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# INTERPLAY™

the metagamer dialogues no. 3



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september...october

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John Sullivan: 12

Richard Becker's fine cover goes well with Howard's UNICORN GOLD design notes in this issue.

Part 2 of the STALIN'S TANKS design notes are included, as well as a background study of the AIR-EATER aliens by Keith Gross.

Hopkins' Dragon piece and Sullivan's Vampyre article should both provide rich dimensions to TFT campaigns. Ron's TFT Q&A column starts in this issue.

We have a great deal of errata this issue, much of it first-hand, which should bring everyone up to date. Also, there is a new TFT contest announcement.

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## editorial...

I've gotten several requests for an INTERPLAY stylesheet.

Well, we don't have one. I had thought that, with our loose format, it wouldn't really be necessary.

I was wrong. We don't want anyone to refrain from submitting simply because they are unsure of the proper style to use, so here goes...

We've been sent an abundance of submissions. Most are good and most are neatly presented. Be neat. A well-organized, clean manuscript will always get published before a sloppy one of equally worthy content.

### STYLE SUGGESTIONS FOR COPY:

Copy is almost always preferred typed and double-spaced.

Remember that we print your work as you send it, so you may wish to go over your piece and edit for corrections.

A good average length is 2,000 words. Make it longer or shorter, as you see fit.

We will give you merchandise credit for your work. The system we use now works out to over one cent per word.

### STYLE SUGGESTIONS FOR ART:

Black and white line drawings are preferred. I will accept continuous tone (with grey shading) art for the cover. Send originals.

Artists receive credit based on the size of the printed art. The base rate is \$10 for a page, thus a piece printed in the space of one quarter of a page will earn \$2.50.

Cover art earns \$40 cash.

**TOPIC SUGGESTIONS:** For art it's easy: fantasy or science fiction - or history dealt with in any of our present or future games.

Art featuring a special tie-in with our games, especially recent releases, is always welcome.

Copy must deal with Metagaming products or with gaming in general.

The most obvious approaches are game variants, scenarios and discussions. Don't be afraid to criticize, but please offer suggestions and solutions when you do.

I will only print fiction if it's very good (in my opinion).

In any case, as usual, all submissions become the copyrighted property of INTERPLAY.

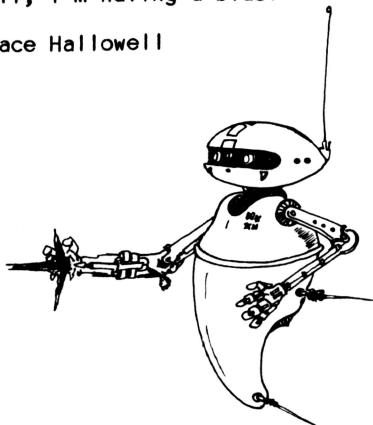
As I have said before, no one will get rich with INTERPLAY, moneywise. We are all doing this for the fun of it, to share ideas and enhance our gaming.

By far, the greater portion of what we receive is TFT material - thus TFT occupies most of our pages.

We will, however, always run history and science fiction pieces in every issue. What we publish is by what you tell us and by what you send us to print.

All the direct feedback I've gotten in letters and conversations indicates that the readers are really enjoying INTERPLAY. That's great. For myself, I'm having a blast.

Trace Hallowell



# coming distractions...

Of course, everyone knows about the UNICORN GOLD treasure hunt game. I'll also mention that we got very strong positive reaction to HELLTANK at the conventions this summer. People are looking forward to again having big mean tanks to smash the little stuff. HELLTANK is the start of a new SUPERTANK series from Metagaming. It's more sophisticated and mildly more complex than Microgame #1. The HELLTANKS do get more nasty as the series progresses.

The Micros after UNICORN will be MASTER OF THE AMULETS, a new TFT Microquest and TRAILBLAZER, a space economic development and exploration game. TRAILBLAZER will be a loooong Micro in that play can extend over many days. The game's 'gimmick' is a realistic buy/sell bid process to ration available goods. This game should be loved by Libertarians and those who like to work through a realistic financial and economic challenge. Who really IS the richest man in the universe? As an old Scrooge McDuck fan I just couldn't resist buying the game.

MASTER OF THE AMULETS features a new monster and a new challenge for the growing legion of Microquesters. Seems this wizard of old really whumped up some fine amulets but got spanked bad by the guild for his trouble. The Amulet of all amulets is gone, but the others are still lying around his lost(no less) valley. There are some gates and other surprises.

The production schedule after that may get juggled a bit depending on which batch of items gets ready first. FIRE WHEN READY is an early 1900s ship combat game simpler than COMMAND AT SEA. It will go in Micro format. Also available will be a stand alone fantasy Microgame, DRAGONSLAYER from the designer of LORDS OF UNDEREARTH. Also on the list are two TFT modules for the new Metasize boxes. One is a western TFT adaption, the rules do differ

somewhat, tentatively titled HIGH NOON. (Tentatively means our lawyers are checking it out.) The other is an adaption for superhero type play called, IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE. Also on the list are two TFT campaign modules for 8 1/2 x 11 booklet format.

The amount of TFT material in evaluation is sufficient to assure a steady flow of items in 1982. The lack of campaign modules will not be a problem within another nine to twelve months. TFT is gaining ground rapidly around the country with the only hold up being the lack of modules.

We've previously mentioned THE FANTASY MASTERS GUILD, a national club for TFT game masters that Metagaming is sponsoring. Fantasy Master being the designation for a TFT game master. TFT warrants a unique designation for TFT game masters. The Guild is only for Fantasy Masters, not for players. It will provide many services including communications, the development of TFT, convention events and other items.

The Fantasy Masters Guild is a reflection of Metagaming's development philosophy for TFT. We aren't going to sit in Austin like gods on high telling the world what TFT should be off the tops of our heads. There are thousands of people running TFT campaigns. Their play experience far surpasses anything we could try to match with staff. It makes more sense to gather ideas from TFT Fantasy Masters. We'll bounce rules ideas off you and let the evolution of the system draw upon Fantasy Master experience as well as our own design strengths.

If you run a TFT campaign and are interested then send \$1 for the first Guild newsletter to:

Fantasy Masters Guild  
Box 15346  
Austin, TX 78761

Good Gaming,  
Howard Thompson

# contest...

5

## FANTASY TRIP CONTEST

**INTERPLAY:** The Metagamer dialogues will run a TFT contest in each issue. There can be more than one winner depending on the number of good submissions we get. Prizes will be \$5 and \$10 product certificates redeemable by mail from Metagaming.

### FANTASY TRIP CONTEST CATEGORIES

1. **Creatures/Races:** This will be a new breed you create and name. Include all attributes, hit damage, size, weapon(s) (if any), habits, number in groups, quirks and such.

If it is an intelligent or semi-intelligent race then you should go into far more detail about the type of terrain they prefer, social activities, some natural Talents (never more than three low level Talents), and skills they may have or need to survive in the background you prepare.

TFT Creatures/Races are meant to be more fleshed out and detailed than other Fantasy systems. We feel it makes better play to have fewer, well thought out creatures than number collections with names.

2. **Encounters:** This would be a brief description of a small TFT encounter. It might include a very small labyrinth, a tower, building or outdoor area. This is the type of thing other Fantasy Masters can use in their campaign.

Describe any creatures/races and their equipment. Give a hex map of the area. Describe any traps or special items. Give a brief background of why this situation exists and what the creatures are trying to do or prevent.

3. **Spells/Talents:** These need to specify I.Q., ST powering costs, necessary prior Spells or Talents. You should also consider how difficult it might be to acquire them, who could teach it and how far characters might have to go to find that person.

We'll start the contest with these three categories. If you think of others that don't fit then send us the sample and suggest a possible new category. All entries become the property of Metagaming and can not be returned. Send entries to:

FANTASY TRIP CONTEST  
INTERPLAY  
Box 15346  
Austin, TX 78761

## I LIKE FANTASY TRIP BECAUSE

This contest is very simple. There will be one prize awarded each issue in the form of a \$10 product certificate redeemable by mail from Metagaming. All entries become the property of Metagaming and can't be returned. Metagaming may use some winners in TFT advertisements to be placed.

**Rules:** In twenty-five words or less describe why you like TFT better than any other Fantasy role-playing system. You may submit as many entries as you like and you might win in more than one issue.



# features:

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## designer's notes...



Treasure of  
**UnicornGold™**

By Howard Thompson

TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD is a sequel to TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON. UNICORN is the second of a planned treasure hunt trilogy. The third hunt will come after the UNICORN has been found.

There are many reasons for the treasure hunt project. An obvious reason is promotion of THE FANTASY TRIP game system. Players need MELEE and WIZARD to play UNICORN and SILVER DRAGON. They can use SILVER DRAGON as background for UNICORN. IN THE LABYRINTH can also provide insight to the system.

THE FANTASY TRIP appeals to gamers who want a rational, coherent framework for their role-playing. The treasure hunts are a way of getting people to try a system they will probably like. TFT gets more fugitives from the best selling system than any other fantasy game. A treasure hunt gets your attention. Gamers are given a clear reason to buy and play TFT as opposed to other role-playing game systems. We want you to play TFT to see its strong points. The treasure hunt gives you reason to buy and play.

Another, less obvious, reason for the hunts is to place more emphasis on the gamer and playing the games. Metagaming's approach has long been to emphasize the gamer and game playing. We put up

good cash prizes for tournaments at larger conventions. We paid out \$10,000 to a gamer for SILVER DRAGON. Money for gamers is a good way of focusing attention on the play of games as opposed to the design, production and marketing of games. After all, you pay the bills for all of Adventure Gaming, why shouldn't you get something special too?

This is direct recognition of gamers playing games. Some conventions don't allow cash prize tournaments. We feel this reduces a game convention to the lowest common commercial level. Treasure hunts are our way of saying commercialism can be more than just taking money for a product.

A third reason is that I like to travel. A treasure hunt lets me rove about the country looking for sites. I love to drive and see the land. This way I get to write it off for taxes. I've been in twenty states on this project. Mountains, islands, cities, plains, forests, coasts and lakes pass by mile after mile. I even get to stop at anything of interest just to ponder its hunt potential. For one who loves the land you can't match morning at 9,000 feet on Sacramento Peak pacing off landmarks.

I'm a country boy at heart. Cities, even small ones like

Austin, make me uncomfortable. I'd rather see some trees and water, or even scruffy west Texas, than see more buildings and crowds. The treasure hunts mean I HAVE to go out and see the outdoors.

A lot of the fun of the treasure hunts is the people. You have to laugh at a guy who won't spring \$4 for a \$10,000 treasure hunt game while lugging around \$200 worth of (mostly confusing) fantasy games. Why someone would gripe about a \$4 buy in that situation is beyond me.

You have to be amazed at guys who want a guarantee that the Unicorn will be hidden close to their house so it won't be too much trouble. Come on guys! It has to be obvious that only one person will find it. That means that the enjoyment is mostly in the looking, not the finding. If you only want the free and easy things of life you can stand there in the crowd of others fighting for it. Many of the finer things require effort to obtain.

What I tell this group is true. If you really think you know where the Unicorn is, even 1,500 miles away, you're going to figure out some way of doing something about it. Even if that means finding a friend near the location and having them check it out for you. No one has yet disagreed with this approach, even if they seem dubious about any friend they could trust in such a situation.

Most gamers take the hunt for what it is, something fun that just might turn out. You should be able to get something out of it aside from finding it or not. If you can't then that \$4 is going to eat at you more than any other buy you've made in gaming.

The best story was the young man who talked to me at Gencon. Seems his father works at the Solar Observatory at Sunspot. He had TREASURE OF THE SILVER DRAGON. He never recognized the vacuum tower for what it was. He played the game and tried to figure out the clues. But, his mind set was such that he couldn't recognize the familiar for what it was. The Dragon was two miles down the road. Maybe he didn't find it, true. But, he has an experience

that will mean something to the way he views life 'til the day he dies.

Perhaps he got far more than \$10,000 out of it if he looks at it right. I'm sure there are others who looked also who have sharp memories that will be part of their life. Those are valuable beyond money.

I wish I could be that age again and have the thrill of knowing that every morning I'd gotten up and taken a key clue for granted. It's the kind of thing that would have taught me far earlier to pay attention to the now that goes on around us every day. All that for \$4.

SILVER DRAGON provided insight on gamers. People tell me their pet theories by the bushel. Many ideas were seemingly not even related to the material of the game. Some thoughts were, to me, far out twists of logic. No doubt many found my logic the same.

The most common type of concept was one that related three or four potentially significant clues into a logical construct. What seekers were doing was taking elements from the game they thought they recognized and assuming that those were the important clues. If they thought they recognized it then it must be important.

Most of the time their concept was easily refutable if they'd only taken the time to become more familiar with TFT as a system. The pet concept simply wouldn't fit with the system on very straight forward logic.

Of course, I didn't point out such obvious oversights. Everyone is free to follow their own logic. The wrong data can even sometimes lead to the right answer.

My talk with Thomas Davidson was a bit of a surprise. He'd figured out enough clues to find the DRAGON. But, some important clues were figured wrong or not figured out at all. Of course, our discussion may not have covered all the possibilities. But, it went far enough for me to know that even Thomas is still in the dark about some SILVER DRAGON clues.





### STORY BACKGROUND

The treasure hunts tell a story. Etherion 'stole' something of great value to the Toltec Brujos. Something that threatens their whole power system. The Toltec culture is brutal. Individuals outside the power structure are without mental or physical freedom. Anything that can shake the Toltec hold on their masses is abomination to be attacked.

The Brujo attack on Etherion in the Dragonodon universe was almost a failure. Etherion deflected the magical attack of death to a non-death stasis. The Brujos did not know that Etherion selected the bottom focus of the solar vacuum tower in our universe as the site of his defense. This other dimensional energy focus let Etherion convert the Brujo attack to stasis and open a dimensional gate for Nalzec Huante's escape.

Etherion was well aware of the solar energy element to psyenergy. The vacuum tower in our universe creates a dimensional stress point. It provided the means to save Etherion and gave him energy to psionically communicate.

Nalzec was Etherion's method for placing the treasure in our universe, beyond the Brujo's recovery. The Brujo's only speculate about alternate universes, Etherion knows. Nalzec died because of the different energy physics of his body. His death was unintended but in a good cause. We should all die so well.

The burden of the secret and man's hope now rests with Xenon and Miri. Miri and her sisters had been seeking unicorns, not knowing that Etherion's summons guided them. Miri found hers and was the catalyst in Xenon's metamorphosis. The question of butterflies and how Xenon and Miri will keep and foster Etherion's 'secret' will be unfolded in stories and the third treasure hunt.

The Seekers have sprung up about the legend and myth of Etherion. They are dedicated to helping him and furthering the use of the secret. Note in the two hunts the Seeker's way of meeting the world and how they seem to act

with purpose. In a way everyone who looks for the Unicorn is a Seeker in his own right. You are a Seeker and the meaning is both apparant and transparant.

The Toltec's are desparately upset by this series of events. Yaoyotl, one of their powerful Brujo/wizards, has gone to find Xenon and Miri. He's also trying to disrupt the spread of Seekers and other ripple effects of Etherion's actions.

SILVER DRAGON was a harder treasure hunt to do than UNICORN. The first time around it was difficult to know how hard to make clues. I did want the Dragon to be found. The difficulty level is hard to gauge when thousands of different people with different thought processes and intuitions will be pondering every word you wrote and the meaning of each and every nuance.

UNICORN is a harder treasure hunt than DRAGON. I know from last time that many of you will go off half cocked. The dragon was found rapidly and you've got a hunch. Many will be disappointed. The seeker who finds the unicorn will be lucky or the seeker who finds answers no immediately apparant.

The difference between DRAGON and UNICORN is subtle. One gave the opportunity to recognize single, specific clues. The other requires a more holistic approach. One had a single unifying theme. The other is a whole of parts.

In writing articles and talking to people I'm as careful as possible to avoid giving any additional information or clues. Anything I say can give someone insight to my way of thinking. Anyone can read something into what I don't say.

Perhaps treasure hunts were the wrong vehicle to promote TFT. But, when you're going to spend money you want to hook it to something sure. Greed seemed a safe hook. If I had it to do over again perhaps I'd just hide more things of nominal value. That way the only people who'd look would be those who wanted to for the fun. For sure Thomas wasn't in it for just the money. Maybe those who are

less concerned with the money will actually have a better chance of finding the Unicorn.

As designer I encourage you to seek. However, if you can't take seeking itself as a rewarding activity solely on its own merit be warned. If you only have a few clues that seem to give an answer you may come up dry. If you're going to get mad if you don't find it then be very sure of your thinking. Seeking can be fun without finding.

Write to us at INTERPLAY and share your seeking. We will print letters and articles about the Unicorn hunt. If there is enough volume we may even start a separate 'Seekers' column. At worst people can share locations of where it wasn't found.

I wish you all luck. May your logic be correct and your hunches good ones.



## Treasure of UnicornGold™

COMING SOON

## HELLTANK™

THE \$10,000 QUEST CONTINUES.....

Etherion, the great silver Dragonodon, is frozen in stasis under Sacramento Peak--victim of the Toltec Brujos. Yet, man's hope lives through Miri the True and Golden Xenon. Can your band of hearty heroes help them before cruel Yaoyotl strikes? Can YOU find the secret **TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD**?

A unicorn is hidden somewhere in the United States. The clues to its location are in **TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD**, a fan-tasy role-playing adventure game. The person who finds the unicorn gets **\$10,000** from Metagaming. This is a real treasure hunt--you may be the gamer who deciphers the clues, finds the unicorn, and finds the **\$10,000** treasure!

**TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD** is the second game in a trilogy of treasure hunt games published by Metagaming. Last year, Thomas Davidson found the hidden sterling silver dragon near Sunspot, New Mexico and won **\$10,000**.

**TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD** is a programmed fantasy adventure game suitable for solitaire or group play for gamers ages 12 and up. Retailing for \$3.95, it is part of a complete fantasy role-playing system called **THE FANTASY TRIP**, published by Metagaming in several game modules that can be combined for increasingly complex play.

To play **TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD**, you will need **THE FANTASY TRIP** MicroGames **MELEE** and **WIZARD** for combat and magic rules.

For retailers and distributors Cozumel to the retailer who sells **TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD** to the treasure-finder. The distributor who supplies the retailer will win a similar trip.

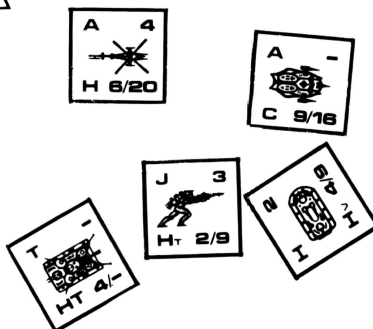
At your local gaming outlet August 20th.

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MORE FEARED THAN DRAGONS OR OGRES...

The nearby grumble and clank surges rank fear in your veins. Crouched low you wait. Dragons or Ogres of old might at least be fought. HELLTANKS are certain death. Closer, closer it comes. You wait and pray it strikes right or left, anywhere but here.

HELLTANK is a game of tactical armored conflict in the 21st century. Each counter is a single vehicle or small unit. Included are the U.S. Klane class MBT-11, light cav. Raiders, Japanese IFV infantry carriers, Israeli Missile Launchers, Recon:Hovers, Brazilian tri-turret MTTs, Jet-pack Hawk Teams, Air Cruisers and the first Ft. Ticonderoga class heavy launch vehicle, HELLTANK. Versatile rules portray future combat in a playable, yet realistic manner, covering move-ment, firing, opportunity fire, missiles, air defense platforms and the special unit rules.

Included are rules, 12x14 play map, 126 unit counters and die.

# unofficial tft variant...

## A DRAGON OF A DIFFERENT COLOR

Ron Hopkins

Aside from demons, dragons are probably the most respected and feared inhabitants of Cidri. Highly intelligent, egotistical, and incredibly strong, dragons are formidable opponents and even more dangerous allies. No other life form comes close to matching the power and grandeur of a dragon.

IN THE LABYRINTH specifies five different sizes for dragons, ranging from the relatively puny 1-hex all the way up to the awesome 14-hex monster. I like to view these differences in size as being mainly a function of age and maturity. The newly-hatched dragon is only 1-hex in size, while the young to adolescent aged creature would range from 2 to 4 hexes. The 7-hex dragon represents the fully mature adult. Only a few dragons possessing preternatural cunning, guile, and strength would survive to become the 14-hex leviathans.

However, the rules say nothing about different characteristics among dragons of similar size and age. It seems logical that, as there are many subgroups of humanoids (dwarf, elf, human, etc.), a similar situation should exist among dragons. I have devised a set of rules under which differently-colored dragons would have somewhat different powers and capabilities. Unless otherwise stated, all TFT rules governing dragons apply.

**GREEN DRAGON** - This is the typical, garden-variety dragon, with no special abilities or powers. By far the most common type found in Cidri.

**SCARLET DRAGON** - This rather fearsome creature expends no ST when breathing fire. A scarlet dragon will both breathe fire and claw at his opponent each melee turn.

**IRON DRAGON** - This dragon has incredibly thick, metallic-like scales, which give him double the normal armor protection for a dragon of similar size. A 7-hex iron dragon would absorb 10 hits before taking any damage.

**GRAY DRAGON** - Somewhat similar to trolls, gray dragons have the ability to regenerate one hit of fatigue or wounds each turn. Damage inflicted by fire is permanent, and these creatures can only be permanently killed by burning their bodies.

**ORANGE DRAGON** - These creatures do an extra 1d+1 damage when breathing fire. Thus, a 4-hex orange dragon would inflict 3d+1 hits when breathing fire.

**YELLOW DRAGON** - Yellow dragons inflict an extra 1d+1 damage when attacking with their claws. A 4-hex yellow dragon does 3d-1 hits when clawing an opponent.

**PURPLE DRAGON** - This extremely dangerous beast does not breathe fire, like most other dragons. Instead, purple dragons have the ability to breathe either poison gas, sleep gas, or fear gas at their enemies. Anyone breathed upon gets a 4 dice vs. dexterity roll to avoid breathing the gasses. Treat the effects of a purple dragon's breath exactly like a poison, sleep, or fear gas bomb, except that only the target figure is affected. The # of dice damage inflicted by the poison gas is the same as is normally done by a dragon of similar size when breathing fire. Thus, a 7-hex purple dragon does 4d damage when breathing poison gas. Regardless of the type of gas breathed, a purple dragon pays the same ST cost as an ordinary dragon does when breathing fire.



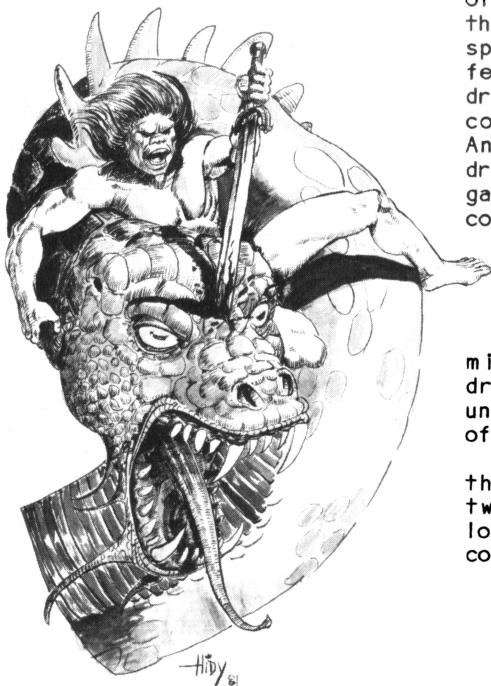
**ICE DRAGON** - Unlike most other dragons, this creature breathes a blast of cold air, instead of fire. Anyone taking 10 hits or more in one turn from an ice dragon's breath (before armor protection) is considered to be frozen solid and cannot move, cast spells, or undertake any other action until thawed out. A 1-hex fire would take about five minutes.

**SILVER DRAGON** - As described in *Treasure of the Silver Dragon*, these creatures are not true dragons but are descendants of prehistoric pteranodons. As a result, they have somewhat different basic attributes than other dragons (see table). Because of their ability to convert solar energy into metabolic energy, silver dragons spend less strength to breathe fire and have a greater movement allowance than other dragons. Silver dragons must be at least 4-hexes in size to fly and 2-hexes to breathe fire, since a minimum surface area is required to gather enough solar energy to support these activities. These creatures also

have limited psionic abilities, such as selective projection. Depending on the game-universe, fantasy masters may wish to give them further powers, such as telekinesis and clairvoyance.

**GOLD DRAGON** - A gold dragon can cast spells, exactly like a wizard. A 4-hex gold dragon would be capable of learning and casting any spell of IQ 16 or less. When determining the characteristics of a gold dragon, the fantasy master should specify which spells the dragon knows.

**PRISMATIC DRAGON** - The rarest and most powerful of all dragons, this creature changes its color every turn. The powers and abilities of a prismatic dragon are determined by its current color. While this dragon must change its color each turn, it is free to choose which color it will change to. Example: In three turns, a prismatic dragon changed from gold to gray to green. On the first turn, the dragon could cast spells, like a gold dragon. On the second turn, the dragon would regain one point of either fatigue or wounds. On the third turn, the dragon had no special abilities. It is perfectly legal for a prismatic dragon to oscillate between two colors, such as gold and iron. Any spells cast while in gold dragon form can be renewed, regardless of the dragon's current color.



Fantasy masters should keep in mind that gold and prismatic dragons are extremely rare and unlikely to be encountered very often.

Whenever a wizard casts one of the Summon Dragon spells, roll two dice and consult the following table to determine what color dragon will appear.

2 - Purple  
3 - Scarlet  
4 - Gray  
5 - Orange  
6 - Green

7 - Green  
8 - Green  
9 - Yellow  
10 - Scarlet  
11 - Iron  
12 - Ice

SIZE	ST	DX	IQ	MA	ARMOR	CLAW	BREATH	ST COST
1-hex	10	11	11	8/-	1	1d	----	----
2-hex	13	11	13	8/-	2	1d+2	1d+1	1 ST
4-hex	25	12	18	8/24	3	2d+1	2d	2 ST
7-hex	50	13	22	10/34	4	3d	3d-1	3 ST
14-hex	83	13	27	10/36	5	3d+2	3d+1	3 ST

# unofficial tft variant...

## THE VAMPYRE

by John Sullivan

This article proposes an elaboration of the rules governing vampires. The present TFT rules for vampires are pretty lackluster and don't make vampires out to be as powerful as legend and folklore described them. The only benefit they receive is the ability to fly at no ST cost. This is more than counterbalanced by their aversion to daylight and need to drink blood. No mention is made of their ability to change form or control weaker-willed beings. This article does an excellent job of making vampires into much more intriguing monsters and raises the possibility of vampires as player-characters.

The author has definitely done his homework concerning the classical vampirish capabilities.

Overall, THE VAMPYRE is excellent TFT material. It doesn't conflict with the rules or unbalance the game and can easily be fitted into an existing campaign.

R.H.



SULLIVAN/-

Nosferatu. Vyrkolakas. Mara. By these names and others are they known and feared; the Undead. The Vampyre. Beings of legend and myth, creatures of the night with awesome powers at their command. In THE FANTASY TRIP, IN THE LABYRINTH, it is no different.

Played properly, a Vampyre can add even more challenge and excitement as a Game Master entity. The Strength of a Vampyre is between 20 and 30. They do double the damage listed for their Strength, and if they chose to, they may attack once per turn with each hand at a -3 Dexterity.

Their Intelligence is between 16 and 18; their Dexterity is very high, 18. Their Movement Allowance depends on the form they are in. When in Human form, they move at 12, on Wolf form, they move to 14. While in Bat form, they fly at 16 (In this form they are far bigger than regular Vampire Bats) and while in Mist form, their MA is 6.

Although they could conceivably wear armor, they tend not to, feeling in their arrogance to be above such measures.

A Vampyre may attack any number of ways. They may choose to use their great strength in hand-to-hand, or simply striking at their targets. Or they may bite their victim, or change their shape. They may try to Control another, or summon other creatures in their command, or even alter the Weather. But they may only do one of these per turn. Except they may strike with both hands as above.

The bite of a Vampyre drains the victim of 4 Strength points. If the Vampyre has sustained any damage (with the exception of damage from the spells FIRE, FIREBALL, LIGHTNING, WIZARD'S WRATH and CLEANSING) they immediately Regenerate 4 Strength points. A Vampyre can not become stronger from biting, than their beginning Strength.

A Vampyre is not affected by normal weapons. Silver and Magic weapons do full damage, and edged wood weapons harm them if they hit effectively. To effectively harm a Vampyre with a wood weapon, the attacker rolls with a -10 on Dexterity (because they are targeting the weapon at the Vampyre's heart). If the weapon hits, it does triple damage. Consider an edged wood weapon like a Dagger in terms of damage. An arrow can be targeted this way as well. If the roll was unsuccessful, the Vampyre is unaffected by the attack.

Missile Spells effect a Vampyre, although from biting, they can Regenerate from MAGIC FIST. Dragon's Breath also effects them, as well as any of the FIRE Spells and the CLEANSING Spell. Vampyres do Regenerate

this damage as well, but at a rate of 1 Strength point for every hour they spend resting peacefully in their native soil or coffin.

A Vampyre may alter form, taking one turn to do so. They keep their Strength, Intelligence and Dexterity they had at the time they changed, only the means and mode of transportation is really affected. Although they cannot use any of their Special abilities such as Charm, Weather Control, striking with the hands, their bite does double the normal amount of damage that type of creature would do. For example, 2 + 2 for a Vampyre in Wolf form. In Bat form, their bite can still drain Strength. In Mist form, they cannot attack, or be attacked.

Commanding other creatures is also an ability of a Vampyre. They may command a certain total of other creatures, but only one specific type at a time (with the exception of any other Vampyres in their control). For every Strength point the Vampyre has, they may summon and command that many rats. For every 2 Strength points the Vampyre has, they may summon and command one Vampire Bat, and for every 5 Strength points they have, one Wolf. These creatures are as per IN THE LABYRINTH.

For every 10 Strength points a Vampyre has, they may make and control one other, weaker Vampyre, who will serve them. At any point when the weaker Vampyre gains Strength equal to their Master, they may challenge the other Vampyre to combat. Usually however, a Host Vampyre is clever enough not to let their minions get too strong.

A Vampyre may command the very Weather itself. It costs the Vampyre in Strength points, they are used and regained just like Strength lost due to spells. It takes one turn to Summon or Change the Weather. The area effected, is a megamegahex, plus an additional ring of megahexes around the Vampyre doing the controlling.

**FOG:** All figures are -4 DX in this Fog. Beings with MAGE SIGHT, as well as other Vampyres can see clearly. Costs the Vampyre 5 ST for 12 turns.

**WIND:** All figures are at a -2 DX, creatures with a basic ST less than 9 are knocked down. Costs 3 ST for every 12 turns. Disperses FOG.

**RAIN:** All figures are at a -3 DX. Every 4 turns, all other 1 hex figures must make a 3 dice roll against DX to avoid falling down. Every 6 turns, any 2-4 hex creature must roll 3 dice to avoid falling. Costs 4 ST for every 12 turns. Disperses FIRE and FOG.

**STORM:** All figures are at a -3 DX, there is both WIND and RAIN. The Vampyre can summon down LIGHTNING BOLTS from the sky, any turn after the first of the STORM, doing 4 dice damage. The Vampyre rolls against their DX to hit with the Lightning. Costs 6 ST for each 12 turns, and 4 ST for each LIGHTNING BOLT.

Vampyres can also attempt to Charm or Control one figure, as a CONTROL PERSON Spell. The target must roll their Intelligence or under on four dice to resist. There is no duration on this spell, and it costs 4 ST regardless if it works or not. Each 12 turns, the victim gets an additional IQ roll, with a cumulative -1 subtracted from their dice roll.

The Victims of a Vampyre are affected as follows. Every and any time a Victim is bitten, they lose 4 Strength points, immediately. For every day of rest the Victim gets, they regain 1 Strength point. If a Vampyre bites a single character twice, in addition to the ST loss, the Vampyre can try to assume a Charm on them, whenever they are within a range of 3 megahexes. This does not cost the Vampyre any ST to try. This effect lasts for one week, or unless the Victim gets a CLEANSING Spell cast on them. The Victim gets one four dice IQ roll to resist the Charm attempt.

In order for a Victim or character to become a Vampyre, they must have been bitten at least three times. If they die at



any time from a Vampyre's bite, they may rise as a Vampyre three nights later, if the Vampyre wills it. Roll three dice against the Vampyre's IQ. A successful roll means that the biting or Host Vampyre has their way. But if the Victim does not die from a third or later bite, and the Vampyre is driven off, the next time that character is killed, they will rise three nights later as a Vampire. Their ST, IQ, and DX remain the same, but they are under the command of the host Vampyre. A CLEANSING Spell will assure that the character will not rise as a Vampyre, and if the Host Vampyre is slain before the three days are up, the Victim gets a 2 dice roll against their beginning ST, not to rise.

During the day, a Vampyre does not have any of their powers. If they have been a Vampyre for at least three weeks, sunlight will not destroy them. All Vampyres are -4 DX during the day. At that time, they can be harmed and/or killed by normal weapons.

A Vampyre will retreat from a character with the Talent PRIEST, as if they were affected by a MEGAHEX AVERT Spell. A character with the Talent HIGH PRIEST can drive them away. This takes one turn, and the character with the Talent must roll 3 dice against their Intelligence. If the roll succeeds, the Vampyre must flee back to their native soil/coffin and rest for the duration of the night.

A Vampyre is considered to have EYES BEHIND like the spell at all times during the hours of darkness. A Vampyre will know IMAGES and ILLUSIONS for what they are, and cannot be affected by them. They can also see creatures which are INVISIBLE, and their attack against them is only at a -3 DX. They are not hampered by DARKNESS or SHADOW at all, although they are at a -2 if within the area of effect of a LIGHT Spell.

If lowered to 1 or 0 ST during the day, they can be permanently killed by driving a wooden stake through their heart, decapitating them, and burning the remains. A stake through the heart serves to suspend their life forces. If the stake is removed, they Regenerate 1 ST per turn up to a ST of 4. At that point, they must feed on blood to restore the remainder of their Strength.

If lowered to 1 ST during the night, they turn to Mist, and must return to their native soil/coffin to Regenerate their Strength for three days. If their ST is lowered to 0 or beyond, they assume human form and are considered to be unconscious, and may be killed by the above method, or by FIREBALL, LIGHTNING BOLT, WIZARD'S WRATH, FIRE or Dragon's Breath.

Vampyres are long lived, and tend to be clever. The older ones are most dangerous, and will not enter into a conflict without first attempting to remove any obvious threats to their existence, such as Wizards. They may choose not to attack all, trying rather to lull the party into a false sense of security, and taking them one at a time. They can go a long time without blood, but after three nights, they lose all of their powers, until they feed. Upon feeding, their powers are restored to them in full, the next turn. They can feed off of any warm blooded creature. They can oftentimes do feed upon animals, but prefer the prey of man; man being delicacy over a mundane, dumb animal. Vampyres savor the fear, as well as the blood of humanoid victims.

Should a player character become a Vampyre, and remain in play, it takes that character 5 times as much experience to gain additional attribute points, keeping in mind, the Host Vampyre will be watching carefully for any sign of betrayal. Vampyres do not tend to trust one another, keeping mostly to themselves, and to the shadows.

## tft: questions & answers...

by Ron Hopkins

**Q.** There are many advantages to great strength (like leather not affecting DX or MA if you're ST18). Why aren't there special advantages for great dexterity or intelligence (like having to roll four dice to hit someone with adj. DX of 18, because of his natural quickness, and not because he spent eleven IQ points on unarmed combat)?

-Anthony Affrunti

**A.** High DX and IQ have their own rewards - especially when using aimed shots and dagger marksmanship rules. However, it doesn't seem unreasonable that a character of very high DX should be somewhat harder to hit and have a greater movement allowance. Four dice to hit seems excessive, though. This would be a good subject for an INTERPLAY article.

**Q.** In INTERPLAY #1 on the article concerning special created gems, can a gem be made of an indefinitely lasting three-hex wall which is an illusion?

-Anthony Affrunti

**A.** Yes, but the illusion wall would last only until either disbelieved, hit with a Dispel Illusion spell, or takes five hits from lightning.

# background...

## AIR - EATERS

THE ALIENS  
by Keith Gross

INVASION OF THE AIR-EATERS has a title and cover that recall the (!) bug-eyed-monsters-from-outer-space flicks of the '50s. Despite this, however, the game is intended as "real" science fiction, not science fantasy. Intelligent life probably does exist elsewhere in the galaxy, and some of these civilizations might well have star travel and other advanced technology, and some of them might want our planet, and one of them could invade the Earth in the near future. multi-eyed and tentacled creatures are just as likely as humanoids. Of course, many "ifs" are involved in this line of reasoning, but, still, nothing in INVASION OF THE AIR-EATERS is possible.

In this article, I would like to give some background information on the Aliens - their technology, their machines, their society, and their biology. Hopefully, this detail will make INVASION OF THE AIR-EATERS and also THE AIR-EATERS STRIKE BACK more believable and perhaps more enjoyable to play.

Much of this material will apply to THE AIR-EATERS STRIKE BACK, the new Metagame. The game is about a second invasion of Earth (and the Solar System) by the Aliens in the late 21st century. The Terrans have colonies throughout the inner Solar System and better weapons than before, but the Aliens are stronger than before as well, having warships which can do orbital bombardment. The map has a Solar System display and planetary maps of Mercury, the poles of Venus, Earth, Luna, Mars, and the four Galilean moons of Jupiter, all on the same scale. The planets move on the Solar System map in their proper

orbits, the Terran spacehips move by an inertia system, and the Alien ships can move anywhere. As in IAE, each turn is three months. Also as in IAE, the Terrans must develop new weapons to fight the Aliens with. The rules are based on IAE, but the flavor of the game is much different. Several versions are included: Introductory, Intermediate, Advanced, Multi-player, Solitaire, and two Earth vs. Mars scenarios.

A third Air Eaters game, tentatively called AGAIN, DANGEROUS AIR-EATERS, is presently in early stages of development. It concerns the development of star travel by humans and early interstellar war with the Aliens. Several different types of slower and faster-than-light drives, with randomly determined movement rules, will be included. I have vague ideas for a fourth and probably final Air-eaters game, BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE AIR-EATERS.

### TERMINOLOGY

The race was long known to the Terrans simply as "the Aliens". Informally, they were also called "the Air-Eaters", especially during the First War. Much later, when the race's origin became known to the Terrans and when the term "Aliens" could be applied to several intelligent races, they were known as Orionids. The Aliens themselves used sign language, and thus their own term for themselves cannot be transliterated.

### BIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

The Aliens are based on carbon-chain protiens, like Terran life. However, respiration is completely different from either Terran animals or plants, using sulfur dioxide rather than oxygen or carbon dioxide. The chemical processes work best at about 150 degrees F, and thus the Aliens prefer temperatures in this area.

The Aliens can reproduce sexually; they are hermaphroditic. They have live young, not eggs, usually in litters of three or four. The young are physically able to function normally as soon

as they are born, like guinea pigs, rather than being helpless like human infants. The Aliens can also reproduce by a holographic cloning process, which will be explained later.

A biologically bred alien has a life span of only about ten Earth years or so. A clone of an adult has an even shorter life span. However, for space-faring aliens, relativistic time dilation can greatly increase life spans.

Being short-lived creatures, the Aliens depend more on innate, genetically determined behaviors and emotions than humans do. They are capable of learning, but less so than humans, and thus are much less intelligent than humans if one defines "intelligence" as ability to learn. However, they think and process information faster than humans do. The Aliens have never needed computers.

The Aliens do not eat either plants or animals. Their ancestors could "eat" natural rocks for nutrients, but, since industrialization, the Alien's digestive systems have atrophied somewhat. Now, Aliens generally eat purified and powdered minerals. Carbon is especially important, and is obtained from coal, petroleum, or diamonds. They drink water, as humans do.

The Aliens are less territorial and more peaceful--among themselves--than races descended from carnivores. Long ago, carnivorous animals did exist on their home planet, so evolution was not arrested. Like humans, the Aliens developed intelligence and tool-making ability to help them survive. They also developed a "race consciousness" emotion which leads individuals to sacrifice themselves for the good of their society.

As mentioned before, the Aliens communicate by sign language rather than spoken language - a logical development for creatures with lots of tentacles but no mouths who often work in vacuum environments. Their writing is based on their sign language. None of the Aliens are in the least bit telepathic.

## SOCIOLOGY

Education is very short. An Alien is born knowing how to read, write, use sign language, work some of the machinery that has existed for a long time, and understand many of the social customs. Besides, education technology is advanced. A young Alien generally attends "school" from birth until four months of age, where he acquires technical and specialized knowledge.

Each individual has special abilities for which he was cloned or bred and for which he was educated. For example, some Aliens are Planners, some are Pilots, and some are Planetary Engineers. However, an Alien is not so specialized that he is prevented from performing other tasks. The old Scientist caste is extinct, but, still, scientific progress has not totally ceased.

The Aliens have a high sense of social responsibility, which comes from a biologically-based emotion. An Alien regards his own well-being as less important than the interests of society and others of the species, as he sees them. Different interpretations of "the interests of society" sometimes arise, but these are reduced by the fact that all involved parties are being honest and by a complex ethical code. No Alien would ever knowingly harm another. The aliens have never, in their long history, had a war among themselves (except once against mutants). a highly developed philosophical/religious system ties together their social responsibility ethics, their science, and their outlook on the universe. (unfortunately for the humans of the late twentieth century, the ethical code doesn't extend to other species.)

The Aliens are organized into Bases, planets, and star systems (if the star system has more than one inhabited planet). Each Base has a Planner and each planet has a Planning Committee. Alien populations are restricted by the capabilities of the Bases; this will be explained later. Aliens have less government than humans do. Interstellar organization does not exist.



Reproduction, like all matters, is done according to the Race's needs at that place and time, when population increase and/or genetic changes are desirable and time and resources are available. Likewise, holographic cloning is done when the Race needs trained individuals quickly and has lots of energy available.

#### ANTIMATTER

The Alien civilization is based on antimatter. Matter-antimatter annihilation is not only the power source for their industries, living quarters, transportation networks, and spaceships, but it is also the source of their food and their atmosphere, and is important in reproduction.

Matter is composed of atoms, which are in turn, in this universe, composed of proton, neutrons, and electrons. However elementary particles of other types exist as well. For some of these particles, collisions produce annihilation of both particles and the release of electromagnetic energy (annihilation radiation). For example, a collision of an electron and a positron produces radiation of a particular wavelength. In antimatter, atoms are composed not of protons, neutrons, and electrons, but rather of their antiparticles. (In 1970's human physics, antiparticles are known to exist, but are unstable, at least as they are produced in particle accelerators. Thus, antimatter atoms and larger units of antimatter remain hypothetical.)

In nuclear fission, an atom of uranium or plutonium is divided into two smaller atoms whose total mass is slightly less than that of the original atom; the difference being converted to electromagnetic energy according to  $E=mc^2$ . Likewise, in nuclear fusion, two hydrogen atoms are converted into a single helium atom which is not quite as heavy. However, in antimatter annihilation, all mass is converted into energy.

Most of the alien machines, including small spaceships, use an engine which consists of a tank of antimatter, a tank of hydrogen plasma, and a combustion chamber. At least the antimatter tanks, and usually the other two chambers as well, are magnetic bottles like those in fusion reactors. A small quantity of the matter is combined with a small quantity of the antimatter, and the resulting energy is used directly in a rocket engine or indirectly to drive a piston or turbine.

Antimatter is produced by antimatter generators. Like fusion reactors, they work by the compression of hydrogen plasma to a very high density and temperature, using a cyclic process. First, hydrogen plasma is inserted into a chamber and an extremely powerful magnetic field is turned on. Then the magnetic field is intensified and made smaller until the hydrogen undergoes fusion into helium. The energy from the fusion is then used to further compress the mass until it becomes a tiny black hole for an instant. Then the enclosing field reverses polarity, exploding the black hole and producing a white hole. This creates a "gate" from a black hole in an antimatter universe, which draws a few micrograms of antimatter from that universe. Then the antimatter is drawn off into a storage chamber and the hydrogen is replaced. Most, but not all, of the antimatter produced in each "power stroke" is consumed in the next "compression stroke". The generator returns 3% more energy than it uses. Generators on Motherships are 115% efficient when the ship is travelling at near-lightspeed.

#### ENERGY-MATTER REVERSAL

A second important technology, closely related to the first, is the ability to convert electromagnetic energy into matter.  $E=mc^2$  is also  $m=E/c^2$ . The process is related to antimatter generation; the two are always found together in the Alien Bases. The type of matter is determined by the wavelength of the radiation.



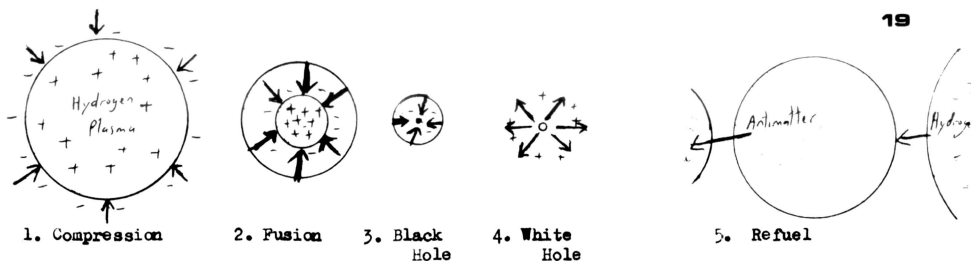


FIGURE 1. Antimatter Generation

Five cycles per second

However, the wavelengths can be altered if energy is added, thus allowing an expensive and inefficient method of transmutation of elements.

### HOLOGRAPHY

Holography is a process, known to 1970's Terran scientists, of producing three-dimensional images from interference patterns in light. It gains importance when energy-matter reversal is possible, because then one can not only make three-dimensional image but physical three-dimensional copies of a surface. If the subject is annihilated by antimatter in a controlled manner, and if holograms are made of the subject in each stage of annihilation, then the entire internal structure can be duplicated. Thus, "blueprints" for machine parts are very high resolution holographic films of that part being disintegrated. The Aliens can even record the internal structure of living organisms, down to the biochemically-coded memories. Thus, holograms of particularly valuable individuals have been made, so that they can be brought back to life in later generations.

This procedure has two disadvantages. First, kilometers of filmstrip are required even for relatively simple objects. Secondly, a great deal of energy is needed to make the copies: the object's mass times the speed of light squared, plus a little for waste.

An application of this technique is teleportation. The holograms can be transmitted to receivers via laser beams, over distances of light-years if the laser beams are sufficiently tight. Then a reconstruction of the object is built at the receiver. This procedure allows travel (or communication) at the speed of light, but only to places which have the necessary receiving equipment.

Another application of holography is cloning. The hologram can be duplicated by means of a prism and then each of the new beams can be put into a receiver. As mentioned before, a great deal of energy input is needed. Nevertheless, cloning is nearly as common as natural breeding for some groups of Aliens.

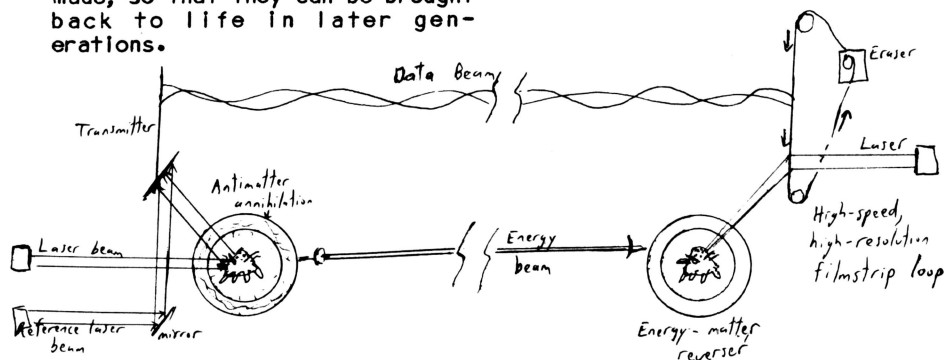


FIGURE 2. Holographic teleportation.

## BASES

Antimatter generators, energy-matter converters, holographic equipment, and hologram libraries together form the core of a Base, which in turn is the core of an Alien community. Each Base must have at least a dozen individuals to man it, but is capable of providing food, power, and transportation for up to a thousand Aliens. However, Matter-energy reversers do not work efficiently if they are within two thousand kilometers of each other. Thus, each community of Aliens has one Base and each Base has a community. Planetary populations are severely restricted - an Earth-sized planet could support only a few hundred thousand Aliens at their accustomed standard of living.

## ECOLOGY

The ecology of the Alien home world and established Alien colonies is simple: it consists entirely of the Aliens and their machines. All other species on the home world died in the dim past, and Alien colony worlds are always sterilized. The Aliens don't hate other forms of life and in fact have no emotions about them one way or the other. However, bacteria can cause diseases, plants can grow in unwanted places, animals can bite, and intelligent life can start wars, so all are eliminated. Breathable sulfur dioxide is manufactured by atmospheric converters, not plants. Waste products are processed by machines, not bacteria. All of these machines cause pollution, which is treated by still more machines.

The Aliens create incredible amounts of energy through liberal use of antimatter annihilation. The home planet has far more energy output than its sun does. However, most of the radiation is turned back into matter. Little energy is actually lost because the annihilation is carefully controlled and contained, and energy is transmitted by very tight laser beams. Energy is lost primarily through low-frequency radio waves, mechanical work,

star travel, and on hostile worlds, force-fields. This energy is replaced through heavy-hydrogen fusion, uranium fission, solar power, and antimatter generation.

## FORCE FIELDS

Force fields are devices to protect Bases, atmospheric converters, and other machines from hostile natives on alien planets, as well as from meteors, storms, and other natural dangers. A force field consists of a powerful magnetic field created by external projection, covered by a thin antimatter plasma, covered by a second magnetic field. The antimatter density can be adjusted automatically or manually, so that power can be conserved when full strength is not needed. Usually, a strong plastic-and-steel armor is beneath the force field, as well as lead radiation shielding. Force fields afford protection primarily against solid objects, although they provide some protection against radiation (including lasers) and antimatter weapons.

## CRAWLERS

Crawlers are large (20m long), heavily armored, and semi-mobile (8 kph or so) - thus the name given to them by Terrans. They have antimatter beams, which consist simply of small quantities of antimatter let out of containment, "pushed" by powerful pulse lasers.

The crawler has several functions. The obvious function is as a war machine, for use against hostile, intelligent, advanced alien races. A second function is to provide heat to change atmospheres. Also, crawlers are used as "bulldozers" to clear roads, tunnels, and flat surfaces.

Like a base, a crawler has equipment for energy-matter reversal. A crawler's equipment is less sophisticated than a Base's and lacks holographic capabilities. However, a crawler can convert energy to antimatter as well as to matter, thus enabling replenishment of its supply. A crawler can operate away from a Base for years.

## ATMOSPHERIC CONVERTERS

Atmospheric Converters (ACs) work largely by chemical means, using transmutation when necessary. Energy is supplied by antimatter engines. giant fans push gases through the ACs. Usually each AC is associated with a Base, which can provide antimatter, support for personnel, and teleportation of needed raw materials. Like Bases, ACs work more efficiently when spread out, though the distances vary according to atmospheric density and other factors.

## TRANSPORTATION

The primary method of transportation for Aliens is teleportation between Bases. The home planet also has old subways which are still used. aliens tend to move around less than humans, however.

Landers are used for transportation to or from places which don't have Bases to teleport to. Landers are disk-shaped machines powered by antimatter rockets. Landers gain lift by spinning on planets which have an atmosphere, although they can operate in a vacuum. To save weight, landers do not have force-field equipment. Landers have rather limited fuel and life support, and thus can't do interplanetary journeys by themselves.

## STAR TRAVEL

Antimatter engines give Alien spaceships lots of power. Still, the spaceships are rather massive - the apparatus to generate the magnetic fields for antimatter containment is large. The biggest problem is the light barrier. An object's mass increases as it approaches the speed of light and would be infinite at the speed of light. Thus, more power is needed for acceleration at high speeds. Time relative to a stationary observer slows down as the object approaches the speed of light. Also, the object's length decreases, becoming zero at the speed of light. The problems of relativity have never been solved by the Aliens, despite their

advanced technology. All of their spaceships are slower than light.

The simplest type of starship is the Novaship. This was first encountered by the terans during the secon War. A Novaship is a relatively largeship, with a length of 800 meters when at rest. It carries lots of antimatter, which can be used for propulsion, life support, force fields, beam weapons, or warheads on planetary attack missiles. A Novaship can support up to three generations of Aliens and thus has a range of about 20 light-years when not accompanied by a Mothership. Novaships are not exclusively warships, and were used for colonization earlier in Alien history.

The smallest of the standard types of Alien spaceships is known to Terrans as the Escort. It is not a starship, since it carries only enough antimatter fuel for an interplanetary journey. The Escort has a small antimatter engine, some offensive weapons, weak force-fields, and a limited transport capacity. Escorts are relatively simple and easy to build. They are used only by Alien colonists, since the home star system has only one planet.

The Quasarship is a bigger version of the Novship, with more weapons, stronger force fields, and much more stored antimatter. unlike other Alien hardware, the Quasarship's function is purely military. It has a rest length of 2000 meters. Only a few have ever been built, and fewer still have ever done interstellar voyages. Moving a Quasarship's huge mass at relativistic speeds requires vast amounts of antimatter fuel, which can usually be better used in other ways.

The Mothership is the most sophisticated of the Alien spaceships, or, indeed, of any Alien equipment. Essentially, a Mothership is a combination of a Novaship and a Base. Like ground Bases, Motherships have antimatter generators, holographic equipment, energy-matter reversers, and life-support systems. The Mothership also has

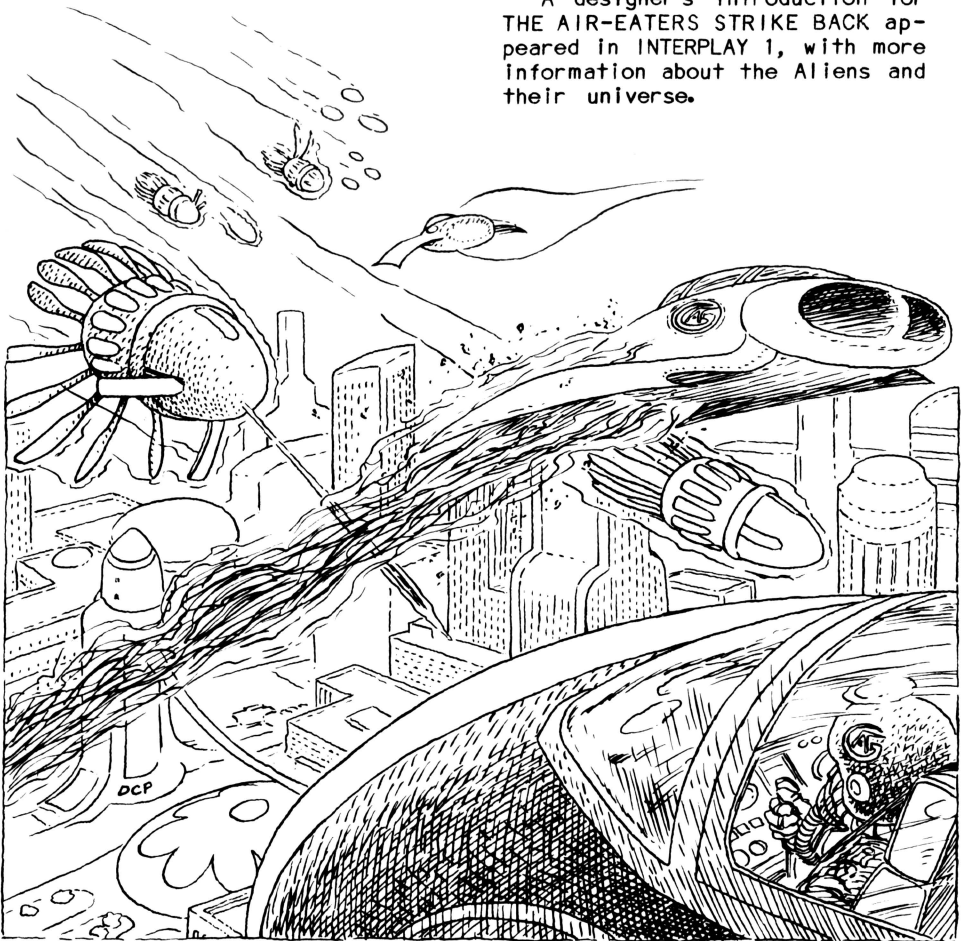
a kilometers-wide scoop (Bussard ram jet), which, in many parts of the galaxy, allows it to collect interstellar hydrogen. The ship can manufacture antimatter and thus, the ship does not need to store large amounts of antimatter like a Novaship or Quasarship would. Moreover, the antimatter generator is more efficient than that of a ground Base, and can generate enough antimatter to accelerate the Mothership as well as support the crew and passengers. The holographic equipment and libraries together with the energy-matter reverser allow the retrieval of information from the home planet, including living individuals. These can periodically breed with other aliens, to prevent mutation

and genetic drift during multi-generation flight. a Mothership can go forever and can accelerate the whole time, although it can never quite reach the speed of light. Motherships are in various sizes, to provide various crew populations and various transport capacities.

#### CONCLUSION

The Aliens are scientifically and technologically advanced, particularly in the areas of physics and chemistry. Moreover, their social structure works far better than that of the humans. However, the Aliens are not all-powerful and have some very real weaknesses along with their strengths.

A designer's introduction for THE AIR-EATERS STRIKE BACK appeared in INTERPLAY 1, with more information about the Aliens and their universe.



c.200,00 B.C.: writing is invented  
 107,000 B.C.: steam engine invented  
 98,000 B.C.: electricity discovered  
 85,00 B.C.: Law of Gravity discovered  
 70,012 B.C.: first stellite launched into orbit  
 63,000 B.C.: theory of special relativity  
 50,000 B.C.: fusion reactors developed  
 25,000 B.C.: Alien genetics become better understood, despite the lack of lab subjects. A massive eugenics program was begun immediately. Genetic specialization into castes, which had been proceeding slowly for the past 100,000 years, speeded up considerably.  
 20,000 B.C.: antimatter generator invented  
 16,000 B.C.: energy-matter reverser invented  
 5017 B.C.: Contact with intelligent alien life (known to later Terran historians simply as "Race X"). Relations were peaceful (though not particularly friendly) at first, because the two races were technologically equal. "Race X" had star travel but not antimatter generation.  
 4900 B.C.: "Race X" acquired antimatter generation and gained a technological lead over the Aliens, allowing economic exploitation.  
 4700 B.C.: Race X's domination of the Alien's planet began, when Race X achieved a monopoly on antimatter generation on the planet. Alien Geneticists were forced to begin development of a Slave caste. A large, but silent, Alien underground developed.  
 4000 B.C.: A group of rebel Planners and Geneticists began breeding of Scientists, Engineers, and Warriors.  
 3544 B.C.: Alien Revolution. The rebel Aliens seized control of Race X's spaceport, achieving total surprise. Three ships were modified into Novaships by Engineers, using secretly

developed plans, and; the rest were destroyed on the ground. These three Novaships, manned by 114 Aliens of various castes, went into orbit and bombarded the Alien home planet until everybody of both races on it was killed. Afterwards, rebuilding and repopulation of the planet was begun. Interstellar war with Race X was also begun.  
 2998 B.C.: A large world of Race X (the home planet?) was destroyed. War ended.  
 2744 B.C.: The first Alien colony was established, six light-years from the home planet, with a Novaship. Extensive colonization of space within 30-40 light years of the home planet began.  
 1844 B.C.: Escort developed  
 c.1600 B.C.: Genetic drift, due to high radiation levels on the Novaships, lack of communication and interbreeding between colonies, and still undeveloped holography, became a problem. The sense of race-consciousness among Aliens was replaced by competitiveness and independence.  
 1492 B.C.: The first wave of colonization (by Novaship) ended.  
 1433 B.C.: A highly mutated colony of Aliens, whose members had only three lower tentacles and only five eyes, launched an attack on the home planet. The Mutant War, the only Alien vs. Alien war in history, began. Many of the less-mutated colonists allied with the home planet. Several mutant colonies joined the attackers, but these were a disorganized coalition rather than a true alliance.  
 1128 B.C.: Quasarship developed by home planet to fight Mutant Novaships  
 1001 B.C.: Last rebel planet destroyed; Mutant War ended  
 990 B.C.: All surviving, loyal colonists were recalled to the home planet  
 612B.C.: Genetic despecialization began, to increase the race's homogeneity casts interbred; Geneticist caste discontinued

563 B.C.: Holography was first applied to energy-matter reversal, enabling cloning and teleportation

331B.C.: Radio signals were received from an alien civilization 40 lightyears away. A Quasarship was sent to destroy it.

4 B.C.: Mothership developed

293A.D.: Expansion Directive. Planners decided to renew interstellar colonization, but this time using Motherships and far-flung planets which would not normally be in contact with the home world or with each other. Only a few

would be given holograms for building Novaships and Quasar-ships, although all would have holograms of individual Aliens to use for breeding. In this way, the race's survival and expansion would be insured with minimum risk of another Mutant War.

294 A.D.: Mothership launched  
toward Sol

622 A.D.: The last and largest of the Motherships began a two-million-year journey to the Andromeda galaxy

1983 A.D.: Mothership arrived at  
Sol - INVASION OF THE AIR-  
EATERS

THE FIRST  
INTERGALACTIC FISTFUL  
OF TURKEYS TOURNAMENT  
AT NANCON

by Ben L. Price and  
John Pitzel

witnessed and attested to by  
Some Turkey Himself

"Here I come ready or not!" screamed John Pitzel, of Georgetown University (Crab Nebula, D.C.).

With those prophetic words, the First Intergalactic Fistful of Turkeys Game commenced.

"Gobble, gobble, gobblegobble" his opponent, Ben Price, fencing instructor for the Louisiana State Home for Demented Football Players (Swamp Planet) replied, echoing the time honored (fifteen minute) ritual call to perch.

The two combatants had undergone exhaustive pre-game workouts (cutting our counters and looking for those funny six sided dice).

It was over almost as soon as it began. B. J. tried to strangle Leon, missed, and was tripped by numerous turkeys, while a half dozen of the little buggars thought of escape, thus ending the game after 3 turns.

B. J. was sobbing and attempting to staunch the flow of blood from numerous vicious peck wounds to the ankles, knees, and face; searching for his shotgun

amid the undetonated B. O. M. s,  
he was already plotting next  
year's revenge.

John was awarded a beautiful, new copy of A FISTFUL OF TURKEYS as a grand prize. He was overwhelmed with joy.

P.S. Everyone knows that the hex map was invented in the crab nebula! The map was brought to this planet by a 43-year old Spamway salesman from Peoria, Ill. with a chronic sinus condition. This is common knowledge throughout the Milky Way.

A pox of B. O. M. s on your  
pipsqueak Peorian Purveyor! Take  
a sideways hike you lousey Bra-  
chychura! I was first and you Ne-  
bulous minded Crabbitts know it!

- Some Turkey

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# Stalin's Tanks

Designer's Introduction

by

Roger Damon

## Part 2

It takes valuable time to develop and produce a totally new tank. The IIIj model was an early attempt to immediately even up the qualitative odds on the Eastern Front, though it was far from an acceptable compromise. It was simply a Pz III with the longer 50mm L60 gun installed in the turret and the frontal armor upped to 50mm (from 30mm in earlier models). The addition of the longer gun was actually ordered by Hitler himself as he was reviewing troops in Poland in April, 1941.

Initially, the early models of the Pz IV were intended to be used for close infantry support and were not intended as tank fighters. In the campaign for France, they weren't even given armor piercing shot. The need for better anti-tank weaponry prompted the introduction of the longer 75mm L43 (they originally had L24's) into the Pz IV's turret. This was coupled with an overall increase in the tank's armor. The first model of this improved tank was the IVf2. The IV was more readily adaptable than the PIII and was continually improved throughout the war, becoming the German army's main battle tank.

The last version represented in the game is the IVh, which had an even longer 75mm L48 and had a respectable increase in its frontal armor.

A few words should be said about barrel length and tank gun effectiveness. Basically, as the barrel length increased, so did the muzzle velocity. And as the muzzle velocity increased, so did the shell's force. The length of

a gun barrel is its bore size multiplied by its L number. Thus, a 75mm L43 had a barrel 75mm times 43 or 3225mm long, which is about nine feet.

The Tiger I had impressive armor and an 88mm L56. It was introduced in July of 1942 and was the first German tank capable of dealing with Soviet armor. The Tiger I was updated in 1944 when the armor was upped from 100mm to 150-180mm and the devastating 88mm L71 was fitted to the turret. This was the Tiger II, otherwise known as the King Tiger.

Finally, there was the Panther, the pinnacle of German tank design. It was a definitive response to the better Soviet tanks, and in fact, far surpassed them. It had the excellent 75mm L70 gun, excellent sloped armor, and cross country speed equal to the T34's.

The Soviet had a similar improvement schedule, modifying the T34 and KV models with improved armor and weaponry which culminated in the models with the 85mm guns. The Joseph Stalin (JS) line of heavy tanks was a remarkable success. It was the last of the wartime production models with a respectable 122mm L43 gun and armor equivalent to the Panther.

The idea of the Self-Propelled gun originated with the Germans in the mid 30's. The idea was to mount a gun on a self-propelled chassis to be used for close infantry support. Being turretless, they were cheaper, easier to produce and offered a larger fighting compartment.

It was found that bigger guns could be mounted on a specific chassis than on their turretted counterparts. For example; the biggest gun that could be fitted into a Pz III turret was the 50mm L60 of the IIIj. However, Sturmgeschutz's used the III chassis (except for some later models, which used the chassis from a Pz IV) and in these chassis they were mounting guns up to 105mm.

The Self Propelled guns also were situated lower than tanks and offered less of a target area to enemy fire. These SP guns followed a line of development

similar to that of tanks as they were up-gunned and made with heavier armor.

The restrictions applied to SP use in the game represents their relative weakness in a mobile situation. They were generally best in defensive roles. The prime example of their inadequacy in a mobile situation was the disaster the Elephants encountered at the battle of Kursk. That battle alone marked the beginning and end of the Elephant, as they were handily destroyed by flanking fire and infantry assaults.

THE SCENARIOS--The scenarios follow a historical outline, though they do not exactly represent specific historical events. My main intention with the scenarios was to give players a general state of affairs in which certain units were available in certain situations. What's a lot of fun for the Soviet player is the rampant superiority of the T34's and KV's in the first scenario. Their effectiveness dwindles, however, as the scenarios are played, until the big German tanks rule the battlefield.

My favorite scenarios are the ones labeled non-historical. They represent basic tactical situations. They are both tense and exciting firefights. Infantry takes an important role in Scenario 25.6, not only to occupy hills already taken, but also to move in and challenge hills held by the enemy. This scenario often comes down to the wire. Players have much leeway on what hills to go for and how to go for them.

The Guantlet (scenario 25.7) can be fun for the German player especially, as he has the most impressive tanks and SP guns available. This was why I included this scenario: give the German player the best units there are, and then give the Soviet player enough stuff to deal with them.

Scenario 25.1 is a scenario of example; the example being to show the general superiority of Soviet equipment in the early goings. I considered giving the

Soviet armor a +1 Dice Roll Modifier to display their general ineptness at handling armor at this stage of the war. This would probably more accurately reflect the difference in the units; differences that are not as tangible as armor thickness. If players seem to have trouble finding a German victory in this scenario, they may try the +1 DRM. It's a tough scenario for the German player. Much hinges on the first shots. They should be concentrated on the T34's and KV's. The Soviet player might want to try an end sweep with the swift BT-7's, darting them from cover to cover until some interesting flank shots can be worked out.

Scenario 25.2 is one of soft targets versus armor. The German player must get the SU 152's. They will simply devour any AT gun positions. Likewise, the Soviet player should use his 152's (for as long as they last) for cover fire. Once the main AT guns are destroyed, the infantry is virtually helpless.

Scenario 25.3 represents a combined-arms frontal assault on a prepared defense. For the German player, it will be rough going. Find the weak spot and hit it with all you have.

Scenario 25.4 represents the greatest armor free-for-all of the war. Get in there and mix it up!

Scenario 25.5 is a battle of the giants. The German player will need all the help he can get. He must decide whether to get the infantry out of there or stay and fight. Like many of the scenarios, it seems hopeless for the German player. But, just by hanging in there as long as possible, the tide may slowly flow his way.

DESIGN YOUR OWN SCENARIOS--For those wishing to modify the game, I offer the guidelines below for scenarios that may be designed by the players. The scenario force makeup follows no historical precedent. The forces chosen were chosen for play balance rather than to reflect organizational structures of the armies. The



following instructions are based on the organizational structures of the two armies. Units will be organized into platoon level groups with scenario forces representing companies.

A Soviet tank company consisted of three tank platoons of three tanks each plus a command tank for a total of ten tanks. Thus a T34 tank company would have ten T34's. The Soviet army attached infantry to their tank units. In game terms, this would mean that each soviet tank company would have three squads (one platoon) of infantry that would be attached to it. Since there aren't ten of any one type of tank in the counter mix, one tank will represent a platoon, and a Soviet tank company will be represented by four tanks with three infantry squads attached to it.

A German tank company, in 1941, had three platoons of five tanks each plus two command tanks. In the later years, as tanks became scarce, this was cut to four, and sometimes three, tanks per platoon. In game terms, each German 1941-1942 tank company and some 1943 tank companies will be represented by five tanks. This will be cut to four, and sometimes three tanks per company in later year units. Infantry was often nearby in the form of a motorized or panzer grenadier battalion, but it was a separate unit.

German SP guns were organized like the tank companies and are represented by five SP guns. Soviet SP gun companies had three platoons of five tanks each plus a command tank and are represented by a company of five SP guns.

Units are organized into companies because that was how the respective armies organized them. Other than SP gun companies, units of a company are of the same type. The following organizational chart lists companies, their components, the time of their availability, and their average worth, in points.

## EARLY

## GERMAN

Pz II Company (4 Pz II) 1/2 pt.  
 Pz III Co. (3 Pz IIIg, 3 Pz IIIj) 3 pts.  
 Pz IV Company (3 IVd, 2 IVf2) 3 pts.  
 Assault Gun Co. (4 Stug b) 3 pts.  
 Note: use the blank counters to represent the missing IVd and IVf2.  
 Use Stug-g's as Stug b's.  
 Infantry Company (4 squads) 1/2 pts.

## SOVIET

BT-7 Company (4 BT-7) 1 pt.  
 T34 Company (2 T34a, 2 T34b) 5 pts.  
 KV Company (4 KVla) 6 pts.  
 Note: Each tank company has three infantry squads attached to it.

In addition to the forces listed, the Soviet forces suffer from lack of command control in the early and middle time periods. One tank from each tank company (not assault gun co.) must be designated as a command tank. A small pencil mark on the counter may be helpful in keeping track. When a command tank is destroyed, simply replace some other unit of the company with the marked counter. All units of a company must be in the LOS of the command tank, at the beginning of a movement phase to move. A unit that cannot see the command tank (has a blocked LOS

MIDDLE

GERMAN

Pz II Co. (4 Pz II) 1/2 pt.  
 Pz III Co. (4 Pz II), 1 Pz II 1/2 pt.  
 Pz IV Co. (5 Pz IVh) 6 pts.  
 Pz V Co. (4 Panth.) 12 pts.  
 Pz VI Co. (4 Tiger I) 10 pts.  
 Assault Gun Co. (2 Stug G, 1 Nash) 5 pts.  
 Infantry Co. (4 squads, 4 HT) 1 pt.

SOVIET

T34 Co. (4 T34c) 5 pts.  
 KV Co. (4 KV1c) 7 pts.  
 Assault Gun Co. (1 SU 76, 2 SU 85,  
 1 SU 122, 1 SU 152)  
 8 pts.  
 Note: Each tank company has three  
 infantry squads attached to it.

LATE

GERMAN

Pz II Co. (4 Pz II) 1/2 pt.  
 Pz IV Co. (4 Pz IVh) 5 pts.  
 Pz V Co. (3 Panth.) 9 pts.  
 Pz VI Co. (3 Tig 2) 12 pts.  
 Assault Gun Co. (1 Hetzer, 1 PzJg V  
 1 PzJg VI) 8 pts.  
 Infantry Co. Same as middle 1 pt.

SOVIET

T34 and KV Co. same as middle  
 T34/85 Co. (4 T34/85) 6 pts.  
 JSII Co. (4 JSII) 10 pts. (Use blanks)  
 Assault gun Co. (1 SU 100, 2 JSU 122,  
 2 JSU 152) 10 pts.  
 Note: Each Company has three infantry  
 squads attached to it.

to it) may not move until an unobstructed LOS is achieved to the command tank. It may fire normally.

Players now choose a time period in which their scenario is to take place (Early, Middle, or Late). Next, objectives, and set-up/entry hexes are agreed upon. Here, players have a free hand. Perhaps one side tries to take and hold the buildings from the other side, or a small raid can be set up. A game length should be agreed upon by the players. Next, sides are chosen and a point limit (30-40 pts) is set.

Players then secretly choose forces from the time period and start the game. Other units, not mentioned in the above chart, may also be used for some situations. The 88 Flak is an early weapon and the 88 Pak a middle-late weapon. All other weapons are available in any time period.

TACTICS--This section is mainly for players who are new to tactical armored wargames. There are a few basic doctrines to which players should almost always adhere.

1. If at all possible, do not expose your tanks or SP guns to flank fire.

2. Use all available cover when approaching enemy positions.
3. Position units so as to have the most fields of fire.
4. Keep your units with good guns, but light armor, back as far as possible; but not so far back that they themselves have no available shots.
5. Do not advance into enemy positions with SP guns alone.
6. Do not be over-hesitant in advancing your better armored units right into and through enemy positions.
7. Keep infantry, or perhaps a smaller tank, near your threatened SP guns. This will help deter enemy units from approaching your SP gun positions from the flank to avoid fire.
8. Use infantry to assault tanks when possible.
9. Concentrate your tanks on the weakest area.
10. Don't hesitate to take a long shot across the board, especially if it is a flank shot.
11. Don't be afraid to lose some tanks. A lost Panther does not mean a lost game.

As one plays the game, one becomes more and more familiar with the terrain. This can be a crucial factor between an experienced player and one new to the game, even if a newcomer uses sound tactics. General trends, peculiar to the game, have arisen. It seems the southern map area favors the fleet T34's while the northern hills are prime spots for such units as the Nashorn. The center hill (hexes 1517 and 1417) is a hot spot in most scenarios. Getting your best tanks onto that hill is a sound initial objective. The eastern side of the map offers the least resistance, as far as terrain is concerned. By that token, however, it is often a suspected course of an attack. Infantry should strive for hexes with terrain features. Left in the open, they seem to disappear fast. Don't go in the swamp. There is an interesting sighting, discovered by playtester and Line-of-Sight expert Shane Stein, from hex 2132 to hex 0806. This was entirely unintentional.

Those big Soviet SP guns (SU and JSU 152's) should be used more as anti-personnel weapons than anti-tank weapons. You can surprise an unwary German player if you catch his infantry in the open with one of these beasts. As the Soviet player, don't let the Panthers intimidate you (the Tiger II's yes, but not the Panthers). Fire at them. The loss of a Panther can so upset a German player's attack, physically and psychologically, that it may spell doom for him. And, to both sides, don't baby your units. Use them to attack--that was their intention.

Tactical warfare of the era, and games representing it, involves a way of thinking that is different from that used in games covering larger scales. The main concept to be grasped is that of time. A flanking attack may be represented in one move in a company level or larger scale game. But, in a game of this scale, flanking attacks involve a number of moves, usually with depleting forces. So if you decide to send some faster units along one or both board edges, expect it to take some time to develop.

A good defensive position is one that remains intact. If units are falling back to respond to a flanking move, this means that defensive positions are being vacated and units are becoming more vulnerable as they move. Keep in mind how unnerved you might become with an enemy unit roaming behind your lines. Your opponent may well likewise become as unnerved. When attempting mass flanking moves, don't totally disregard losses; simply expect them. The rewards getting a few through can be immense.

ERRATA AND ADDENDA--It is almost impossible to print a game free of error. ROMMEL'S PANZERS suffered from a misplaced Movement Factor and Defense Factor on the counter diagram in the rulebook. Though an obvious mistake made clear to anyone studying the examples, I still wonder if there isn't some gamer out there moving his Matildas 25 hexes per turn.

Fortunately, the errors in STALIN'S TANKS are few and far from critical.

Counters--The Pz III's and IVd should have an armor class of "G" not "6".

Map--Hex 1727 should be a ford hex. A ford hex is treated as clear terrain.

Rulebook--Any reference to the IVfz should read IVf2>

Section 4.0--The parenthetical

note that players may also design their own scenarios is somewhat in error. The method for doing this was not included in the rulebook, but was described earlier in this article.

6.3--Add: except when the optional Overrun rule is used.

14.3 This rule states that unit types don't matter. It should state that Armor Class doesn't matter.

# METAGAMES

## COMMAND AT SEA

LEVEL: Very advanced play for 2 or more age 18 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Complex learning, rapid play system. 3-8 hours playtime.

COMPONENTS: 24 ship counters, rules, 24 ship data cards, 3 turn guages, scenario map and sheet. Requires 20-sided die.

COMMAND AT SEA is a scale simulation of World War II naval battles. Units are single ships. Each ship is defined by its guns, compartments and combat factors.

You play by acting as commander of a ship or task group with a mission. You plot the moves, you fire the guns, you assess the damage.

1/4800 scale.

## THE AIR EATERS STRIKE BACK

LEVEL: Advanced competition for two, age 14 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Moderate complexity. 3-6 hours playtime.

COMPONENTS: map, 240 counters, rules, die.

THE AIR EATERS STRIKE BACK is a strategic simulation of the alien invasion of the inner solar system in the 21st century.

Separate ground actions occur on maps of Mercury, Earth, Mars, the Venusian poles, Ganymede, Callisto, Europa and Io - all in the same scale.

Rules cover production, technology, teleportation, combat and movement.

## TROJAN WAR

LEVEL: Average complexity for two players 12 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Scenarios play in 1 1/2 to 4 hours of rapid action.

COMPONENTS: Map, 240 counters, rules booklet.

TROJAN WAR is true to its source, THE ILLIAD. The map represents the area described by Homer. The play counters represent 56 Greek and 51 Trojan named heroes of three classes, plus chariots and status markers.

Rules cover combat with bow and spear, chariots, rendering aid, rallying and intervention of the gods. There are eleven scenarios covering different stages of siege plus a campaign game of the entire eleven years.

## HITLER'S WAR

LEVEL: Advanced competition for 2 or 3 players age 15 and up.

PLAYABILITY: Moderate Complexity. Scenarios from 1 to 5 hours of play.

COMPONENTS: Map, 360 counters, record sheets, rules.

HITLER'S WAR is a grand-strategic level game of theatre operations in World War II. Turns represent four months and the map represents the European, Mediterranean, Baltic and Russian theatres.

Rules cover morale, production, technology, continued advance, winter, supply, sea movement, lend lease and neutral countries.

## CONVENTIONS:

DENVENTION II: September 3-7; Bill Reece; Box 11547, Denver, CO, 80211; Science Fiction; Metagaming attends.

GLASC VI: September 4-7; pre-register for \$6, \$8 at the door; L. Daniel; 20550 Wyandotte St., Canoga Park, CA; at Student Union, California State University, Northridge.

DRAGON FLIGHT: September 12-14; FRP and wargames; The Brass Dragon Society, Box 33872, Seattle, WA, 98133; (206) 364-8383; at Seattle University.

ARMADILLOCON III: October 2-4; c/o Metagaming, Box 15346, Austin, TX, 78761; \$100 TFT tournament, STELLAR CONQUEST, Micros, Science Fiction, Metagaming attends.

VOLCON II: October?; Ken Peterson; 3605 Tieton Dr., Yakima, WA, 98902; (509) 452-8838; Science Fiction, Games.

ALPHACON III: November 14-15; Bill Freebairn; 310 N. Sunset Dr., Ithaca, NY, 14850; at Ithaca Ramada Inn; Films, Games.

WINTERCON: November 20-22; Metro Detroit Gamers; Box 787, Troy, MI, 48099; 200 events: tournaments, seminars, demonstrations.

## MISC:

THIEVES' WORLD: A role-playing aid for TFT and other systems, based on Robert Asprin's city of Sanctuary as described in his anthologies, THIEVES' WORLD and TALES FROM THE VULGAR UNICORN. From: Chaosium, Inc., Box 6302, Albany, CA, 94706.

VIKING!: For those who want to contribute to sustaining continued acquisition of data from the surviving Viking Lander: Viking Fund, 357 Saratoga Ave., Santa Clara, CA, 95050.

## ERRATA:

### AIR-EATERS STRIKE BACK:

BOX: The back should list the map as 22 x 27 and 240 counters.

COUNTERS: The one Terran "FR" counter should be "CA" (Cruiser).

The two Motherships should be marked "1" and "2" to indicate which holding box is for which "MS" counter.

In games with more than one Terran player, players should mark the backs of their counters to tell them apart.

RULES: The Space Colony is missing from the Space Combat Results Table. It should be in the same column (target type) as the "ESC," "LN," "TR," etc. (unshielded units). It can not fire, only be fired upon.

Omit "WS" from the Space CRT.

Rule 4.1: Add "One CORV is placed in Mercury's In Orbit Box."

Rule 6.10: second to last sentence should read, "Passenger units may not end the movement phase on a lander," not "any planet."

Rule 22.3: "TWICW" should be "TWICE."

Rule 22.4: first sentence: "destroyed base" should be "deployed base."

Rule 26.6: replace the last two lines with: "main on the Solar System map and not hit the planet. If a Free Asteroid reaches space A-1 and does not hit Mercury, it hits the Sun and is removed."

Rule 33.1: should read: "Terran units are set up normally (see 4.1). The Earth player controls the units and IUs on Earth. The Space Fleet player controls the seven Corvettes orbiting Mercury, Earth and Mars. The Mining Consortium player controls the units

on Mars, The Corvette orbiting Jupiter and all IUs not on Earth."

Thanks to Keith Gross and Stewart Kramer.

**COMMAND AT SEA:** Errata will appear in INTERPLAY 4. Meanwhile, you may write us for a free errata sheet.

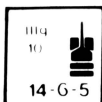
**CODEX/SCREEN:** The column indicated in the table below should be omitted from the lower right of the left panel of the FANTASY MASTERS' SCREEN and from COMBAT.8 of the CODEX.

#### REACTION TO INJURIES

Strength (ST) Normal	Hits Taken to Get -2DX	Hits Taken to Fall	Strength to Fall
1-9	0	0	0
10-29	5	8	1
30-49	10	16	2
50-69	15	24	3
70-89	20	32	4
90-109	25	40	5
each +20	+5	+8	+1

See ADVANCED MELEE, page 18. When a fall down result occurs during combat, the target must lose one action phase and one movement phase.

**STALIN'S TANKS:** The German (black) counters for the IIIg, IIIj and IVd tanks are printed as having an armor class of "6." They should instead read "G."



We recommend that you scratch off part of the line of the "6" so that it will resemble a "G."

Also, please note that the last row of halftracks are printed in red. They should have been printed in black, since they are German units.

Thanks to Richard Verrill.

**TREASURE OF UNICORN GOLD:** Two minor typos have already been found by Mark Meredith:

#189: inscription should read "WYLU CU BYRUHJO EH WYLU CU TUQJX."

#598: second paragraph should read: "You may try to make her talk, (go to 639)."



I have just read your first issue of Interplay and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I had not ordered it, and I was surprised when it came in the mail with no accompanying explanation. I assumed it was a free sample issue to see if I was interested in subscribing. Well, I am and I did.

I found the T.F.T. micro-adventure Vagabond Thief! very interesting, but it had a few major flaws. The first, and the most obvious, was not about the design, but about you, the editor. I cannot possibly think why you would make such a stupid mistake as to leave out the map that was supposed to be under instruction no. 2. Without the map, the player has no way of knowing how big the rooms are, or where to place the denizens and obstacles. I hope you will include the map in Interplay no. 2.

I also find it hard to believe that a 32-point thief-type character can survive the adventure if he explores all the rooms. Consider the following:

1. A beginning thief character has to put a few more points on IQ than usual to take the necessary talents, so he will have a bit less combat ability than the average 32-point character. On the other hand, if the player takes a "human tank", he probably won't even be able to get into the building. And even if he does, he will be massacred by the trap(s).

2. The thief will encounter an average of about 3 wandering persons in the building, each of which will have an attribute total of about 34. It is possible that they will team up with you, but it will be only a 2 in 9 chance if you have no reaction roll modifiers. Besides this, in the first room the thief has to contend with 2 wolves, and in another room is a 38(1) point wizard. It seems like the only way for the thief to survive is if he gets help from WP's, and fast. And even then, his profits are cut in half.

The trap in the room behind door "C" is utterly ridiculous. The thief is given no chance to detect the trap, even if he searches both the door and the "body" under the covers. And if the thief triggers the trap, either by searching the "body" or attacking it, he is automatically killed by the poison gas.

Despite all this, the overall quality of the magazine was good, and I am looking forward to seeing more TFT variants and articles in future issues.

Tim Prokott  
Maplewood, MN

I apologize for omitting the maps for VAGABOND THIEF. You will have found them in the INTERPLAY 2 errata section. TH

You were wrong in thinking I'd like Interplay. I LOVE IT! Finally we, the loyal Metagamers, have a means to hear about the newest games from the best game co., METAGAMING! We also have a magazine that works for the serious Metagamers, not for advertisers.

Now, the Metagamers have a way to share their ideas, comments, views, and gripes. And we also know the wonderful people at Metagaming are listening. So, all you Metagamers out there, get off your duff's and get a subscription to Interplay, AND BE HEARD!

I only have one gripe about the first issue. David Doucettes' spells are great, but too powerful for the strength costs. Left the way they are, and IQ 20 wizard could wipe out an army with relatively little ST cost.

The weaker (and less potent) spells are fine left alone, but spells such as "Earthquake, Metamorph Others, Metamorph self, and Weakness" are much too powerful for their ST cost.

One suggestion would be to multiply the ST costs (of the

spells above) by five. Another idea would be to increase the no. of dice in the DX roll. Or, you could make the damage greater due to a 16,17, or 18 on the wizards' DX roll. Something along those lines.

I would like to know how I may be of some value to you. Specifically, how do I apply to write articles? I am 14, so would my being a minor complicate my application? Not that I have anything to write about now, but if I (or anyone else out there) have something in the future to write about, this information would (obviously) be very helpful.

In closing, I'd sincerely like to say that "Interplay" has the potential for becoming a great (and fun) magazine. I hope to see the same high amount of excellence Metagaming puts in its games in Interplay.

John Gfoeller  
Fremont, OH

Many thanks. Please send in what you have. Whether you have but a single new spell or question or you have a longer article. No one is excluded because of age.

See this issue's editorial for style suggestions. TH

First, congratulations are in order. The magazine is quite a success as an aid. Unfortunately, it is still quite a ways from its full potential. One thought that immediately pops to mind is the use of a "meeting house" page, run perhaps every other issue and highlighting the names (perhaps phone numbers if unlisted) of area players by major cities.

Another potential aid to players is hex-diagrams of such features as cities (remember: medieval cities were very small) and a logical way for some of the already expressed ideas to be introduced. Say a marketplace common to all of Cidri like the Intra-dimensional Bazaar of the Bizaare at Deva.

And now a word to David Doucette, a wizard that makes enough money to buy Youth potion just once a year stands a good chance of reaching IQ 30 and surpassing it simply by making weekly die-rolls. An example is a 2,537 year old wizard (chronologically) who recently passed away. (Pesky thing these lucky barbarians!) This wizard managed to reach IQ 140! Wouldn't it seem logical that such an intelligent wizard would have spells available that a lesser wizard couldn't fathom? By the way, I would not allow the 14hx dragons in unless they also attacked the summoner. Probably not then.

As for Scott Cramer, if you add great secrets and great treasure try these ideas:

1) Roll 2 dice for the books on a 2-7 it is untranslatable, on a 7-11 the knowledge is useless, on a 12 it is a great secret determined by a random die roll. For example how to make adamantium.

2) Adding something like that could require something like: "As you enter this room you hear a flat-toned voice say 'Red Alert. Red Alert Humanoid Intruder must not escape. Dispatching Security Drones to vicinity.'"

3) As for "Immense wealth" Security Station is in a low-metal part of Cidri. Peel off some wall and grab some wire if wealth is all you want!

Gregg Sharp  
Virginia Beach, VA

Anyone who wants may send their name and address to be posted. State the games you want most to play. TH

An excellent ad campaign! If it's so bad, I have to see for myself. Enclosed is a check for \$1.95 for A FISTFUL OF TURKEYS.

Lor M. Windle  
Jacksonville, NC



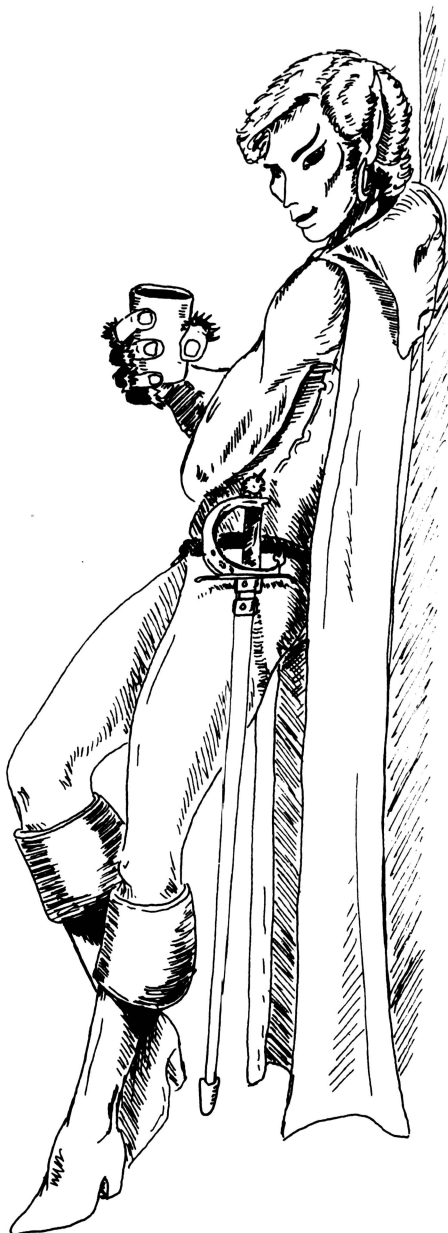
I really like your game "The Fantasy Trip." The only thing that I would suggest is that you come out with a book of monsters for the GM to stock his labyrinth with. The best way to do this would be to put a form at the end of each Fantasy Trip book asking the buyer to send in his favorite monster. Once you get enough of these forms, you can select the best monsters and publish a book of them as a Fantasy Trip supplement. I would suggest each monster entry have the following information. It's:

- 1) strength
- 2) dexterity
- 3) intelligence
- 4) number and type of attacks per turn
- 5) damage for each attack
- 6) movement allowance
- 7) number of hits its armour stops
- 8) special defenses
- 9) special attacks
- 10) behavior characteristics (eg. where it lives, its disposition etc.)
- 11) what myth or story (if any) it comes from

I think a book of monsters to supplement the "Flora and Fauna" section of In the Labyrinth, Game Master's Module would be a worthy addition to the Fantasy Trip series.

John J. Weins  
Omaha, NE

Good idea. We're working on it even now - see Howard's contest announcements in this issue. TH



#### INTERPLAY the metagamer dialogues

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