

///FIRFIGHT///

SUMMER 1999

ISSUE 8.2



///FIRFIGHT///

The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

CONTENTS

2	TAG DIARY - 1999
3	SLOTH'S PAGE by Dai Rees
5	LAZERTAG SENSORS - as presented by Tim Atkinson
10	TAGCON'99 - as seen by D.A. Harvey
16	FIGHTING HELMETS PROSPECTUS - Ian Stopford
21	HOW TO BE BAD - a write up by Dai Rees
25	ARMADACON 10 - a report by David A Harvey
34	A SIMPLE GUN CIRCUIT DESIGN - by Phil Higgins
35	A CONFEDERATION OUTLINE - a report from Tagcon
37	"The Truth" Fiction + Scenario - by Dai Rees
44	CLUB DIRECTORY
47	LAZERTAG EVENTS DIARY (MAILING LIST UPDATE)



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. If layout is critical send a printed copy along with the disk.



Similarly articles sent via e-mail should be sent in as simple a form as possible with further instructions if format is important.
The editor reserves the right to alter any material submitted.
The trade names in this fanzine are used for descriptive purposes only.
Any alterations made by readers to their own property are entirely at their own risk.

Please send all correspondence to :-

Mr DA Rees, 122 Hartland Avenue, Wyken, Coventry, CV2 3ES
(02476) 727105/6 Drees42@joyeaux-garde.freemove.co.uk

**THE FINAL DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF
ARTICLES OR ADVERTISEMENTS FOR
FIREFIGHT 8.3 is AUGUST 30th 1999**

TAG Diary -1999

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact</u>
July 31st	A.S.A.S total immersion game	?	?	Ian Stopford (01604)765442 Gloss@Demolition.freeserve.co.uk
August 22nd	An evening bash with the Light Brigade	£3/2 non-members / members	?	Dai Rees (02476) 727105 drees42@joyeaux-garde.freeserve.co.uk
Late August	Time Guardian Fighting Helmets	?	?	Ian Stopford (01604)765442 Gloss@Demolition.freeserve.co.uk
Sept 17-19th	Virtual Eclipse	?	?	Graham Field 01252-614119 drake@mid-gard.demon.co.uk
Sept 17-19th	Starlore Adventures, Starlore Universe game	£35 rising to £45 NPCs £17 for a bunk, £10 camping	Walesby, Notts	Shaun Danby, 111 Berridge Road, Forest Fields, Nottingham. NG7 6HS E-mail: continuum@inc.co.uk Bookings to: Starlore Adventures, Imladris, 3 Hardys Drive, Gedling. Nottingham. NG4 3HR Cheques: Starlore Adventures
Late Sept	Dispersal Weekend A.S.A.S.	?	?	Ian Stopford (01604)765442 Gloss@Demolition.freeserve.co.uk
Oct 8-10th	Virtual Eclipse	?	?	Graham Field 01252-614119 drake@mid-gard.demon.co.uk
Mid Oct	For a Few Noodles More Fighting Helmets	?	?	Ian Stopford (01604)765442 Gloss@Demolition.freeserve.co.uk
Oct 30th	Night of the Living Dead Fighting Helmets	?	?	Ian Stopford (01604)765442 Gloss@Demolition.freeserve.co.uk
Dec 10-12th	Virtual Eclipse	?	?	Graham Field 01252-614119 drake@mid-gard.demon.co.uk

Please note: this is a free advertising service maintained by Sarah Clark and amended by Dai Rees for the benefit of the Lasertag hobby and has no connection with any organisation commercial or otherwise. The appearance of an event in this calendar should not be taken as an endorsement of the event by the authors of the diary.

Sloth's page

Yes I know the last thing I said at Dropzone was I'll get FIREFIGHT out as soon as possible. (That wasn't actually the last thing you understand, but close enough.) Build on the enthusiasm generated I thought. Get some publicity for the other games this year.

Well first off, sorry to the Dropzone committee and games organisers that you did not receive your timely thanks.

By the way a message from some friends :-

***"To all who attended Dropzone 99, thanks to all who attended, its not just the organisers who make the game its the players and NPC's as well. We would like to especially thank those people that helped us out on the NPC crew, you were outstanding and made the whole thing possible - you know who you are.
Many thanks.***

Phil, Katt, Mutt & Lucy"

Second apology to the TAGRAG organisers apparently it went off very well with a number of games seeking to become sequelised.

Third a deep apology to Mr D.A. Harvey who after writing so much for this edition was correct in his prediction that I would not get this rag out before "A Weekend in the Country". I hope it goes well!

There are however impending write ups from several games on the horizon so I may just be able to pick up a bit more momentum. These include Dropzone, TagRag, the Fighting Helmets A.S.A.S. scenario and the Operation Phoenix game from 3rd Age.

However I have not been idle and the Light Brigade have begun their season finally, with a sudden influx of taggers old and new; complete with one web site up and another on it's way from keen newcomers. In addition work is progressing on our bid to run a Starship Troopers main themed game for Dropzone next year.

Allegedly a number of interested parties are to meet with the outgoing Dropzone committee to arrange the necessary posts and duties. If you are interested then contact Tim Atkinson the retiring Chairman (No! Not, Shy and retiring) on (0181) 402 8738

After this meeting if Starship Troopers is going ahead, then anyone interested either as player, NPC or organiser can contact me on (02476) 727105

That said there are still plenty of tags for the rest of the year so don't sit around reading this drivell! Warm up those batteries and tag something.

TTFN

Dai

£2:00 EACH or £6:00 4 ISSUES

FIREFIGHT
SPRING 1999 155



FIREFIGHT
The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

**NEXT ISSUE
OUT
SEPT.
1999**

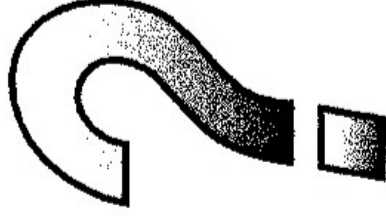
FIREFIGHT
WINTER 1998/9

ISSUE 8.1



FIREFIGHT
AUTUMN 1999

ISSUE 8.3



FIREFIGHT
The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

FIREFIGHT
AUTUMN 1998

ISSUE 7.4

nd it came to pass,
t a fanzine was created.
was called FIREFIGHT.
d so it was.
as the laws and ways
the faithful were written.
e faithful read the fanzine
there was much rejoicing.

REFIGHT
The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

Send cheques

payable to :-

FIREFIGHT FANZINE

c/o Dai Rees

122,

Hartland Ave.,

Wyken,

Coventry.

CV2 3ES

**SUBSCRIBE
NOW**

FIREFIGHT

The Independent Science Fiction Live Roleplaying Fanzine

Lazertag Sensors – "The state of the technology address."

Tim Atkinson Feb '99

• The Sensor problem



1. We cannot buy suitable sensors from a large-scale commercial entity any more.
☐
2. The ten-year-old equipment is becoming both damaged and increasingly unreliable.

The simple solution: Re-equip the hobby. This has the advantage that it's relatively cheap. Laser Challenge™ - the obvious candidate is now approximately the price that WOW® Lazertag '87 was when certainly the Warlords started playing. All the technological innovations to do with weapons apply and so existing weapons need some relatively simple modifications to make them work. The disadvantage of this is twofold, first there is a large amount of antipathy in the tag playing hobby to changing equipment owing to the cost, secondly re-equipping the I would guess maybe 200 people in the hobby would be a logistical nightmare for the "techies" amongst us.

OK so that's not an acceptable solution, what else can we do...?

Step 1 define the problem...

The basic criteria here is "fairness", your sensor needs to be identical in capability to your opponents (We'll ignore monsters for the time being). A sensor need to receive hits from approximately 360 degrees from a Lazertag 87 weapon and needs to have a demonstrable minimum sensitivity.

The Sensor solution – Part 1

Dave Bodger, Simon Russell and some others are now in the situation where they can manufacture sensors. This has pros and cons. The Pro's are obvious, new equipment means the hobby can expand or change; we can replace failed kit. End of Problem – mostly, we'll come back to this later.

First we need to define a standard which we did several Tagcon's ago. I.e. 4 metres with a snubbed off starlyte.

Let's talk about this test a little. On the surface it seems fine, most players or clubs can come up with a single pistol they can snub (simply remove the clear plastic 1cm diameter lens from the starlyte and voila - you have a snubbed weapon – the lens may later be replaced if necessary). This is simple, easy basically a destructive mod so ANYONE can do it. There's no soldering, no

electronics, no maplinese; you break a piece of plastic off that's it. The gun still has its sight; even I can hit a barn door at 4m.

The problem is that this test is not completely definitive. The level of ambient light is important. Simply put the sensor works by detecting a flash of infra red light above the background level. However if that flash is swamped by a large source of IR, the Sun for example, the sensor cannot detect the small gun flash in amongst the massive emission from an unshielded nuclear fusion reactor (albeit 90 million miles away).

You can see this with a thought experiment. Take two torches, a small dim penlight and a large maglight. Shine the penlight at the wall, you can see a beam. Now shine the maglight at the same piece of wall, the beam from the maglight obliterates the beam from the penlight. The beam from the penlight is still there, just MUCH harder to see, and hence in Lazertag terms, the small signal from the gun is much harder to detect if the area is flooded with IR to start with.

So we need to modify the standard test to take this into account. Indoors under a 60 watt bulb there is about 50 Lux of illumination, moving outdoors takes this up to 10,000 Lux on a cloudy but fairly light day in October. The sun comes out, and this goes up to 50,000 Lux. Lux is a Natural logarithmic scale, each point is 2.71 times, so 51 Lux is just under three times more light than 50 Lux.

This means we need to measure our sensors in known light conditions, which unless you go and buy a light meter, I would suggest that indoors is OK. On the snubbed test indoors, every sensor system I have access to can achieve at least 4 metres – except the Star Helmet, which as we all know is less sensitive. 3.5m indoors is an acceptable figure if Starhelmets are allowed.

OK the thing that separates the men from the boys, or women from girls, or more mature furry things from Alpha Centauri from the less mature furry things from Alpha Centauri (**Adams D, 1977**) is the way a sensor's performance degrades due to this ambient light.

Everything I have said so far is as far as I can tell not contentious. People may argue the toss over the validity of the 4m test, as opposed to any other kind of test, but after 4 years, No one has come up with a better, simpler one.

So on to the contentious bit. I want to put forward the idea that a sensor should register hits at 4m indoors and at least 1.5m outdoors away from direct sunlight. This is a compromise, and quite a big one, but it is my feeling that the test checks the sensor will receive hits from a starlyte, and meets some basic criteria, regarding sensitivity.

Going back to the sensor systems from Dave, Simon and co. These should according to my calculations be able to pass this test and are thus allowable, under the current rules if people consider these acceptable. It is worth restating that we cannot buy these things any more, Dave and Simon are the only ones who have physically shown me they have a piece of equipment that I can shoot at and it goes beep. I'm very driven by results as a person.

There is a secondary problem here and that is that Dave's sensor doesn't receive hits from "terminator" powered equipment. This is a problem, but one that is solvable relatively easily. There are two options, first is to live with it. So your sidearm doesn't necessarily hit all the sensors out there, so what. Secondly is to replace the terminator board with a Wes board. These can be built from scratch and cost approximately 5 pounds. You don't remove the terminator board, you simply rewire the Wes board in parallel and let the terminator do the sound and muzzle-flash, let the Wes do the tag and Bingo. Even the power supplies are compatible (Wes boards really like 6 volts). There is a lot of room in a terminator gun body, more than enough to slot a Wes board in there. I am not aware if this problem applies to Simon's sensor or not, either way if it does the solution is the same.

The down side is that Wes boards are notoriously unreliable, owing to the somewhat unique design technique apparently used. The plus side is that Dave "Saint" Bodger is currently developing a very cheap simple gun board that will do the same job reliably. **[So instead of a Smart Gun™ it'll be a Stupid Gun™ yes? ED]**

Sensor solution Part 2.

Equipment gets physically broken, we can't stop that. Equipment Ages (don't we all) we can't stop that either, BUT we can repair existing equipment.

Simple fixes such as broken switches and wires are not worth mentioning here, so I'll skip on to the more technical stuff, and hope to make it simple.

The Magic Bananas that make a sensor work have three adjusters on a standard Starsensor/cap/helmet board, Sensitivity-adjuster, a Frequency adjuster and a Bandpass adjuster.

These adjusters are constructed from a coil of wire with a metal lever that presses down on the coil. Depending where along the coil the lever touches depends on what "value" you get. Unfortunately these devices get wet and corrode over a period of time, especially when you play in the pouring rain as we did a lot last year. This corrosion can get in the way of the electricity and can change the behaviour of the sensor. Solution purchase a can of "Contact cleaner" from Maplin. "Electrolube" is a brand name to look out for,

but Maplin also do their own brand stuff. This aerosol spray combines a solvent with a coating chemical that helps remove grime and protect the surface. DO NOT DO THE NEXT BIT YET! Working the adjuster up and down the scale vigorously can also help wipe clean the contacts on the adjuster. Unfortunately, this will change the value of the adjuster so we need a method of resetting this.

Enter the Multimeter. This is a most valuable tool and ranges in cost from 5 pounds for a cheap analogue to hundreds of pounds, however if you or your club is very committed a Multimeter costing between 60 and 80 pounds with a frequency counter function is ideal for tag use.

I'm going to talk entirely about star sensors here; you can look at Dave Bodger's notes for comparison on Starcaps etc.

Back to the adjusters, these are all measured in a unit called an Ohm, you may remember Ohm's law from secondary school physics, if not don't worry this is merely the number of Magic Bananas necessary to make the thing work right.

The setting on the sensitivity adjuster – the adjuster nearest the "hit" lights – should read about 200 Ohms.

The setting on the Frequency adjuster – the adjuster nearest the battery – should read about 20,000 ohms or 20 K Ohms (KiloOhms), sometimes just called 20K.

The setting on the Bandpass adjuster – the middle one – should read about 200,000 Ohms or 200K.

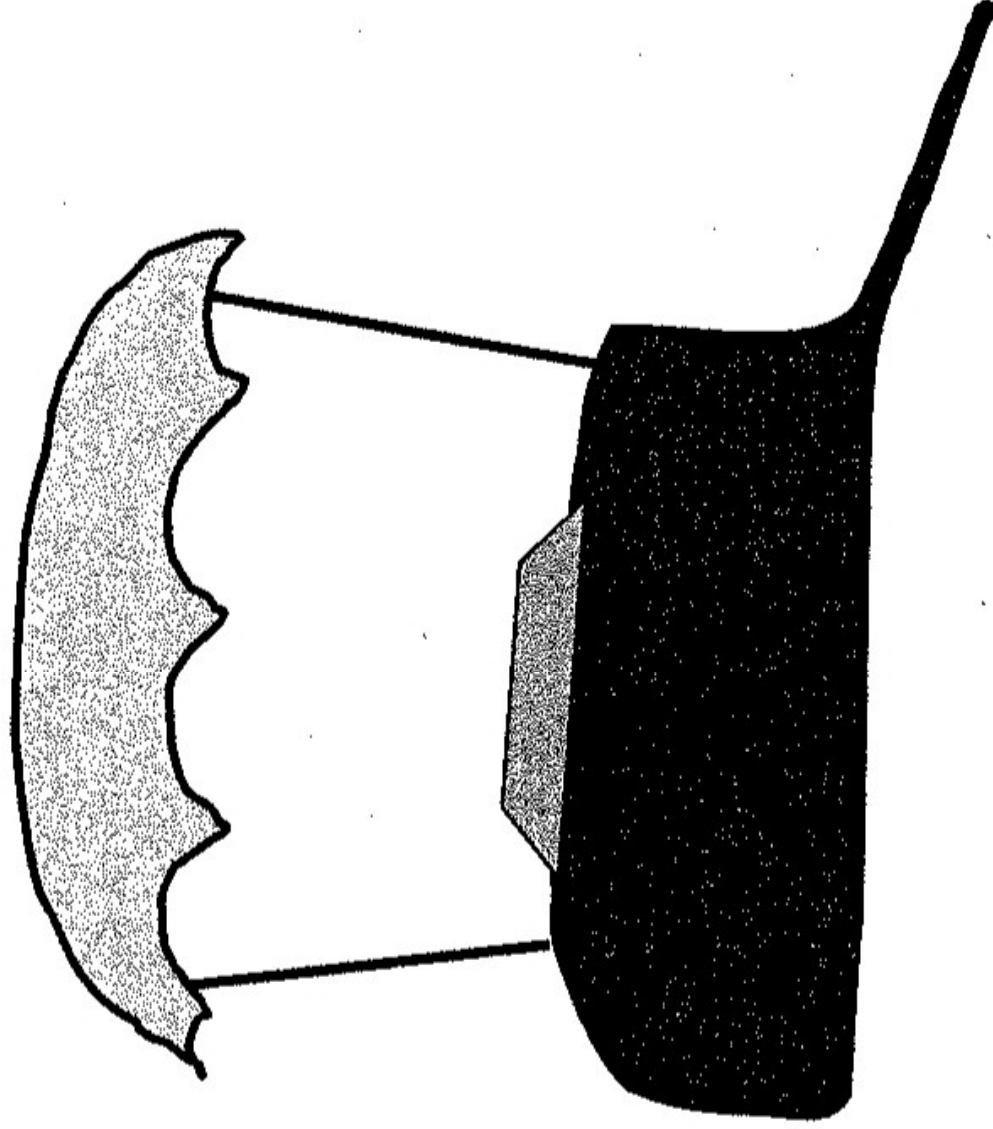
If you want to get really clever, you can put your Multimeter into Frequency counter mode. Connect the red lead to pin 5 of the LM567 chip and the black lead to the negative side of the battery, turn the sensor on and tune this adjuster till it reads 1800 Hertz. A "Hertz" is how many times per second you have to hit a magic banana before the sensor registers a hit. Please note that you should ALWAYS use a non conductive adjusting tool since using a metal one will A) Affect the reading, and B) May well short circuit something and blow the sensor up.

Unfortunately with the exception of the frequency adjustment you cannot simply measure these values in place because your reading is affected by the other components around the adjuster (not to mention the other adjusters). If you're doing a really serious overhaul, simply loosening one of the two legs will allow you to measure the value.

Once you have set these values, you should connect a battery and try firing a gun at it at short range. If you get a hit try a 4m test and see what you get. If you don't get anything, try adjusting the frequency first, then the sensitivity. Note the more you crank up the sensitivity, the more likely you are to take spurious hits. In general it is best to avoid adjusting the band pass wherever possible, it's function is linked with the sensitivity setting and incorrect values can again cause spurious hits.

I must thank Dave Bodger for his technical guidance in the writing of this article.

Dave "Saint" Bodgers technical details can be found at <http://www.cix.co.uk/~lasertag/lasertag.htm>



**THE PATENTED 'REES' SUNSCREEN/SHOWER PROOF
TAG ENHANCER SYSTEM™ or "Brolly"**

**COMING SOON :- I.R. Sun Screen for red
Polypropylene.**

TagCon'99

as seen by David A Harvey

Saturday 13th February brought that annual taggers pilgrimage to the Nuneaton Arts Centre for TagCon.

Resplendent in our Salute'99 T-shirts the Warlords delegation (Dave Bodger, Ros Day, Tim Atkinson, Mick Penver, Jasper Hedger and myself) together with Doug Ross and Simon Clarke arrived in reasonable time to book in, hand out lots of Salute flyers, and check out the latest gossip with our fellow delegates while we waited for the stragglers to arrive.

Eventually we were ushered into the auditorium where Graham Parton welcoming us all to TagCon'99 and started things off with the traditional club by club round up of coming events:

*First on the hot spot was yours truly talking about the Warlords one day double events on 13-3-99 and 15-5-99, and Weekend in the Country 3 at Merton Castle (16th to 18th July 1999).

*I was followed by a hastily chosen volunteer from Virtual Eclipse who told us about their program of

games up and down the country this year.

*Shawn Danby, with prompts from Paul Watson, was next canvassing for the Starlore UNIT game in April and the Continuum (the name for the relaunched Starlore Universe) game in September.

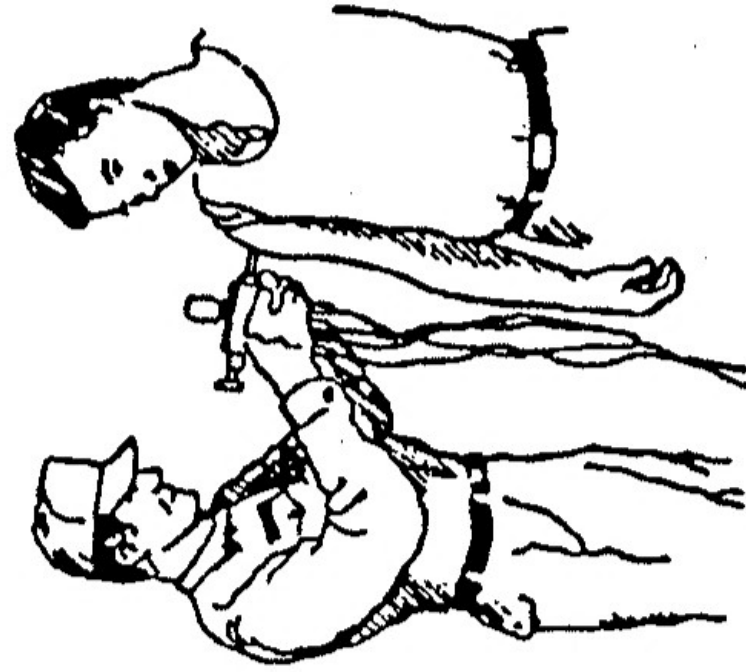
*Following the regrettable split in Blackwatch's ranks, Liam Thompson launched a new organisation called The Fighting Helmets with two games on the cards. The first "Vietnam Covert Ops" and the second "A Few Noodles More" a sequel to last September's "A Fistful of Noodles".

*Drawing this section to a close Tim Atkinson gave us an update on DropZone'99. There was good news, the new site is interesting, the website is highly informative and the games sound very interesting but there was also bad news... There had been no bookings and as such there was no money in the kitty to run the event and without at last 10 bookings before the close of the day DropZone'99 would have to be cancelled. A flurry of cheque book abuse followed and the required bookings were

forthcoming. I suspect most of the problem is due to the first price rise being so much later than usual this year.

The first lecture of the day was brought to us by Andy Smith and was a follow on from the various articles on the possibilities of forming a "Lasertag Confederation" to backup the insurance policy which Simon Clarke maintains for the good of the hobby. Having given delegates something to think about this subject was adjourned for a fuller discussion in the afternoon.

Next up was Tim Atkinson with an informative talk on a subject vital to the future of the hobby, that of sensors. Having spent the last few months researching the subject Tim starting with an overview of what is available and the options which this gives us. Then he went on to tell us what the sensor sensitivity requirements will be for DropZone'99



(with a snubbed starlite: 4 meters indoors and 1.5 meters outdoors in moderate sunlight) and then went on to explain how to repair and recalibrate our sensors to ensure they meet this new (reduced) standard. To help with this Tim, as always, provided a set of notes to take away and work from and formed the basis for his sensor article in Command Post 98/99 vol. 3.

After a break for refreshments Dai Rees gave us a talk on how to replay being a bad guy which covered a lot of ground in a very short period and with luck should prove a good spur to better roleplaying. Dai plans to expand on this in a series of articles in FireFight which I thoroughly look forward to.

Next up was Tim Atkinson's third presentation of the morning, the public launching of SAMS 3. The Standard Atkinson Medical System (SAMS) has been around in various incarnations for a few years now and has become a very popular choice with game organisers with its combination of ease of use and sufficient detail to give roleplaying depth.

SAMS 3 uses the same basis as its previous incarnation, that of having three levels with increasing complexity and risk of permanent incapacity which the game organiser chooses between dependent on the type of game they are running.



As Tim told us his goal was to simplify and streamline the system especially the pregame preparation which seems to have swallowed great chunks of the last three years of his life. This has provided the motivation for the biggest change which is the use of smarties drawn at random together with a results table to produce wound results rather than the bag full of pre-printed result slips.

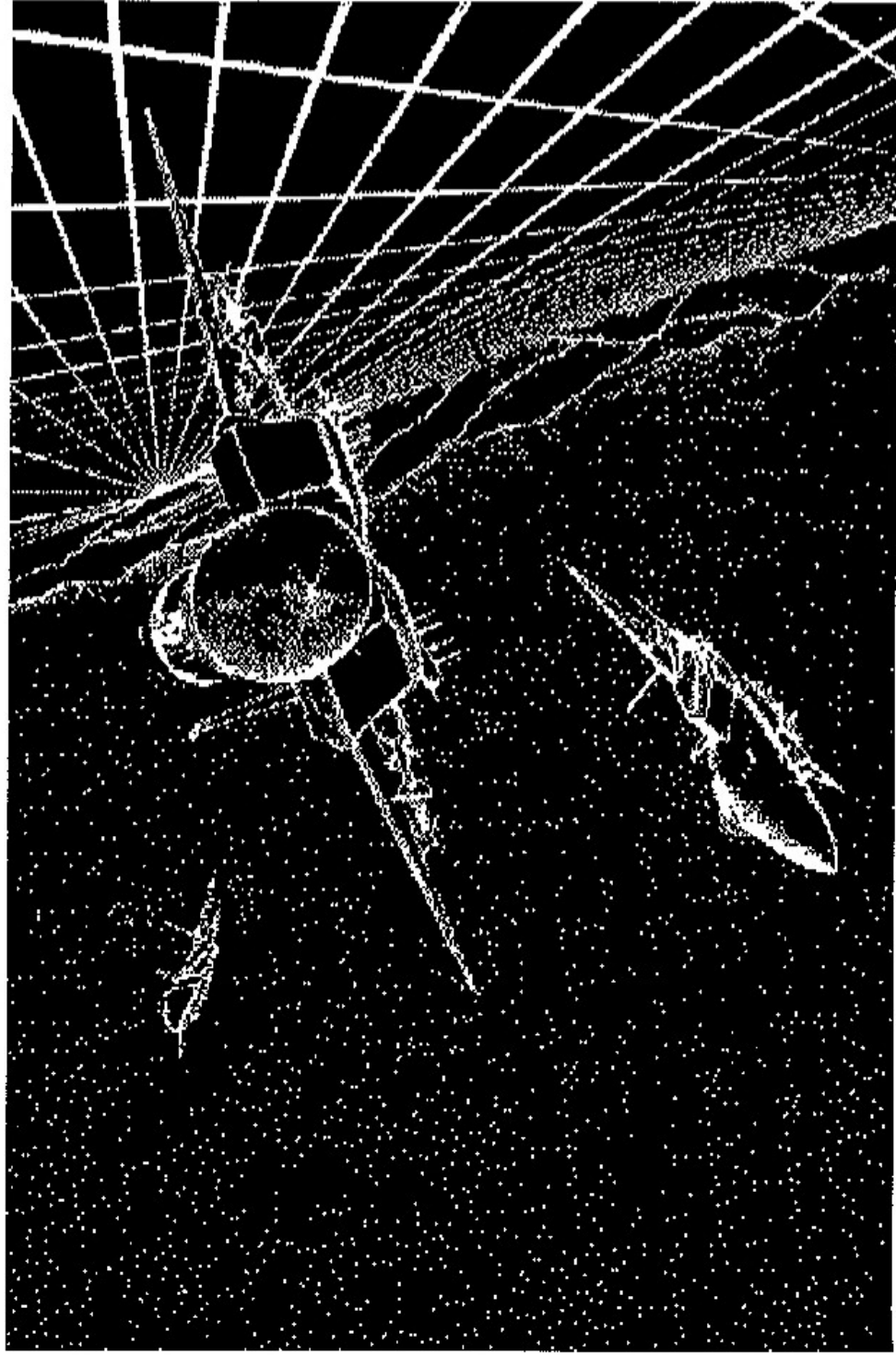
The new system has definite advantages. The most obvious being the vastly reduced preparation time.

On the other hand part of the fun of SAMS 2 was that you never knew exactly what you were going to get because nobody (except Tim) knew all the possible wounds. So even if you were an experienced medic there was the possibility of a wild card result. Even though Tim informs me that there are more results in the new version (36 in SAMS 3 level 2

compared to 20 in the original SAMS 2 mix) by showing all the options the new system seems frustratingly limited and some of the rarer and more "interesting" results seem to have gone AWOL.

Another shame, in my opinion, is the removal of the SAMS specific advantages of wearing protective clothing that doesn't grant a hit bonus such as gloves, boots and eye protection. eg. no flash blinded result so no advantage in wearing protective glasses (apart from in the real world one of not getting a twig in the eye). I suspect this is the byproduct of Tim squeezing things in order to get the result table on one side of A4 so, if Tim chooses to, this shouldn't prove too difficult to remedy.

Despite these drawbacks SAMS 3 is an easier to use version of the system and should prove as invaluable as it's predecessor and I look forward



to seeing level three which is designed for heavy roleplaying games and will hopefully add additional complexity in order to give the medics decisions to make which affect the progress of treatment in the same way that the old Atkinson Realistic System did.

Chris Hannaford brought the morning to a close with the Big Gun Video combining vast amounts of cinematic violence into a four minute montage backed by a thumping Motorhead soundtrack. Any chance of a copy Chris?

Next on the agenda was lunch. Although the spread on offer was somewhat less expansive than in the culinary endurance test which it used to be, it was adequate and the increased provision of soft drinks was a good move. Indeed given that the

price tickets is still the same as it was back in 1991 I am amazed that lunch is still included at all, but I'm jolly glad it is.

After lunch those who were interested gathered to discuss forming a national body for the lasertag hobby, 1) whether it was necessary, and if so 2) what it should do, and 3) its constitution and charter.

The interested parties were divided into three groups chaired respectively by Jenny Watson, Nigel Crouch and Andy Smith in order to speed up the collection of views and ideas on the agenda which they had drawn up beforehand. After discussions on these points the chairman of each group reported back to the whole assembly.

Everyone present was in favour of a Lasertag Confederation and it was agreed that it should be up and running by the end of the year in time for the renewal date of the LTC insurance policy which started the ball rolling several years ago when Simon Clarke set it up. This was no big surprise as those people who were opposed to the idea chose not to attend and spent the afternoon in the bar.

Moving on to point two every knew what they wanted from a LTC. This was to provide insurance and to be a central clearing house for information such as game dates, club contacts etc. without the LTC having powers to interfere in the day to day running of any associated club.

Unfortunately, but inevitably, there was no such consensus on the third issue, the structure of the LTC. In other words how should it be run, how its committee and members should be elected and how it should pay for itself.

Full minutes of the presentation and ensuing discussion were taken by Dai Rees for publication in FireFight so rather than regurgitate all the interesting and occasionally practical

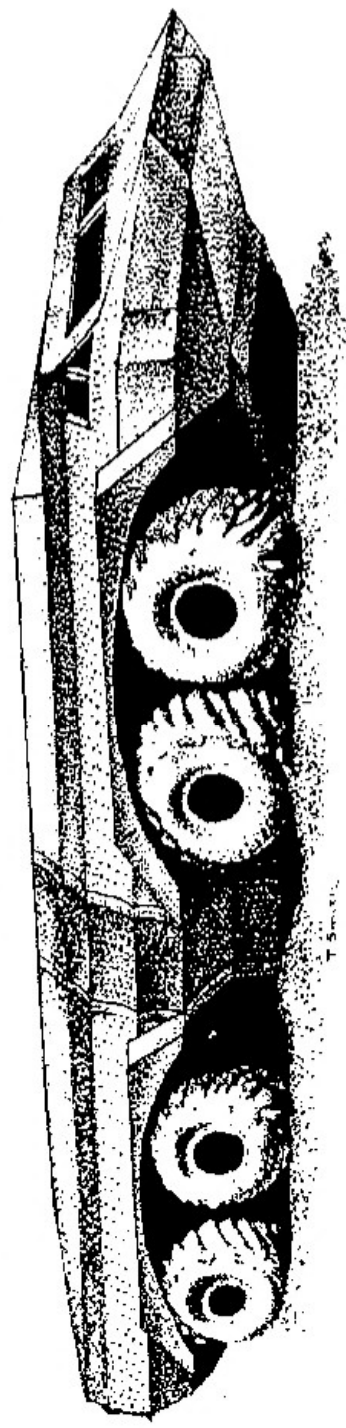
ideas which were suggested I refer you to Dai's notes.

In the end, since it was obvious that no consensus was going to be reached there and then, it was agreed that debate would be adjourned until a meeting later in the year which will coincide with the election of the committee for DropZone 2000. In the meantime, to allow further reflection on the subject it was also agreed, with Dai Rees's consent, that further suggestions and proposals should be forwarded to FireFight.

The final event of the day was the ever popular TagCon quiz hosted and prepared, as ever, by Dai Rees. Divided into four teams and facing questions on science and science fiction (film, TV and books) it was fingers on the buzzers for the annual battle of wits and reactions. Despite tough competition Team Warlord (Tim Atkinson, Dave Bodger, Mick Penver, Jasper Hedger, Ros Day, Doug Ross and myself) came through victorious.

With the quiz over it was time to say our goodbyes and head off for the long journey home, tired but having had a good day.

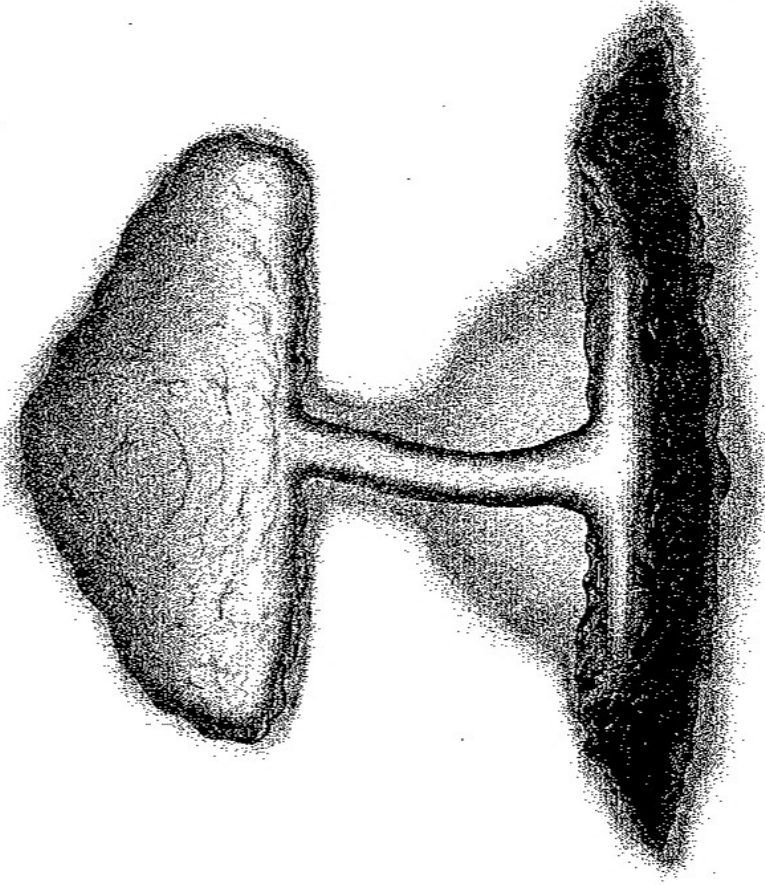
See you there next year.



FIGHTING HELMETS

PRESENT

FORTHCOMING
ATTRACTIVE



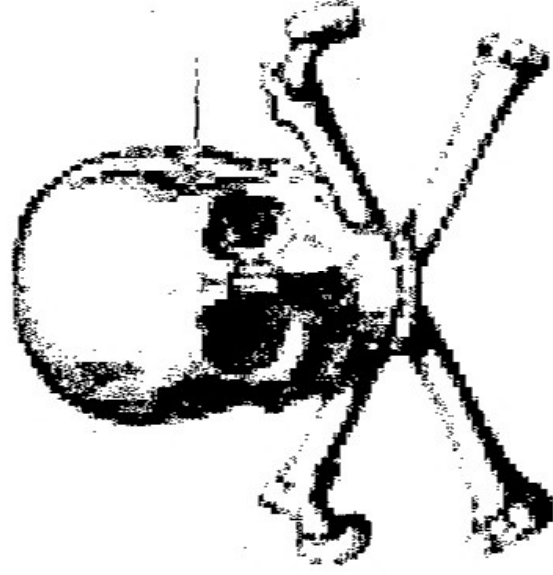
"GONNA BLOW YOU AWAY"

“TOTAL IMMERSION”

As some of you already know the Fighting Helmets are running a series of overnight total immersion games. These are based on the actions of the Australian Special Air Service during there tours of duty in Vietnam. By the time you read this we will already have run our first event and we are going to be issuing “call up papers” to whoever wants to come along.



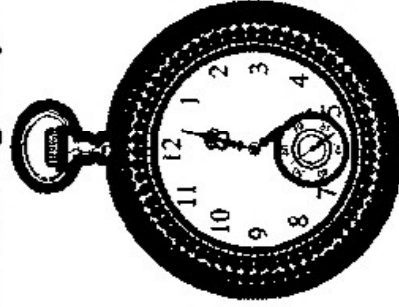
But , Theres more! As a one off special halloween game we are hoping to run a “Night of the Living Dead” overnight game . This is to be a night for 7-8 players , a night of sheer hell on earth as we create your very own personal nightmare. All you gotta do is survive.



“WEEKENDS”

As a club the Fighting Helmets are hoping to run 3 weekend events during the middle to latter part of 1999.

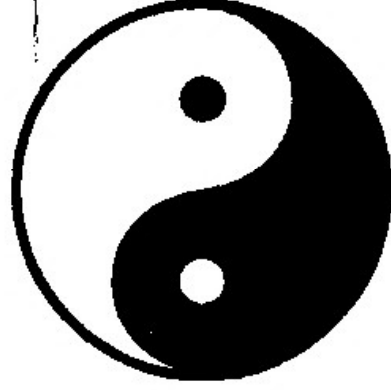
The first is to be a sci-fi event based on a 1988 Australian movie called “Time Guardian”. This is standard sci-fi fare involving heroes, evil cyborgs, big guns & a time travelling city.



The second is to be a “Dispersal Weekend” featuring the A.S.A.S in and out of training and culminating in a daring mission during there tour in Vietnam.



The third is to be the sequel to our first ever event. “For A Few Noodles More” is to be more in the Jackie Chan Chinese Ghost story mould involving new gags , new gimmicks and possibly some old faces.



“CALENDAR”

These are the confirmed and the suspected dates of our events to come.

June 26th A.S.A.S. Total immersion

July 31st A.S.A.S. Total immersion

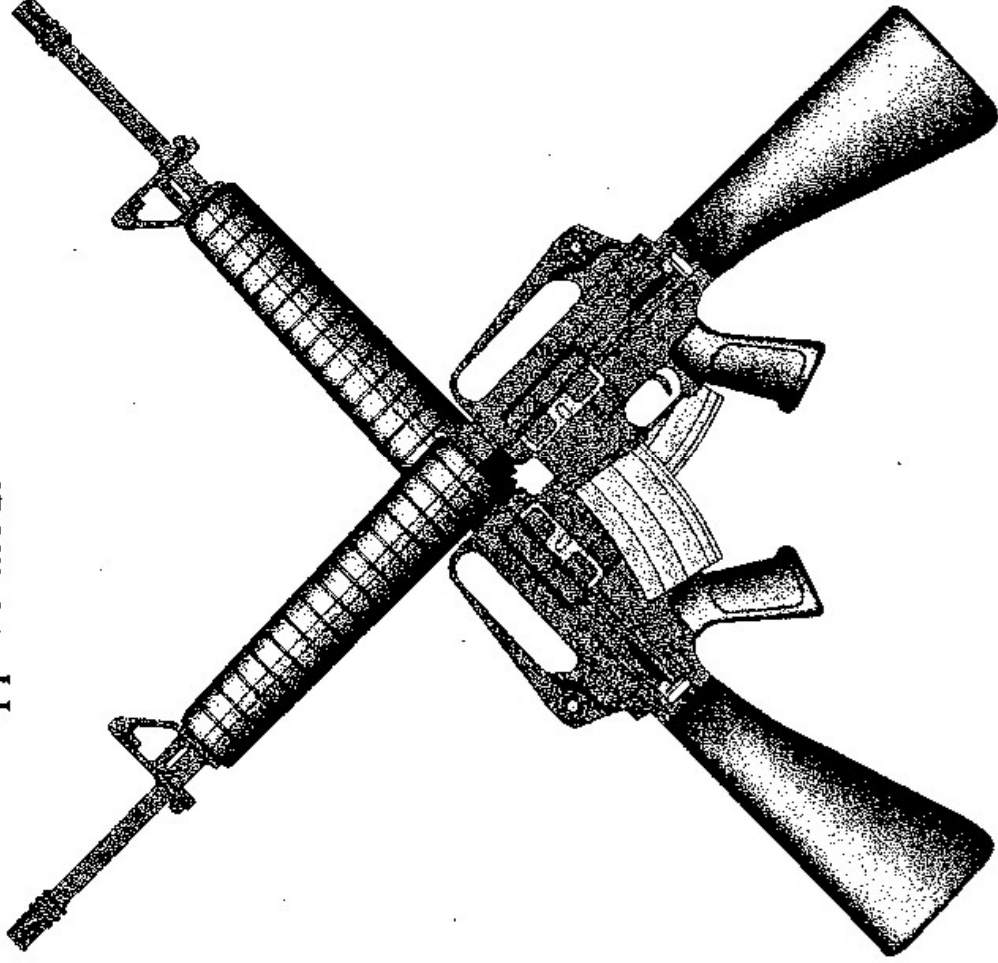
Late August Weekend 1

Late September Weekend 2

Middle October Weekend 3

October 30th ‘Night of The Living Dead’

The order and the dates of the three weekend slots are to be confirmed once we can arrange sites for the staging of these events, any aid in locating venues will be appreciated.



“CLUB CONTACTS”

For any more information please contact:

Ian Stopford

**31, Queen Eleanor Terrace,
Far Cotton,
Northamptonshire.
NN4 8NU.**

**Phone (01604) 453337
Fax (01604) 765442
Email Gloss@Demolition.Freeserve.Co.Uk**

Liam Thompson

**1st Floor Flat
36, The Crescent,
Abingdon,
Northampton.
NN1 4SB.**

**Phone (01604) 474735
Email Pkey@Boonies.Freeserve.Co.Uk**

Or visit our up & coming website at

F-Helmets.webjump.com

HOW TO BE BAD

What this article is not going to be about, is the argument of good and bad in tag scenarios i.e. “were Aliens™ an endangered species that mankind should leave alone and respect”.

I will however use examples from literature, movies and other media to further my ideas rather than to analyse others ideas of BAD.

The sub categories I’m going to consider are :-

Clothes
Props
Distance
Attitude
Verbal and Non-verbal cues
Winning

I will end with a few ideas of my own and welcome any comments from the readership will be gladly received.

BAD GUYS ALWAYS WEAR BLACK

Black works. It is a stereotype, but if no one else is wearing it, it has a marked effect.

Unfortunately many scenario’s in tag now use Blacks as an option for opposition forces with no regard as to whether there is any stigma attached to those wearing the blacks.

This has lead to a weakening of the black is bad, immediate response.

Use of camouflage and remaining hidden from view may create a threat but there again good guys have snipers too. So it is not enough just to be a hidden threat.

In some cases it could be argued that merely to be a step apart in colour is enough. But subtleties are often lost in woods/ the dark or general confusion so a definite difference is better. This may include bright colour. Witness the use of the bright yellow cloak at dropzone last year and the Quetzlcoat costume two years before that.

The ability to blend does however lend itself to certain types of bad guys. These creatures are beyond redemption and often threatened with execution on sight without trial or proof. The traitor. The belief that one of you is a 5th columnist (and I don’t mean writing for the Guradian) sets everyone on edge. the perfect camouflage is merely to wear what everyone else is whether it be British DPM or a string vest and shorts.

I personally feel that for the majority of taggers the stereotypical black still gives the best immediate kick. This must be associated with other sartorial cues. Theses might include rank or alieness or be instantly recognisable e.g. Darth Vader. This leads into the next section.

LOOK FOR THE MAN WITH A SCAR OVER THE RIGHT EYE

The look of evil would not be complete without some hall mark deformity if the early cinema is to be believed. The duelling scar or characteristic disability seems compulsory. Examples are widespread from the 6 fingered man from The Princess Bride to possibly one of the most famous Richard the III. From the wheelchair bound Dr Strangelove to the scarred Freddy Krueger

However Quasimodo and Forest Gump could be regarded as a heroes. Taggers however have a tendency to regard such things a "classic" signals that this person if not bad is at least suspicious. For example the Herr Flick walk.

There are props we can use to accentuate these signals.

A Patch is the next stage up

A Mask is a stage further and if a full mask or hood can be very disconcerting. e.g. the Guardians of Stargate II in 1995.

There are more subtle clue or props

The Hat

The Gloves

The other things e.g. Cigar or cigarette, a cane, even a briefcase regardless of whether there is anything inside it.

MAN YOU'VE GOT A BAAD ATTITUDE

Whatever happens unless the bad guy is a traitor it makes for far more fun if an attitude that entertains whilst possibly confuses the players is portrayed. Some examples might include :-

Generally Loud

good for large groups but difficult to maintain and is not Strong

Cold and Indifferent

Could be construed as just bored and not participating.

Openly Threatening

Again if momentum can be maintain can lead to mayhem and a bloodbath.

Insane, even incoherent

Unless reinforced many will see it as a sign of weakness unless it alternates with some stronger mode.

Overly friendly and sarcastically solicitous

Irritating rather than dominating but a good motivator if the evil chap is for the chop they'll be queuing up.

Comic and Sad

Difficult to portray at the same time as Bad but if done so is very scary.

WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THE WHITES OF THEIR EYES

As commented on before the cues to react must be seen to cause the reaction.

For the Bad guy the distances can be crucial to the interaction.

Too Close

For many the perfect dominating distance making most cringe at the threat of false intimacy.

Normal distance

This is useful if the surrounding onlookers are not to catch on. Equally if done to a powerful player on the “good” side shows power to the followers.

Too Far

This can be very useful if facing roleplayers in general. However as it is difficult to fix people in place and talk them into submission at this range, it is far more likely that at this range the response will be a long range pop.

Of course the ultimate extreme which I have yet to witness but I feel would scare the socks off many is the bad guy you never get close to only hear whether by radio or loud speakers or see in video clips. This is a particular favourite idea of mine and Steve Aucott has agreed to help me if I can work out how to fit it into a scenario complete with atmospheric music/ effects.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU SAY IT'S THE WAY THAT YOU SAY IT

The Non-verbal cues we give are key to the perception of threat and control so given that we are bad what are we to do with our non-verbal cues. With the various attitudes we've looked at there are three main categories. They are not exclusive and can be used together.

Intense - Staring rigid stance watching the others response exceedingly closely.

Controlled - to put this over a certain degree of false NVC must take place for example deliberately waiting until someone uses a mannerism then copying it after a short delay. Not displaying hands or facial expression remaining neutral. This is probably the most difficult unless in a confined area and for a length of time suitable for people to pick up on the bad guys actions.

Discordant - This behaviour would fit into the Insane or Comic or Falsely Solicitous groups saying one thing whilst signally another.

The problem with all of these are 3 fold.

1. It is difficult to falsify NVC especially for a scenario running for several hours at least.
2. It is sometimes difficult for taggers who are concentrating on the bigger cues to pick up on the more subtle ones.

3. Once someone has noticed they may well attribute the NVC to you not the character and react adversely. i.e. a punch on the nose.

WHY IS IT THE GOOD GUYS ALWAYS WIN?

To win or not to win that is the question.

As a player we are there to enjoy ourselves but also to succeed. If our character is a bad guy then we immediately have a dichotomy. Unless the rest of your bunch are bad guys as well, in which case we're back to the good vs. evil argument I was going to avoid; then if you succeed, normally it means others in the player team lose.

If this happens to often people won't trust you. Equally you will find it more difficult to play bad guys and still have fun as many will take it as read.

On the other hand as an NPC bad guy the fear is not so much of losing or being branded a bad guy, but of succeeding too well. These roles, free of the need to succeed are well worth their weight in gold. Not only because taggers recognise as an opposition NPC that you are not inherently evil but the scenario writer will often allow a lot more creative input than for players.

MY PERSONAL SNIPPETS.

The phrases you use must be like switches. We all know the gung ho ones but the more subtle ones are just as good.

from DZ95 "By my power you are under my command"

from DZ98 "Sorry chaps am I late"

from Darth Vader "Do not fail me Captain."

from Goldfinger "Q. Do you expect me to talk."

"A. No Mr Bond I expect you to die."

You must delay the death of anyone as much as possible. Pretend to judge them do whatever you have to the frustration alone will get them to think how to escape.

Equally do not hesitate to take immediate and disproportionate action against an enemy who crosses your own imaginary lines, either physically or metaphorically

Lastly if you possibly can invest in a couple of friends as bodyguards either as comic relief or extra muscle in which case silence and controlled even absent NVC is an asset.

I originally envisioned a more audience participation to this talk but time was of the essence. As a result I may well revisit this subject with a talk next year on bodyguards and henchmen. If anyone out there has any definite ideas on the subject please get in touch.

With a shared interest in costume, sf, good beer and good company perhaps tagging and sf cons have more in common than you might think?

ARMADACON10

As remembered by David A Harvey

Having been introduced to that strange beast the science fiction convention last year at ArmadaCon 9 and enjoyed it enormously I spent the weekend of Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd November 1999 back in Plymouth attending ArmadaCon 10.

After a, thankfully, uneventful journey (last year the car broke down) Ros and I arrived at the Copthorne Hotel. This was a new venue for the show and a serious step up on the luxury front (it's the only 4 star hotel in Plymouth) from the Astor where the con was last year.

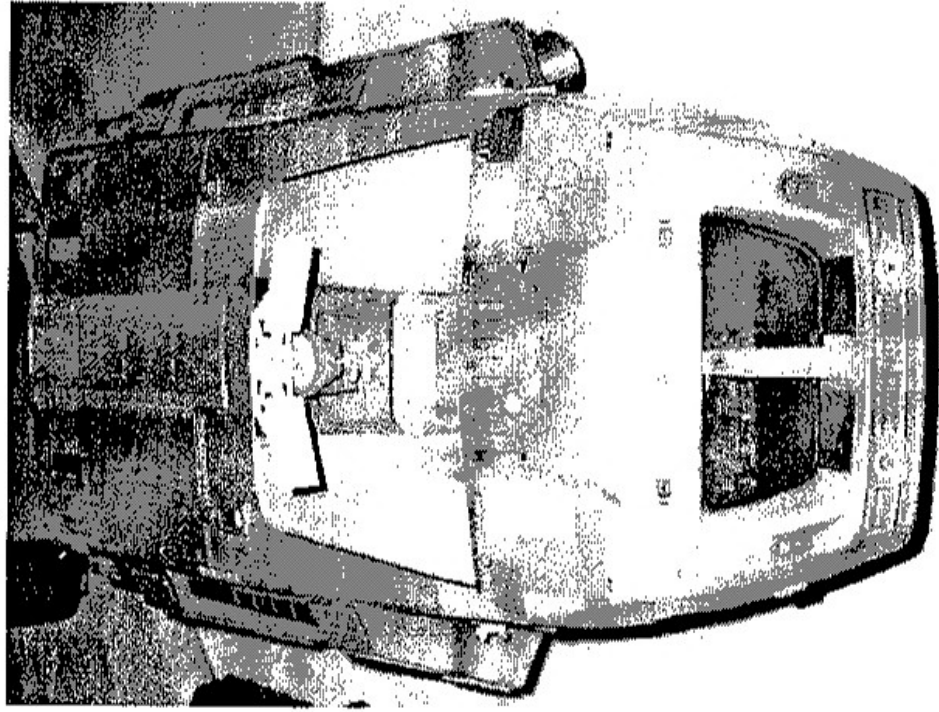
After unpacking and taking a walk around town to check out the local restaurants and shops, so we wouldn't be limited to the nice looking but rather pricey hotel

restaurant, we headed downstairs to register and then retired to the bar to wait for the con to open. The wait proved a useful opportunity to catch up with friends made last year and as a pleasant bonus we discovered that it was happy hour (and with Theakstons at two pounds a pint the regular prices were quite reasonable anyway).

After registering a quick look through the welcome pack revealed the usual mix of advertisements and information wrapped in a handy carrier bag. Closer inspection revealed a well laid out event booklet which proved to be an invaluable source of information during the weekend. As a bonus it also contained lots of other entertaining things such as contributions from previous guests, of which the short story from Dave Langford was particularly fun.

Eventually we were ushered into the main hall for the opening ceremony which was followed by an SF music quiz. Having divided into teams of five or six we were played clips from SF tv and film theme tunes which we had to identify. As well as some easy ones to get things started (anyone who didn't get the Dr. Who





theme was asked to leave) there were some quite obscure ones but overall difficult enough to be interesting without being ridiculously obscure. Although I must admit that I am probably biased because our team won scoring 32 out of a possible 51.

Next up was somewhat more serious. Amanda (sorry surname forgotten) gave an interesting and quite wide ranging talk with slides on the depiction of prehistoric man in SF and fantasy fiction.

This was followed by a spoken drama in the form of a radio play based on the infamously bad novel "John Carstairs, Space Detective" which has become some what of a cult at ArmadaCon. An enthusiastic cast, amusing sound effects and a receptive audience (throughout the weekend the

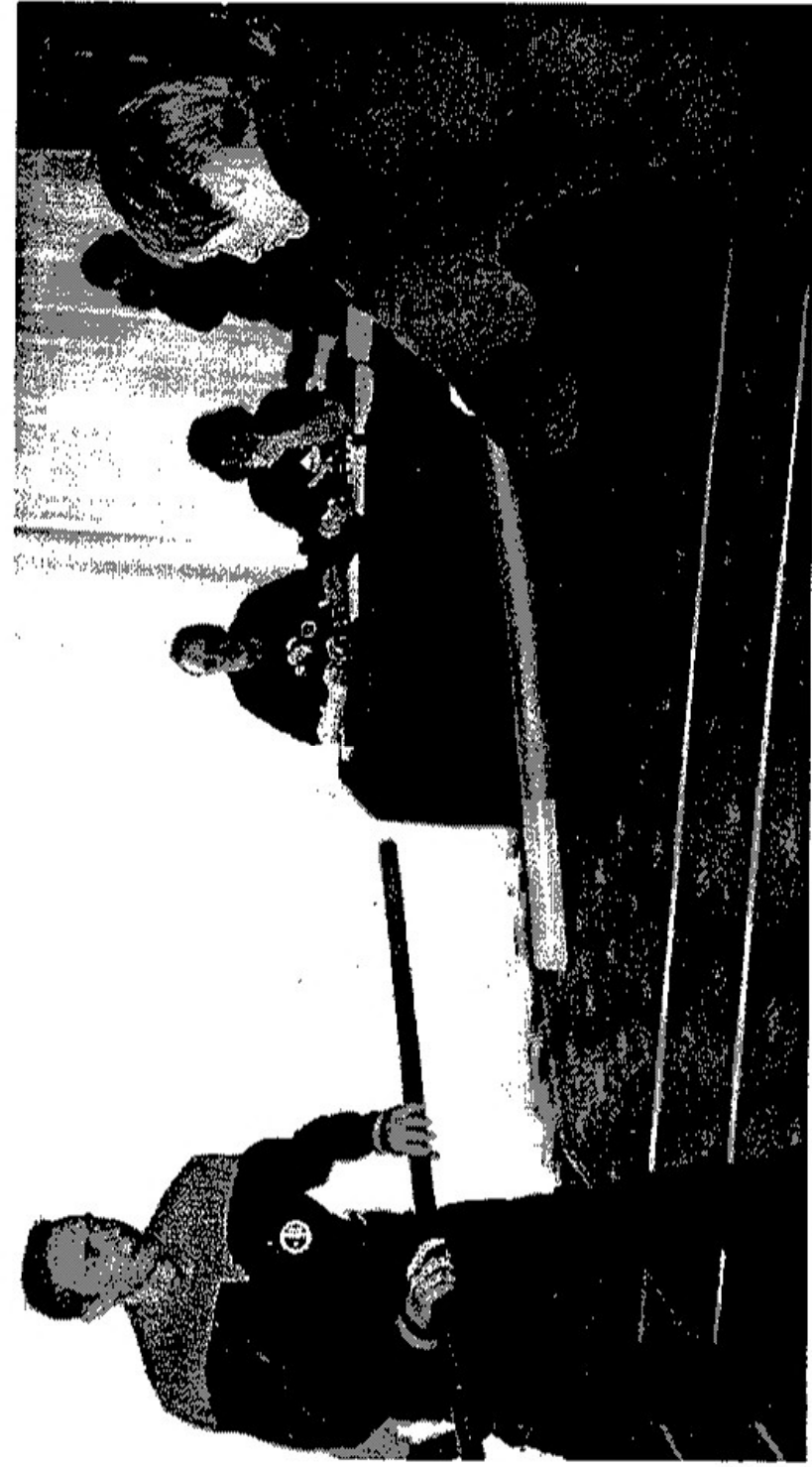
hotel provided a private bar for us in the main hall) made this a fun interlude.

The finale of the evening was a Rocky Horror Show party to celebrate the play's 20th anniversary. A number of people dressed up for the screening of the film and a silly time was had by all.

Having overslept somewhat Dougal Dixon's Saturday morning presentation, which started at an unpleasantly early 9 o'clock, lost out to breakfast.

After working through the enormous breakfast provided by the hotel we arrived in the main hall for a panel by Mike Scott Rohan (fantasy author) and Ken McLeod (SF author). Many things were discussed including writing techniques, what inspired the authors and future plans, it then opened into a wider discussion including religion in SF, first contact, Eric (Chariots of the Gods) Von Danekin getting out of jail and many other subjects.

Taking advantage of a short break in the proceedings we went upstairs to take a look around the dealers room and model and artwork display. The standard of exhibits in the display room was very high including a large selection of models by Martin Bower and artwork by Jim Burns who also had, at the request of the organisers, brought along his two



Hugo awards so we could see what a Hugo actually looks like.

Having bought a couple of rather fun T-shirts we headed back downstairs for the Minbari Pike fighting competition.

Knowing my limitations I offered act as photographer and let Jasper and Ros uphold the honour of the Warlords.

Armed with pipe-lagging and gaffer tape pikes the contestants faced off in pairs in the ten by ten feet arena hoping to score points by touching their opponent with the pike or forcing them out of the arena. For safety reasons head blows and thrusting attacks were forbidden and thankfully nobody was injured, despite the best efforts of the participants to hurt themselves, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves.

After lunch it was time to welcome Jim Burns, the renowned science fiction artist, who gave us a slide presentation about his work. Like most people, I guess, I have heard of Jim Burns but never really looked at his work. Having been shown lots of it all at once I can now see why he has such an incredible reputation. As the slides rolled by I was surprised to see how many I recognised, mainly book covers but also a Games Workshop Space Marine boxed wargame.

His attention to detail is incredible. Even when shown as slides it was only when sections were even further magnified that the details in the background became apparent. As an example in one bookcover there is a ship and when magnified we could see that he had actually painted the in the furniture and figures visible through the cabin windows. Not particularly impressive until you



realised that in the original the window is less than half a centimetre square (and then he apologises that his eyesight isn't as good as it used to be).

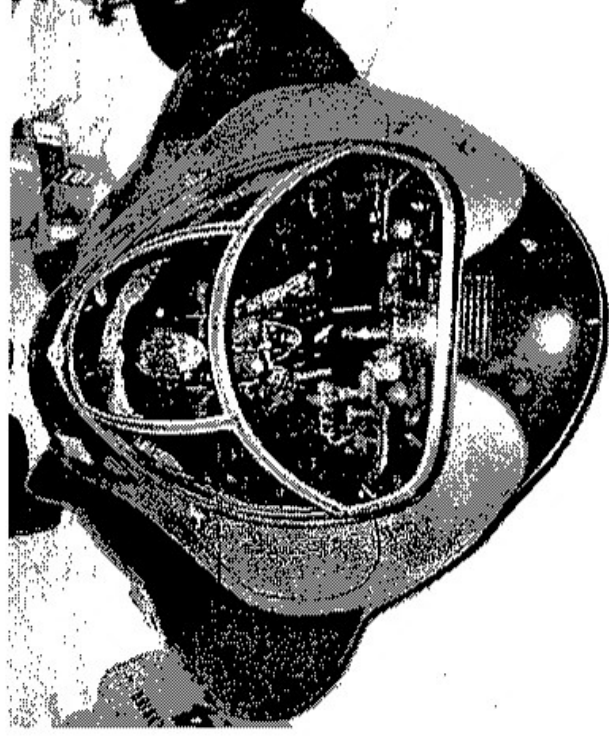
For the artists in the audience much advice was freely given about the various techniques used and how various effects were achieved. Other asides included comment about the process of being commissioned to do work, including the bemusement of some editors because he reads the book before he does the cover painting.

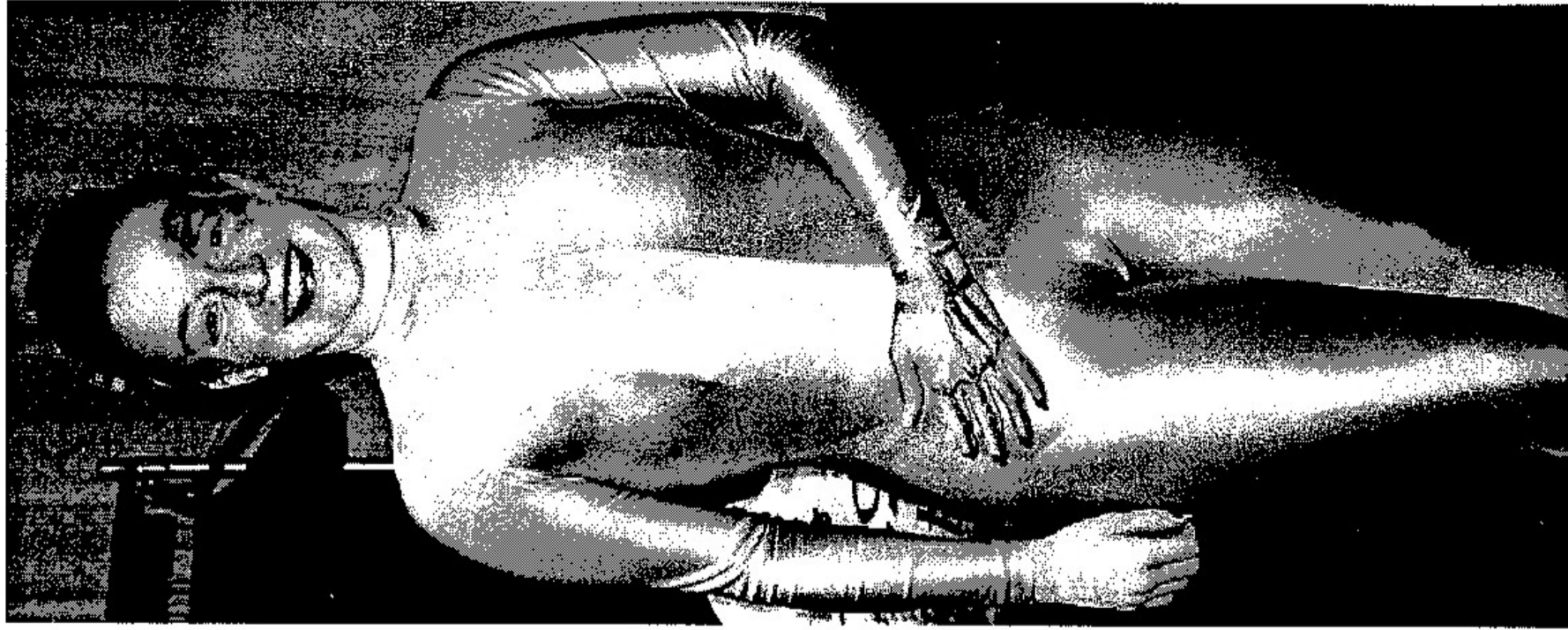
The only shame about this presentation was that after two hours it had to come to an end (with Jim only halfway through his slides).

Next up was the auction and in order to avoid temptation we went out for a walk up to Plymouth Hoe and on the way picked up some rather tasty looking pasties for later.

We arrived back as the auction was ending and in time for the next presentation. Although Martin Bower is by no means a household name I would be surprised if anyone reading wouldn't recognise his work if they saw it. This is because he is a professional science fiction model maker whose work has appeared in many films and tv shows including Alien, Space 1999, Outland, Blake's 7 and Dr. Who.

The presentation opened with an film extract from one of Martin's modelling videos. Inspired by Fireball XL5 the sequence was a rocket launching and landing sequence, with inserted crew and launch control shots, which showed the surprisingly good results that can be achieved using home video equipment (VHS at that) with a little imagination. This demonstration seemed to sum up Martin's view of modelling that although building models is fun the next step is doing something with them.





This was followed by a slide presentation going through Martin's career and reminiscences of working in the industry including working on Alien with Ridley Scott (a great guy to work with as long as you can put up with the swearing and having him

take a hacksaw to your work...), the importance of making sure that your models will fit through your workshop door when it's time to take them to the studio, a near death experience filming a Space 1999 crash landing, and lots of useful modelling tips and equally important tips on how to make interesting photographs from them.

Just before six, and despite Martin Bower's protests that he was only half way through his slides (between him and Jim Burns the scutters must have been rushed off their wheels loading all those slides) we were kicked out of the main hall so it could be made ready for the evenings entertainment.

An hour or so later having taking advantage of the break to get some supper (the pasties proved to be very good) we were all called back in from the bar. After a short delay to get the con guests (still clutching their desserts) out of the restaurant to form the panel of judges it was time for the masquerade.

Containing both costume and drama the masquerade was, as usual, quite entertaining. All the contestants had put considerable effort into their costume and performance. Costumes on display included Ali Trace and her baby son Jamie in Star Trek uniforms as Star Trek Generations, Sam Jackson as 7 of 9 from Voyager, as well as a number of entries for the best original costume. This section

finished with a collection of five different uniforms from Space 1999 put together by Kerry Endacotte.

On the drama front there were several amusing sketches including Dougal Dixon as a hapless NASA bureaucrat trying to get a mumbling hooded native to sign over the rights to the planet's vineyards only to discover that he wasn't on the Planet of the Grapes but that of the apes...

Next up was the Anorak Competition which was inspired by the media's stereotype of SF fans as wearing badge covered anoraks. So the hunt was on to put the most SF related badges onto an item of clothing. This lead to an embarrassing binge of badge buying which given the satirical nature of the competition were attached to a truly ghastly tie and tank top which Ros and I picked up from a charity shop. Despite trying hard we were beaten into second place by Jasper Hedger...

During the remainder of the evening we had various silly things to do and watch including: Just a minute with four of the guests valiantly trying to talk for sixty seconds on an SF related topic without hesitation, repetition or deviation (from the subject that is). The Case of the Golden Graham, another quite fun radio play but with audience participation which forced them to vote on how (but not if...) the plot would continue. Ten Little Con



Guests, a balloon debate (complete with balloons) on the premise that the committee have invited ten previous guests to ArmadaCon 100 but could only afford one ticket for the moon shuttle to get them there. Debate was fierce but eventually the winner was Danny John Jules because he attended despite being in a play in London the same weekend and in his haste to be at both got a speeding ticket on the way out of Plymouth.

With the promise that the bar in the hall would stay open until we were finished with it drinking and frothing continued until the early hours of Sunday morning.

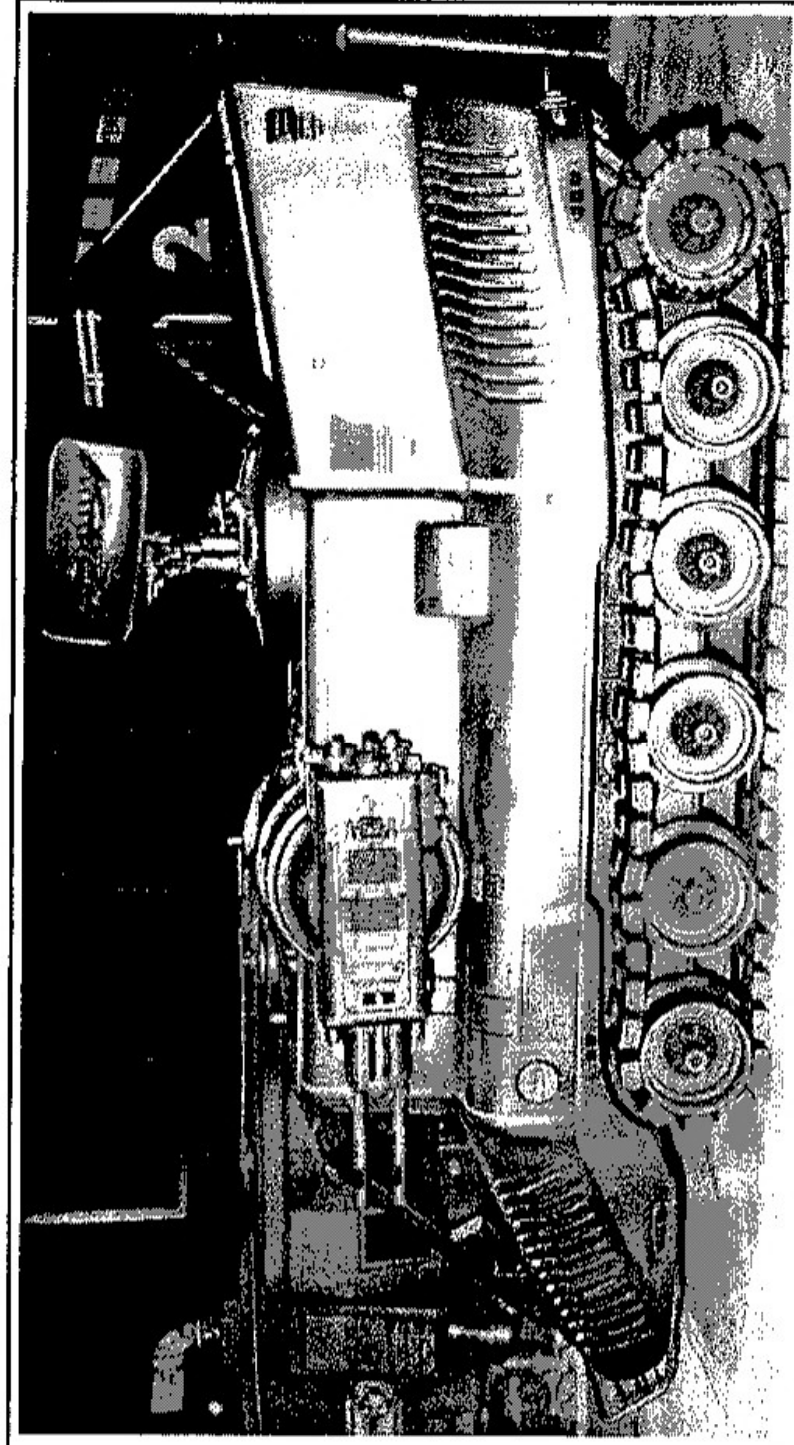
Despite a serious reluctance to get up on Sunday morning I dragged myself out of bed in time to get to breakfast and catch the second half of Michael Scott Rohan's second presentation which, Ros tells me, was well worth getting up for, although how he was up (let alone coherent) for a nine o'clock presentation (given that he didn't get to bed much earlier than the rest of us) amazes me.

Afterwards we made our way into the bar for the Turkey Reading. This infamous fund raiser celebrates the worst in SF and fantasy literature with the audience bidding to get the reading to stop (this stuff is seriously bad) or to keep going (most of it is so bad that it is hysterically funny).



Dreadful as it sounds the turkey reading is lots of fun although for best results a plentiful supply of change (a sense of humour, and possibly a modicum of alcohol) is recommended so you don't run out at a critical moment.

After lunch there was a second presentation by Martin Bower. While his first talk he had concentrated primarily on his cinema and television work and how to present your models to best effect, this talk was more about building models from scratch (as opposed to kit bashing - the making of models from kits or making a model by combining parts from a number of kits). To illustrate this Martin brought



The RamCat. It's amazing what you can do with an old vacuum cleaner

down his models from the display room and talked about the techniques he had used to make them such as the Ramcat which is a lunar rover made from a broken vacuum cleaner.

Other models included Thunderbird 2 complete with cargo pod and a fully detailed cargo bay and Stingray, which were carved from wood and as far as I could tell identical to the ones in the show. Even though I'm not a modeller this was an interesting talk with Martin's enthusiasm for his subject shining through.

Next up was Dougal Dixon, who is a science writer and editor (working for publications such as "New Scientist"). He is best known for his speculative anthropology books "After Man, a zoology of the future" and "Man After Man" both of

which examine how life would evolve after humanity's extinction. Having talked about "After Man" in his talk on Saturday morning Dougal talked about the rest of his career, work and future projects and plans. Particularly amusing (and worrying) was his recollections of a lecturing tour in the USA where he was cautioned not to use the word evolution but was told he was alright to say natural selection...

The final presentation of the afternoon was a second talk by Jim Burns which was followed by the closing ceremony where the raffle was drawn, prizes for the various competitions (appropriately enough I received a golden duck for the Anorak Competition), and all the guests and organisers thanked for their efforts.

Even the fact that the con was officially over didn't stop the fun with

those who could hang on attending the post ArmadaCon Pig-Out in the hotel restaurant. Although the portions were a little on the small side the food was good and at fifteen pounds for a three course meal (without wine) the price wasn't extortionate.

After dinner everyone retired to the bar where the large selection of liquor coffees proved deservedly popular and another enjoyable late night of conversation brought ArmadaCon to a close for another year.

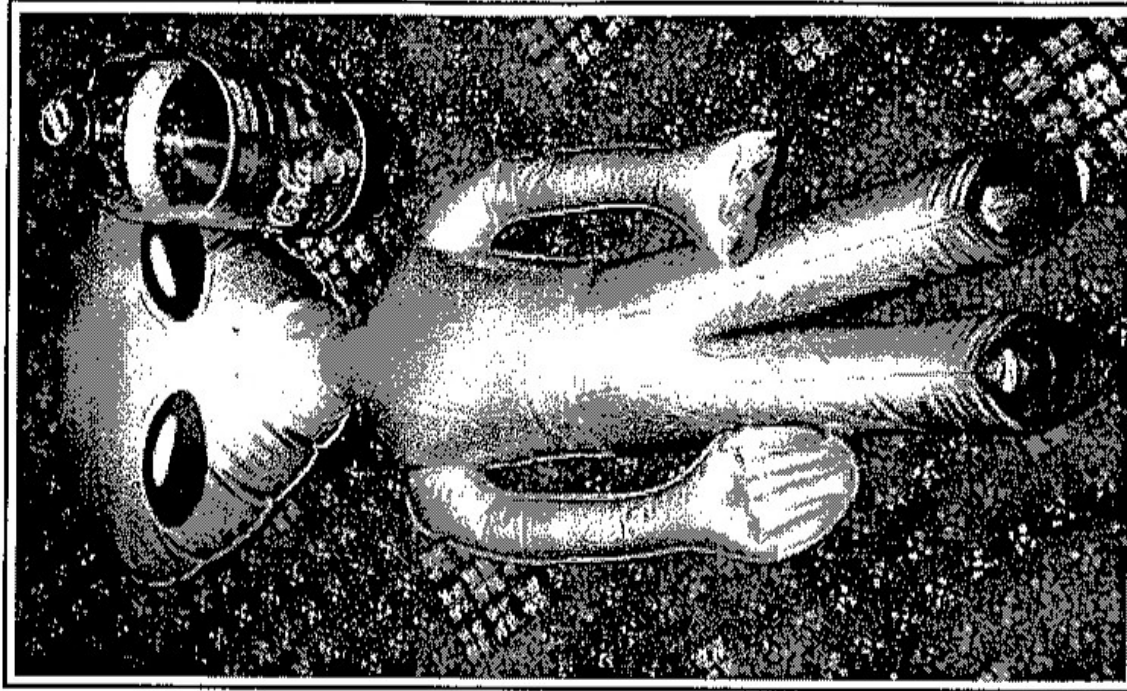
Closing thoughts

ArmadaCon 10 was a great deal of fun and well worth being at. The atmosphere was extremely friendly and the guests were entertaining and informative. The change of venue to the Copthorne was a good move not only was it modern and well equipped (not that I had time to check out the gym and pool) but also the hotel and staff made considerable efforts to make us welcome with friendly and helpful service, and special discounts at every turn.

The only real shame about the weekend was that attendance was somewhat down on previous years. This was probably due to there being several other cons on the same weekend (oops) but the dates for next year (12th - 14th November 1999) are

earlier in the month so (provided the publicity is out early) that shouldn't be a problem next year.

All in all if you're interested in science fiction and fancy a relaxed and informative weekend I think you will enjoy ArmadaCon. I've booked for ArmadaCon 11 and I hope to see you there next year.



For some the excitement was all too much...

*Many thanks to Jasper Hedger
for the use of his photographs and to
Dave Bodger for scanning them.*

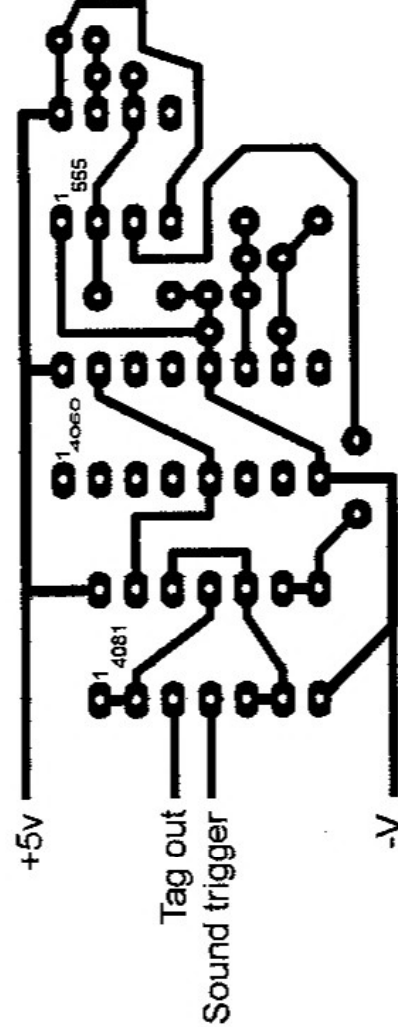
For more info on ArmadaCon11 check out their website
([HTTP://WWW.CANIS-PUBL.DEMON.CO.UK/ARMADACON](http://www.canis-publ.demon.co.uk/armadacon))
or call (01752)257635 or (01752)780456.

Simple Gun Circuit Design

With the sensor rules for Dropzone '99 allowing the use of new sensors that do not receive hits from terminators it is necessary to have a simple circuit to replace the one's in the terminator itself. The freebooters circuit would do this admirably but quite a few people seem to have trouble making them work reliably. The freebooter circuit is very similar in operation to the one outlined in Dave Bodgers FAQ so I've combined the two to produce a reliable circuit that is simple to build. The circuit outlined below runs from +5V so you will need to use a 5 volt regulator (78L05) to supply the power for the board. Also I have not detailed the power output transistors as this depends on the power output you would like. For high power you could use a TIP 122 or for more general use a multi-transistor chip like the ULN2003A. Also the design has no provision for sound as if you are fitting it into a Terminator there is already sound on the circuit already in there.

As for wiring a new board into the terminator you leave the original board where it is but connect the IR emitter to the new board. The negative power line from the new board should be connected to the trigger of the Terminator at the same place that the original board is.

Circuit layout (component side of the board)



COMPONENT LIST

R1 10 M

R2 2.2 K

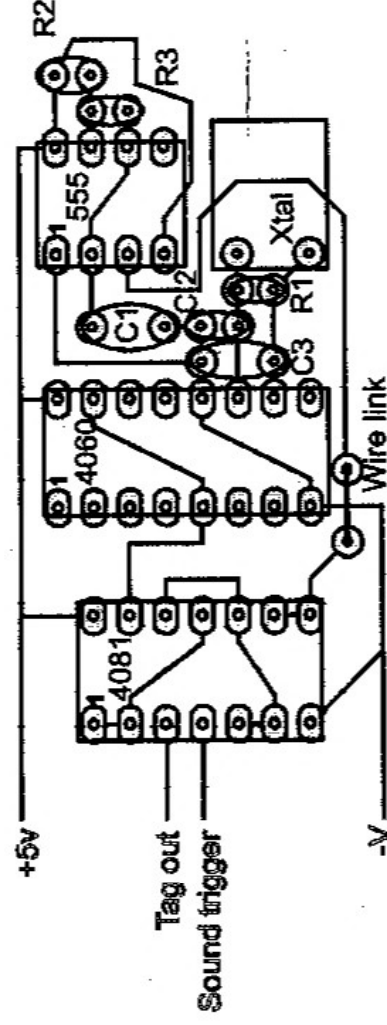
R3 100 K

C1 2.2M F

C2 33 P F

C3 120 P F

Component Layout



XTAL 1.8432 MHZ

555 TIMER

4081 QUAD AND

GATE

74HC4060

If you want any more information or a complete design then let me know I'm sure that I could sort something out for anyone who is interested. My address is 18 Althorp Road, St. James, Northampton. NN55EF. Tel 01604 464673. E-mail ashamaan@hotmail.com

Phil



A CONFEDERATION

OUTLINE

With the constitution debate raging in tents and bars around the country a decision was made to have a discussion at **TAGCON niner-niner** on what form of monster would a Confederation take and what would it do?

It was with great pleasure as organiser of **TAGCON** that so many felt strongly enough to stay and discuss this subject. Either that or they couldn't stand to walk out.

The discussion lasted 2 hours or so with eventual general consensus that despite many reservations that perhaps the time for an attempt at forming a Confederation had come.

The proviso was that feedback via **FIREFIGHT** would allow those interested in creating this body would get extra feedback.

The Guidelines read something like this:-

Structure

Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer to form an executive. Other posts to include Public Relations Officer, Club representatives (1 each) and an Independent Officer to represent those who are not affiliated with a club.

There would be a Rules sub-committee

Dropzone would similarly possibly be a sub-committee

Although the idea of 1 club 1 vote was agreed. It was also pointed out that yearly reviews of the system would only lead to elections if it were need or required to fill a post.

Fees

Fees were to be decided annually dependent on the need for funds for primarily insurance but also publicity and mailshots.

The level of fees and club/individual rates were left for further discussion.

Focus and Jurisdiction

The Confederation was to be the contact point for the outside world including the LRP world in general.

It would arrange the general insurance and deal with general PR work. It would provide a focus for information on:-

Players, Sites, Props and events.

It would encourage and assist groups with events BUT would not interfere with internal Club affairs.

It would also it was hoped encourage via the rules sub-committee and example a code of conduct for taggers in general.

Timescale

All suggestions are hoped to be in by Christmas at the very latest

[Unfortunately FIREFIGHT being late has delayed the original timeline. Sorry ED]

The next TAGCON to see action on the above guidelines to from the first formal Confederation into the 21st Century. **[Gosh that sounds good. ED]**

- First this was the overall opinion of the 30+ people discussing at **TAGCON** others have a voice let it be heard by writing to **FIREFIGHT**.
- Second many of the above require refinement. SUGGEST some targets or aims for the committee.

There remains a great deal of work to be done to get this confederation into existence but it may just provide the focus many require to contact others or just to know that there is a body that they can turn to if they feel they're doing everything themselves.

Coming soon to a venue in the Midlands

TAGCON 2000

February 2000

**Any papers/discussion points or presentations
contact**

Dai Rees 122, Hartland Avenue, Wyken, Coventry. CV2 3ES

(02476) 727105/6 (0780) 3778910 mobile

Drees42@joyeaux-garde.freemove.co.uk

"THE TRUTH."

CHAPTER 1

WELCOME TO JERUSALEM

Alexander Dimitri Endovitch, a hollow featured man with patient deep blue eyes, stared out of the hypersonic's tiny vision port. He was well aware of the dynamics outside, and the incident that had caused the compulsory shrinkage of such perspectives, so often the only 'real' relief of in-flight boredom. He could not help wishing; if only the dignity involved had been less typically 'poor African', just a little fatter the ports would have remained a decent semi-panoramic size.

He sighed. Too many an unchristian thought had crossed his mind recently. He whispered a note to his organiser to log a call to the Pope, when time zones were more mutually convenient. In order to discuss his confessional state. The Pope would understand; after all, Alex was Bishop-envoy of U.C.N., the United Christian Nations. He had to have some privileges in order to function efficiently, especially since his special assignment was the "Holy-Land" an increasingly disorganised and unstable region. Clear thoughts had been the order of the day as he had left the President. The world at large was in enough upheaval without this flashpoint.

The 4th 'original' of the Dead Sea scrolls had been unearthed. They were authenticated almost instantaneously by numerous Zionist and independent Jewish specialists. They were threatening "Jihad" in the Middle East. Not the scrolls of course; they were historical rather than prophetic texts by all accounts. The fundamentalists of both Zionist and Islamic extraction however, read a plethora of threats and promises between the lines. Hence his neutral calming influence had been quietly insisted upon by vested interests.

Although almost classically demonic in features, a dark but greying goatee and short cropped hair, about a gaunt and recently ever tired face, he was no charismatic beauty. The appearance was not aided by his insistence despite medical advice, of using his absurdly anachronistic half-lenses, perched precariously and yet permanently half way down his aquiline nose. He did however listen, and people liked to be listened to. He always found a compromise. Not dynamic, not glorious, not bloody, but effective. With the Middle East so particularly sensitive at this time, he was a necessary evil.

He had heard that as he left home. "Endovitch, a long drawn out necessary evil." Not a very christian adieu. Honest at least. He always tried to think the best of people. It could be very difficult at times.

He also knew that time as always was against him. Already in the brief 6 months since the discovery in the Mesada ancients site 25 miles S.S.E. of Jerusalem, the death toll had risen from 20 in the announcement day riots to three and a half thousand killed and wounded. City wide riots, dawn raids, refugee columns just like Poland in '16. The aggression seemed almost exponential. Jew vs. Arab, Fundamentalist vs. Moderate, Terrorist vs. civilian, Army vs. civilian, civilian vs. civilian. What was it that crass programme had broadcast "In the Middle East every 3 seconds a civilian is shot..... and he's getting sick and tired of it!" God rest his soul.

Accepting the considerable risk on his behalf the U.C.N. jet landed at Jerusalem just after nightfall. The fires of retribution were already burning bright all over the city and the jet copter gunships almost nonchalantly banked, screaming overhead, missiles flying both ways and flares blinding anyone daring to look.

"Chaos" thought Alex, "and death and the very look of Hell about us; but who are the demons? Not for me to judge. That burden is for God alone."

The hotel with its rooftop lasers, guards, coverall 'background' music, was almost on a par with the Paris one he had left but 4hrs previously. More fires, than the Champs Elysses but just as noisy. He was too tired to really care where he was. His near stupor did not however stop him from hearing a few faint voices calling from the crowd outside.

"Bishop! Bishop-General! Will you not aid us? Will you not bless us?" The last was from a small boy no more than 10 years old. Turning Alex walked back out to the smoky night and the roar of the crowd. He focused on that one devout voice. His guards, panicking sprinted after him, clearing their holsters as they ran.

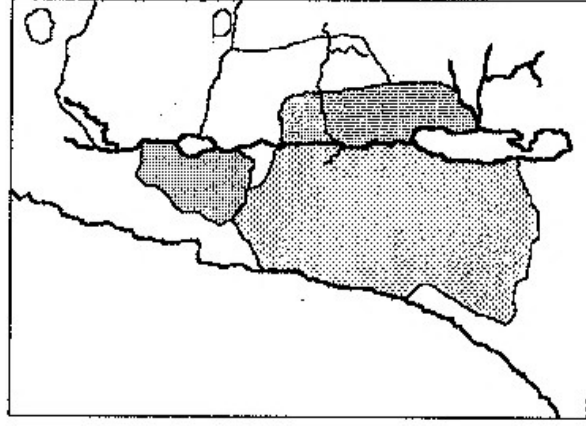
Calmly, as if in the eye of a storm he waved their guns down and smiled at the boy. Shy to be noticed when almost all hope had gone, the boy covered his beaming face with a thin grimy hand, nodding recognition and thanks to God in one simple motion.

Suddenly there was a scream of "Gentile!" and a shot gun resounded a short way off. Alex kicked from behind to the ground, saw the crowd turn to run and the guns above him stop them as they turned. They put them to the ground in graceless heaps, as he sobbing was dragged; still watching the still boy; back to the cool foyer.

There he was fussed and attended by guard, hotelier, medic and diplomat alike. He bit his lip and the sardonic words the War-generals loved to taunt him with, came back "It's not the earth the meek inherit, it's the dirt!"

CHAPTER 2

MESADA



Two days later fretting at the delay, the bruise in his side and the new "heavy" vest, he lurched in time to the gunships evasive landing procedure. Once down everything was sweetness and light. A palatial marquee within a sandbagged emplacement was the first reception on the itinerary. Here amidst delightful small talk he began to piece together the roles of those present. All those talking seemed to have little or nothing to say of the discovery or its alleged authenticity. There was one figure of interest, a red-faced impatient chap, pacing up and down on the edge of the 'dignitaries'.

Satisfied that no good would come of the crowd and a little more relaxed as his guards were outside the tent, Alex meandered over to the gentleman. He was more than a little alarmed however when the man grabbed him by the wrist, the instant he came within lunging distance. Hoping the E.C.G. auto-alarm would NOT bring his dutiful guardians blasting into the room, he calmed himself by muttering a brief paternoster.

The man hurried without a word, down a long flight of steps leading to the excavation, or so Alex assumed. Once they had reached a small platform, the man stopped. He puffed and prodded at a seemingly ineffective medi-patch on his arm. He coughed a few times and in a somewhat strangled voice announced.

"I am Professor Nelan, I must....." The coughing and wheezing resumed.

During this time Alex's eyes accustomed themselves to the semi-light of green fluorescent tubes hung at irregular intervals down the stairs for as far as he could make out.

"They don't spoil peoples vision and they're not white enough to bleach ancient pigments." Said a much more controlled voice next to him.

"Come! We have a few hundred more of these steps to go yet."

So saying the swaying and gasping professor led the way down, oblivious of Alex's compliance behind.

Although apparently in danger of suffering a respiratory arrest in the dry cavern air, the Professor managed an enthusiastic monologue. He described with relish the finding of the lower levels of an ancient city, and the library within a palace, and finally the completeness of the scriptures found therein.

It was only when Alex asked how easy it had been to translate the scrolls, that the Professor paused. He turned and a worried look almost palened his usually florid face.

"Not too difficult!" he said shortly. He obviously didn't believe his own words.

"Here we are!" he announced.

They stepped at last to a wooden stage amid a disappointingly small cavern, crumbling in parts but in others carefully and meticulously sculpted.

"Over there in that stone box. That's where I found them!" whispered the Professor.

"How many were there?" Alex whispered back.

"Oh, about sixteen decent ones. The whole lot must have numbered 30 or more I'd say."

"All religious?" queried Alex.

"All historical!" the Professor retorted.

"Where are they now?" asked Alex with the beginnings of impatience.

"Oh, they're in a special vault in Jerusalem. Safe there I suppose." the Professor wilted as the remembrance of the occasion slipped away. "They told me to carry on the good work here. But when you've seen those words, you lose all drive for anything else." he sighed.

"The scrolls are genuine, you think?" asked Alex.

"Oh, yes most definitely, most unfortunately for us.....but that's the way the parchment crumbles isn't it?"

Professor Nelan continued to mumble to himself on the long slow climb up the steps. Alex contented himself with visions of righteous wrath at those who had brought him on this wild goose chase. The golden egg lay in Jerusalem.

When they re-emerged in the tent site, the whole marquee was open to the sky. Blinded by the sun beating down on them, they stood for a moment squinting about. There was a distant crack and the Professor next to him grunted and collapsed. Almost immediately the air close around him was torn apart as a cacophony of automatic weapons answered the distant sniper.

For the second time this trip, he was hauled away unceremoniously and dumped behind some boxes of wine 'for his own safety'. A few yards away the professor, lungs still labouring, was lying in an ever darkening patch of sand.

"Arabs!" he heard a guard mutter. "Won't be long now though!"

Alex craned his neck to see between cases of reception-only alcohol and thought he could just make out 2 or 3 tiny figures on a hill some three-quarters of a mile away. Then a flash. He blinked and the hill top was ash and the very peak a sudden crater.

"That's nailed 'em!" enthused the guard. "Up you come sir. They'll not try that again in a hurry I'll bet!"

The man was obviously ecstatic at the annihilation of some 2 or 3 fellow human beings. Alex shuddered and then remembered the Professor. The medic's were there, as was the army colonel, who had dragged them all this way in the first place.

"Yes, Yes, the Professor will live. I know you may think our retaliation is overly aggressive, but you must understand: These people will stop at nothing to destroy us. There are even rumours the have nuclear bombs." The colonels defensive speech was started and finished before Alex reached him.

Then with promises of compliance with U.C.N. recommendations, he was ferried over blasted hilltop to besieged hotel. The radio announced en route twice the numbers of rioters and twice the number of dead as yesterday. Dear God why?



CHAPTER 3

THE BEGINNING OR THE END?

Four further days of delay, threats, counter threats, conferences and walkouts had finally led to the acquiescence. A "gentile" may view the scrolls, and the transcripts in Modern Hebrew. But a report on their validity must be given whilst he remained in Israel.

Alex didn't mind the last too much. A few preliminary statements could so very easily be qualified any number of ways, once outside the 'protective' custody of the Israeli state. He felt sure they all knew that. It did niggle him though missing the middle out. "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

When the armoured car did arrive, he was surprised and disturbed to see hardly a soul on the streets. Apparently sections of the new-old scriptures, were being broadcast to all households. A strict curfew was encouraging the populace to pay attention to the words of wisdom from the past. Another U.C.N. recommendation ignored. Until validated the scripts may lead to all kinds of pilgrimages, peaceful or not, that in the end could be ill founded. Eternal damnation was a steep price to pay for something that got lost in translation.

The scrolls were held in a vault apparently and he was to be allowed to see the transcripts next door to it. A number of agitated Hebrew scholars were concerned that he be allowed to be in the right ambience to truly appreciate the significance of the revelations. He had remarked that for a technologically pre-eminent country in the region the banning of electronic transmission of the text except by official media was only going to drive the traffic underground.

He was thoroughly but politely searched once inside the buildings basement. The undecorated concrete walls he recognised as an old style shelter from the Millennium Celebration war as it was styled, in the region. A bare room with an obvious new two way mirror further irked him. He was further surprised that a young man he thought he recognised from the dig site was already present. He was seated at a large plain table with sheafs of paper at his side. He rose as Alex entered.

"I'm a colleague of Professor Nelan, but not an academic as you've probably gathered."

Alex shook hands and to the resounding thud of the heavy metal door sat down. He fumbled for his spectacles noting the wry smile on the others face. He began to pull the papers towards him and was surprised when the young man attempted to enthusiastically help him by shoving them towards him. The upshot being, several papers ended up on the floor. Grunting Alex leaned over to retrieve them.

"I'm terribly sorry Mr Endovitch, It's my fault let me help you! It's just so exciting isn't it? Genesis is the key."

The papers were dumped back on the table. Alex stared momentarily at the man who was fussing over sorting the papers back into order. Despite his experience Alex started to turn to the mirror and winced as the man kicked his ankle as he lent over to retrieve an errant set of notes.

"I work for the government Mr Endovitch I was at Mesada purely in an advisory capacity. The government would not wish extremists to jump to conclusions I think you would agree!"

Nodding in both annoyance at his overly loud voice and confusion as to his purpose Alex started sifting through the text and notes appended. He was concerned that the notes were seriously curtailed almost none were contradictory. After some 10 minutes he had already come to the conclusion that the notes were addenda added well after the script had been officially sanctioned.

He looked up and was surprised that the young man after his initial outbursts was sitting watching him avidly.

"Have you finished with those initial introductions Mr Endovitch?" he asked reaching for the first sheaf of papers. "I'll get you a coffee if you'd like?"

Perplexed Alex nodded and pulled the second sheaf of semi-fiction towards him. At the thump of the door he looked up and surveyed the room. Unless a listening device had been place on the table chairs or himself then they would have to rely on remote microphones. He understood now why the papers had ended up on the floor. With an ironic smile he bent to the task of double guessing the second act of the performance.

As the young man returned Alex had already realised that if the text fragments he was seeing were not genuine they were exceedingly good fakes. The whispered reference to the beginning of the text he found frustrating. This not least because he could find no reference to it.

The coffee and a couple of biscuits were laid unsteadily by his hand. The poor young chap almost looked as if he were about to faint.

"Sit down before you fall down young man!" Alex was concerned that he may genuinely be ill.

"I'll be fine once I've had a drink and a biscuit" The agent flopped into his own seat and started doodling on a piece of paper whilst sipping his own coffee.

"Are you not hungry Bishop General?" he asked.

"Mmm? What oh! yes I suppose I am. Thank-you!" Alex picked up a biscuit and was rewarded with a smile and a twirl of a biscuit and a wink.

Alex froze in mid-bite and looked at the biscuit as he slowly turned it over he read the words "Original Genesis !!" he bit, swallowed and almost choked, in his haste to remove the evidence. The young chap pounded enthusiastically on his back as his glasses toppled onto the desk.

"I (cough, cough), I need to see the original section pertaining to Genesis!" Alex managed in the end.

Two others came in whilst the agent went out and repeated his statement. he was somewhat surprised when he was taken to a shower room and given a clean suit to change into before entering the vault that held the originals.

He stepped, when told into the shower and changed, he was met by another guard at the vault entrance and was searched again. Pursing his lips with frustration he noticed that the vault was similar to that containing the Vatican jewels. He knew only too well that whatever was inside would be as well preserved as it was guarded.

Finally as the door whispered open he walked in. The silence was deafening. His clean shoes made tiny swish noises as he moved but apart from that, all he could hear was his own breathing and rapidly crescendoing pulse.

On a polished steel table in the muted reddish light was an array of scrolls each under a glass panel clearly labelled.

Resisting the impulse to start at the nearest and read them all and conscious that the door had not opened and the guard was still there, he moved carefully until he saw the scroll marked "? Genesis fragments".

He reminded himself to swallow and moisten his lips he peered at the text disappointed that the scroll was one of the worst preserved. He read it and marvelled at how close to conventional thinking it appeared to be. But there was something wrong with the end passage. Mentally noting the rest he peered closer at the symbols around the text. That his head shot up! He stared wide eyed at the guard and shuffled quickly over.

"You! you! what passage are they reading to the public? Tell me!" He stormed.

The guard appeared non-plussed and Alex pushed past him to be met at the changing room door by the young man with a resigned look on his face.

"It's too late isn't it Mr Endovitch? That all happened too long ago, for us to do anything about it now."

"But if people loose faith what is there left?" Alex muttered, tearing at the clean suit and grabbing his clothes.

He felt a gentle weight on his arm. The young man leaned closer and whispered.

"They have not yet seen the truth. The translation was changed before it went out. But others must know." Then in a louder voice "If you have what you need? Then as long as you give us the assurances we require that will be all Mr Endovitch. Safe journey!"

.....and he saw all the world and said "It is good". But on the seventh day, he was rested.....

“THE TRUTH” TAG SCENARIO

PLAYERS

Dimitri Endovitch (armoured but unarmed)
2 Bodyguards (well armed and armoured)

Israeli's
4-8 Troops (armoured and armed)
2-3 MOSAD secret service (armoured and lightly armed)

Arabs
5-10 Civilians (unarmoured but some armed)

UCN
2-4 Troops (armoured and armed)

One of the MOSAD wants the envoy to get away.
The Arabs may interfere if they blame Dimitri for validating the Israeli state. They certainly would delay any Israeli troops and possibly UCN too.

Dimitri must be alive at the end to convey his translation a facsimile is not enough since errors may have been transmitted.

Probably best played on a scorching hot day with little water available to get into the feel of the area. (I've always been one for the method school of tagging)

Have fun!

Dai

CLUB DIRECTORY

BAD COMPANY

BAD COMPANY

Contact: Ian Palmer,
2 Beech Close,
Stokenchurch,
High Wycombe
HP14 3QL
(01494) 483160

BARKING (MAD) WARDOGS



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

BLACK WATCH



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

FIAT LUX



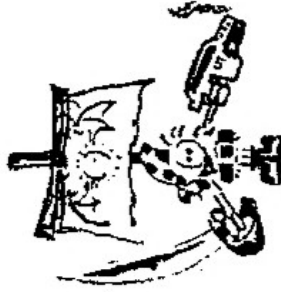
FIAT LUX

Contact: Alex & Sarah Clark,
74, Bluebell Rd.,
Southampton,
SO16 3LQ
(01703) 679758
(0385) 790673

AJC4@SOTON.AC.UK

<http://www.soton.ac.uk/~ajc4/index.html>

FREEBOOTERS

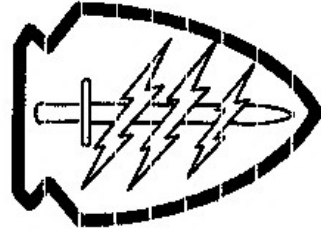


Contact: Peter Sherwood,
129 Paro-y-dre,
Ruthin,
Chwyd.
N. Wales
LL15 1PH
(01824) 704735

LAZERQUAKE

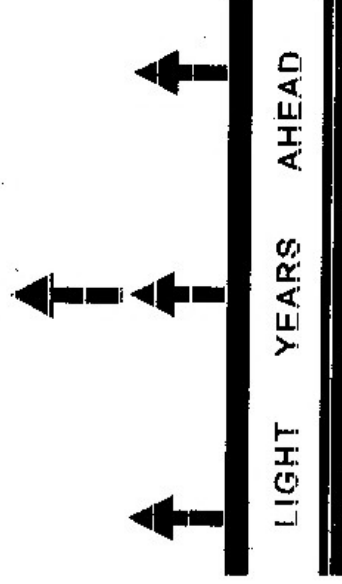
Contact: Paul Simmonds,
7, Preachers Lane,
St. Ebbes,
Oxford.
OX1 1RS
(01865) 728695

LIGHT BRIGADE



Contact: Dai Rees
122, Harland Ave.,
Wyken,
Coventry.
CV2 3ES
(01203) 727105/6
drees42@joyeaux-garde.freemove.co.uk

LIGHT YEARS AHEAD



Contact: Jon Blau,
Lane Cottage,
Whitbread Lane,
Northiam,
East Sussex.
TN31 6QU
(01797) 252537
(0860) 314857

N.O.A.G. 2500



Contact: Pete Webb,
8 Grenadier Walk,
Hardwick,
Cambridge.
CB3 7XW
(01954) 211593

SOUTH LONDON WARLORDS



Contact: Dave Harvey,
7, Nutt Street,
London.
SE15 6LD
(0171) 7018981

SURREY & HANTS OUTDOOR LAZER TAG

Contact: Jim Harvey,
2, Ibotson Court,
Poyle Road,
Slough
SL3 0HP

THIRD AGE ADVENTURES

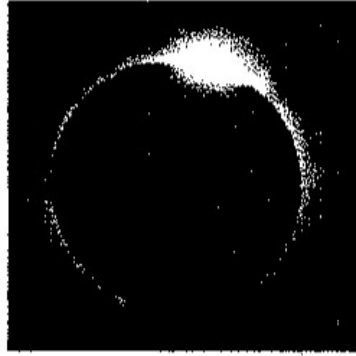


Contact: Andy Gudelaajitis
49, Goldsmith St.
Mansfield,
Nottinghamshire.
NG18 5PF
(01623) 644914
andy@outpost1.demon.co.uk

VIETNAANS

Contact: Dave Bignall
Flat 8, St John's Court,
101, Wentworth Rd.,
Harbourne,
Birmingham.
B17 9ST
(0121) 4262520

VIRTUAL ECLIPSE



Contact: Bill Chivers
5, Stokes Close,
Maidenbower,
Crawley,
West Sussex.
RH10 7LY
(01293) 889642
Bill@Chivcons.demon.co.uk
http://www.chivcons.demon.co.uk/~ve_info.htm

FIGHTING HELMETS (see separate advert.)

Will be included next edition.

**ALL CLUBS WILL BE CONTACTED AND THOSE
NO LONGER FUNCTIONING WILL BE DELETED.**

LAZERTAG EVENTS DIARY MAILING LIST

UPDATE

As you may know, Sarah Clark of Fiat Lux!, as a service to the hobby maintains a diary of upcoming tag events on her website (http://www.btinternet.com/~Sarah.Clark/tag_idx.htm) Until recently she also used to provide a paper version for those who chose to subscribe to it but, due to other commitments, no longer has time to run this mailing service.

If like me, you found the monthly mail shot of the paper version useful, not all of us have net access, this is a bit of a nuisance. After all although the event diaries in COMMAND POST and FIREFIGHT are useful they don't come out often enough to keep you right up to date. With this in mind, I have talked to Sarah and she is happy for me to revive this service. In return for your £4:80 per year (40p per month) you will be sent a copy of the current events listing on or about the 1st of each month.

As before if anyone wants to send anything else out with the monthly mailing such as advertisements or booking forms for their coming games (It pays to advertise) I'm happy to send it out provided you preferably, send me enough copies for everyone on the list or pay for the copies to be done (currently 5p per A4 side).

If you want to subscribe please send a cheque for £4:80 made payable to David A Harvey to 7 Nutt Street, London SE15 6LD complete with a legible copy of your name and address.

As a possibly easier alternative I have also arranged with Dai Rees for the events list subscription to be available as an optional extra when subscribing to FIREFIGHT. You get the same service but one less cheque to write and letter to send. Cheers Dai

I hope this is of use and interest. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

David A Harvey
(South London Warlords)

SPARTAN DESIGNWORKS

SPECIFICATIONS

ROF- Fully automatic. 50mm lens system, with SFH-484-2 emitter. Hyperbright muzzle flash in a choice of colours (red, amber, green or blue). Machine gun sound effect. Built in carry handle w/fitted sight rail. Working pump action grenade launcher. 75 rnd ammo counter w/double digit display. Adjustable stock. Fitted 1.8 aH rechargeable pack w/charging point. Aluminium construction.

PULSE RIFLE

Pulse Rifle

£170

MORITA STARSHIP TROOPERS RIFLE

SPECIFICATIONS

ROF- Fully automatic. 40mm lens system, with SFH-484-2 emitter. Hyperbright muzzle flash in a choice of colours (red, amber, green or blue). Machine gun sound effect. Built in carry handle w/fitted sight rail. Working pump action blaster. 75 rnd ammo counter. Aluminium construction. 1.8 aH rechargeable pack.

Morita Rifle

£150

MORITA (CARBINE)

SPECIFICATIONS

ROF- Fully automatic. 40mm lens system, with SFH-484-2 emitter. Hyperbright muzzle flash in a choice of colours (red, amber, green or blue). Machine gun sound effect. Built in carry handle w/fitted sight rail. 75 rnd ammo counter. Aluminium construction. 1.8 aH rechargeable pack.

Morita Carbine

£125

SPARTAN SAR

SPECIFICATIONS

ROF- Fully automatic. 50mm lens system, with SFH-484-2 emitter. Hyperbright muzzle flash in a choice of colours (red, amber, green or blue). Machine gun sound effect. Built in carry handle. Fitted sight rail. Aluminium construction. Can be fitted with a Smartgun board.

Basic Gun with our own circuit

Basic Gun with Smartgun(tm)

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

1.2 aH rechargeable pack (fitted)

1.8 aH rechargeable pack (fitted)

Red Dot sight (fitted and sighted)

£90

£105

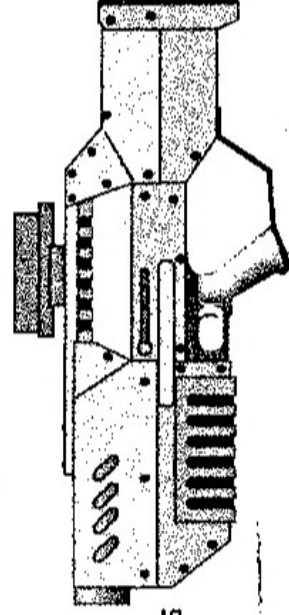
£15

£20

£20

(already included on some guns)

(available for any of the guns)



Notes- The circuit supplied with the SAR, Morita and Carbine model has a built in ammunition counter that can be set from 1-99 rounds at the time of purchase only. It has a single LED to indicate ammunition status (lit for ammo remaining, flashing for clip empty).

Please Contact Philip Higgins, 18 Althorp Road,
St. James, Northampton. NN55EF.

Email - col.priest@bigfoot.com

To see pictures of our gear please visit

<http://www.uscblackwatch.freemove.co.uk/>