

Iridia

role-playing games and miniatures, old and new
by Christian Walker

On Point

I've been meaning to dust off my Star Frontiers rulebook. For this issue, I've finally decided to do so. I hope it's the start of a sporadic series of articles similar to the Iron Rations material for Basic D&D. Back in the day, my friends and I had a lot of fun with the game. I always ran Star Frontiers in a cyberpunk style, since I began playing it close to the time I read William Gibson's *Neuromancer* and Walter Williams' *Hardwired*. If my Star Frontiers material seems less space opera and more "street", you'll understand why.

Until next time, Christian

A Life Among The Stars

star frontiers

Gavin Light was happy to leave his old life behind. There was nothing for him on his homeworld except a failed marriage and a criminal record.

One year into his prison sentence for robbery, Gavin's cell block was visited by a personnel recruiter. The recruiter promised Gavin, and anyone else who was interested, a fresh start on Groth, a Dralasite world in the Frontier Sector. "Groth" didn't exactly roll off the tongue, but it had to be better than a 6' x 8' cell. All Gavin needed to do was serve two years in the planet's defense force and he would receive citizenship and a new identity. More importantly, he would be immediately paroled, which would shave four years off his sentence. Since Gavin had had about enough of prison, he immediately volunteered. With any luck, the old Gavin would be gone, along with his troubled past.

Gavin wasn't sure what to expect. He never saw himself as a soldier, but the recruiter assured him that everything would go smoothly and not to worry. The recruiter's exact words were, "You'll do nothing more dangerous than guard duty. The weapons training might even be fun. Think of it as a camping trip!" Gavin was, of course, skeptical. A clean slate was a lot to offer someone in exchange for two years of camping.

Two weeks later, Gavin found himself staring out the windows of a starliner's observation deck. On his lap, a lecturer on a holo-disk explained Dralasite physiology and culture. From what he was able to learn, Dralasites weren't exactly warlike, so perhaps two years in their military would pass smoothly. Dralasites seemed to be a very introspective, philosophical species, so they might even be able to help Gavin get his head straight. In just a few days the star liner would finally arrive in the Fromeltar system and his training would begin. It'd be interesting to see what the "camping trip" would really be like.

Note: The statblock at right represents Gavin before entering basic training. His abilities and skills will be updated as his story unfolds.

Gavin Light

human male (1.78m, 74.8kgs)

Abilities

Strength/Stamina: 45/45
Dexterity/Reaction Speed: 60/55
Intuition/Logic: 50/45
Personality/Leadership: 50/45
Initiative Modifier: +6

Skills (Military PSA):

Projectile Weapons-1
Martial Arts-1

Weapons

Hand-to-Hand: % to hit: 40, Dmg: 4

Equipment

Chronocom, 250 credits



Illustration by Min Yum

On My Bookshelf

reviews of things you need

Although battles in D&D are won and lost as a group, it's rare for player characters to focus on tactics and cohesive action. Usually, combat is a free-for-all, with PCs running willy nilly across the battle mat. This approach to combat often begins at the character creation level - feats in particular. Most feats are designed with the solitary hero in mind, despite the fact that role-playing games are a team effort.

In "A Dozen and Three Group Feats," Patrick Younts presents a fascinating selection of feats designed to make parties much more effective in combat. Characters will be required to sacrifice a bit of their individuality, but taking group feats will ensure that the party functions like a well-oiled battle machine.

This six page .pdf supplement also introduces something called "Tandem Feats." To work properly, two or more characters must possess the same feat for the benefit to be gained. The feats, Tandem Assault and Tandem Attack, model the tactics of Roman soldiers, or other, highly trained troops. Again, the idea is for the players to think of an adventuring group as a well-trained squad of fighters, rather than a loosely aligned group of strangers who wander around killing things for fun and profit.

The Tandem Feats reminded me of tactics employed by the players in an old campaign of mine. From 1985-1989, I ran a 1e AD&D game set in Greyhawk. There were six characters in the group and each was part of a "fire team," which consisted of two members. In battle, a character never left his fire team and all attacks were focused against a single foe. When doing so, a character and his fire team partner were very effective. I think that a pair of 3.5 fighters with Tandem Feats would be an awesome threat in combat, judging from my Greyhawk experience.

Although the feats might contribute to a min/max, powergame feel, I think they would be appropriate for the right kind of group. Certainly, characters with a military background should consider the feats. Moreover, characters who have spent some time fighting with one another, getting to know each other's strengths and weaknesses, would have a good role-playing excuse to maximize their combat potential.

I highly encourage you to purchase this supplement. At under \$2, how can you lose? The excellent archery feat at right is indicative of the quality. Please visit RPGNow.com today and do a keyword search for "A Dozen and Three Group Feats." You can also search for this supplement via its publisher, Ronin Arts.

Next week, I'll review another Ronin Arts supplement when I present "Behind the Spells - Dancing Lights" by Bret Boyd.



Cover Fire

You are very skilled at protecting your allies with suppressive cover fire. When you draw down your bow, you can devastate enemies who seek to harm your vulnerable allies.

Prerequisite: Combat Reflexes.

Benefits: While armed with a ranged weapon you can declare, as a full-round action, that you are providing cover fire for your allies. Until the start of your next turn, each time an ally within 60' performs an action that provokes an attack of opportunity, you can make an attack against any creature (or creatures) attempting to perform an attack of opportunity; if your attack successfully hits and inflicts damage, the creature is distracted, and suffers a -4 circumstance penalty to his attack roll. You can provide cover fire in this fashion a maximum number of times each round equal to the number of attacks of opportunity you can perform.

Since defending allies in this fashion requires absolute concentration, if you are struck while performing this action you must succeed at a Concentration check against DC 10 + damage inflicted. If the check is failed, you may not provide Cover Fire for the remainder of your turn.



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