Designer's Notes
STAR PATROL
by Michael Scott Kurtick

In 1975, when *Dungeons & Dragons* was just beginning to hit its stride, two novice designers in Salt Lake City were approached by Lou Zocchi, who had the idea of doing a *Star Trek* D&D. Of course there were many problems with such a project — paying a huge licensing fee to Paramount Pictures, making the game acceptable to the many trekkies who would try playing it, and making it also acceptable to regular, hard-core gamers. Rockland Russo and I began working on the project in the Fall of '75 and it rapidly became apparent that *Star Trek* was too limited a subject for a role-playing game. So we started adding things to it: More weapons, random alien tables, and many additional systems that would eventually make the game a general science fiction role-playing game rather than one which specialized in just one subject. I moved down to Biloxi, Mississippi, to work for Lou Zocchi's Gamescience Corp., and took the project with me. Soon after that, the game emerged in its initial form: *Space Patrol*.

Space Patrol was published after Rick Loomis and Ken St. Andre released *Starfaring* and about the same time as *Traveller*. Zocchi's modest Gamescience operation was not yet able to financially support major graphics work, and *Space Patrol* showed it with a generally cheap appearance. The game also did not include many elements that the other games possessed, such as space exploration, starship handling and combat, or economics. *Space Patrol*'s best features were its alien generation system and its rather clean combat system.

Soon after the publication of *Space Patrol*, I did get the chance to do a *Star Trek* role-playing game for Heritage, who had managed to acquire a license to do both game and figures. *Star Trek: Adventure Gaming on the Final Frontier* was essentially a clone of *Space Patrol*, concentrating on the elements of the *Star Trek* universe. The figures were poorly sculpted and the advertising campaign promised by Heritage never materialized. Paramount withdrew its license.

Over the next several years, Russo and I collaborated on an intense rewrite of *Space Patrol*, running long-distance phone bills up to appropriately astronomical levels. Finally, in 1981, the project was ready for release, and due to the huge expansion of material, the game was re-christened *Star Patrol*.

Star Patrol comes boxed, for $15.00, and includes a rather large rulebook (68 pages), a complete set of polyhedra and regular dice, cardboard miniatures similar to the *Cardboard Heroes* produced by SJ Games (any chance of getting Loubet to redraw them for *Star Patrol*, Steve?), a set of deck plans with scenario, and a sheet of regular hex paper.

Star Patrol rules cover random alien generation, character skills, gravity and movement, combat with all types of edged and ranged weapons, star system generation, simple trade and exploration tables, a large range of starship types and combat rules for them, and a scenario generation system.

Unfortunately, *Star Patrol* suffers from an inordinate number of typographical errors. This is partially remedied by the included errata.
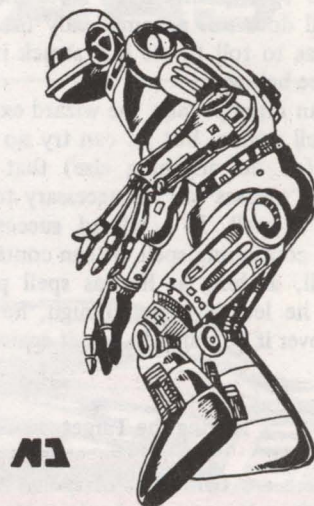
Space Patrol was originally to be an open-ended role-playing system, adaptable to any science fiction situation. To this end, we included practically every SF weapon we could find in our libraries. This was carried over to *Star Patrol*, which includes lists of typical aliens from classic works of science fiction and special notes concerning different kinds of FTL travel and combat. This has proven to be one of *Star Patrol*'s biggest advantages and biggest faults. It's an advantage in that a particular player will have less trouble fitting their favorite SF universe into a role-playing game, but it's a disadvantage when a harried mission master is trying to get a game going and the players keep wanting to introduce elements into the adventure that don't belong there.

"I want a Phaser II!"

"But this is not Star Trek!"

"It's in the rules — why can't I have it?"

Traveller, Space Opera, Spacequest, and *Universe* all situate their adventures in clearly defined, specific future histories. This is a tremendous advantage in that the designers created their own universe and could then limit it or expand upon it as they wished. All of the above works claim that you can play any of your favorite SF stories with their systems, but in reality this would take a lot of fudging on the part of the game master.

Realizing the advantages of a limited universe, we included the bare bones of one at the back of the *Star Patrol* rulebook. This "League of Star Systems" universe is basically the same one included in my SF miniatures game, *Strike Team Alpha*, and was also used much earlier with the amateur published effort, *Star Command*.

The League of Star Systsem is generally similar to the kind of universe created by Poul Anderson for his Polesotechnic League and Terran Empire, though the differences are many. Eventually there will be a *Star Patrol Technical Manual*, which will include the history of the League, three-views of many of the spacecraft, details of weaponry, uniforms, aliens, and technology. Currently, the only *Star Patrol* supplement in print is the *Star Patrol Mission Master Pack* from Terra Games Co. This includes graph paper, hex paper, sector star charts, character read-out sheets, combat tables on heavy stock, and a special scenario using the starship deck plans already included in *Star Patrol*.

Star Patrol is designed to be midway in complexity between *Traveller* and simpler RPGs. It is prepared so that the newcomer to role-playing can get involved in science fiction adventures with little difficulty or time wasted. Admittedly, *Star Patrol* requires a little more creative input from the players (we don't tell you which colleges you attended or how many medals you got in 2256, for example), but imagination is what role-playing is all about, and *Star Patrol* is one item that will give your imagination a good workout!

Laws

Generally, players of *Star Patrol* will be interested in what type of weapons they may carry on a planet, when it comes to local laws. Basically, the more hostile the planetary environment, the stricter the controls placed on its citizens in order to prevent the endangering of the life-support capabilities of the colony. In other words: It's not nice to blow holes in the dome!

Players may rest assured that each planet will have its equivalent of speeding tickets, spitting on the sidewalks, and no-parking zones. This is left entirely up to the mission master and should usually be used as an excuse for a random encounter with a law officer or lawbreaker. Almost certainly murder, rape, various levels of theft, and kidnapping are against the law on any planet. The following table may be used to determine what the restrictions on weapons are and what the usual penalties for crimes may be.

Modifiers Based on Planet Type and Colony Type

	Planet Class		
		6	4, 8
Type	5	7	9
Full Colony	-3	-4	-5
Agro Colony	-2	-3	-4
Pioneer Colony	+2	-1	-3
Industrial Colony	-3	-4	-5
Mining Colony	+1	-3	-4
Star Patrol Base	-4	-5	-5
Communications Station	0	-3	-5
Research Station	+1	0	-3

Weapons Restrictions (1d8)

Die Roll	Energy	Auto-Fire	Firearms	Blades	Carry & Conceal
1	—No Personal Weapons Permitted—				Unlawful
2	None	None	None	Registered	Unlawful
3	None	None	Registered	Registered	Unlawful
4	None	None	Registered	Okay	Unlawful
5	None	Registered	Registered	Okay	Discouraged
6	Registered	Registered	Okay	Okay	Dicscouraged
7	Registered	Okay	Okay	Okay	Discouraged
8	—No Weapon Restrictions—				Okay

Penalties (1d8)

Die Roll	Crime		
	Capital	Major	Petty
1	Death	Mindwipe*	Psychotherapy**
2	Mindwipe*	Psychotherapy**	Imprisonment 2d20 yrs
3-4	Mindwipe*	Imprisonment 1d20 yrs	Fines 1d10 x 100
5-6	Mindwipe*	Fines 1d20 x 100	Fines 1d10 x 10
7-8	Imprisonment 2d20 yrs	Fines 1d20 x 100	Fines 1d10 x 10

*Adult memories
**Memory/motivation

Here is a new skill table which includes several extra skills not covered in the original system. This is to allow for more diversified characters. Please note that a player should be allowed to roll on the OTHERS column, instead of a particular profession, but may do so for no more than ½ of their skill dice rolls.

AFV Driver. This skill enables the character to operate all types of military vehicles including tanks and armored personnel carriers. Each level of skill is a modifier to the character's safety rolls in accident situations.

Zero-Gee. This skill gives the character experience in moving under weightless conditions. Each skill level is a modifier when checking for injuries caused by moving in zero-gee.

Demolition. Characters having this skill are capable of preparing and detonating various kinds of explosive. Increased skill levels allow the character a wider range of experience and lessen the chance of an accident.

Hvy Equip Op. (Heavy Equipment Operator) This skill enables the character to operate bulldozers, earth movers, cranes, handling machines, and other types of heavy equipment. Increased skill levels widen the character's experience with heavy equipment and insure safer operation.

Revised Skill Tables

1d100 Roll	10	20	30	38	46	54	62	69	76	82	87	92	96	98	00
Skill Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

	Soldier	Engineer	Scientist	Astronaut	Others
1	Ranged Wpns	Electronics	Sensors	Pilot	Contact Exp
2	H-H Combat	Sensors	Computer	Astrogation	Extra-Terre.
3	Contact Wpns	Computer	Contact Exp	Sensors	Underground
4	Survival	Hvy Equip Op	Medical	Computer	Lockpicking
5	AFV Driver	Maintenance	Biology	Zero-Gee	H-H Combat
6	Power Armor	Life Support	Astrophysics	Contact Exp	Contact Wpns
7	Zero-Gee	Thermonuclear	Anthropology	Survival	Ranged Wpns
8	Demolition	Zero-Gee	Linguistics	Ranged Wpns	Pilot
9	Sensors	Gravitics	Meterology	Gunner	Zero-Gee
10	Hvy Equip Op	Laser Science	Planetology	Contact Wpns	Survival
11	Maintenance	Hyperdrive	Chemistry	Medical	Computer
12	Fwrd Observ	Robotics	Electronics	Extra-Terr	Robotics
13	Communication	Extra-Terr	Extra-Terr	H-H Combat	Sensors
14	Medical	Power Armor	Robotics	Communication	Medical
15	Leadership	Demolition	Thermonuclear	Leadership	Linguistics

Fwrd Observ. (Forward Observer) This skill gives the character the specialized knowledge to call in long-range artillery and beam weapon fire for pinpoint accuracy.

Communication. This skill gives the character the ability to operate specialized communications equipment other than regular pocket communicators or telephones. This includes long-range radio gear, broadcasting equipment, holographic recording devices, and so on. Increased skill levels allow the character to use more sophisticated equipment and to use codes, cyphers, and special encoding equipment.

Robotics. This skill sllows the character to understand the basics of controlling robots, communicating with them, repairing them, and reprogramming them. Increased levels of skill allow the character to modify the efficiency roll for the robot when it attempts tasks that it is not normally programmed for.

Equipment

To the right is an expanded table of *Star Patrol* equipment and gear.

Biology. This is life sciences skill. Characters with Biology skill will be better able to identify creatures as to types and probable behavior. Increased levels of skill allow wider range of lifeform types, including those not of standard carbon-based systems.

Linguistics. This is the study of languages and other forms of communication that a race might possess. Persons with this skill will be able to translate various known languages and will have a much better chance of translating and learning new alien languages.

Meteorology. This skill gives the character the ability to determine weather patterns for different planets based on observation of the planet's atmosphere, rotation, temperature, and also by what types of star it orbits.

Lockpicking. This underground skill allows the character to be able to penetrate various locks, doorcodes, and safe mechanisms. Each skill level is a modifier to the chance to penetrate a particular device, or against the chance of setting off an alarm.

Item	Mass	Initiation	Price	Notes
Biosensor	.5	—	350	Detects life forms up to 50 m. Must be set for different types of life forms.
Energy Sensor	.6	—	150	Detects and measures energy sources up to 1 km away.
Spectral Scanner	.8	—	200	Analyzes chemical and elemental composition up to 1 m.
Space Suit Repair Kit	.3	—	30	Repairs punctures and line failures. Type of suit must be specified.
Weapon Maintenance Kit	.4	—	15	Normal cleaning and maintenance tools. Type of weapon must be specified.
Electronics Maintenance Kit	.8	—	45	Circuit testing sensors, spare modules, tools.
Translator Module	.1	—	200	Module for hand computer. Translates known languages, helps linguist analyze alien languages.
Diagnostic Sensor	.5	—	100	Determines health status of specified life form.
Eva Maneuver Thruster Pack	1.0	–1	300	Fits onto back of space suit or life support unit. .2 g acceleration for up to 30 seconds.
Zero-Gee Tool Kit	1.0	—	180	Powered tools for weightless operation.
Cold Weather Gear	2.0	–2	150	Thermal gloves, jumpsuit, boots, hood, and face mask.
Fluoroscanner	.6	—	250	Device to see through other materials. Scan is blocked by heavy metals.
Holotaper	.4	—	150	Records 3D images on tape with playback capability.
Access Terminal	.1	—	200	Allows hand computer to tie in with main systems.
Super Glue	.02	—	1.5	Will bond most substances together, including flesh.
Scuba Gear	20.0	–2	250	Air tank, fins, mask for underwater, 2 hours.
Gill Breather Gear	5.0	–1	1000	Gill, fins, mask for underwater use.
Peepmap	.1	—	40	Small box containing a map which may be examined as if it were full-sized.
Sinclair Monofilament Wire	.2	—	500	Spool of 100 m with handle and illumination tab. Will cut through most substances and will support up to 500 kg before breaking.
Emergency Drug Pack	1.0	—	400	This is a military or restricted item consisting of a plastic case with a keyboard and grip. A small nozzle may be detached from the side to administer drug by air pressure. Always make a saving roll for allergic reaction. These drugs are designed for Terran humans or may be specified by other races. Each pack contains 3 doses of each drug.

Drug and Effects:

Countershock.* Prevents unconsciousness for 12 combat turns, or erases fatigue for 36 combat turns (3 game turns). Person must then rest for at least 6 hours.

Hypertime.* Enhances user's time sense, allowing him or her to perform up to 3 actions per combat turn, for 12 combat turns. Then a rest period of 6 hours must follow.

Antirad. Negates up to 2d6 radiation-caused damage.

Antitox. Negates up to 2d6 damage caused by poisons or other toxic substances.

Unitrank. Acts as a 3d6 stun attack.

Panabiotic. Halts infection of wounds and prevents bacterial and viral infection.

Booster.* Increases strength times 2 for 12 combat turns. Requires rest for at least 6 hours following use.

Warning: Double doses or contigual repeated doses require the character to make a 5d6 saving roll to prevent a 2d6 loss of strength, dexterity, and mentality.