

LEGionnaire

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AUGUST, 1990: DODGING ROCKS, FIGHTING SLOZEK AND WATCHING BRUTALVISION



After the unseemly gap between the first two issues of *LEGionnaire*, you were probably expecting another long, ugly wait. But we were not kidding when we said that producing *ALIENS™* was brutal, and we are indeed getting back on schedule. *LEGionnaire 4* will be available in October.

As promised, this time we have the Slozek for *Living Steel*, including the first drawings of them, as well as background on *BrutalVision* and Gregor, the Black Sword Dragon, from the *Dragonstar Rising* time period. Plus Rock Dodging for *Phoenix Command*, the usual news, and the *Neemis Enterprises* version of Golf.

3.1

The pace of the release schedule is accelerating from the *ALIENS*-induced crawl of the past year. This summer will see three new products hitting the shelves, as well as a number of reprints. *Trident / RMBK* and the reprints of the *Living Steel* hardcover and the *ALIENS* boardgame are available as you read this; if they are not, your local retailer is not doing his job.

The next item is that we were wrong in the last issue of *LEGionnaire*. (Shocking and sad, but true.) The next release for *Phoenix Command* will not be a reprint of the *Civillian Weapon Data Supplement*, as we promised; it will be the *Phoenix Command Artillery System*. As noted in the back of 3rd Edition PC, it includes field pieces, rockets, and mortars from World War II to the present, and covers the full spectrum of Indirect Fire weapons as well as the special rules necessary for Forward Observers, Battery Fire, and so on. It is 72 pages long, costs \$11.95, and should be in stores about Labor Day. The Direct Fire weapons will be in the PC Artillery Direct Fire WDS, which will be released with the PC Mechanized rules, early in 1991. That will have the Anti-Tank Guns, Recoilless Rifles, and Anti-Tank Rockets.

The *Civillian WDS* and the reprint of the *Phoenix Command Advanced Damage Tables* should be available some time after Artillery; as we said before, we have to squeeze them in among the rest of the production, but we will do our best for you.

On the *Living Steel* front, *Rhand:2349* will be released in September/October, and will be followed soon after by either *Heavy Metal: Power Armor Sourcebook*, or *Renaissance and Ruins: The Vartac Sourcebook*. *Heavy Metal* will include full details on a wide range of Power Armor types, both Seven Worlds and Starguild, as well as detailed Hit Location and Damage Tables for each suit along the same lines as those in *Dragonstar Rising*. For those of you who do not have *Dragonstar Rising* (and you are bringing shame upon your houses), these Tables feature easy ways of tracking damage to the suit's systems, as well as built-in Glancing tables (which greatly enhance survivability, by the way). *Heavy Metal* will also include a wide variety of new Auxiliary Packs. For those who have *Dragonstar Rising*, it will greatly broaden your Power Armor information; for those without *Dragonstar Rising*, it is probably vital. No kidding; it will make that big a difference.

NEWS FROM THE EDGE

"Adjusting Fire,
1000 Meters Left...
No, no, the other Left!"

Axly
Forward Observer for a Day
PC Artillery

Renaissance and Ruins will provide background information on the Vartac area, as first presented in **Trident:RMBK**, and will include the Subcon's surviving machinery, all the interesting people (and a few of the boring ones), and information on the activities of the Trident troops who evacuated RA2. Duncan, the White Sword Dragon who led Phoenix Strike in **Dragonstar Rising** is among them, and he is keeping very busy.

Next up is **ALIENS**, and yes, there is more to come. The **ALIENS Role-Playing Game** will be out in the immediate future; it is completed, but is awaiting approval from the good people at 20th Century Fox. This has been a slow process, because they are pretty heavily occupied with **Bart Simpson** at the moment. The system is a streamlined form of the **Living Steel** system, and full **Phoenix Command** data is included for the weapons and the Aliens, of course. The release date? Ask Bart. (Actually, it should be very soon.) **ALIENS RPG** will be followed by a line of **ALIENS** miniatures as soon as we line up a suitable producer; those of you who have discussed miniatures with us at the booth know that we had an unpleasant experience with a miniatures company that malfunctioned immediately after we agreed to give them our miniatures rights. That company is long gone now, though, and **ALIENS** miniatures should be on the way, with **Living Steel** and **Phoenix Command** miniatures sometime soon after.

And the best news we have saved for last. This coming December, Twentieth Century Fox will release **PREDATOR II**, starring Danny Glover (**Lethal Weapon**) and Bill Paxton (**ALIENS**), and we have secured the rights to the board and role-playing games for the movie. The games will be out when the movie opens, and the systems for the RPG will be identical to those in the **ALIENS RPG**: again, **PC** data will be included.

And a last word about release schedules; we know it is frustrating for you when we get behind, and in a perfect world we probably would not even project release dates, knowing how unreliable they can be. But we have to develop release dates for the sake of our distributors, even if they are not precisely written in stone. We cannot be too far behind them, because it infuriates all of you good people and prevents our distributors from doing their jobs; at the same time we cannot be generous in scheduling, because if a product arrives too early, we will not have the orders established, and we end up in trouble. So we take a good, long look at things and make our best estimate, allowing a little padding. If we hit a production snag with some aspect of a product (the card stock for the **ALIENS** counters had to be specially ordered from what seems to be the only place that makes double-coated card stock of that heavy a grade; kiss two weeks goodbye on that problem alone), then we come in late. And if something goes well (the ballistic data programs for **PC Artillery** were less of a nightmare than we allowed for, and we confirmed our data sources much more quickly than we had expected), then we come out ahead of schedule. So take the dates with just a grain of salt, keep your fingers crossed, and if you get too ticked off, write us a cranky letter.

"If all of your friends
threw themselves on
grenades, would you
do it too?"

Sgt. Servo
PC Artillery

3.2

PHOENIX COMMAND

Most of the general news about **Phoenix Command** is given above. The only points which should be added are that the **Mechanized Combat System** will include squad level combat, as well as the traditional **PC** man-to-man scale; that the **High-Tech WDS** has nearly sold out, and is only available by mail order and at conventions for the next few months; and that work on the **PC RPG** is continuing, and it should be out next summer.

Dodging Rocks

Rules for Thrown Rocks, Bottles, and Bricks were included in Section 3.3 of the **Special Weapons WDS**. One aspect of the use of Thrown Weapons that was omitted was something that does not come up when dealing with bullets; Dodging. Because thrown objects move fairly slowly, a combatant can usually step out of the way if he sees one coming. That is the trick, of course, and while rocks are easy to spot if you are looking the right way, in a riot or melee it is much more difficult to keep track of what is going on.

The chance of Spotting a Thrown Weapon is shown on the following table. In general, the Combat Skill Level of the Target should be cross-indexed with the type of incoming weapon; the number given is the percent chance that the Target will see the object and have the option of Dodging it.

SPOTTING A THROWN WEAPON			
Target's Combat Skill Level	Rock or Knife	Bottle Dagger Javelin	Brick Axe Spear
0	-	15	50
1	27	56	75
2	52	72	83
3	64	79	87
4	71	83	90
5-6	78	87	92
7-9	84	90	94
10-12	88	93	95
13-15	90	94	96
16-20	92	95	97

The above odds apply to all objects which are thrown from within the Target's Field of View. They assume a situation analogous to a line of riot police faced with a crowd of rock throwers; multiple objects are coming in, but the targets have a clear view of their assailants and are not distracted.

The following modifiers are applied to the chance of Spotting a Thrown Weapon.

If the number of people throwing objects is less than or equal to 1/2 of the target's Combat Skill Level, then 4 should be added to the target's Combat Skill Level when entering the table.

If the Target is Aiming, then there is no chance of Spotting an incoming object.

If the Target is using some but not all of its Actions during a Phase, then the chance of Spotting the incoming projectile is reduced. Just roll a number from 1 to the Target's Combat Actions; if the number rolled is less than or equal to the number of Actions being used during the Phase, then the Target does not see the object; if the roll is greater, then the table is used in the normal way.

If the object is thrown from within 1/2 the weapon's Maximum Range, there is a chance that the target will not have enough time to Dodge. The following table gives the chance of successfully Dodging a projectile which is thrown from short range.

SHORT RANGE DODGING TABLE	
Percent of Maximum Range	Chance of Dodging
over 50%	Automatic
41 to 50%	85
31 to 40%	40
21 to 30%	25
11 to 20%	20
10% or less	-

If the Target elects to Dodge the object, the act of Dodging takes 2 Actions. The exception to this is if the Target is behind cover, or is carrying a Riot Shield or similar protective device. If that is the case, then the Target can perform a normal Reflex Duck behind cover, per the normal Ducking rules. Note that the Target must decide whether to Dodge or not before the attacker rolls to see if the object hits.

"Look on the bright side. All those bottles they threw at us are Redeemable."

Officer Stuart Tank

3.3

LIVING STEEL

"Four of us were guarding the Vehicle Park when the attack came. We heard grav vehicles, explosions, gunfire... but we stayed at our post. Then we heard a noise on the roof, and this thing dropped right in front of us..."

Morben Skinner
Landcaste Law Enforcement
Living Steel

The Spectrals are a race of immense power, yet they possess bizarre, dangerous blind spots. They can use technology, but they cannot build it; their numbers are vast, but their ability to reproduce seems sharply limited; they move swiftly, but they cannot travel beyond a limited range from their Lairs. Because of these limitations, they have client races like the Trank and the Slozek. Yet the Spectrals cannot allow just any race to serve them, because a race with too many abilities that the Spectrals lack would be a serious threat to them.

Consequently, before they begin use of a race as a client, they sculpt it, weaken it, and destroy its independence. For the Trank, this sculpting process ended in a creature that could build, but which could not create something new. For the Slozek, the Spectrals' light infantry, the limitations are quite different.

The Slozek

As mentioned in *Living Steel*, the Slozek are humanoid carnivores. Although they must be considered intelligent creatures, they are certainly not thinkers in the classic sense. Asking a Slozek what it thinks of life in the universe or the latest sports scores will bring no response; they are not capable of dealing with such concepts.

They are adept at manipulating technological devices, however, and their eye-hand coordination is superb. Their thought and decision-making processes are extremely swift and are uncluttered with the higher functions that we associate with human intelligence. In a way, their intelligence is simply a higher order of instinct. Where it differs from the abilities of animals and from human reflexes is that they are able to incorporate tools, equipment, and abstract concepts of threat, action, and planning into their 'instinct'.

The Slozeks' odd mix of intellect and instinct extends primarily into the field of military matters. The impressive combat abilities of the Slozek, based in part on quickness and coordination and in part on cooperation and an excellent grasp of tactics, are enhanced by a complete lack of fear or anxiety. A Slozek is aware of risks and optimizes its actions to minimize danger and maximize gain, but these are utterly unemotional decisions.

The ability of the Slozek to cooperate in all matters, but with special efficiency on the field of battle, is tied in part to their unusual reproductive cycle.

Reproduction

Each Slozek has a full set of sexual organs, and is capable of bearing young alone. Young created in this way are clones of the parent, however, which is a weakness for the species. Additionally, Slozek only activate their ability to reproduce in response to an ancient mating ritual, which normally occurs at the end of a long hunt or a military campaign. This conscious control over reproduction allows a Slozek Clan to match the growth of its population to the expansion of its food supply, and makes it easy to replace casualties from hunting or war.

In the distant past, the Ritual was conducted by a **Leader**, a special type of Slozek. A Clan normally had three Leaders, each of which would control roughly one-third of the Clan (called a **Sept**) during hunts and battles, and the eldest of which would make the overall decisions. The Leaders were slightly more independent and intelligent than normal Slozek, and were the only ones who had an instinctive knowledge of the movements, dances, and other aspects of the Ritual which triggered Slozek reproduction. Because of this, the loss of all three Leaders meant the members of the Clan could no longer reproduce, and that the Clan would die out. Since Slozek Leaders tended to lead from the front, this was not an uncommon occurrence.

For the Ritual, three pairs of Slozek were selected. The Leaders were always included in these pairs, along with normal Slozek who had distinguished themselves in some way. These three pairs of Slozek would fertilize each other, creating Slozek which were



"...It was lean and broad-shouldered, with big, emotionless eyes. I had seen pictures of them so I knew it immediately; Slozek, the things the Spectrals use for light infantry..."

Morben Skinner
Living Steel

Slozek

mixtures of the genetic materials of both parents and not simply clones, and which were the only ones capable of growing into Leaders. In addition to the six potential Leaders which would be created by these three pairs, a number of other Slozek would have their internal reproduction capability triggered. The number triggered depended on the casualties sustained, or on the expansion of the food supply. Although these Slozek produced only clones, they provided a quick, extremely efficient way of expanding the numbers of the Clan.

After the mating ritual, the Clan settled into a single location and restricted its activities to routine hunting. The gestation period of a Slozek was about three months, and at birth the infant Slozek weighed only 4 or 5 pounds. It grew rapidly, however, and was largely self-sufficient and fully mobile at the age of 3 months. At this point, when the young were three months old, the Clan resumed its normal activities. By the age of 3 years, the Slozek was a fully grown Adult. As the young Leaders reached maturity, their ritual abilities and independence would fade away unless the Clan had less than three Leaders. If that was the case, the most powerful young Slozek Leader(s) would assume the vacancy (or vacancies). The other proto-Leaders would simply become new types of normal Slozek, and provided the race with its evolutionary advancement.

The advantages to this strange reproductive cycle are significant. The fact that any Slozek can reproduce means that a Clan which has suffered severe losses, or which has expanded its food supplies, can quickly generate new members. Since these new members are exact duplicates of existing Clan members, there is no question of adapting to new behaviors, or of absorbing the new members into the Clan; they are simply clones of their parents, and are well-adapted to the Clan at birth. Additionally, the similarity of gene

"...It just looked at us for a split-second, those dead eyes staring out from under the thick brow-ridge, and I remember thinking that it didn't seem interested in us..."

Morben Skinner
Living Steel

structure within a Clan means that the Leaders know what to expect from their followers. While too much sameness would not be a good thing, it is valuable to have troops that are reasonably uniform in their behavior.

The obvious weakness of the system is the requirement that a Leader initiate the Ritual which allows reproduction. This was presumably developed as a way of controlling population growth, so the Slozek would not overpopulate or destroy their food supplies, and also serves as a method of purging ineffective Clans from the species; when the Leaders are killed, the Clan dies and a more capable Clan will take over the area. On the other hand, the complete dependence of the normal Slozek on their Leaders for all reproduction means that even the strongest, healthiest Clans are tragically vulnerable to any mishap or threat which destroys their Leaders. Long ago, that is exactly what happened to the entire Slozek species.

The Spectrals came to the Slozek's homeworld, and studied them long enough to learn how to imitate the Ritual. As they mastered the Ritual, they killed the Leaders of the Slozek and replaced them with a new type of Spectral, the Missionary. The Missionary can duplicate the Ritual and trigger Slozek reproduction, and also knows how to command Slozek in combat. Within a few years, the entire Slozek race was under the control of the Spectrals and their Missionaries.

With complete control over Slozek reproduction, the Spectrals have been able to slowly transform the Slozek into an ideal client race. Only those which lack all individuality and which respond perfectly to Missionary control have been allowed to reproduce, and now entire Clans are made up of the descendants of single Slozek. Cooperation among the Slozek is naturally at an all-time high, although the uniformity of reaction and behavior makes them a less lethal foe than the Slozek of old. They are certainly lethal enough for the purposes of the Spectrals, however, and their uniformity makes them much easier to control.

On Rhand, the Missionaries remained on board the Spectral ship when the Slozek combat teams dropped on the Power Generators. They were destroyed along with the Spectral ship, of course, and so the Slozek are currently without Leaders and are very vulnerable. With no Leaders whatsoever, and with no Missionaries continuing to issue commands, they are poorly organized and are unable to reproduce. Anyone who knows the Slozeks' secret has the opportunity to take control of them.

The Spectrals know the secret, and it is likely that they will teach it to Pawns and to other human servants. There are people within Operation Seven Swords who also know the Ritual, however, and they too will try to reach the Slozek, to keep them free from Spectral control. There are also reports that there are even a few real Slozek Leaders on Rhand. Where they have come from is unknown, as is their purpose. If they are able to reach the Clans, they could change the course of the future for every Slozek on Rhand.

Deployment

When the Spectral craft passed over the southern polar regions of Rhand, it released a total of 61 Grav Vehicles filled with Slozek. The first wave consisted of 21 Grav APC's, each carrying aSept (squad) of 14 Slozek, which launched the initial assaults. The 21 Septs made up 7 complete Clans, two of which were Vanguard and 5 which were Assault Clans, described below. Of the six Septs which made up the Vanguard Clans, one went to each of the five Power Generators and the sixth was held as a reserve.

The first wave was followed closely by 40 Grav Carriers, each with a full Pursuit Clan of 30 Slozek on board. The Carriers delivered their cargo to the surface, and then rejoined the Spectral craft on its next orbit. The Clans were assigned to the five Power Generators, to the Trident Law Enforcement facility, and to other key sites in the south polar region. In the fighting which followed, two of the Power Generators were disabled, but the Slozek were left with substantial control of the area, including the Magellan Mountains and Riktor, Viktor, and Vela Islands.

Although the Slozek have the military capability to expand beyond this area, their Missionaries have been killed and the orders given to the Slozek did not include instructions regarding what they should do once the Generators and other targets were secured.



"...But then it fired two quick bursts, and Strad and I were the only ones left. I broke for the door and ran for it. Strad never came out."

Morben Skinner
Living Steel

Angry Slozek

They have been thrown back on ancient instincts and are attempting to set up secure areas of operations, but their inability to think independently limits them. Captured Humans are handling many of the decision making tasks for the Slozek, under the threat of death if events do not proceed favorably. These Humans are consequently acting with caution and attempting to simply establish stable food supplies and to find replacement technicians and other specialized personnel. Thoughts of expansion and conquest have been shelved for the time being, and the Slozek are as concerned as Slozek can be about the absence of Missionaries.

Unit Composition and Numbers

Each Slozek unit is a self-contained Clan, and is divided into three Septs, which receive their orders from the three Missionaries assigned to the Clan. There are two different sizes of Clan; one is deployed in a group of three Grav APC's, and one fits in a single Grav Carrier. Those in APC's are either Assault or Vanguard Clans, and have a total of 42 Slozek in Septs of 14 Slozek each, with one Sept per APC. Those which travel in Grav Carriers are called Pursuit Clans, and have Septs of 10 Slozek for a total of 30 in the Clan.

As mentioned above, 5 Assault, 2 Vanguard, and 40 Pursuit Clans landed; this is a total of 1494 Slozek. Their casualties during their initial operations were light, and they have had no serious troubles since the Invasion, as there are few Humans near the Pole. So far, no organized group has attempted to evict the Slozek from their positions, due to possible damage to the Power Generators and justifiable respect for the Slozeks' abilities.

Equipment

Slozek are generally equipped with a Combat Suit with Level 1 Armor Panels, a Lase Assault Rifle (LAR8), and the same type of support equipment (food, water, frame pack, and so forth) as carried by Humans. In each Sept there is one Slozek which carries a Lase Assault Rifle with a Grenade Launcher attached (LARGL8), and members of Assault Clans are equipped with Level 2 Armor Panels for their Combat Suits. Vanguard Clan members wear Level 3 Panels on their Combat Suits, and carry much of the special equipment listed below.

The following pieces of equipment have recently appeared in Slozek units. They are specifically designed for the Slozek, and are very different from the equipment available in Human military forces. Although they are manufactured by the Trank, they bear the marks of Dragoncrest design. The reason for this remains a mystery.

Ultrasonic Speaker: Slozek hearing goes well into the ultrasonic, and some of their natural speech occurs in ranges which are not audible to Humans. Because of this, they commonly use a combat language which is entirely ultrasonic and which allows them to move in apparent silence on the battlefield, while passing commands and information to each other. The Ultrasonic Speaker attaches to the neck of the user, and functions as an ultrasonic megaphone, allowing the transmission of orders over far larger areas.

Infiltration Harness: This special piece of equipment is worn by five members of each Vanguard Sept. It is a normal fighting harness with a gas operated Grappling Hook Launcher attached to it. The Launcher is silent, has a range of 100 feet, and is aimed like a Slivergun (SMP8). Once the Grappling Hook hits its target and attaches itself, the automatic Ascender contained in the Harness is activated, and lifts the Slozek. The Ascender allows the Slozek to be pulled up with its hands free and all Combat Actions available. The speed of the ascent is 1 Hex per Impulse, and the power for the Ascender comes from a normal Lase Power Pack, which has enough energy for three uses. The Launcher can also be used to withdraw from a battlefield. It is fired into a pickup net hanging from a Slozek Grav APC as it makes a slow pass. The Hook simply contacts the net, and controls aboard the vehicle pull in the user.

Lightning Bug: This is a 3 pound bomb which disperses an aerosol spray of conductive filaments into the air, which are then sucked into the cooling vents and other air intakes of nearby equipment. After 1 minute, a room which is 3 hexes on a side is completely filled, and the filaments have been absorbed into all exposed equipment. At this point the device detonates, causing a massive current surge which arcs through the filament-filled air. The current is thereby channeled into the grounds and components of all exposed equipment, and destroys it. For salvage and repair purposes, the equipment has taken irreparable damage. This device is used as a convenient and very thorough sabotage device, and three are carried in each Vanguard Sept.

SkateBoots: These are special attachments worn by all Vanguard Slozek. They lower motorized rollers from the sides of the wearer's boots, which allow silent movement on normal flooring and other smooth surfaces. The speed of the rollers is 1 Hex per Impulse. The rollers automatically retract in response to firm downward pressure.

Climbing Gear: This is a 15 pound backpack which has special boot and wrist attachments. The boots and wrist pads have suction cups which are controlled by the backpack power supply; the backpack creates a powerful vacuum, allowing the cups to adhere more powerfully than would be possible with manual application. This piece of equipment is worn by three in each Vanguard Sept, and allows the wearer to climb almost any vertical surface, for the use of 3 Combat Actions per Hex.

Silent Breach Equipment: This device uses a powerful water jet to cut through windows and walls. It will cut through 10 PF Inches per Impulse, and has power and cutting fluid enough for 100 Impulses in a single load. The unit is specifically designed to breach the high-security windows of Starguild installations and is silent. The only evidence it leaves behind is water vapor. Each weighs 20 pounds, and there are two per Sept.

"War is Swell."

Chevok
Slozek Leader
Living Steel

We have two articles that are based in Dragonstar Rising. The first covers BrutalVision, a "sports" network that spans the time from the early days of the Seven Worlds right up to the time of Living Steel. The second is part of the story of Gregor, a Black Sword Dragon. He is a man who is at the heart of Operation Seven Swords, and one who spent his early years exposed to the worst aspects of the BrutalVision system.

DRAGONSTAR RISING

BrutalVision

The wealthiest and most influential of all Humans are the Starcaste, and the power wielded by them is channeled through two types of people; executives and soldiers. Business, finance, and politics are the general arena of the executives, while the soldiers maintain the military might which lies behind the political maneuvering, and which guarantees that the Starcaste retain their power. Not all members of the Starcaste are disciplined and driven enough to be soldiers or executives, however. Many have been spoiled by their wealth and privileges, and spend their lives in the pursuit of thrills and entertainment. Because of their great wealth, there are many people willing to supply them with whatever it takes to bring them pleasure. This decadent portion of the Starcaste was not large in the time of Dragonstar Rising, but it has grown through the many decades since then, and the Spectral Invasion swelled the ranks of the pleasure seekers to unmatched levels. From the very beginning of the Starguild, there has been one entertainment service that has remained a popular success; BrutalVision.

BrutalVision was an entertainment production company founded in the 21st Century by a subsidiary of Neemis Enterprises. Initially it presented events which featured contact sports and a variety of combat-oriented contests. These events were not unlike football games and boxing matches, and for a time they were available to all levels of Starguild society.

It was not very long before the staff at BrutalVision began extending their sporting events in new directions. This was to be expected, given their relationship with Neemis Enterprises. The events became more violent, and the contests around which they were built became less important; it became clear that BrutalVision was presenting violence for the sake of violence alone.

The quality of the events naturally suffered, and for a time the audience for BrutalVision events declined, but as the degeneration of the sports continued a new audience was developed. The angriest and most violent of the Bondsmen became fascinated by BrutalVision, and the violence of the sports extended into their lives. Conflicts between higher-caste persons and Bondsmen became more common, there was a noticeable increase in rebellious acts and in sabotage, and it became common for large areas of Bondsmen communities to dissolve into rioting after BrutalVision broadcasts. In 2080, the largest of the BrutalVision riots occurred on New Eden; a spontaneous orgy of violence, looting, and assaults on higher-caste persons which lasted for 6 days, until Imperial and Starcaste military forces were called in. Dozens of people died in the riot.

BrutalVision was immediately pulled off the air, of course, and all production on new events was halted. Three years later, however, BrutalVision was back, under the ownership of a coalition of Corporations. It was on a smaller scale, it was again within the boundaries of organized sporting events (of a sort), and it was presented only to Starcaste audiences. The new BrutalVision found an avid following among the thrill-seekers of the Starcaste, and before long it was something of a "cult classic". Added to the excitement of watching Humans and non-Humans battling each other was the knowledge that they were watching a form of entertainment so rough that it had been banned for a time, and was still restricted to the elite. It was an easy way for jaded Starcaste citizens to capture the sensations of facing physical danger and of breaking the law, without having to deal with any real risks.

**"Neemis Enterprises –
Where you want it.
When you want it.
No refund, no return."**

Neemis Enterprises Ad
Dragonstar Rising

"I don't care what this all means. They just wanted a killer, and I'm the best."

Braxudrev
Brutalypics Contestant
KViSR Rocks!

"The only thing I miss is the roar of the crowd."

Braxudrev

It was not until after 2295, with the fall of the Dragoncrests, that BrutalVision underwent its next change. At that time it became possible to encounter, capture, and even raise and train a wide variety of species from within Dragoncrest space which had been bred solely as combatants. The Dragoncrests of course are great lovers of battle, of almost any type, and there were many life forms on their planets which were ideal for a gladiatorial arena. As these species were added to BrutalVision's programming, the events became noticeably bloodier. Rules were changed which allowed the killing of many of the new species, although there were those who felt they were intelligent races. The influence of the BrutalVision aficionados (and their money) kept the programs on the air, however. The network was so popular that many wealthy people began fielding their own teams in various BrutalVision events and competing with rival members of the Starcaste, and an informal league came into existence.

Shortly after the Spectral Invasion, BrutalVision advanced to the next stage in its evolution (or devolution, depending on how one looks at these things.) An extremely wealthy Starcaste playboy named Hosef Alfred Pharra married his fifth wife, and on his honeymoon he took the time to reflect on the state of the Imperium. He saw unmistakable signs of decay all around him, and after studying early battle reports he became one of the first to appreciate the full threat of the Spectrals. The combination convinced him that he should change his life, and being a man of action, he did so. On his return from his honeymoon, he began divesting himself of all his holdings, converting them into huge stores of cash and into shares in the BrutalVision network. He convinced his brother and sister, who were equally wealthy, to join him, and together the three accumulated a controlling interest in BrutalVision. Together, they mapped out their future.

All three of them moved to Rhand, knowing it to be one of the most beautiful and unspoiled worlds in the Imperium, and knowing also that it was as far from the Spectrals as one could get and still remain in touch with the Imperium's elite and the fine things in life. They then announced the creation of a new BrutalVision event; the Brutalypics. All of the events in the Brutalypics were taken to the greatest extremes, and the last remaining safeguards for the athletes were removed. Every organization which fielded any kind of BrutalVision team was invited to join, with a single purpose in mind; to determine the Brutalypics Universal Champions, in a great event held on Rhand. The announcement of the Brutalypics was accompanied by a great deal of hype and advertising, supplied by the Pharras' immense bankroll, and there was immediate popular support. Perhaps it was the subdued feelings of panic aroused by the Spectral Invasion, and the bad news coming from the front. Perhaps it was the astute lobbying by the Pharras that reopened BrutalVision broadcasts to the Landcaste and Bondsman in 2344. Perhaps the Brutalypics simply tapped into an old, ugly part of human nature in a new and unprecedented way. Regardless, the attention focussed on the Brutalypics was immense, and the response from Corporations and private citizens who wished to field teams was very satisfying to Hosef Pharra and his family.

In 2347, the Brutalypics began. Teams from all across the Imperium began moving toward Rhand in a tightly orchestrated dance. The intent was to eliminate all but the finest teams from the competition before they reached Rhand. On every world, teams "performed" for huge crowds, and with every passing round, with each team eliminated, the public interest in the Brutalypics grew.

At the time of the Spectral Invasion of Rhand, many of the teams had arrived on the planet, and they were simply waiting for the remaining teams to arrive and the high-profile conflict between the Imperium and RMBK to blow over. Once the full attention of the Starguild could be focussed on the Brutalypics, the Pharras would stage the biggest and most violent sporting event in the history of Humanity.

Now, the teams are simply roving groups and individuals possessing rather unusual skills and attitudes, and the Pharras' dream of the Brutalypics is gone forever. But there is a certain message contained in what they almost created. Their willingness to gamble their every possession, coupled with an odd dream that went far beyond what anyone would ever consider acceptable, combined to make them giants in the eyes of the people of the Starguild. Weird giants, twisted, sick giants, but giants nonetheless.

Gregor: Black Sword Dragon

Of all the positions within the Seven Swords, none is more rare than that of the Black Sword Dragon. These are people who have lost all hope for themselves and who ask little more than the chance to die for their dreams, but who retain enough emotional balance to plan carefully and to lead wisely. To the Black Sword Dragons fall the most difficult burdens, and the most unbearable sorrows. There are only a handful of them, and Gregor is their leader.

The earliest known assignment for Gregor was in the middle of the 21st Century, on the strange and brutal world of Menreudh. It does not lie on any of the normal paths among the stars, and is the private and little known property of a nameless Starcaste consortium. It is mostly Earthlike, although it is a dangerous world, and its technology is very limited. The only sentients on the world are Humans, scattered around a single continent on Menreudh in many small cultures. Most of these societies are violent and without sophistication or ethics, but there is a single society that is very different. These people call themselves the Maecenae, and they are in fact a very cultured people.

Literacy and the arts are greatly respected among the Maecenae, as are many of the ideals which are common in the Seven Worlds; honesty, courage, loyalty, and so forth. As an organized, rational, and healthy society, they have little to fear from the world around them. The natural dangers of Menreudh can easily be held at bay, and the violent but disorganized groups which are nearby are no match for the superior technology, training, and leadership of the Maecenae. Only a single burden afflicts their society; the Tithe.

The Tithe is applied to all of the cultures of Menreudh, and was created by the mysterious Starcaste group which owns the world. Every year, each culture must give up a few of its strongest and brightest children, as a Tithe to the rulers of the world. The children taken are chosen from those who are five years old, and they are given to the Dark Rider who travels ceaselessly, from village to village. For twenty years, from 2158 to 2178, Gregor served as the Dark Rider.

The Rider's circuit takes a full year, as he travels from Enifil, the central city of Menreudh, to each of the other societies. At each stop, he picks up the children who have been chosen for the Tithe, and takes them with him as he continues his circuit. Most of these children have been trained to fight and to survive from an early age, as they belong to societies which know little more than violence. Gathered and led by the Dark Rider, who does nothing for their welfare beyond ensuring that they are fed and protected from wild animals, they are taken to Enifil for combat training.

Forced to travel together, the casualties among the children during the circuit are high. They have only native savagery to protect them from the elements and the dangers of the wild. Although the Dark Rider always drives away any beasts which attack, he is not always able to do so before children are injured or killed; he is also unable to protect them from each other. For the children of the Maecenae, the time on the circuit is especially dangerous. They are raised in a society with little brutality, where the only warriors are those who choose it as a profession. Their experiences are mostly those of children who have been raised by loving families in safe and healthy surroundings, and the abrupt transition to the dangers of nature and the savagery of the other children is often fatal.

Once the children arrive at Enifil, they are entered into grueling combat training with a wide range of hand-to-hand weapons. This training program lasts for 11 years, until the children are in their late teens, and the death rate remains high. Only one child in eight survives the full cycle, from being picked up at the age of five to graduation from the combat schools. The mortality rate for the untrained children of the Maecenae is even higher.

After graduation, the survivors are discreetly sold to a very special clientele, in a secret auction. The eventual fates of these graduates vary widely, but a large percentage end up on BrutalVision teams. They are, after all, the most highly trained warriors in the Starguild, at least with medieval weapons. Others end up as members of the Imperial military, as Starcaste bodyguards and killers, or in the Imperial Secret Service.

The fate of the children of the Maecenae is different. The handful of them who survive the grueling, 12 year ordeal are bought, at a high price, by representatives of the Seven Swords Special Service (S-4). They are taken to the Seven Worlds (or to hidden S-4 bases,

**"Mission Update:
Pursuing a band of
enemy agents... They
were brought here as
part of a sporting
event, and broke out of
their training camp at
the beginning of the
Apocalypse... At every
encounter I have been
impressed by their
skill. If you discover
some trace of who
they might be, please
inform me at my next
contact. It is, however,
more a point of curios-
ity now. I have at-
tended to 7 of them;
only 2 remain..."**

Gregor
Black Sword Dragon
Living Steel

when there is no safety in the Seven Worlds), and roles are found for them in that society. Although most are deeply scarred by their experiences, there is some rehabilitation for them in the sanity of the Seven Worlds environment, and they are generally able to create lives for themselves. Many become soldiers or trainers, putting their hard-won skills to use in defense of their new home. The best of them become members of S-4, and provide the agency with its most talented and powerful personnel. There are many of the Maecenae in the S-4, and some of the names are familiar; Niki, Sol, and Darantz are three of the most visible.

To be a part of this was Gregor's burden. A solitary agent on a hostile world, he could not stop the Tithe. He could not even assist the Maecenae, in spite of the fact that he respected and admired them, and considered them to be the peers of the people of the Seven Worlds; to do so would draw attention to their special qualities, and to his bias. Instead, he was forced to watch silently as they passed through their ordeal, and could take only a single action to provide them with hope for the future; he altered the identity papers for the Maecenae children, so that they appeared in the files as children from other areas. It was an easy ruse, because the children knew nothing of how they were kept track of, and those who received the children in Enifil knew nothing of where each child was from. As a result, when the graduated children were bought by S-4 representatives, there was no sign that the children of a specific area were attracting special interest.

By 2178, other S-4 agents had infiltrated the operation of the Tithe, and were able to alter the records of the children once they reached Enifil. At the same time, the technology used in collecting the Tithe was updated, and the position of the Rider was made obsolete. Gregor moved on to other duties within S-4, but the suffering of the children of Menruadh has stayed with him ever since, and fuels his devotion to the cause of the Seven Worlds.

3.5

FROTH ON!

And now, directly from the mechanical pencil of Barry Nakazono, the latest sports craze.

Neemis Golf

The sport of **Neemis Golf**, also called **Golf Carts and Bang Sticks**, first aired on **BrutalVision** in 2079, shortly before the program was cancelled. It was invented a year earlier, when Neemis executives engaged in a round of golf with one of Neemis' most vehement opponents, a member of the press named **Narjack Simms**. The Corporation had been suffering from extremely bad public relations, and it was felt that a civilized gesture toward the press would help. After many long months of rehearsal and hundreds of hours attempting to mold a new image, the Neemis executives felt they were ready to alter Simms' attitudes by spending some time with him. Golf was considered a cultured game and the Neemis executives invited Simms to play a round at the exclusive **Heisson Athletics Club**.

Needless to say, the game didn't go well. The executives soon found it exceptionally aggravating and that it lacked any outlet for the adrenaline and frustration it built up. Violence erupted on the back nine as the Neemis group clashed with the bodyguards who were protecting Narjack. These bodyguards had been brought specifically to irritate the Neemis group, and the ensuing riot was exactly what Narjack figured he would get; another exclusive front page story. Unfortunately, Narjack was severely injured in the battle, and was unable to enjoy his new fame. He suffered a broken nose and a broken neck, and was paralyzed for the rest of his life.

Neemis Enterprises' plans were again in ruins, but Neemis personnel have never been the sort to worry over spilled blood. The executives had found the golf carts and the clubs quite pleasant, except that the clubs were too flimsy. The Neemis Enterprises design crew went to work, and Neemis Golf was born.

The sport is played in the open air on manicured greens. Each "hole" is a large crater in the ground, measuring from 100 to 300 yards in diameter. In this grass-covered crater

"Your money can talk all it wants; my gun will make the decisions."

Victor Gantz
Vartac Security
Trident/RMBK

are a number of obstacles, such as trees, water hazards, sand pits, dead falls, mine fields, punji stakes, and so forth. Players select clubs and carts as they enter the course. Different groups enter from opposite sides of the course, so some groups play the holes from 1 to 18, while others play from 18 to 1. As with normal golf, a new group enters the course every few minutes, so each group "plays" a different opponent at each hole.

Game play begins as each cart enters the hole from opposite sides. The carts are heavily armored, but have a number of holes of various sizes in the sides. Additionally, there is a wide slot in the armor which extends around the entire cart at about shoulder height, through which the Poleman sticks his club. The cart's Driver maneuvers for position while the Poleman on the back of the cart attempts to engage the opposing cart. Each cart can carry up to 6 polemen, but only one can play at a time. The Poleman picks one of his clubs, which are differentiated by their length (from 3 feet to 14 feet). These clubs have explosive charges on the end, and each team attempts to impale the opposing Driver or Poleman. Obviously the longer the pole, the greater your advantage, but the greater the risk while maneuvering that the opponent will be able to slip inside your range before you can attack. Another drawback to a longer pole is that it is more difficult to aim, and it is therefore more likely to detonate on the protective armor of the opposing cart than a shorter, better controlled club.

The game is one of maneuver, skill, and of course, violence. Each hole is played to a Par of 3, 4, or 5 Bangs; once the stated number of clubs have detonated, both groups advance to their next holes. Most of the time the clubs detonate harmlessly on the exterior armor, as a defending Poleman can parry with his own club or can duck behind the shoulder-high armor. When a club does connect with a Poleman or with the Driver, however, the results are quite ghastly. (It should be noted that during its first incarnation, Neemis Golf was played with a gas-operated, telescoping boxing glove instead of explosives at the end of each club. It was only in 2080, during the BrutalVision Farewell Tour, that the explosive clubheads were adopted.)

One of the most interesting aspects of Neemis Golf is the Penalty Helmet. It is illegal for the Driver of a cart to hit any of the trees or decorative flower beds which are present in each hole, and Polemen are also forbidden from making any contact with any decorative items or with non-participating Polemen riding in the opponent's cart. Committing one of these infractions results in the violator having to wear a Penalty Helmet for a set amount of time, depending on the severity of the infraction.

The Penalty Helmet is a light, open faced helm with a large, 60 degree conical bell in the front. This cone forms a funnel, centered on the face of the wearer. This obviously makes it much easier for opponents to hit the wearer, and any blow striking the funnel is deflected into the face prior to detonation. The Driver's Penalty Helmet is bolted into the front of the vehicle, making it impossible for him to move his head, while the Poleman's Helmet is mounted on runners inside the armor. This allows the Poleman to maneuver around the inside of the vehicle, but prevents him from ducking.

The sport has made a recent comeback under the name of Golf Carts and Bang Sticks, and is one of the events in the Brutallympics. Some schools and sporting resorts have even installed courses, and the gentler version of the sport (with the boxing gloves) is rapidly growing in popularity.

"I knew that someday, somehow, we'd both die. I just figured you'd be first."

Gerfel
His last words.
Wrong, as usual.
PC Artillery

3.6

Andre Sonksen of San Diego wants to know how to handle Automatic Fire with Shotguns. Rules for this are in 3rd Edition Phoenix Command, in Section 3.5. The appropriate subsection reads as follows.

"Special rules are required to handle a shotgun firing a fully automatic burst. To determine the chance of hitting with the shotgun's patterns, the normal automatic fire rules apply, using the larger of the Target Size Elevation ALM or the SALM for the target size modifier. Enter the Auto Elevation Odds Table (4G) with this modified EAL to determine

READERS' COMMENTS

the Odds of Hitting the target elevation with the shotgun's patterns. If the patterns are at the right elevation, enter the **Automatic Weapon Hit Chance Table (5A)** and cross-index the weapon's Rate of Fire (ROF) and Arc of Fire just as you would for an automatic burst. This gives the number of patterns hitting, or the chance of one pattern covering the target. Determine pattern hits just as you would for automatic fire against all targets in the Arc of Fire. For each pattern hit, use the BPHC to determine the number of pellet hits just as you would for a single shotgun blast."

Note that the first table reference above is to the Odds of Hitting Table, which is Table 4H in 1st and 2nd Editions of PC.

And, from Kris Leighty in Oregon, we have the following:

"Ever since I started playing Phoenix Command, my body odor has cleared up, and now it's girls, girls, girls. Thanks a million."

Don't mention it, Kris. We're just glad we could help.

3.7

AND SO FORTH

Leading Edge will be attending two West Coast conventions this Labor Day weekend, for those of you who like that sort of thing. Barry, Irene, and most of the crew will be at Gateway in Los Angeles, while David and Joe (see below) will be in San Mateo (south of San Francisco) for PacfiCon. Both Cons start Friday night and run through Monday, with the usual Convention trappings (all-night games, people who don't sleep, other people who don't bathe, that sort of thing.) Stop by the booth and say hello if you get a chance.

Staff

There are three of our regular convention staff who have not had their names up in lights so far; they aren't complaining, but we can see that resentful look in their eyes. Here goes.

Joe Cormick: Joe is a cheerful and generally well-adjusted sort who has been helping out for the last couple of years. Why he does this we don't quite know, but we do appreciate it. Joe recently relocated to Chico, so he can now be found running events for us at Conventions in the Bay area.

Keith and Marc Meyer: You are probably familiar with myths and legends about twins, one of whom is good and the other evil. Meet the Meyers. Marc would appear to be the personification of all that is Good and Noble in Humanity, while Keith is generally referred to as Mr. Bitterness. That is the Meyer Legend. The reality is that they are both long-standing PC nuts, and they both taught their younger sister, Heather, how to play *Sword's Path: Glory* when she was 11: Thereby warping her for life. So it turns out there is an evil twin... and an even more evil twin. We're still deciding which is which.

Mall Order

A long, long time ago, when we were all much younger, far less experienced, and had a lot more functioning brain cells, Leading Edge released its first serious product (at least we thought it was serious). It was called *Sword's Path: Glory, Book One*, and at the time there was nothing else on the market like it. There still isn't. SPG 1 is truly the ultimate medieval melee system; as a study of what hand-to-hand combat is, SPG 1 is absolutely definitive, and the only hardcore alternative to the real thing. Unfortunately, we were all new at the business and fresh out of Cal Tech. Our heads were full of numbers and formula, and we severely overestimated the love that people have for calculations. Consequently, SPG 1 is run in Impulses which are 1/12 of a second long; that's right, one-twelfth. This is what made SPG 1 a one-of-a-kind product. For players who like detail and who are not afraid of numbers, it provides a gaming experience that cannot be matched for realism and excitement. For everyone else (except perhaps those who are very curious), it should be avoided like the plague. It is 104 pages and originally retailed for \$9.95; the remaining copies are available to LEGionnaires for \$8.00.

"You can never have too much armor."

Trebor Nawoc
Sword's Path: Glory Book One

At the other end of the accessibility spectrum are the Buttons we sell at Conventions. Many of you are familiar with them; they are 1 1/2" or 2 1/3" across, sell for \$1.00, and feature the coolest and funniest quotes from our products. We are making some of them available by mail order, for those of you who cannot make it to Conventions or who do not want to wait for the next one. There are four different sets this month; each includes five buttons and costs \$5.00, or you can buy all four for only \$16.00.

Dr. Oscar, Set 1	Axly, Set 1	Truisms	Mr. Grenade Set
"Hand me my Mallet. I must anesthetize him."	"Well, yes, I did it. but it's not my fault."	"You can never be too rich or too violent."	"Once you have pulled the pin out of Mr. Grenade, he is no longer your friend."
"Hand me my Mallet. The swelling will stop the bleeding."	"Alright, it is my fault...but I'm not responsible."	"Give you one good reason? I'll give you .45 good reasons."	"I said Interrogate the prisoner, Gil. Not Ventilate."
"Hand me my Mallet. I must tenderize the area before making the first incision."	"Well, maybe I am responsible...but I'm not to blame."	"Smile. Today is the last day of the rest of your life."	"Why are you ducking? He couldn't possibly hit us in the head from there."
"Well, he looks dead to me. I don't care if he does have a pulse."	"Yes, I am to blame...but they made me do it."	"If you can't dazzle them with style, riddle them with bullets."	"Today is Election Day and we encourage all citizens to Vote NO with the weapons of their choice."
"Most people would say this man is half dead. But I am a doctor. And I like to think of him as half alive."	Blam. Blam. "Stop!" Blam. Blam. "Police!"	"Another day, Another body count."	"War is Swell"

"Multiple gunshot wounds. Numerous shell fragments. A deep bayonet wound. Let's call it Natural Causes."

Dr. Oscar Schneiderbunk
PC Artillery

When ordering, just list the name of the set you want. Sorry, but we cannot fill custom orders, or mix buttons from the various sets. And remember; as always, LEGionnaires do not have to pay for shipping and handling.

Next Time

In the next issue of LEGionnaire we will have some interesting new guns and the Canister round for the M79 Grenade Launcher for Phoenix Command, the 8th Legion of the Seven Worlds (that's right - eighth), and the characteristics and skills of the members of Phoenix Strike, the best Dragonstar unit in the history of the Seven Worlds.

Credits

LEGionnaire is written and produced by Barry Nakazono, David McKenzie, and the rest of the Leading Edge staff.

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