{square root of } P*R$$

If you got this far, congratulations, you can now understand basic electricity and bore the pants off people when frothing around the camp fire. 😊

Author: Dave Bodger 22/02/98.

Next issue - if you can stand it - Maplin'ese for the terminally sick.

(Well, you will be by the time you finish reading it 😊)

BODGER'S BITS (ADVERTISEMENT)

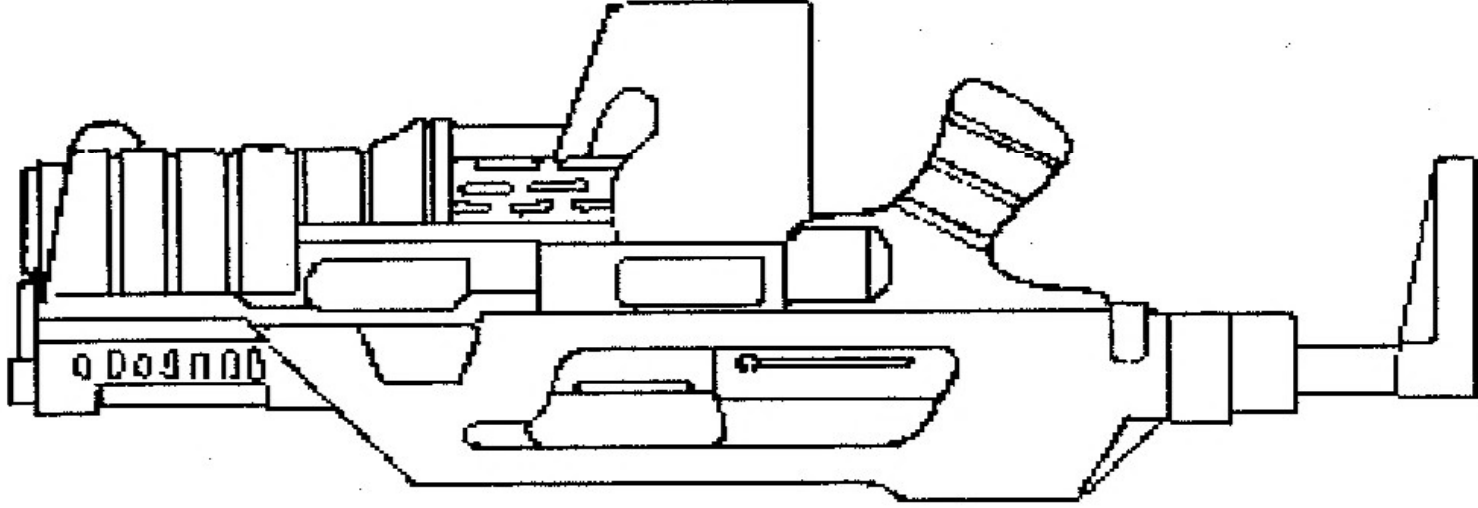
<u>Part number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Price each</u>
SmartGun Circuit V1.6	Tag gun electronics including amplified sound	£45.00
SmartSensor Circuit V1.0	Sensor electronics (has limited performance in direct sunlight and does not take hits from Terminators) - OK for NPCs or good role-players.	£40.00
LENS25	25mm ready built lens unit including emitter.	£10.00
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SFH484-2	High power IR emitter diode - 300mW output @ 1.5A	£0.60
LMC567CN	Low power tone detector chip.	£1.20
IRLZ24	Logic-level Power MOSFET (to drive OD50L etc. from 5V logic chips)	£1.00

Check my web pages at <<http://www.cix.co.uk/~lasertag/lasertag.htm>> for downloadable documentation and other useful info.

[APPARENTLY THERE IS A UNIVERSITY IN THE STATES THAT IS ABOUT TO START A DEGREE COURSE IN MAPLINESE IF ANYONE'S INTERESTED IN THE ABOVE..... THIS LAST STATEMENT WAS A JOKE. ED]

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COLD WIND TO VALHALLA

MODERN MYTHOLOGY

BY TIM ATKINSON

A warriors work is never done. A band of inhabitants of a remote part of Valhalla have thought to raise arms against the right and just rulers of Valhalla. I sought employment with a warrior band, who made their camp in the frozen realms of the far north of Valhalla.

My companions were David Harvey, a man of many words, accompanied by his young brother Robert, a keen lad, who will one day make a fine warrior. Dibley the healer, with magic's of great potency and even greater risk, Magnox a backwoodsman of considerable skill, a warrior maiden named Pat and her stalwart companion Su, and myself Tim Atkinson completed our party.

We were requested to aid a fellow band of warriors while they strove to locate the camp of their foes.

They were Watson, a giant of a man and his warrior woman companion Jennifer, Bloodworth, a worthy comparable only Volstagg of Asgard himself, and finally Hannaford, of grim countenance.

We journeyed hither, and as storm rains fell from the heavens, we did not meet another soul for many long hours. Finally we came upon our new companions, and after converse, we journeyed further

mayhap to catch our foes between our mighty weapons.

After circling a great distance, fording the great river in several places, until finally we were reunited with our companions as they had caught a luckless wite, a native of the local region who cowered in terror at our sight. He had no knowledge of use, so Watson bound him and took him with them.

Needs be a warrior must be stealthy, so Harvey and I lay far from sight, reckoning to catch the other foemen of our enemy unaware. Alas the foe was more cunning than I and stole up upon me from behind, and only by the luck of Balder himself did I manage to defend myself, capturing the foul brigand.

Dibley worked his greatest magic's on the prisoner, restoring him to a semblance of health, at a great cost, his body became tainted with a gradual decay that only the gods themselves may hope to heal.

Thus our task completed, we journeyed back to our northern camp to await our next adventure.

It was not before long that our services were again in demand, a pair of great sky-ships had fought a mighty battle, leaving both too

damaged to return to port. We were commissioned to find and rescue the survivors from their grave peril and to return them to our camp fire where to sing songs of their deeds. We were also to better locate the great demon fortress of the region so that our wizards could devise magic's to reduce it.

The two warrior maidens from our party remained behind, leaving just the Harvey brothers, myself, Magnox and Dibley, but more of him later.

Alas, we could not journey to the region by sky-ship as the mighty demon fortress hurled great magic's into the sky at anyone who ventured close. So we made land well away, and journeyed the remaining distance on foot, to the area of the battle where we found the once proud remains of our foe's sky-ship. We found no mortal remains here and so resolved to search the area further.

After a short while, a group of bandits attacked our party. Whilst my valiant comrades held them off, I circled around to surprise them from behind. Alas I was surprised myself, the bandits numbered among them a man of great skills who surprised me, knocking me out.

When I awoke, some little time had passed, but fortunately I was unhurt. As I opened my eyes, a great battle erupted around me and I was forced to hide as great bolts of destruction were hurled past me. Determined to contribute my share, I discovered that my weapon had been damaged and I was forced to make repairs. Shortly when the battle died

down, I was reunited with my comrades, except for Dibley the healer, who had fled in great fear.

Having chanced upon Watson and his band during the battle, they spoke that they were guarding a high chieftain of Valhalla who had been in the sky-ship of our foes. Magnox called for our sky-ship to come to the pre-arranged meeting place, but when the ship arrived it merely hurled bolts of fire at us, and then we were sorely beset by demons clad all in black.

During this terrible battle, I noticed Dibley loosing his weapons on members of our party, whether out of terror or malice I could not say.

I determined that we needed to confuse our enemies and thus we fled to a safe hiding place to rest our bodies and gather our strength to attack our foes anew.

It was at this point I learnt that Dibley had abandoned one of our number, the young lad Robert was lying gravely wounded. He had not thought to tell me or anyone else. I swore mightily and many in the party resolved to rescue him immediately. This would have cost too many lives, so three of us, Magnox, the warrior maiden Jennifer and I, set out through the stygian darkness, we found our quarry and returned to the main group at our secret camp.

While we were engaged in our mission, two members of our foes forces had wandered into our camp, and our comrades had given them no

indication that we were not of their number. When it became clear that they had no information of any worth, Watson struck them down. Dibley then struck Watson down so I hurled myself at Dibley before anyone else was hurt. Dibley was restrained while Watson recovered to answer for his actions.

It was by now obvious that there were three groups at work here. The duly appointed rulers (us by proxy), the free Valhalla revolutionaries, and another more clandestine group within the government of Valhalla. I needed to find out who owed allegiance to who, simply killing people did not solve much.

Watson had guessed as much, and determined to remove any untrustworthy persons from our ranks.

We settled down for the night with Dibley tied up and both Watson and young Robert recovering from their wounds.

At dawn, I was left with a dilemma, what to do with Dibley. Normally, one such as I regards all life as sacred, and as such I would have taken Dibley as a prisoner. However we were being betrayed by all sides and I felt unable to carry a prisoner, nor did I feel safe simply turning him loose, so the warrior maiden Jennifer dispatched him, thus we could continue unburdened by his presence. It is with some regret that I write these words, but in the heat of battle, I could not conceive of another plan.

We journeyed back to the site of the sky-ship battle, and found the scrolls on which the events leading up to the battle, were recorded. This demonstrated that Watson was in the employ of the clandestine conspiracy within the ranks of Valhalla's guardians, and not with us in the proper government of Valhalla.

We were again beset by bandits or demons, I know not which, but in the light of day, we drove them away with ease. Magnox had made contact with our employers again, this time using the proper secret words, he arranged a place for a sky-ship to come and return us to our base in the north. We had much time in which to wait, so I determined to spend much of that time moving as this would reduce the chance of being discovered. At the appointed time, we made our way to the place of meeting. Shortly before we got there, a band of rag tag people challenged us to identify ourselves, but since they did not wear the garb of our friends, we smote them with our weapons. This time the sky-ship arrived and we returned with our charges to our base in the north.

We had rescued some survivors, and also captured a Chieftain of our foes, not a bad days work.

Well I hope you enjoyed this, I've got a little bored writing straight tag write ups, so I thought I'd try something different.

BOOK REVIEW

BRASSEY'S BOOK OF CAMOUFLAGE

Tim Newark, Quentin Newark and Dr JF Borsarello

Brassey's (UK) Ltd, ISBN 1 85753 273 2

Price £9.99 (paperback)

This book was first published in hardback a couple of years ago, but the paperback edition is new. (1998) I have only just encountered it for the first time, so I thought it deserved a review.

The first section of the book provides a history of camouflage and its development for military use from the 18th Century to the present day and into the possible future. there are detailed sections on the first and second world wars, Vietnam and mention of other conflicts up to 1995. there are numerous photographs and (for earlier periods) drawings, not only of camouflage actually used, but also of experimental patterns that were never generally issued or saw only limited use.

The second section illustrates 50 "classic" camouflage patterns from around the world, from the 1940's to present day. These are generally illustrated nearly "life size" making for easy recognition "in the field" and are the next best thing to being provided with samples of the actual materials.

The third part of the book gives a catalogue of camouflage patterns from around the world. This is by no means comprehensive - some nations, such as Israel, are not represented at all; while for others (e.g.. Switzerland) only old patterns are illustrated. However, it provides a guide to almost every pattern you might find in a military surplus store and a great many that you probably will not!

This book would interest wargamers and taggers from a number of different points of view. For the "authenticity" purists it helps to make sure their outfits (or that of the figures on the table-top) are correct for the time and place represented. For the serious student of uniform, it will enable identification of almost any camouflage pattern encountered.

I believe the original hardback version was expensive, but this paperback edition, whilst still not cheap, is now well within the reach of the average person. I admit to having been sad enough to buy it myself and all those other sad people out there might well find this book worth adding to their collection.

Reviewer :- Ros Day

TAGCON'98

As seen by David A Harvey

The 1998 tagging season opened on Saturday 28th February 1998 with TagCon at its usual venue of the Nuneaton Arts Centre. After signing in Dai Rees presented us with our delegates pack which was made up of a timetable, map showing where everything was in the building, up to date diary of coming tag events and a booking form for DropZone'98 including an update detailing the games being held there.

About 10:30 we were ushered into the auditorium and Graham Parton slipping with well practised ease into his role as Master of Ceremonies gave us a run down of the days timetable.

We were then given a quick run down of how preparations for DropZone were getting along. Then a spokesman for Virtual Eclipse was invited to the front and gave us a few words about their club. VE have been going for about a year now and in that time have been quite active in running games set in the campaign universe which they have set up. Their universe revolves around conflicts between a number of rival human stellar empires

mainly centring on attempts to gain control of independent worlds on their borders. Players tend to be mercenaries who at the start of an event choose which of a number of contracts on offer they wish to sign up for. The amount of background information which is available is phenomenal which helps you slip into and stay in character. Having played one of their weekends I can say that it was a lot of fun and worth trying out. For more information check out their web site, phone Graham Field their contact man on 01252-614119, or read the game write ups by Tim Atkinson in Command Post 97/8 issue 3 and Graham Parton in issue 7.2 of FireFight.

Dai Rees then told us that the Light Brigade would be holding a number of events and in addition to their usual training days they were planning to do a weekend long scenario called GHD3 in August.

With coming events covered James Bloodworth was invited up to the front for the first talk of the day. Entitled "One Shot Wonders vs. A Life of Pain" James' talk concerned



Simple additions to a costume such as a shemagh can radically alter how a character is perceived. The relative merits of ongoing campaigns with characters carrying over from one game to another and one off scenarios in which people play a different character every time. The main thrust behind James' talk was that if we want to tap into the much larger fantasy LRP hobby we will have to have more campaign games because fantasy live roleplayers aren't prepared, James tells us, to go to the trouble of preparing an interesting character for a single game.

Now I can and do see the benefits in terms of character and plot development which campaign play can offer but I disagree with James'

underlying presumption that you can't have good roleplaying and interesting characters in a one off game and also presupposes that in a one off games players don't consider the long term effects of their actions on their characters.

Mr. Katt from Blackwatch then gave a talk on costume design. Starting from the basis of a simple black tabard he showed us how to customise an item to fit a variety of different roles. By adding details such as badges, gold braid, glasses, eye-patch etc. to an outfit its appearance can be altered dramatically. He also reminded us not to forget that headgear is an important part of costume and a good chance to create an impression. Who can forget Tim Atkinson's Unit beret, or the shemagh wearing Arabs at Chris Hannaford's Doctor Strangelove game at Greenham Common? It was also noted that, although sensible footwear is essential, you can break up the tell tale look of boots and trousers by using greaves when designing monster costume. All in all an entertaining and thought provoking presentation.

Following a break for coffee in order to straighten things out for DropZone where it will be used again Tim Atkinson gave a walk through of his SAMS 2 medical system. Although it has proved to be a popular medical system in games Tim had noticed that there was still some

confusion about exactly how a player used it. So, complete with practical examples Tim gave us a blow by blow of SAMS 2 in action. Again an informative and useful presentation.

Liam Thompson was the next speaker talking about 5 man squad tactics. Unfortunately Liam had forgotten his notes and his overheard so what could have been a very useful talk became a short collection of tag anecdotes. Hopefully Liam will retrieve his notes and turn them into an article for FireFight which I look forward to.

Chris Hannaford closed the morning with a Big Gun Video.

Lunchtime was busy with lots of things to buy from, amongst others, Chris Hannaford who was acting as rep for Fraries and had a good selection of items at discount prices such as American M1 helmet with cover for £10.00 and respirators in their carry case for £4.00. Downstairs Ben Roberts was fronting for various people and had a room full of various pieces of kit including sensors, guns, webbing various national cammos, and a highly interesting 50p an item grab box. I spent a small fortune and would have spent far more if I'd had it.

After lunch we assembled in the upstairs lounge for the Cthulhu Clothes Show which was a demonstration of the sort of costume



Now then chaps dont forget the six

P.s. That's Prior Preparation
Prevents Piss Poor Performance.

which would be appropriate for the linked games at DropZone this year. Unfortunately although what was demonstrated was interesting and gave us a few ideas it was a shame that there was no mention of period civilian costume for the WW2 game which in some ways is harder to costume and research than period military uniforms.

There was then a short gap with various things going on such as having another look at the stalls, catching up with friends they hadn't seen since before Christmas, watching

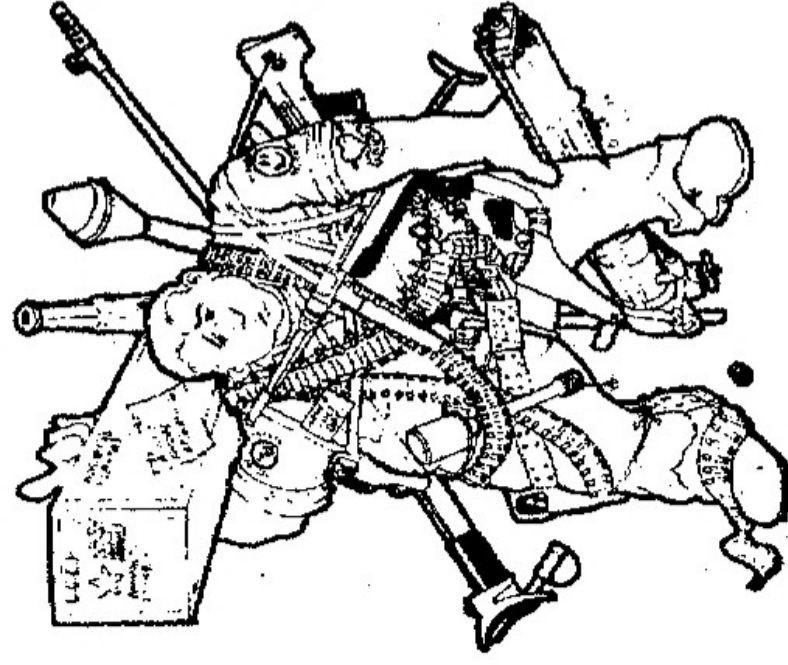
some previously unseen tag footage, or taking part in a DropZone committee meeting.

The Final item on the agenda was the quiz which was so popular that Dai had to introduce an additional round to bring the number of teams down to four for the buzzer round. There were a good variety of questions on subject including movies tag lines, tagging, general knowledge and real science. This made the quiz far more entertaining and more of a challenge. The format of having some questions directed to a particular team as well as first on the buzzer gets to answer made things fairer as well as adding variety.

The quiz was a close run contest but at the end Team Warlord (Jasper Hedger, Tim Atkinson and myself) managed to hold onto the lead and we won a space rocket shaped Easter egg for our trouble, which serves us right I suppose.

Well done Dai and Graham thanks for another great quiz. More of the same next year please.

Overall it wasn't a bad day out I certainly came away with some new ideas and loads of new kit so I certainly didn't waste my time but it was a shame to see that attendance was poor, not the poorest it has ever been (that was about four years ago when there were about 15 delegates) but few enough to notice that numbers were down.

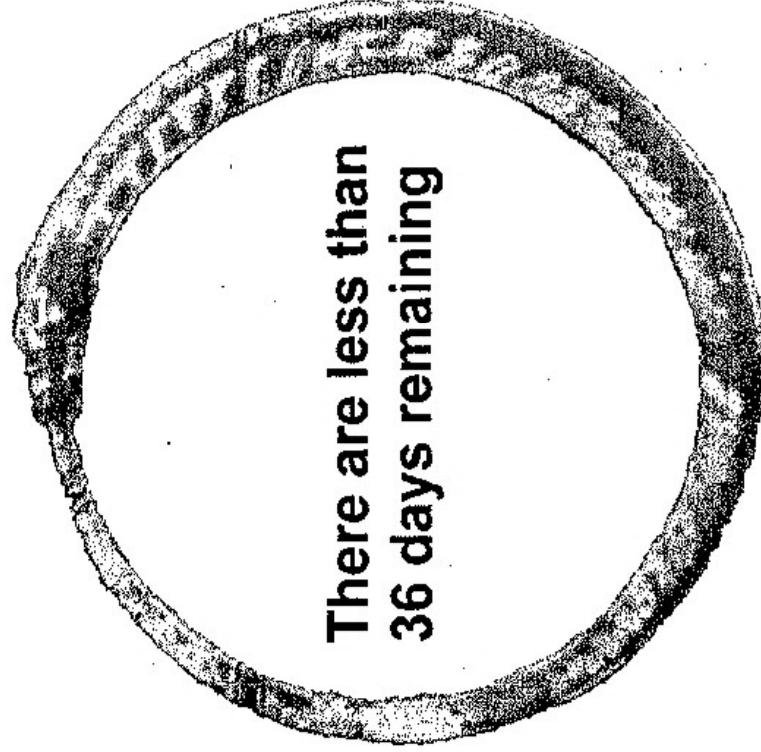


A successful afternoon at the trade stalls made the journey home interesting.

On the plus side the stalls were excellent. Perhaps we could have a bring and buy next year which would give us all a chance to get rid of those bits of kit which we don't use anymore but are too good to throw away. Yes, someone will have to run it but if it is limited to just lunchtime and everything is clearly labelled it could prove a useful service. Certainly a good spread of things to buy, or the opportunity to turn some little used kit into money, is a powerful argument for attending a show (why else do people go to computer shows?) and could give TagCon the boost it needs.

Thank to Graham Parton and Dai Rees for organising TagCon for another year and to everyone who gave a presentation, without you we wouldn't have had a show. Cheers guys.

DROPZONE 98



**There are less than
36 days remaining**

Yet another Provisional game time table

- Friday evening**
- **The Price of Liberty**
If the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, then the price of liberty is eternal paranoia!
(*Watch out for nasty robots with Austrian accents.*)
Organisers - David Harvey and Jasper Hedger
- Saturday morning**
- **Theme game 1 - "Occupied France 1940"**
War is Hell and Hell's just been unleashed!
Organiser Paul Watson/Wild Cards
- Early Saturday afternoon**
- **"Action Man Adventures"**
Only players with realistic hair and gripping hands need apply!
Copyright notice on your underpants an advantage.
Organiser - Mr Katt
- Late Saturday afternoon**
- **Theme game 2 - "Vietnam 1970"**
Just cause you've done your time in hell don't mean you're knockin on Heavens door.
Organiser Chris Hannaford/Wild Cards
- Saturday evening**
- **"Trojan Horse"**
If you can handle the truth - *It's out there*.....
Organiser - Alex Clark
- Sunday morning**
- **"Fugitive Breakout"**
You can run, but you can't hide!
Organiser - Dai Rees
- Sunday afternoon**
- **Theme game 3 - "Colombia 1990"**
In the jungles of Colombia it just keeps getting hotter and hotter.
Organiser - James Bloodworth/Wild Cards
- Early Sunday Evening**
- **in context free BARBEQUE**
All you can eat, and when you've got a *nice full stomach*...
- Sunday evening**
- **Theme game 4 - "Millennium Party 31st December 1999"**
(*my it's unseasonably warm, isn't it?*)
Organisers - the Wild Cards

DropZone 98 is being held over the late May bank holiday weekend (22nd to 26th May 1998) at Thorsby Park near Mansfield in Nottinghamshire.

For more details please contact

Graham Parton,
5 Hawthorn Close, Charfield,
Gloucestershire, GL12 8TX
phone: **01454 260983**

Email: f100602.2714@compuserve.com.

DROPZONE '98 details

Where?:

Thoresby Park. A Paint-ball site in Nottinghamshire.

When?:

22nd - 25th May 1998

How much?:

- **Event:** (to include Sunday night barbecue, campsite and all games)
 - £30 to May 15th
 - £35 thereafter
 - Attendance on a day basis will be charged at £15 per day or part *regardless of how many games you take part in*. Sunday attendance includes the cost of the barbecue. **NOTE: A deposit of at least £10 is required at booking to secure a place.** Cheques payable to "Dropzone" sent to Mr G. Parton, 5 Hawthorn Close, Charfield, Gloucs. GL12 8TX
- **Equipment hire:** Equipment will be available for hire at a rate of £10 per item with a £30 deposit (payable on the day, do NOT send money for equipment hire in advance). The items for hire will be on loan from private individuals and the supply is limited so anyone wishing to hire equipment **MUST** let us know before the event to avoid disappointment.

What games will there be?:

8-10 showcase games, four of which will be a linked set.

The common theme of this year's event is modern horror. The linked games in particular will have a "Cthulu-esq" flavour and the last phase will start with an in-character celebration with a barbecue on Sunday evening. We have only just closed the books on game submissions so the details have not yet been finalised but this is the provisional timetable:

Or you can download the publicity booklet as a graphic from Dave Bodger's site:

www.bogo.co.uk/davebodger/dzbook.pdf :

Be warned: it's a big'n (c980K)!

Committee:

Chair: Sarah Clark

Site Co-ordinator: Nigel Crouch

Games Co-ordinator: Alex Clark

Secretary: Tim Atkinson

Treasurer: Graham Parton

Publicity Co-ordinator: Chris Ward

The Hybrid Napoleonic Game

by Brigadier General Sir Nigel Ponsonby-Crouch

Player Types

Infantry units of various quality (lives) e.g.. conscript, veteran, guard. Individuals of various qualities e.g.: grenadiers and voltigeurs.
Artillery units composed of long range high effect weaponry.
Cavalry may be used at the organisers option.
Battlefield Generals capable of rallying and leading troops to mixed effect

NPCs

Commanding Generals.

Army Types

Each army may be composed of Line Infantry, Light Infantry, Grenadier Battalions, Artillery, Generals and Commanding Generals. Optional rules have been designed for Cavalry.

Unit Size

Infantry units should consist of a standard bearer and 3-5 other players one of whom can be light infantry.
Artillery batteries should have between 3 and 6 players.
Horse artillery should have 2 or 3 players.
Cavalry may be organised into units of almost any size.

Player Group Balance

This aspect will require play testing?

Props and Costumes

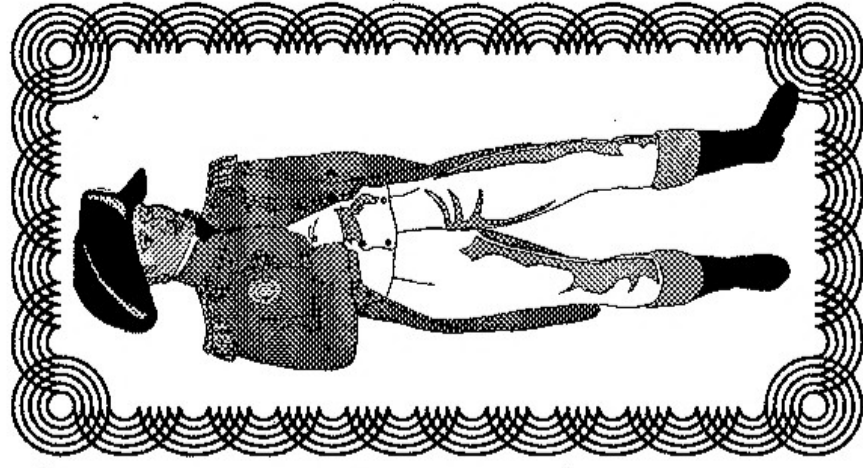
Standards: French Eagle or British Lion on a broomstick (flag optional)
Generals: At the very least a bicorn hat, but the more lace and frills the better.
Grenadiers/Standard Bearers: A tunic/tabard of appropriate colour, lace and frills optional.
Light Infantry: Something green.

Artillery: Ideally a mock-up gun carriage with slots/tubes for weapons to be fired from.

Cavalry. Think dashing, lace and fur, taste no object. and a rubber sword.

Rules of engagement

Normally infantry must stay close to their standard in order to conform to its movement', the only exception being light infantry which may be attached to a unit or acting together as a converged unit or being regular light infantry. Infantry conforming to their standards movement do so as follows:



Players may not advance in front of the standard, other movement is allowed as long as they remain close to the standard.

Artillery may only walk, carrying/pulling a physrep, must fire from a set position and must fire co-ordinated fire against a single unit or area. A delay is imposed between walking and firing to represent limbering/unlimbering.

Cavalry may move freely about the battlefield but will work best if co-ordinated by a General with Infantry and Artillery.

Generals may neither shoot or be shot, optional rules may allow their capture.

Weaponry

Weaponry should be divided into 3 broad groups; light, medium and heavy. Light infantry is limited to using light weaponry, other infantry may use medium weaponry, heavy weaponry is only available to artillery units.

Rallying

Infantry (and Cavalry) units which have lost all lives will normally rally as broken i.e. with less lives than normal. Players of units returning to the Rally line unbroken may regain 1 lost life by reforming. Units returning to the Rally line with an enemy standard will gain an extra life even if no lives have been lost. Players may not gain lives by successive reforming if they have lost none since the last reform, this includes lives gained by capturing standards.

Players of units which have lost their standard will have to be attached to other units unless their standard is recovered or they are given a standard from the reserves. Players transferred will retain the lives and qualities that they were formerly entitled to.

Reserves

Generals may reform a broken unit as a new unit from the reserves, complete with new standard. There is a limit to the number of reserves available.

The Battlefield

Both sets of generals should have a clear understanding of the location of all the Rally lines.

The Rally lines should be approximately parallel, equidistant and well defined.

Winning

When a General with a Standard crosses the enemy Rally Line the enemy are no longer able to Rally there and must fall back to a new Rally Line this is called Breakthrough. The General and Standard must reform to advance after making a breakthrough. Successive breakthroughs will yield victory.

Mapping

Both Commanding Generals should have a map indicating the following start conditions.

Boxes = Generals

Circles = Standards

Vertical Lines = Rally Lines

Arrows indicate freedom of movement

Feedback

- A variety of +ve and -ve feedback such as taking of enemy standard, crossing enemy rally point first, or breaking first. etc. can lead to various penalties or awards.

Objectives

Standard carriers: Advance, retain Standard, capture other Standards.

Generals: Advance to enemy Rally Line with Standard

Artillery: Terrorise the enemy

The Battle

The length of time the battle lasts will be determined by the Commanding Generals by agreement, while they stay widely separated the -ve feedback effects are greater than the +ve feedback as they close together the balance is reversed and the battle should draw to a close. Battlefield Generals should be acting with a single unit offensively or patrolling the home rally line defensively. When a Battlefield General achieves a breakthrough he should report it immediately to the Commanding General thus removing a General from the offence and preventing one unit being able to win the battle alone.

Optional Rules

Cavalry

A possible role for the cavalry is that of capturing standards. The cavalry are not armed with laser tag weaponry just a rubber sword. In the event of a units flag being captured by cavalry the whole unit must immediately retreat to the rally line and may not fire even in self-defence.

Method of capture / defence of the standard.

Method A

The standard is captured by assaulting it (the pole) with the rubber sword. This is prevented by the unit forming square. A square is formed by over 1/2 the unit physically holding the standard.



Method B

The standard has bands painted along the shaft, each band must be covered by an infantryman's hand holding the standard to form a square. Units with higher morale/discipline will have fewer bands. If an uncovered band is grasped by the cavalryman the standard is captured. Thus units in square form a dense target (especially for artillery!), move slowly (co-ordinated movement only) and fire less effectively (using only one hand). A severely depleted unit will not be able to form square and should consider retreating away from cavalry as a more sensible option.

Cavalry vs. Cavalry

When opposing cavalry meet they may mill about in simulated melee (doing nothing else) until one side calls for quarter, at this point both cavalry units must retreat to their respective Rally lines. It is reasonable to reward the side which did not call for quarter as if it had captured a standard. If one cavalry unit is outnumbered 2:1 it must call for quarter. Fresh cavalry units can reinforce the melee at any time but no units are allowed to retreat until one side calls for quarter.

Artillery

In the event that artillery unit members lose their lives they may not fire nor may they retreat. If all members lose their lives then the unit may return to the Rally line leaving behind the artillery limber. If the unit is then rallied they may return to the limber and take up firing again. It is extremely unusual for artillery to be brought up from reserve.

If cavalry are active these present a significant danger to artillery which cannot form square. If cavalry strike the limber the artillery unit is considered cut down or scattered and must retire without limber to the Rally line. Artillerymen may shelter within infantry squares but may not fire when doing so.

Artillery does not have the freedom of movement of infantry, they may only move under the direct orders of a General. They may not retreat in the face of superior odds but must resist until the bitter end. Horse artillery are not directed by a General but are attached to a cavalry unit and most conform to its movements in much the same way as infantry does to its standard.

Example Battle Mixes

GENERALS	STANDARDS	LIGHT	LINE	CAVALRY	ARTILLERY	TOTAL
2	2	4	12	2	2	24

Line Infantry Characteristics

	Size of Unit	Number of Hits	Hands to Form Square
Guard	5	6	2
Veteran	6	5	3
Line	7	4	4
Militia	8	3	5

[Although the above may seem both extensive and yet not comprehensive there are several ideas that others have already discussed in the past any further points on this subject would be appreciated. ED]



Its all a plot

No this is not the return of the paranoid ravings of a persecuted sub editor..... Or is it? Having only recently been initiated into the machinations of the Internet and news groups, I have been intrigued by the parallels between the Live Action Role Playing groups in general and us lepers in lazertag.

The main point was put in an article; that removing players (PCs) fee will i.e. sticking to a linear plot line, despite events that compromise it, was detrimental to the hobby and generally irritates the PCs. At the same time an argument was breaking out over the role of Non Player Characters (NPCs). Some felt they should bend to the will of the players and ensure their enjoyment; **[A point I made last edition. ED]** whilst others felt that they should add more defining moments and not necessarily be susceptible to player whims.

Obviously we tend not to play long term characters, with the exception of one or two clubs that try to keep their universe consistent. The majority of us tend to play a variety of games for a variety of reasons. **[See Ros Day's article last edition, and James Bloodworth's talk at Tagcon-8. ED]**

I am not a great fan of long campaigns, however the LARP people with their 'in character' political intrigue, with factions and guilds etc. obviously do. They are however far more numerous than us pariahs. As such there are always new people for them to interact with in the same scenario.

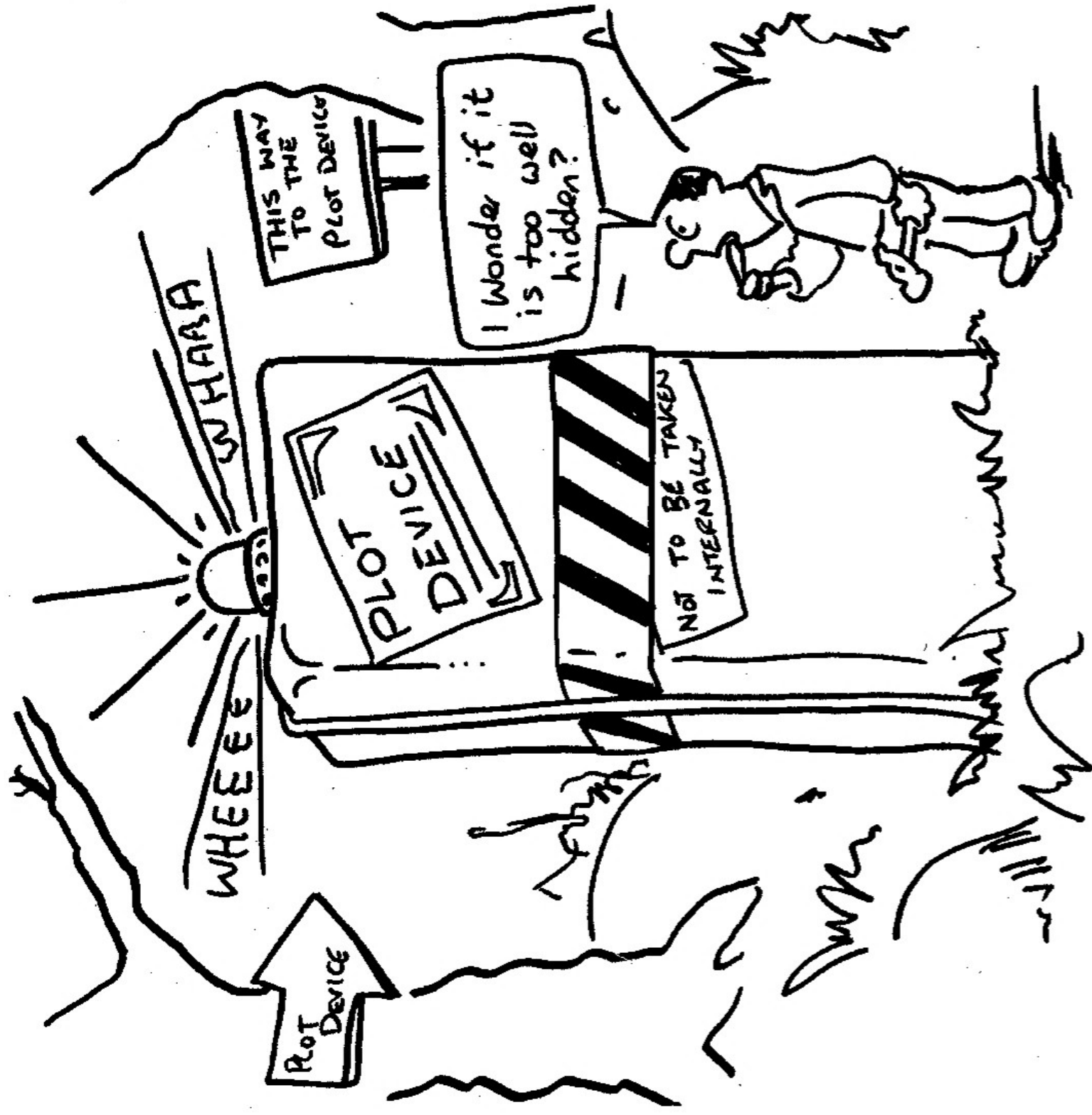
In lasertag we are more limited. Therefore it seems logical that more story boarding goes on. This should of course be directed at setting the scene guaranteeing varied interactions, and creating the genre continuity for people to maintain their suspension of belief.

It could however be said that as soon as the script writers start setting up any set piece other than the opening scene, then the PC's freedom of expression becomes limited. A similar situation I have seen in several Roleplaying games of the dice and pencil variety. The Games master (GM) creates a story and the players go through it. No choice just follow the leads that get handed you. If their really unlucky the GM will out of the kindness of their heart [A GM kind? what am I saying? ED] not let them die, so they finish the game. You now have players who cannot die and can do little but follow the GM's lead. These often lead to people throwing themselves recklessly in front of dragons, demi-gods or lemming hoards of ice gnomes. (i.e. suicide) This also happens in tag. Once people feel they can no longer influence the plot In character, they try to influence the whole scenario by coming out of character or just grossly exaggerating their own characteristics.

This dichotomy in my opinion does NOT have a solution. Each player is different. Each genre relies on different motivations and internal forces to become "real". In addition the NPC's, as I've moaned about before, have to be committed not only to the plot, but also to the realities of the tag/sensor system, and their own 'in character' reasons for being there.

Personally I've always favoured the more intense creation of atmosphere created by the unknown or the known but unavoidable. We may as a hobby have to move around the genres and find something new or a fresh angle. It is, I recognise difficult to invent a 'new form of mobility' when there is a perfectly good wheel right behind you. But as interest wanes in the organisers and veterans it will tend to damp the newer taggers enthusiasm. That we should never do. Otherwise who the hell is going to run the show when the tired and jaded have to recharge their batteries.

To conclude anyone with any ideas on plot devices **[See cartoons following. ED]**, formulae that work or don't work please get in touch. Through **FIREFIGHT** and discussion perhaps a new Golden Age will appear in the new millennium after all.



The games master's problem!

The
Observations
of
Timothy Tagger



A Letter

Dear Dai,

No computer, so handwritten. **[Thanks a bundle.ED]**

Article 1

The Safe laser

Many people ask about the 'laser' beam emitted by the guns used in tag and other laser games. So here is some information to pass on to questioners and perhaps interest them in playing.

The beam is infra red (IR) which is beyond the red end of the light spectrum. Infra red extends up to the arbitrary wavelength limit of 1 mm at which point the radio region begins. The near infra red part of the spectrum, used by the laser/quasar weapons, is present in daylight and in many other light sources. In the latter this leads to a loss of visible luminosity and appears as unwanted heat. The ordinary incandescent lamp radiates most of its power in the near infra red.

Any radiation creates heat when absorbed. Provided the material will absorb radiant energy at the appropriate wavelength a body can be heated by radiation anywhere. IR is not perceptible to the eye, but can be detected by the skin if sufficiently intense. So if your eye were to be damaged it would feel warm. Any radiation which is absorbed by an object will cause damage if the rate of absorption is too great.

The wavelength we use is defined as IR -A, being in the range 780-1400nm actually more typically 880nm. TV remote controls are at a nearby wavelength.

Article 2

Sensors

Recently, I managed to persuade some people to sell their Starsensors™. This is to be recommended with the following caution. Remember you are getting people to dig around in lofts and such so make it worth their while. Say £15 for a sensor and £10 for a Starlyte™.

The most important thing is persistence. There were reputedly 40 million kite distributed world wide. There are still some sitting in houses, redundant. Get a picture and show it to people you know or at boot sales. If you want a Y-rig conversion then Firefight will send you the diagrams. I will also do it for a small fee of course.

Good Hunting

Nigel Carr

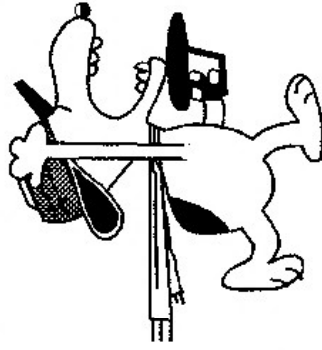
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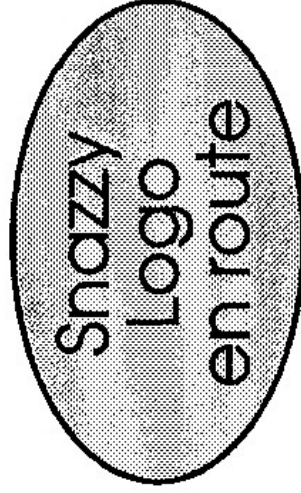
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BARKING (MAD) WARDOGS



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

BLACK WATCH



Contact: Mr Katt (Jason) Landinaff,
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St. James,
Northampton.
NN5 5EF
(01604) 750329
(0802) 698802

BROTHERS IN ARMS



Contact: Richard Weremiuk,
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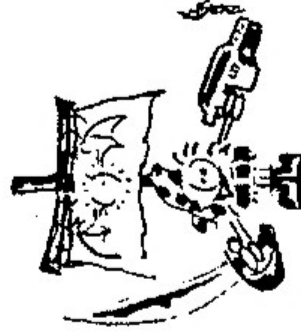


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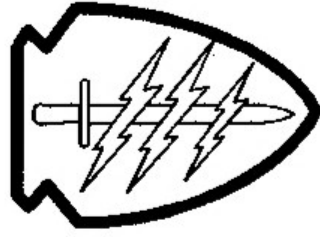


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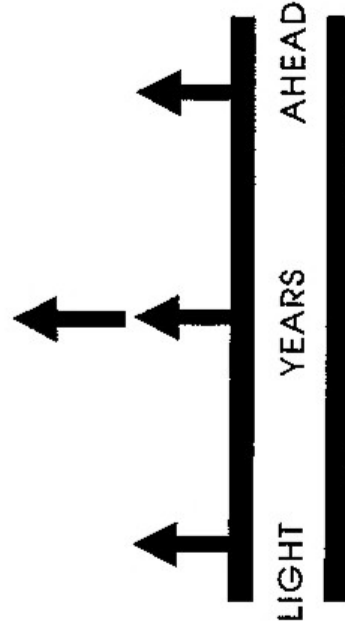
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(01865) 728695

LIGHT BRIGADE



Contact: Dal Rees
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Coventry.
CV2 3ES
(01203) 453673

LIGHT YEARS AHEAD



Contact: Jon Blau,
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Northiam,
East Sussex.
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(0860) 314857

N.O.A.G. 2500



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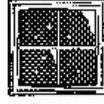
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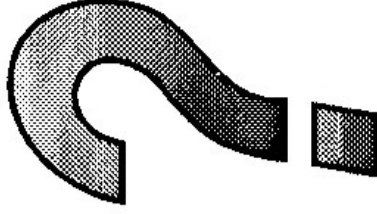
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*year Santa knew he was up
out a couple
ough babies*



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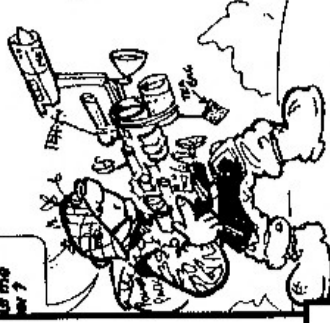


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*the last
of the
war?*



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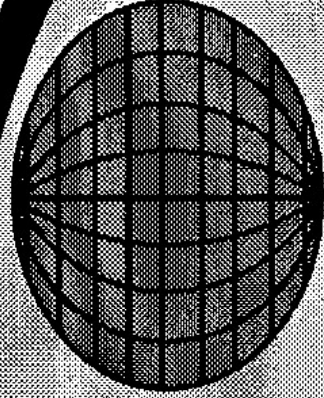
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" We live on a placid island of ignorance
in the midst of black seas of infinity,
and it was not meant that we should
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H.P. Lovecraft
(The Call of Cthulhu)

