



Volume 15 Issue 1

January 2018

### **Crew Meetings & Activities 2018**

February 24 crew mtg this meeting is held from 2-4 instead of 3-5

March 24 crew mtg

April 28 crew mtg

May 26 crew mtg

June 22-24 Summit 2018 in Irving

All above meeting are subject to change. Normally we meet at Shady Oaks BBQ at 3:00 p.m. on the dates above (unless otherwise mentioned.)

### **COMMAND DIVISION (GOLD)**

It looks like we finally have an away Mission scheduled the Scottish Festival and Highland Games at the Decatur Texas Fairgrounds on FM 51 running May 11th through 13th. Friday it runs from 5 p.m. to midnight Saturday is 9 a.m. to midnight Sunday is 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Our CO is planning on being there for the entire event but Saturday or Sunday would probably be a better official day for the away mission. That is something that can be decided at a meeting closer to the event date.

R. Admiral Joy Flynt

### **CO REPORT**

In attendance at this month's meeting: Tank Clark, Tracy Clark, Liz Goulet, Alan Goulet, Michelle Goulet, Cynthia Crouch, Joy Flynt.

Joy, as the Officer of the Deck, presented the trivia quiz – which was pretty difficult.

The Captain reported on the ship's status, and reminded and encouraged the crew about the Bridge Officer Certification Program. He also passed the word about the "Warp-core Side Chats" that the RC is hosting on the Region 3 Discord server, 3rd Tuesday of each month from 1930 to 2100 hours. The Red Division Leader, Byron Flynt, was not present; in "Retention" news, Cynthia already renewed for January, and the Clarks both renewed for February. Next due are Liz, Alan, Michelle, Karen Chaffin, and Nick Mason.

We also discussed a Landing Party to the Scottish Festival and Texas Highland Games, 11-13 May 2018, at the Wise County Fairgrounds in Decatur, TX. A lot of interest was generated, and we've decided to send a Landing Party to this event. More planning will occur soon.

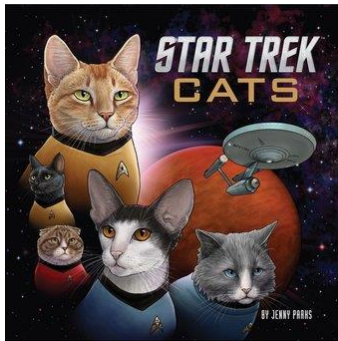
Liz also reminded the crew, especially members of the Leadership Committee, that articles for the newsletter are due by Friday 2 February.

Region 3 Summit will be 22-24 Jun, at the Atrium Hotel & Suites in Irving. As this is on the 4th Saturday, which is our normal meeting weekend, we will probably have to make some adjustments. This will be discussed in more detail in February.

We raised \$3.00 with our intraship 50/50 game. It was suggested that we continue to require dues for this year, and if our 50/50 or other fundraisers raise enough, we can discontinue dues in January 2019 (adjusting the Ship's Articles accordingly at that time.)

We finished the meeting after discussing movies and tv shows.

Respectfully,  
Commodore Tank Clark  
Captain, USS *Sea Tiger* NCC-2009



### **XO REPORT/Communications Report**

Well, I write this on February 3 and except for the Captain's report – which I got off the blog- I have yet to see a report from anyone. So be forewarned this could be unique newsletter. UPDATE: a late entry from the CO and our Gold Leader have come in and will be posted. You just made it.

Respectfully,  
R. Admiral Liz Goulet  
First Officer, USS *Sea Tiger*, NCC-2009

Articles for next month need to be in by March 2.

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### **SCIENCE DIVISION (BLUE)**



#### **Ship's Services**

So far no one has reported to sick bay since the festivities started. They either recovered well or they are still in their cabins recuperating. The Ground Hog was reported to have seen his shadow on Feb. 2 which is supposed to mean six more weeks of winter. Interesting, as there are exactly six more weeks before Spring is supposed to be here. Of course the poor rodent would see his shadow since they have flood lights all around his hole and don't rely on natural sun light anymore.

Commander Tracy "Gleek" Clark, SFMD  
Blue Division Leader & Chief Medical Officer, USS *Sea Tiger*, NCC-2009

#### **Birthdays for next month:**

February Birthdays

#### **Movies Upcoming**

Peter Rabbit	Feb 9
Black Panther	Feb 16

A Wrinkle in Time Mar 9  
Tomb Raider Mar 16  
Pacific Uprising Mar 23  
Avengers Infinity May 4  
Incredibles 2 Jun 15  
Jurassic Park: Incredible Kingdom Jun 27  
Mission Impossible VI Jul 27  
Nutcracker and the Four Realms Nov 2  
Fantastic Beasts the Curse of Grindelwald Nov 16

## Science

### **Scientist Found Accessible Ice Sheets On Mars and it Could be a ‘Game Changer’ for Colonizing the Planet** (Business Insider news)

- NASA scientists discovered eight instances of ice exposed on the Martian surface.
- While scientists have long known about the red planet’s sub-surface ice sheets, this is the first time ice has been seen exposed and easily accessible.
- The ice could be a ‘game-changer’ for human exploration and eventual settlement on the red planet.

There may be a major source of easily accessible drinkable water on Mars, according to a new study in the journal Science (<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6372/199>).

Using images from NASA’s Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, which has been orbiting the planet since 2006, scientists working with the space agency discovered ice sheets that are relatively pure and partially exposed on the Martian surface.

Scientists have long known about the existence of subsurface ice on the red planet and about major ice deposits on its frigid poles. But they hadn’t seen exposed ice on the other parts of the planet’s surface before. The newly discovered ice deposits are thick sheets just under the Martian surface, and parts of the sheets are exposed in eight sites on steep slopes up to 100 meters tall.

Shane Byrne, a planetary scientist at the University of Arizona and one of the study’s authors, told Reuters the discovery a potential ‘game changer’ for human exploration of Mars.

“Here we have what we think is almost pure water ice buried just below the surface. You don’t see a high-tech solution,” Byrne said. “You can go out with a bucket and shovel and just collect as much water as you need.”

The scientists believe the ice is consolidated now that was deposited relatively recently in geologic terms.

The exposed portions of ice are located at mid-latitudes, where the temperatures are a bit balmy for humans and robots to operate. Other ice that exists at these latitudes is covered by layers of Martian dust, or regolith. Those layers of loose rock make the sub-surface ice extremely difficult to access. Colin Dundas, the study’s leader and a geologist with the US Geological Survey’s Astrogeology Science Center, told Reuters.

“Previous ideas for extracting human-usable water from Mars were to pull it from the very dry atmosphere or to break down water containing rocks,” Byrne said. But because these newly discovered ice deposits are so much more accessible, they could aid the foundation of a permanent Mars base – or at least, could support future missions to study the planet.

Your move Elon Musk.

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## ENGINEERING DIVISION (RED)



### ENGINEERING

#### Red Division

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this month’s meeting but I received a brief from Admiral Flynt.

Byron Flynt, Brig. General

#### BOSUN (Chief in Charge)

Things are doing good in the Flip-Top Challenge. If things keep up we could break our total from last year.

**Special Note:** Please put your name and what group you want your flip tops to be counted for on your bag with the tops. If you **do not** put your name on it, you won’t get credit- I will.

Alan Goulet, MCPO

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#### Military Intelligence Group: OIC, VMA-333 “Phoenix Squadron”

Greetings, Marines!

Just a reminder to participate in the reading challenge. It will end in May and the winners will be announced at the Summit in June. We have several members who are participating so keep on reading.

#### Operation: Icon Quest 2018!

*Timeframe:* Mission starts 0001hrs 01JAN2018 (Stardate 11801.01/0001)

Mission ends 2359hrs 31MAR2018 (Stardate 11803.31/2359)

#### Mission Overview:

Using a digital camera (like the one on most cell phones), capture an image of as many different **“Icons”** that you can, and send them to [ussseatiger@gmail.com](mailto:ussseatiger@gmail.com). You may email them one at a time, or in a big bunch. (I’d prefer you *not* wait until the end of the mission to send in the data.)

For this mission, we define **“Icon”** as a *statue of a business’ or organization’s mascot* – for example, those Ronald McDonald statues (like the one of him sitting on a bench with his arm out, so people can sit with Ronald), or the Buc-ee’s Beaver that’s in front of their stores. High schools and colleges also often have statues of their mascots out in public. (Standees count, but only if they are approximately life sized and in a public place! See below for examples.)

A participant must be next to the Icon, preferably in uniform. Yes, this means you should work as a team – or have the ability to talk someone into taking your photo.

### *Points:*

Points will be awarded as follows:

- o One point per unique photo. (a “unique photo” is defined as a photo with a target – an Icon – not otherwise submitted by the person in the photo. See example below.)
- o Two points per Star Trek uniform worn by someone in the photo. (Group shots are worth more points!)
- o One point for having a sign that includes the text “333rd Military Intelligence Group”, “We Know Better,” and “Operation: Icon Quest 2018.” I’ll post a PDF of a sign you can use on the Marines page of our website -- click [here](#). Feel free to make your own sign – be creative!
- o One point per person visibly wearing a “comm-badge” in the picture, unless that person is wearing it as part of a uniform. This would include pins like those worn in TNG, VOY, DS9, and Discovery, patches as worn in the Original Series, or pins as in Wrath of Khan and other Trek movies, or special badges like from “Future Imperfect” (TNG episode) or “Future’s End” (VOY episode). Embroidered or silk-screened comm-badges count for this purpose.
- o Additional points for extra awesomeness, *as judged solely by the proctor for this operation*. This is somewhere from zero points (for just meeting the criteria set forth), to up to three bonus points (for William Shatner kissing your forehead in the picture). Things that might earn extra awesomeness points include:
  - § having a famous person join you in the picture (If you run into Burt Ward at McDonalds, for example)
  - § Funny poses that amuse the proctor
  - § Funny or interesting additions to the sign

### *Prize*

Prize is to be determined.

### *Examples*

- o Five members in uniform stand next to a Colonel Sanders standee at a KFC. This picture counts as 11 points (12 if they have the sign displayed, see above), and EACH person in the photo can submit it.
- o Three members wearing t-shirts with comm-badges attached stand next to a Spock standee at a comic-book store, and they have the sign. No points, as Spock is not a business’ mascot
- o One member, in uniform, hugging the Buc-ee Beaver statue in front of the Buc-ees at TX-114 and I-35W, without a sign. Two points.

This month, we’re going to look at what STARFLEET Marine Intelligence calls “Signals Intelligence” or SIGINT.

Our Table of Organization for the 333<sup>rd</sup> Military Intelligence Group has SIGINT (and ELINT, and Cryptographic analysis) assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon.

This brief is UNCLASSIFIED, from an open source. (Wikipedia -- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signals\\_intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Signals_intelligence))

**Signals intelligence (SIGINT)** is intelligence-gathering by interception of signals, whether communications between people (**communications intelligence**—abbreviated to **COMINT**) or from

electronic signals not directly used in communication (**electronic intelligence**—abbreviated to **ELINT**). Signals intelligence is a subset of intelligence collection management.

As sensitive information is often encrypted, signals intelligence in turn involves the use of cryptanalysis to decipher the messages. Traffic analysis—the study of who is signaling whom and in what quantity—is also used to derive information.

Electronic interception appeared as early as 1900, during the Boer War of 1899-1902. The British Royal Navy had installed wireless sets produced by Marconi on board their ships in the late 1890s and the British Army used some limited wireless signaling. The Boers captured some wireless sets and used them to make vital transmissions. Since the British were the only people transmitting at the time, no special interpretation of the signals that were intercepted by the British was necessary. The birth of signals intelligence in a modern sense dates from the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. As the Russian fleet prepared for conflict with Japan in 1904, the British ship HMS *Diana* stationed in the Suez Canal intercepted Russian naval wireless signals being sent out for the mobilization of the fleet, for the first time in history.

Over the course of the First World War, the new method of signals intelligence reached maturity. Failure to properly protect its communications fatally compromised the Russian Army in its advance early in World War I and led to their disastrous defeat by the Germans under Ludendorff and Hindenburg at the Battle of Tannenberg. In 1918, French intercept personnel captured a message written in the new ADFGVX cipher, which was cryptanalyzed by Georges Painvin. This gave the Allies advance warning of the German 1918 Spring offensive.

The British in particular built up great expertise in the newly emerging field of signals intelligence and codebreaking. On the declaration of war, Britain cut all German undersea cables. This forced the Germans to use either a telegraph line that connected through the British network and could be tapped, or through radio which the British could then intercept. Rear-Admiral Henry Oliver appointed Sir Alfred Ewing to establish an interception and decryption service at the Admiralty; Room 40. An interception service known as 'Y' service, together with the post office and Marconi stations grew rapidly to the point where the British could intercept almost all official German messages.

The German fleet was in the habit each day of wirelessly the exact position of each ship and giving regular position reports when at sea. It was possible to build up a precise picture of the normal operation of the High Seas Fleet, to infer from the routes they chose where defensive minefields had been placed and where it was safe for ships to operate. Whenever a change to the normal pattern was seen, it immediately signaled that some operation was about to take place and a warning could be given. Detailed information about submarine movements was also available.

The use of radio receiving equipment to pinpoint the location of the transmitter was also developed during the war. Captain H.J. Round working for Marconi, began carrying out experiments with direction finding radio equipment for the army in France in 1915. By May 1915, the Admiralty was able to track German submarines crossing the North Sea. Some of these stations also acted as 'Y' stations to collect German messages, but a new section was created within Room 40 to plot the positions of ships from the directional reports.

Room 40 played an important role in several naval engagements during the war, notably in detecting major German sorties into the North Sea. The battle of Dogger Bank was won in no small part due to the intercepts that allowed the Navy to position its ships in the right place. It played a vital role in subsequent naval clashes, including at the Battle of Jutland as the British fleet was sent out to



intercept them. The direction-finding capability allowed for the tracking and location of German ships, submarines and Zeppelins. The system was so successful, that by the end of the war over 80 million words, comprising the totality of German wireless transmission over the course of the war had been intercepted by the operators of the Y-stations and decrypted.<sup>1</sup> However its most astonishing success was in decrypting the Zimmermann Telegram, a telegram from the German Foreign Office sent via Washington to its ambassador Heinrich von Eckardt in Mexico.

With the importance of interception and decryption firmly established by the wartime experience, countries established permanent agencies dedicated to this task in the interwar period. In 1919, the British Cabinet's Secret Service Committee, chaired by Lord Curzon, recommended that a peace-time codebreaking agency should be created. The Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) was the first peace-time codebreaking agency, with a public function "to advise as to the security of codes and cyphers used by all Government departments and to assist in their provision", but also with a secret directive to "study the methods of cypher communications used by foreign powers". GC&CS officially formed on 1 November 1919, and produced its first decrypt on 19 October. By 1940, GC&CS was working on the diplomatic codes and ciphers of 26 countries, tackling over 150 diplomatic cryptosystems.

The US Cipher Bureau was established in 1919 and achieved some success at the Washington Naval Conference in 1921, through cryptanalysis by Herbert Yardley. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson closed the US Cipher Bureau in 1929 with the words "Gentlemen do not read each other's mail."

The use of SIGINT had even greater implications during World War II. The combined effort of intercepts and cryptanalysis for the whole of the British forces in World War II came under the code name "Ultra" managed from Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley Park. Properly used, the German Enigma and Lorenz ciphers should have been virtually unbreakable, but flaws in German cryptographic procedures, and poor discipline among the personnel carrying them out, created vulnerabilities which made Bletchley's attacks feasible.

Bletchley's work was essential to defeating the U-boats in the Battle of the Atlantic, and to the British naval victories in the Battle of Cape Matapan and the Battle of North Cape. In 1941, Ultra exerted a powerful effect on the North African desert campaign against German forces under General Erwin Rommel. General Sir Claude Auchinleck wrote that were it not for Ultra, "Rommel would have certainly got through to Cairo". "Ultra" decrypts featured prominently in the story of Operation SALAM, László Almásy's mission across the desert behind Allied lines in 1942. Prior to the Normandy landings on D-Day in June 1944, the Allies knew the locations of all but two of Germany's fifty-eight Western-front divisions.

Winston Churchill was reported to have told King George VI: "It is thanks to the secret weapon of General Menzies, put into use on all the fronts, that we won the war!" Supreme Allied Commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower, at the end of the war, described Ultra as having been "decisive" to Allied victory. Official historian of British Intelligence in World War II Sir Harry Hinsley, argued that Ultra shortened the war "by not less than two years and probably by four years"; and that, in the absence of Ultra, it is uncertain how the war would have ended.

*More next month!*

Any questions, or if you just want to chat about stuff, feel free to email me ([greenlantern.pirate@gmail.com](mailto:greenlantern.pirate@gmail.com)), call me (940.255.9445), text me, or find me on Facebook, or whatever.

Thank you all, and Carry on!  
Brigadier General Tank Clark, SFMC, SFMD (BFHD, LMAO)  
Officer-in-Charge, 333<sup>rd</sup> Military Intelligence Group, "The Yellowjackets"  
"We Know Better"  
[Greenlantern.pirate@gmail.com](mailto:Greenlantern.pirate@gmail.com)

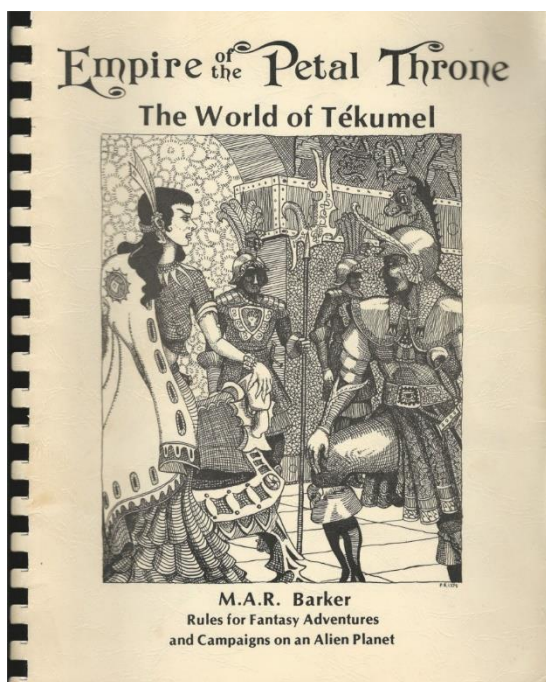
Have Phaser, Will Travel!



**Here's my monthly nagging: Take courses, have fun, earn ribbons and certifications. (It really is pretty fun.)**

Now, on with the game stuff...

Once upon a time, in the dark ages before *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D) became well known, Professor M. A. R. Barker – a scholar of ancient languages – spent decades creating a fantasy world called Tekumel. He wrote thousands of pages of histories, describing its culture and constructing its languages. Tekumel was an alien planet, complete with both human and non-human races, which had reverted to a Medieval technology level.



Barker served as advisor to the University of Minnesota's wargaming club, where a club member (Michael Mornard) showed him the new, (original edition) *Dungeons and Dragons* RPG. Barker first self-published 50 copies of his own role-playing game, *Empire of the Petal Throne*<sup>1</sup> (EPT), in 1974, the same year that D&D was published.

**EPT influenced Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax – the creators of D&D – who were impressed with the game. Barker made his commercial game-design debut at Tactical Studies Rules (TSR, the publishers of D&D) with a boxed set of EPT in 1975. TSR published EPT as a stand-alone game, rather than as a 'supplement' to D&D. The game brought a level of detail and quality to the concept of a campaign setting which had previously been unknown in the nascent RPG industry's publications. The game was addressed in early issues of *The Dragon* magazine, but inconsistent support from TSR led to a decline in popularity. TSR was locked into a deal that made the financial end of the game unpalatable to them; they had agreed to pay a 'finder's fee' on sales, in addition to royalties and certain expensive overrides, making the product more expensive and thus, less profitable.**

<sup>1</sup> "Empire of the Petal Throne" is a synonym for the Tsolyani Empire, the main setting in Tekumel  
REGULATOR'S CHARGE



**There was no fiction set in the world until much later – the first, “The Man of Gold” by M. A. R. Barker, was published in 1984 – so, the only commonly-available information on the game world was in the game itself. The setting is an important part of the game. This made it a bit difficult for a young player to get into it.**

**I remember running across a used copy of the game in the very early 1980’s and looking through it. At the time, I chose not to purchase it – there were some parts missing, and the game looked hard for me to follow. It was interesting, but I judged it beyond my limited finances and time.**

**However, a few months ago, RPGNow.com had a limited-time sale, and I picked up a PDF copy for fairly cheap.**

**In many ways, it’s typical of the games of the time: Extremely random, leaning much more heavily upon random die rolls than a modern game; somewhat complicated; somewhat confusing.**

Players roll for their character’s basic ‘talents’: strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence, comeliness, and psychic ability. Rather than D&D’s 3d6, however, these rolls are made on percentile dice. Scores in talents can yield a bonus (or minus) to combat rolls, though oddly not to hit points themselves. Psychic ability, which replaces D&D’s wisdom, affects a character’s ability to use spells. The rules forbid swapping points from one category to another and insist that what you roll is what you get, though they do allow discarding substandard characters before the game begins. Further, talents may increase in the course of play; there is a 20% chance one talent will rise whenever a character gains a level. Characters have the choice between only three professions, as classes are called in E.P.T.: warrior, priest, and magician. The last two professions are closer in conception than in D&D. Characters may be of either sex; though Tsolyani society is patriarchal, women may claim all of the rights of men by declaring themselves independent, or aridani. E.P.T. also permits characters from a variety of nonhuman races, though its rules for this are quite sketchy and more suited for generating non-player characters. Interestingly, although social rank is quite important on Tekumel, it plays no role in character generation. Hit points, as in D&D, are based on a d6 for all classes, and do not simply increase by 1 die per level; instead a chart is used. The rulebook makes clear something that remained obscure in Original (“White Box”) D&D—characters are to re-roll their hit points from scratch at each level, but the total can never be less than it was before.

E.P.T. moves beyond its roots by including a simple skill system. Characters begin the game with a set of ‘original’ skills, which are divided into three groups: plebeian, skilled, and noble. In all, some 57 skills are available. Though Barker notes that the rules omit less-interesting skills and concentrate on those useful in adventuring, the range is still quite wide, from crafts like carpet-making (a plebeian skill) to assassin/spy/tracker (a noble skill). The rulebook explains the noble skills, but treats most of the other groups as self-explanatory. Players roll to see how many skills they have, and from which groups, but may choose whichever ones they wish. Additional skills may be acquired when gaining a level, or learned in-game by spending time and money.

A second set of skills, linked to professions (classes), works rather differently. Players again roll on a table to determine how many they start with, but the skills are arranged hierarchically, with a dozen for each profession. A typical result might be “choose 3 of the first 4 skills.” After that, characters get additional professional skills only by rising levels, beginning with the lowest-ranked skill they do not already possess and proceeding in order. The higher professional skills are thus available only to higher-level characters; even with the best starting roll, a character would attain skill 12 only at level

8. For warriors, most professional skills are weapons, and a fighter cannot use a given weapon until he has the requisite skill. Since most melee weapons have the same damage and hit profile, this has little impact. Missile weapons, however, only begin to appear at skill 5 on the warrior's list, and two-weapon fighting at skill 9. For priests and magicians, most professional skills are in fact spells or arcane abilities, though the first two priest skills are knowledge of languages. Although priests and mages can fight with some melee weapons, they never receive weapon skills—a slight rules glitch. A single table governs the chance of failure with all skills (though not combat rolls); this decreases from 60% at level 1 to 0% at level 9. High-level characters not only have more skills but are much more effective in using them.

As already noted, priests and magicians receive some spells or magical abilities as part of their beginning skills. There is little overlap between the spells so available to the two professions. Those for priests resemble the magic of D&D clerics fairly closely (cure light & heavy wounds, detect good/evil, etc.) while those for mages, though adapting some spells from the D&D lists, are more original. For instance, the first spell gained by mages is 'control of self' which permits them to stop their respiration or heartbeat indefinitely without ill effects, recall memories perfectly, grip something with great strength, etc. The sharp difference between a priest's and a mage's arcane abilities erodes at higher levels, however, because both professions draw from the same set of 59 'bonus spells'. This is divided into three groups of increasing potency, though the even the lowest group includes spells causing permanent madness and a plague that will kill victims in 2 turns. At each level increase, a player rolls against a chart to determine how many bonus spells of which groups the character gains. At lower levels there is a good chance none will be gained at all. Therefore, there is nothing like the chart in OD&D showing how many spells a magic-user has at a given level; depending on die rolls this can vary widely. Barker explains each spell's effects concisely—sometimes, perhaps too concisely. Compared to OD&D's very terse spell descriptions, however, E.P.T.'s seem a bit expansive. Oddly, few of the spells have much specific 'flavor' of the setting.

Magic on Tekumel is less reliable than in the D&D universe. When casting a spell or using an arcane ability, a priest or magician must roll for success just as for any other skill. Low-level magic users thus will fail more frequently than they succeed in casting attempts. Further, attack spells aimed at a single target require 'to hit' rolls on the combat table, though failure here means that the spell struck the wrong target. Of course, the targets of many spell would also be allowed saving throws, so a spell-caster might require three successful die rolls for an attack spell to take effect. With some exceptions, spells can be used but once a day and regenerate at 6 a.m. A few very powerful spells keep their casters from using any other magic for up to a week afterward.

E.P.T.'s combat system is very close to the OD&D norm. Combat is abstract; rounds last an entire minute and there is no attempt to simulate every blow or parry that takes place. Instead, players roll d20 and consult a table, cross-indexing their own level against the target's armor class. These classes are a bit more extensive than in OD&D, because of a peculiarity of Tekumel. Iron is rare there, and as a substitute for it people have learned how to treat the hide of the chlen, a dinosaur-like creature, so that it can be molded and then hardened almost to the consistency of steel. Common weapons and armor are made of chlen-hide, which allows them to take fantastic forms. A few more armor classes are needed to take into account real steel armor, which is rare and expensive. As in OD&D, only warriors can use all weapons and armor; priests cannot employ edged weapons and magic users are limited to steel daggers and no armor. The weapon restriction on priests seems an odd carry-over—certainly there is nothing in the religions of Tekumel to suggest that priests should not shed blood! Its main in-game function is to restrict the best magical weapons—all edged—to the fighters.

Following the lead of OD&D, most weapons (and most monsters' attacks) do a d6 of damage, though daggers do a d4 and a few arms do d6 + 1 or 2. E.P.T. introduces some variations to this simple damage system. Any natural 20 on an attack roll yields double damage for the attacker, and a second throw of 20 indicates a lucky hit that immediately kills the opponent. When higher-level characters fight those with significantly fewer hit dice, their base damage rises considerably. An eighth-level warrior fighting opponents with 2 hit dice would do a base 3d6 of damage, for instance. These added dice of damage can 'spill over' from one opponent to another, allowing a high-level character to dispatch several considerably weaker opponents in a single round—mook rules long before the term was coined. E.P.T. also includes simple rules for grappling and subduing an opponent; this requires rolling under the average of a character's strength, intelligence, and dexterity, with the possibility of a saving throw for the target. By current standards, none of these ideas seem innovative, but they were all new in 1975. Some, like higher damage or instant death for critical hits, have become standard in many systems.

E.P.T. presents a straightforward frame for beginning campaigns. All characters are presumed to be foreigners who have reached the seaport city of Jakalla (which has its own detailed map). Since the Tsolyani are a rather xenophobic people and quick to take offense at even unwitting violations of their complex etiquette, characters do not wander about the empire, or even the town, at low levels. Instead, they are supposed to reside inside the foreigners' quarter of the city and wait for natives to seek them out as potential employees. The rulebook gives tables for potential employers and the jobs they offer, such as joining a trading party, searching for particular thing or person, participating in a quarrel or intrigue, serving the empire in a secret mission, etc. It also presents tables that can be used to figure out pay, either for player characters or n.p.c.s. Though artificial and in some ways limiting, this frame for the early stages of a campaign has its advantages. Because characters are foreigners, their players need not know a great deal about Tsolyani society and culture; that information can be introduced gradually. Their hiring for some mission explains why the group of characters have come together in a party and supplies a direction for the session.

To judge by the encounter tables and examples provided, adventures are expected to take place outdoors (including at sea) or in the underworld, as E.P.T. calls its dungeons. The setting offers several rationales for such large underground labyrinths. In Tekumel's ancient high-tech past humans burrowed deeply beneath the surface, leaving among other things a subterranean railcar system that is still in operation. Tekumel's post-catastrophe history is so long that many ruins from previous civilizations, some now mostly buried in the passage of time, dot the landscape. The rulebook provides a suggestive partial list, with entries like "the curious city of Hnakyal, where dwells He Who Has No Tail." Moreover, in a custom known as ditlana, many cities ceremonially renew themselves every 500 years by leveling their sites and rebuilding over the ruins of old city, leading to underground complexes of many layers. Barker assumes that readers will be familiar with the concept of dungeons already, but does give advice on how to create them and some brief examples. He stresses the importance of 'Saturday Night Specials,' that is, unique and carefully planned complexes with special inhabitants or challenges. His examples include the 'River of Silence' under Jakalla, which leads characters to an island on which Death himself dwells, and the 'Tomb of Mnekshetra, the Lesbian Mistress of Queen Nayari of the Silken Thighs' which can transport unwitting characters thousands of years back to Nayari's own throne room. Despite its inclusion of a detailed map of Jakalla, E.P.T. offers no guidance or tables for urban adventures—a characteristic shared by OD&D, which mentioned town adventures but supplied no rules for them.

Players used to versions of D&D in which challenges are carefully calibrated to the power of the player-characters may find E.P.T. a bit of a shock. As in OD&D, some encounters are likely to prove overwhelming except to the largest or most skilled parties. This is particularly true of outdoors

encounters; parties may find themselves facing as many as 600 bandits, for instance, or 400 Chnelh, an apelike creature. Rules for hiring N.P.C.s and some examples in the text suggest that Barker envisioned outdoor parties as including dozens or hundreds of retainers along with the players. Of course, not every encounter is meant to be fought—or is even hostile. Still, adventuring on Tekumel is definitely hazardous. It is revealing that, while the example of play given in OD&D concludes with a party member saying “Onward, friends, to more and bigger loot,” the equivalent in Petal Throne apparently ends with an imminent T.P.K. (“Total Party Kill”)

Some of the mechanics for outdoor adventures have been copied a bit too directly from OD&D. For example, the daily chance of becoming lost in clear terrain remains 1 in 6. That figure made sense in OD&D, where wilderness adventures were supposed to be the exploration of unknown terrain. In E.P.T., in contrast, movement through ‘clear’ hexes will likely represent travel through the well-settled and mapped countryside of the Tsolyani empire, perhaps even along lesser roads. Similarly, the 1/6 daily chance of becoming lost that E.P.T. assigns to sea movement in coastal regions would make ocean-going commerce impossible.

**To sum up: It’s weird, compared to both modern RPGs and to old-school RPGs. There were interesting things that first occurred in EPT. I can’t see myself running an EPT campaign, but I’d enjoy playing in a game of it.**

**Ready your spear and roll some dice!**

*Sum non Satis?*

Commodore Tank Clark, SFMD

Team Leader, 33<sup>rd</sup> STARFLEET Rangers (“The Paladins”)

“Have Phaser, Will Travel”



Meetings for the *USS Sea Tiger* are held every month  
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