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LASER SQUAD



GAME MANUAL

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WELCOME

Laser Squad is a fast-moving, futuristic, tactical wargame for one or two players that accurately simulates many aspects of individual level combat. It will take some time for a new player to become familiar with the game system, and we recommend that you load the program and go through the first section of this manual which provides you with a basic guide to playing the game. The second section should be treated as a reference manual for experienced players. The final section provides instructions for the five missions. Before playing a mission, you should read the special mission instructions which will provide details of objectives, deployment areas, and other information.

Laser Squad was designed with 'button-like' menu options, which have symbols rather than descriptions. (Refer to the descriptions contained herein for further details.) While a mouse is recommended, it is possible to operate Laser Squad by keyboard only. Joystick support is not provided.

The following is a list of important keys with their corresponding function:

ARROW KEYS	Move the pointer.
SPACE	Equivalent to left mouse button click.
LEFT ALT	Equivalent to right mouse button click.
DELETE	Scrolls the map left.
PAGE DOWN	Scrolls the map right.
HOME	Scrolls the map up.
END	Scrolls the map down.
CTRL+ESC	Quit game.

PART ONE: PLAYING THE GAME

OVERVIEW

Laser Squad is played in a series of game turns. Each player, during his turn, controls a small group of characters which represent humans, droids or other creatures. Each character has unique characteristics which affect the abilities and activity of that character.

At the start of every turn, each character is allocated a number of 'action points' which are used for performing all activities, such as movement, combat, manipulating objects, etc. Once all action points are exhausted, or the player does not wish to use any more, the 'end turn' option is selected and the other player (or the computer) has a turn.

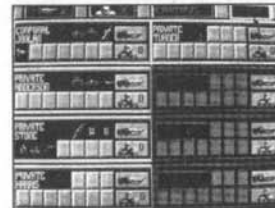
The winner of the game is the first side to accumulate 100 victory points. Victory points are awarded for various tasks, such as eliminating enemy characters or destroying certain installations, depending on the mission being played.



#1

STARTING THE GAME

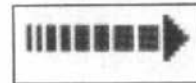
Use the mouse pointer to select a mission, or press one of the first five function keys. (See illust. #1) Mission one is recommended for learning the game. Consult the mission briefing (pg.20) before starting a scenario. Click on the disk icon to instantly reload a saved game. After choosing a mission, you must select the number of players. Use the mouse pointer to click on the one player icon if you wish to play against the computer. Click on the two player icon if you want to play against a human opponent. Click on the left and right arrows to change the level (1 to 7), and click on the check mark to confirm your choices and continue. If you wish to skip the opening story, strike the spacebar. (NOTE: If using two players, all maneuvers should be kept secret from the opponent.)



#2

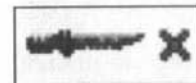
EQUIPMENT SELECTION

In each scenario you are allocated a number of 'credits' to spend on armor, weapons, and ammunition (for the entire squad). The equipment selection screen displays the names of all squad members eligible for equipment along with their current equipment selection and icons for selecting weapons and armor. (See illust. #2) The number of credits remaining is displayed at the top of the screen. You must use the icons to add or subtract equipment until you are satisfied with the selection you have made. Remember that the best choice of equipment depends very much on the nature of the mission you are undertaking.



End Equipment Selection

Choose this icon once you have finished your selection. If you are playing against a human opponent then the second player must also allocate equipment. (Each player's selection should be secret from the other player).



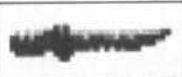
Cancel All Weapons

Choose this icon to eliminate all weapon selections you have made so far (for the entire squad), and restore your credits accordingly.



Cancel All Armor

Choose this icon to eliminate all armor selections you have made so far (for the entire squad), and restore your credits accordingly.



Select Weapons

Choose this icon to view the weapons selection screen for that character (see below).

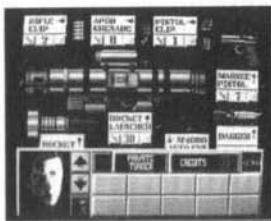


Select Armor

Choose this screen to view the armor selection screen for that character (see below). The number indicates the current armor selection from '0' to '4'. A '0' indicates no armor selected, and a '4' represents the best available.

WEAPON SELECTION

The weapons screen displays a scrolling 'arsenal' of weapons and ammunition with a picture of the character, along with the current weapons selected. Each weapon picture has a corresponding information box that contains the credit cost, and the add and subtract icons to add or remove weapons. (See illust. #3) Refer to the weapon chart at the back of the manual for more details.



#3



Scroll Up

Scroll the weapons display up.



Scroll Down

Scroll the weapons display down.



Delete Weapon Selection

This will erase all weapons selected for this character and will restore credits for the removed equipment.



End Selection

This will return you to the main weapon selection screen.



Add Equipment

This icon is located on each of the equipment information boxes. Click on this icon to add a weapon or ammunition to the character's selection.

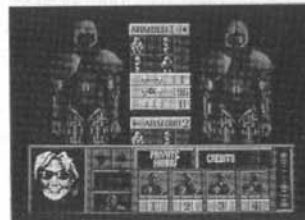


Delete Equipment

This icon is located on each of the weapon information boxes. Click on this icon to delete the weapon or ammunition from the character's selection.

ARMOR SELECTION

The armor screen shows a scrolling display of the four armor types available. The information boxes show the armor's protection value for each 'side', the weight of the armor (heavy armor restricts movement) and the weight carrying limit of the armor. (See illust. #4) Use the armor chart at the back of the manual as a reference.



#4



Scroll Up

Scroll the armor display up.



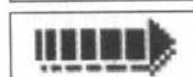
Scroll Down

Scroll the armor display down.



Delete Armor Selection

This will erase any selected armor for this character and restore credits equal to the armor value.



End Selection

This will return you to the main equipment selection screen.



Add Armor

Click anywhere on the armor information box to choose that type of armor.

DEPLOYMENT

When you have finished equipment selection you must deploy your squad. The deployment screen on the right shows the character to be deployed. Click on the 8 scroll icons to scroll the map window (click the right mouse button on these icons to speed up the scrolling). The deployment areas will appear as colored boxes. Consult the mission briefing (see pg.20) for the locations of deployment areas.

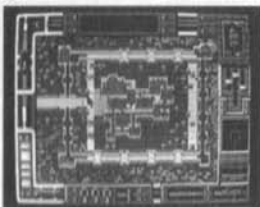
When the mouse pointer is over the map window you will notice that a box-like cursor appears. The cursor is used to show at which map space you are pointing. Click on a deployment square to deploy the character.

You can also display a strategic map by clicking on the map icon. (See illust. #5) All deployment squares and the positions of characters you have already deployed will be highlighted. Click anywhere on the map display to instantly move the map window to a new location.

Deploy the rest of your squad by clicking on empty deployment squares. In a two player game the second player will also deploy characters, and each player should keep their deployment secret from the enemy player. Once deployment is completed the first game turn will begin.

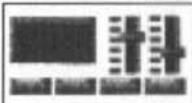
CURSOR MODE

When you start a turn, the game is in 'cursor mode'. This simply means that you have no characters selected for actions. You can scroll around the map, select friendly characters for actions, and examine information screens. The eight arrow icons around the map window are used to slowly scroll the window (the right mouse button is used to scroll at fast speed). When you point and click the left mouse button on a friendly character it will be selected for movement and other actions (see 'select mode' on pg.7). On the bottom right of the screen a set of action icons will be displayed. The shaded icons correspond to actions which are not currently available.



#5

The commands for cursor mode are as follows:



Strategic Map

This will display an overall strategic map showing all the positions of your own characters and any enemy characters that are spotted. The map window position is highlighted by a flashing square. Friendly characters appear as red squares and enemy characters as blue squares. Click anywhere on the strategic map display to instantly move the map window to a new location.



Next Character

This command will select a character from your squad and center the map window on that character. The game will be in 'select mode' (see pg.7) and the character can move and perform other actions. Use 'next character' repeatedly to cycle through all your squad members.



Character Information

When the cursor is over a character you can use this command to display information on the character.



End Turn

Select 'end turn' when your characters have run out of action points, or if you do not wish them to perform any more activities. This option will end your turn and the computer or player two will begin their turn.

LINE OF SIGHT

'Laser Squad' uses a hidden movement system. This simply means that enemy characters will not appear on the map unless they are in the field of vision of one of your characters. A character's field of vision extends 45° from the front. Various types of terrain, such as walls or doors, will block line of sight. You will not see an enemy until he is clearly in view.



#6

OPPORTUNITY FIRE

Opportunity fire is an essential feature of the tactics employed in 'Laser Squad'. If a character is left with at least half its action point allowance at the end of the game turn then it will be eligible for opportunity fire. During your opponent's turn, opportunity fire will be triggered when an enemy character moves into the field of vision of your character. (See illust. #6) Control will immediately switch to you in fire mode, (See pg. 10) which allows you to shoot the enemy character. Once you select 'end fire mode', your opponent will then continue with his turn.



#7

SELECT MODE

To select a character, click the mouse button when the cursor is positioned over a friendly character, or press the 'next character' button. The display on the right of the screen will show the character's name and picture along with the action points remaining on the top right. (See illust. #7) If there are two players, no actions should be seen by your opponent.

In order to move a character simply click on the destination space. Be careful that the character does not bump into obstacles, as action points will be wasted. The number just below the current action points shows how many action points would remain if you move to the space pointed to by the cursor. Just below these numbers is a red 'character' icon with a small number designating the number of enemy characters in the 'line of sight'.

Moving a character will always cost action points. The movement cost depends on the terrain that is being moved over. Moving diagonally will cost an extra two action points and rotating a character 45° costs one action point. If you attempt to move into impassable terrain the character will attack the terrain and possibly destroy it. You are allowed to move a selected character over friendly characters, but you cannot end movement on top of a friendly character.

You will notice that a character can face in eight different directions. This is important because the character's field of vision is limited (see 'line of sight' on pg.6). If you click on the right mouse button, the character will turn to face the cursor.

The icons displayed on the bottom right govern the actions of the character. Only icons for actions which the character can perform are displayed. Each action will consume a number of action points based on a percentage of the character's action point allowance. For example, if a character has an action point allowance of 40 for each turn, then the 'change object' command, which requires 25% of action point allowance, will use 10 action points.

The display at the bottom of the screen shows the following information about the map and characters:

Map

If the pointer is in the map window, this gives a description of the terrain located directly beneath the mouse pointer.

In Use

If in 'select mode', this gives a description of the weapon which a friendly character is currently using. (In 'cursor mode' this field is blank.) A picture of the weapon in use appears just above the character's name.

Protection (PROT.)

If the pointer is in the map window, this gives a numerical ranking of the degree of protection provided by the terrain located directly beneath the mouse pointer. (e.g. tables, chairs, potted plants, etc.)

COMMAND SUMMARY:

Left Mouse Button

Select destination for movement if the pointer is in the map window.

Right Mouse Button

Turn character to face cursor.



End Move

End character's selection and return to 'cursor mode'. You can re-select the character provided it has action points remaining.



Fire Mode

If the character has an object in use then it can be fired or thrown. Select this option to change the display to 'fire mode' (see pg.10).



#8



Change Object In Use

This option is used to change the object in use, if a character is carrying one or more objects. The character's objects will be listed on the screen with the current object in use highlighted. (See illust. #8) The ammunition amount, weight, and size of the object are also shown. Move the mouse up or down to highlight a new object and click the left mouse button to select that object for use. To keep the same object in use, do not change the object highlighted. If you do not wish to have any object in use, click on the 'X'. This action costs 25% of a character's action point allowance, or nothing if the object in use is not changed.



Pick Up Object

A character can pick up objects that occupy the space on which he is standing. Select this option to display all the objects in the space in a similar way to the 'change object' screen. (See illust. #8) Maneuver the mouse to highlight the object you wish to pick up and click the left mouse button. (Click on the 'X' to cancel.) This action cost 50% of the action point allowance if the character already has an object in use, 25% if there is no object in use, or nothing if canceled.



Drop Object In Use

Select this icon to drop an object currently in use. It is possible to hide an object, depending on the size of the object and the type of terrain on which the character is standing. If it is possible to hide an object then an option will be displayed; otherwise the object will simply be dropped to the floor. Dropping an object costs 10% of the action point allowance.



Load Weapon

If a character has a ranged combat weapon in use, and is also carrying the correct ammunition for the weapon, then it can be loaded at a cost of 50% of the character's action point allowance.



Prime Grenade

If a grenade is in use, it can be primed at a cost of 20% of the action point allowance. Use the up and down icons to alter the timer setting. Click on the check mark to confirm or the 'X' to cancel. If the timer is set to 0, it will go off at the end of your turn; if set to 1, it will go off at the end of your opponent's turn; if set to 2, it will go off at the end of your next turn, etc.



Open/Close Door/Chest

If the character is facing toward an unlocked door or chest, it can be opened or closed. The cost is 20% of action point allowance.



Unlock/Lock Door/Chest

If the character is facing toward a locked door or chest and if he is holding the correct key (found elsewhere), then it can be unlocked at a cost of 25% of action point allowance. Doors and chests can be re-locked for the same action point cost.



Strategic Map

Displays the strategic map. This does not cost any action points.



Character Information

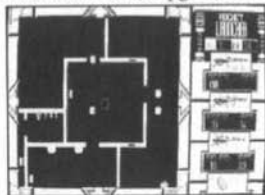
When the cursor is over a character, use this command to display information on him. This does not cost any action points.

CLOSE COMBAT

In order to engage in close combat simply move your character into an enemy character. Refer to a character's information details and the weapon information (see pg.23) to determine the advantage of close combat. This technique can also be used to break down locked doors, cut through jungle foliage, etc.

FIRE MODE

When you select the fire option the main display will change to show a 'line of fire' map. (See illust. #9) On the top right of the screen, ammunition and action points remaining are displayed. Below that, the action point cost and accuracy for each type of shot is shown. The line of fire map shows all terrain features which can block fire. The mouse pointer is replaced by a targeting pointer, which will scroll the map window if it is moved to the edges. This pointer will appear directly over the character who is taking shots. Point to a target and press the left mouse button to display the fire options. For objects which are not ranged combat weapons, only the throw option is available. (NOTE: Automatic fire is only available for some weapons.) See weapons and ammunition chart (on pg.23) for further details.



#9



End Fire Mode

Ends firing and returns to select mode.



Cancel Icons

Cancels the firing options and returns to the main fire mode display.



Character Information

When the cursor is over a character click on this icon to display information on the character.



Throw

Throws an object up to a distance determined by the character's strength divided by the weight of the object. The object will never be thrown further than the cursor, which allows for accurate placing of objects. The accuracy of throwing is equivalent to the character's agility rating. The action point cost is 20% of the character's action point allowance. This technique is most utilized with grenades or explosives, but generally requires some experimentation.



Aimed Shot

Fires a single aimed shot. It is the most accurate type of shot but requires the most action points. See the weapon chart on pg.23 for the exact percentage.



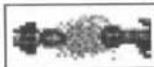
Snap Shot

Faster, but less accurate than an aimed shot. It also costs fewer action points than an aimed shot. See the weapon chart on pg.23 for the exact percentage.



Automatic Fire

A burst of continuous fire. This is very rapid but not very accurate, and a minimum of three shots must be fired. When you select this option a supplementary screen will be displayed with the following icons:



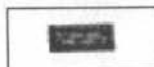
Fire the number of rounds selected.



Cancel fire options & return to the main fire mode screen.



Increase the number of rounds to fire.



Decrease the number of rounds to fire.

In the bottom right of the display, a number is shown which indicates the action points that will remain after the selected number of rounds have been discharged.



Load/Save

Choose this icon to save a game or to load a previously saved game. The load/save screen will have an image of two diskettes. Click on the diskette labeled load or the diskette labeled save. To abort, click on the red arrow 'button'.



Quit Game

Choose this icon to quit the current game (pressing CTRL+ESC will also quit the current game). Click on the check mark to confirm or the 'X' to cancel.

PART TWO: THE REBELLION

I-The Galactic Empires

The earth died a slow and lingering death, wasted by years of war and over-exploitation. The burden of its swollen population was too much to bear, and the existence of the human race itself was in question. The only solution was to look beyond the earth to the promising new worlds that littered the galaxy. Colonization of the first new star system in 2189 consumed immense resources, but the success of this venture led to more expansion at an accelerated pace. The millennium of space travel began in earnest, with hundreds of new worlds added to the human empire. When humanity conquered the stars it appeared to be a new epoch of plenty. However this new epoch brought with it problems of a unique character. Despite enormous leaps in technological development space travel was still slow and costly. Communication was poor, trade was limited, and many worlds developed their own history with little interference from the rest of humanity. Empires rose and fell, depending on the existence of vast military space fleets. Human society became diverse and uneven in its development. Poorer and more inhospitable worlds were colonized, as the richer systems were plundered and ravaged by warfare. Human society was no longer integrated by trade and commerce, but by military might. It seemed that the stellar empires had regressed humanity to the equivalent of earth's medieval Europe. Empires raged against each other until a single empire arose victorious and heralded a new era of peace and prosperity. In reality it represented a new dark age where repression and feudal absolutism presided over stagnation and decay. Only a rebellion against the ossified feudal empire could possibly bring the freedom necessary for the human race to thrive again, but the rebellion seemed nothing more than a dream for the masses.

II-The Interrogation

The light blinded him and he could not see the face of his interrogator. He could only hear the voice grating in his ears, loud and threatening. It was the drugs that made him afraid and his mind confused, but he remembered who he was - captain Tooley, seventh rebel brigade, Thyra-4 station. How had he gotten here? He could not remember anything except the fierce battle at the fueling station. Memories came flooding into his mind - screams, explosions, gun-fire and the terrible stench of death. He did not want to think about that any more, and his mind loosened its grip on consciousness.

"Bring him round - make him sit up properly," the voice ordered.

There were others here, silent servants. He could feel them now, strapping his useless body upright. He could smell them - it was a faintly repugnant smell of festering wounds. Then he realized that these servants were cyborgs, their crude cybernetic implants caused decay and rot where they meshed with human flesh. They were all around him now, so close that he could feel their breath on his face.

"Hey, get out of my head you stinking 'borgs," he yelled. They had attached something to each side of his head, and it hurt badly.

"Ahh, welcome to reality, captain Tooley," said the voice in front of him. Now Tooley could hear the voice clearly and it was firm and reassuring. It calmed him down a little.

"You are aware that you must talk to me, and you will tell me everything I need to know."

Tooley panicked now, he recognized that these commands combined with

the drugs filled him with an urge to talk, but he knew he must resist for the sake his comrades - for the sake of the rebellion.

"Where am I. I want out - now! Get me out of here."

"Listen, you are worth nothing. You are going to die anyway, but you will talk first. Then I shall have the pleasure of personally overseeing your painful demise," the voice threatened.

"Who are you, I know that voice, I'm sure - yes, I know you."

"Indeed, Mr. Tooley. Perhaps you would like to see my face?"

The blinding light dimmed, and he could see the outline of a large figure behind a desk. The figure hit a button and some lights in the wall glowed.

"Regnix, you filthy imperial scum - you should be dead - you wiped out my family on CX-1."

"That's no way to greet an old colleague, Sam. As for your family, they knew full well that CX-1 was Marsec property scheduled for terra-forming."

The bloated, ugly presence of Sterner Regnix disgusted Tooley. He looked very different from when he knew him, but there was still that reassuring, ingratiating voice that he remembered so well.

"They were refugees, dammit. Thousands of them had nowhere to go from the empire's lousy war on Scara Beta."

Sam Tooley knew Sterner Regnix from the Marsec research facility, where they had worked on personal weapons systems. Little did Tooley know that the nature and purpose of that work had horrific implications. Marsec Corporation was one of the biggest, originally the Mars Security and Peace Corporation dating back 400 years. Now it seemed that Marsec had successfully bid for some bloody 'peace' contract tendered by the Imperial Peace Council. But Tooley was not sure what Regnix had got to do with all this.

"Listen Sam," Regnix spoke gently now, "I am disappointed in you. I know it's been ten years, but I am sure that you could have made a first rate Marsec officer. Now you have become a rebel rat, contaminated by their ridiculous ideas. We can't allow this, Sam. You have taken our precious scientific knowledge and given it to those scum. Now look at me, I have had a career to be proud of. After administering the CX-1 transformation I was promoted for my good work. Of course it's a shame that all those people had to die, but they were in the way. There was nothing I could do."

"We'll get you for this, somehow, someday - you will pay with your life."

"Come on, Sam. I don't think you're in a position to threaten me. Let's spend our reunion in a more constructive manner. After all, we haven't much time left."

He stood up and walked to the far wall, facing towards it. Tooley noticed the discreet gravitation implants used to support Regnix's fattened body. At that moment he felt nothing but loathing for him. Suddenly he was startled as a picture appeared covering the wall. There was a building set inside a big garden, populated with flowers and trees.

"It's beautiful, isn't it Sam? This is my home on CX-1. We did a great job on this mud ball. Now you can see that power creates beauty. In fact power can get you anything you want. One day from now I will be relaxing on this lawn and you will be long gone."

The picture changed to images of people running and screaming. Lights in the sky moved downwards and beams of energy erupted on the planet surface. For a moment Tooley thought he saw his mother and sister running with the crowd, but he wasn't sure. He could see that they had nowhere to run to, and the grief overcame him. Tears streamed down his face and he closed his eyes, unaware that Regnix had now turned to towards him with a smile on his face.

"Tell me where Rebelstar is, Sam, and I will let you die peacefully."

Rebelstar was the mythical base of Rebel military operations. Perhaps Regnix really believed that it existed, as did many billions of people who hoped beyond all hopes for deliverance from the Empire. In reality the Rebels had to move from one planet to another, covering their tracks, in order to keep one step ahead of the Imperial Security Services.

Tooley was silent now. There was nothing more to say. He remembered that he did have some purpose here and he knew why he had survived the battle.

"Let me introduce you to my good friends. You won't be able to keep any secrets from them."

Two hovering globes glided into position in front of Tooley's eyes. They were featureless - about the size of a human head.

"You know Sam, I always admired your mind, and the clarity of thought that so benefited our early work. Now I will take everything out of there and leave your brain like scrambled eggs. Perhaps with the right implants you will make a good house servant for the imperial palace. How would you like that, Sam?"

Tooley ignored the voice. It had become irrelevant. The two globes moved around so that they were positioned each side of his head. One of the cyborgs tightened the straps so that he could not move at all. A probe from one of the globes extended slowly towards its target on Tooley's right temple. For the first time he smiled because he knew that his mission was accomplished. Many before him had suffered this torture, but this time it was different. The micro sub-space transmitter in his skull had served its purpose, and all he had to do was issue the mental command to terminate his mission assignment.

Just as the probe was entering his mind Tooley's head exploded with such force that Sterner Regnix's startled face was splattered with blood, brain and bone.

III - The Plot to Assassinate Sterner Regnix

"Have you studied the transmissions, sir?"

The young trooper addressed her superior officer with barely disguised excitement in her voice.

"Yes, I think this is good. We could use this, but we have to act fast."

Bernstein was pacing up and down in his office. He had listened to the interrogation of Sam Tooley several times already, and he had also been excited at the prospect of some action at last. He knew Sam well, but there was no time to mourn now. The best epitaph for Sam Tooley was to blow Regnix out of the galaxy.

"Get the war committee together now. We'll discuss this straight away."

Minutes later Bernstein, Rakovsky and Arturo are together in the briefing room. Cigarette smoke curls slowly under the glare of a single light bulb hanging from the rock wall above. This room was little different to the other parts of the base, hewn out of solid rock deep below the planet surface. It was a cold and inhospitable place.

"You do realize, Bernstein, that if we go for this we'll have to move everything out right away?"

The officer who spoke was Juliet Rakovsky, a veteran rebel who was now in charge of the rebel facilities on Zorys K4, the god-forsaken planet that was home to 2,000 men, women and children.

"Sure, well, I'd like to get the hell out of here in any case. We can make it to Azar in two months can't we?"

"Plus one week to organize ourselves to get off the planet here," said Rakovsky.

"You've got two days at the most, Rakovsky, to be on the safe side. If the marines know that we have been here it won't take two months for them to find out where we've gone."

"Hell, why do you always ask the impossible. The AFVs will have to be wasted, that's the only way."

"Hold on, I think we're jumping ahead here," Arturo intervened. He was responsible for picking and equipping the squad for this mission. "Is this assassination really worth all this trouble. Are you saying that we have to uproot ourselves and risk annihilation all for the sake of hitting this Regnix character?"

"Yes, it is worth it," Bernstein replied. "And the reason is that Regnix is the real power broker in this sector. The empire is a clumsy bureaucracy, and without scum like Regnix we would run rings round them. Our intelligence suggests that Regnix is the boss of Marsec sector 9, and thanks to Sam we know where he is going to be 10 hours from now. We thought that the terra-formation of CX-1 was a failure, and it turns out that this maniac has built some kind of garden of Eden on the in the middle of a wasteland where thousands of people were massacred. I'd guess that Regnix was promoted for disposing of a group of defenseless refugees rather than terra-formation. He's got his own motives for Marsec operations, and they seem to be directed against his former colleagues in Marsec weapons research who have come over to us. He appreciates the value that these scientists have for the rebellion and he is prepared to use the vast resources of Marsec in pursuit of this aim. If we get rid of Regnix it will be a major victory for us, although the Imperial Council probably won't appreciate it. We've got to go for it, but what about the chances of success, Arturo?"

Arturo looked down at his hastily scrawled notes. He stroked his chin, deep in thought.

"Well here's the low down," he began, "The security is tight, but we'll get five fighter pilots in for a diversion at the spaceport. Then we send a small unit down to Regnix's pad with the latest evasion systems. They should get in without a peep from Marsec's space security. But that's the easy part. The squad we'll deploy should be no more than five strong, armed with the latest gear - rocket launchers to blow out the walls and Marsec auto guns to mop up anything that's left. We don't know what kind of resistance we're going to get, and we've got to have volunteers who understand that they would have little chance of getting out alive."

"Sounds OK to me," said Bernstein.

"What! It's a crazy idea," Rakovsky said, slapping the table to emphasize the point. "Are you seriously suggesting that just five squaddies can do the job on the ground. Can't we get a bomber in and nuke the sucker from orbit?"

Arturo sighed and rubbed his tired eyes.

"No chance, we go through these alternatives every time. Anything bigger than a fighter won't get anywhere near the planet before space defenses blow it out of the galaxy. I know it sounds crazy, but it's the best way, believe me. You just get the show on the road this end and by the time we get to Azar we'll know whether we've succeeded or not. We haven't got much time now."

"Who's your squad leader?" Bernstein asked.

"Corporal Jonlan. He's the most experienced tactician we've got, a veteran of the Scara campaign. If anyone can pull it off, he can."

"I hope we're not wasting him." Rakovsky may have been doubtful about the mission but in reality she was more confident now that Jonlan was involved.

"Well is that decided then?" Bernstein was looking at Rakovsky. She nodded her head.

"Okay then, Rakovsky and I have got a lot to sort out here. You go and get your squad and pilots together and we'll rendezvous at Azar."

IV - The Assassins

Jonlan gripped his auto-gun tightly. The vibration and noise was only just bearable as the specially fitted Skydrop space lander plummeted through the thick and cloudy atmosphere of CX-1.

"Hey, Joe. Is this rust-bucket going to make it?"

"No problem, just hold tight back there," the pilot replied.

They had taken a bit of damage from the space defenses and the computer tracking for the landing system was malfunctioning. Joe Pearlman was an experienced pilot and Jonlan was confident that he would get them down in one piece. If there were any ground based defenses the evasion system would still cut in.

The vibration and noise subsided as they emerged from the cloud cover.

"Take a look at this, guys 'n gals. This is sure one helluva picture."

Jonlan turned to the tiny window beside him and rubbed off the condensation. A huge green landscape stretched below with rivers, lakes and forests. There was no sign of human habitation.

"Nice piece of work," said Harris. "I could settle down here." Like the others it had been a very long time since she had seen a green, living landscape.

Very quickly the rolling hills and forests expanded as they descended at an alarming rate. Jonlan was grateful for the free-floating sensation which lessened the burden of his heavy armor and weaponry. He turned away from the window and contemplated the task that lay ahead. There was no conversation because they were all wrapped in their own thoughts.

"Prepare for thrusters ... 5...4...3...2...1"

Gravity returned with a jolt as the thrusters slowed their descent. Within two minutes another jolt indicated that the craft had landed. The bay door swung open with a loud hum and they jumped out, ready for combat. Turner and Jonlan hit the turf first with their powerful Marsec auto-guns slung at the hip. Harris loaded the breech of her sniper rifle. Troopers Stone and Anderson brought up the rear with their heavy weapons.

Jonlan consulted the scanner on his visor display. The target area was two miles north, and they had to get there quickly.

"This way," he pointed forwards with his gun. "It's a two mile hike, so let's take it at a steady run, power suits at full capacity."

The power assisted armor not only enabled them to carry heavy equipment, it meant that they could move rapidly and stealthily over great distances without becoming exhausted. The journey took them through patches of forest and swamp. The variety of flora amazed Jonlan, he had never seen many of these species before. The cover was excellent, but it was heavy going. Visibility was also restricted by low lying fogs created by steaming, bubbling ponds. After ten minutes they had penetrated the heart of a jungle area. Then Jonlan caught something in the corner of his eye. His instant reactions brought his gun to bear and he let loose five rounds. There was a high pitched squeal, but there was nothing visible.

"Just some lizard, I think," said Turner, "I've seen them before."

They Started off again and very shortly they emerged from the jungle and found themselves in front of a large white wall. They walked down the side of it until they come to a large gate. Anderson unslung his rocket launcher and Stone charged his Heavy Laser. Jonlan cautiously peered round the corner.

"No sign of life. The gate's wide open." He continued to look for a few moments. "OK, let's go."

They moved forward, under cover of the trees on the beautifully tendered

lawn. In front of them was driveway leading up to a house with a door and windows. It all seemed very conventional and traditional, not what they had expected at all.

"Harris, come with me, we're going round to the other side. Anderson, start blowing holes in this place when I give the signal."

Within two minutes Jonlan and Harris had found a rear entrance, which they approached with no resistance.

"I can't believe how easy this is so far. It's making me nervous," said Harris. Jonlan prepared a grenade while Harris turned the handle of the door.

"It's not locked! I'll swing it in, have you got that thing primed?"

"Anderson, we're going in. Start your fireworks." Jonlan nodded to Harris and she shoved the door open. Jonlan threw the grenade in and they both ducked away from the open door. Before the grenade had a chance to hit the floor it went off sending glass, debris and the remains of the door shooting away of the house. An instant later they heard an explosion followed by gun fire from the far side of the house. Jonlan burst into the house and found himself in a small room with two doors, one in the north wall and another in the south. Among the debris was a body of a cyborg, armed with an autogun.

"Nice work, Jonlan. Where now?"

"Let's both go south. We shouldn't split up at this stage."

As soon as Jonlan got through the next door Harris yelled and fired a single shot. There was some return fire. Jonlan turned and let off some automatic fire. Harris was lying face down in the doorway. Jonlan checked the squad biofunctions in his visor display. She was alive, but unconscious. Fortunately there was no blood loss either. There was no sign of her attacker, but Jonlan had a good idea of where he was. He reached for a grenade, but had second thoughts. Instead he aimed his gun at the door way and waited.

"Under heavy fire here, Corporal. Two or three 'borgs got us pinned down. Turner's wounded." It was Stone's voice on the communicator. There was another explosion that seemed a little close for comfort.

A shape moved into the door way just a few feet from the end on Jonlan's gun barrel. Three rounds went straight into the target and the shape dropped next to Harris's body. Jonlan quickly moved up to the door way to see if there were any more customers. There was nothing in sight, so he turned the cyborg's body over. It wasn't Regnix, but it was ugly enough to be related. Yellow fluid oozed from some absurd mechanical implant where the mouth was supposed to be. The scalp was covered by a badly fitted metallic grill. Jonlan wondered whether these cyborgs ever used mirrors.

He moved Harris into the corner of the room and made sure she was comfortable. She groaned and tried to raise her arms.

"Stay here Harris. That's an order."

"We're going in now, two 'borgs down so far," Stone reported. Jonlan consulted his scanner which showed the positions of the squad.

"I'm going round the south side, you meet me round this way, Stone. Anderson and Turner, find your way round the north side."

He went through two more doors with no resistance, and emerged into a corridor near the front of the house. Stone came round the corner of the corridor and indicated to a door half way between the two of them.

"There's not much left of this side of the house. If Regnix is anywhere there's a good chance he's in here."

They approached the door and Stone went in first. Jonlan heard the rapid

zaps of the high powered laser. By the time he was in the room Stone had managed to sever the gun arm of an ugly, oversized cyborg.

"Regnix, I presume?" said Jonlan triumphantly. Regnix was clutching his shoulder where his arm used to be, but instead of blood there was that familiar yellow fluid. "Not much humanity left in you, either physically or morally, is there?" said Stone.

Nothing could disguise the horror in the eyes of Sterner Regnix.

"Kill me now, please" he whimpered, and he slumped to his knees with his head bowed down. Jonlan stood next to him, took hold of his hair and pulled his head back. "What! you want the luxury of a quick death? Do you want to know what my friend here can do with a laser beam?"

Turner appeared in the far doorway, his gun slung over his shoulder. His left leg was wounded where a round had penetrated his armor.

"Anderson's gone to find Harris. There's no more 'borgs alive in the house."

Jonlan un-holstered his pistol and pressed it between Regnix's eyes. Regnix began to talk with a quiet, mumbling voice.

"How did you know, how could you know? This is a secret planet, nobody knows."

"It seems that your conversation with our mutual friend, Sam Tooley, had a wider audience than you expected. Now you are going to suffer because of your pathetic boasting," Jonlan replied with barely disguised anger.

"I'll give you money, freedom, anything you want. All of you can have a job in the corporation. I could use men like you, and you'll have a pardon from the Emperor. I guarantee it. I have the power," Regnix pleaded.

"Do you have the power to stop a bullet from my pistol?" Jonlan pulled hard on Regnix's hair so that he squealed with pain. "Fortunately for you we can't waste time torturing Imperial scum. You're going to die now."

Regnix clearly felt relieved. After all, he had witnessed enough torture to know that it was worse than death.

V - New Home

Rakovsky sat in front of a vidi-scanner surveying the plans of the new Rebel base on Azar. She sipped from a steaming cup of strong coffee and shivered in the cool evening breeze. Her station was in the open air at the moment, with nothing but a camouflage cover draped over some poles for a ceiling.

"How's it going, Juliet?" Bernstein came and sat down in the chair beside her.

"This is a great place. There's plenty of vegetation and there are plenty of native life forms that would easily disguise our presence from Imperial biodetectors."

"Huh ... I'm glad someone's happy here. One of our best troopers got attacked by one of these wonderful natives you're talking about. He said it was some kind of giant frog that spat acid at him. And what about this seismic activity?"

"Well, this is more of a problem. We could expect volcanic eruptions at any time, but we've got two stabilizers set up already. I've already got a proper stabilizer facility under construction further down the valley. Once that's operational we should have nothing to worry about. In fact, I think this place is ideal."

The sun was settling down low on the horizon, creating a beautiful red and purple glow which reflected off the cirrus clouds above. The vegetation was thick and varied as far as the eye could see, and white peaked mountains rose steeply on both sides of the valley.

"You know that some jokers are calling this place 'paradise' valley," said Bernstein. "It's going to be a nightmare for me making sure we don't start losing people to these monsters that are roaming around out there."

"Oh, do you think it's that bad?"

Rakovsky sounded genuinely worried, but Bernstein just laughed.

"No, it'll be good training. Keep them on their toes!"

Bernstein got up and walked down a pathway to a storage area. About a mile further down he could see a space shuttle unloading supplies from one of the big transporters in orbit. The place was bustling with activity as the Rebels rushed to secure the base before any Imperial snoopers turned up. He hit his communicator and it bleeped into life.

"Arturo, it's Bernstein here. Meet me in the canteen at 1800 with your Omni report."

Bernstein walked to the other side of the storage area where the canteen was located. At the moment it served as a briefing room, and office. At least there was plenty of coffee available, even if the food left a lot to be desired. He helped himself to some coffee and standard biscuit rations, then sat down at one of the primitive benches. There were a few other people around, quietly relaxing and talking.

A little while later Arturo appeared, clutching his wad of notes. He was now in charge of special operations following the success of the Regnix assassination. He looked as serious and grim as usual. He sat down opposite Bernstein laying out some notes and diagrams on the table.

"Nice to see you looking so cheerful, Arturo," Bernstein said sarcastically.

"It's been a long day."

"A productive one, I hope?"

Arturo looked up with a wry smile on his face. He was obviously pleased with his work, though he did not always show it.

"Intelligence have made a breakthrough, I've got something in mind that would set the Empire back decades. We can strike a major blow against the Omni Corporation, look at this." Arturo pointed to a diagram in front of him. "This is a plan of a facility on Arid-6, a satellite of Regala-2. It is used exclusively as a center for analyzing Imperial intelligence data on Rebel operations. We knew Omni had this contract, but we could never find out where they based the operation. It's heavily shielded, but I think we can take it out if we get a squad in there."

"Excellent! This could be the break we've been looking for. How soon can we launch this mission?"

"Three weeks, approximately."

"Can you prepare a full briefing tomorrow?"

"Yes."

Bernstein continued to discuss the details for a while before heading to his sleeping quarters. At last he felt quietly confident that the rebellion was making progress. All these years of dedication would finally begin to pay off. His grandfather had been one of the first rebels, and now the third generation, the grandchildren of the rebellion, would begin to do justice to those original ideals.

PART THREE: THE MISSIONS

Mission One-The Assassins

Marsec, otherwise known as the Mars Security and Peace Corporation, is the major manufacturer of military hardware in the Empire. It has also won a contract from the Imperial Peace Council to maintain peace in galaxy sector 9, with a population of 30 billion. Inevitably this means military repression on a massive scale. Sterner Regnix is the boss of sector 9, and he was responsible for 'terra-forming' the planet CX-1, where thousands of rebels and refugees had fled from the war on Scara. All the refugees were killed in the process and CX-1 became the private estate of Sterner Regnix. Since then he has been tracking down Rebel scientists who used to work for the Marsec weapons laboratories. Sam Tooley, a Rebel soldier who used to work for Regnix, is fitted with a secret sub-space transmitter implanted in his skull. When his mission appears to fail he is captured and interrogated by Regnix himself, and the Rebels record everything through the transmitter. During the interrogation Regnix boasts about his home on the planet CX-1, and how he would be there the following day after Tooley is long gone. Armed with this information, the Rebels plan a daring mission to land a squad on CX-1 and assassinate Sterner Regnix. Meanwhile the Rebels prepare to move their base of operations from Zorys K4 to the large jungle planet Azar in the heart of sector 9.

Deployment

ASSASSIN SQUAD Deploy on the squares which surround the house.
BORG SQUAD Sterner Regnix and his cyborg guards deploy inside the house.

Victory Conditions

ASSASSIN SQUAD If Sterner Regnix is killed, the Rebels win the game.
BORG SQUAD The borg squad wins if Sterner Regnix survives.

Mission Two-Moonbase Assault

The Omni Corporation's moonbase on Arid-6 holds security information on Rebel operations in galaxy sector 9. The rows of databanks and analyzers are manned by clones with cybernetic implants designed to interface with the computer network. The discovery of this facility by Rebel Intelligence immediately resulted in a mission plan for a Rebel squad to penetrate the outer defenses, enter the moonbase, and destroy all the databanks and analyzers. Success will bring greater freedom for Rebel operations and reduce the likelihood of the new base on Azar being discovered. Soon after the base is established a squad of eight rebels is dispatched to Arid-6.

Deployment

LASER SQUAD Set up your squad on the deployment squares outside the base, where airlocks are located. In order to gain entrance simply open the doors.
OMNI CORPORATION Deploy your forces inside the moonbase.

Victory Conditions

LASER SQUAD A sufficient number of databanks and analyzers must be destroyed to guarantee victory. A Databank is worth 5 victory points and an analyzer 2. The Laser Squad wins if 100 victory points are accumulated.
OMNI CORPORATION The Omni Corporation wins if the Laser Squad fails to destroy a sufficient number of databanks and analyzers, or if the Laser Squad is destroyed.

Mission Three-Rescue From The Mines

The success of the Arid-6 mission created new confidence for the Rebel cause. But over-confidence and lack of caution can bring disaster. Such a disaster occurred on the planet Aurum where a vast mine complex belonging to the Metallix Corporation was employing thousands of slaves and prisoners of war. An apparently routine reconnaissance team was captured by Metallix security forces. Fortunately one of the prisoners had a subspace transmitter and was able to communicate with the Rebel base and give the precise location of the prisoners before the transmitter was discovered. A rescue mission was quickly devised to send a squad of five rebels down a mine system on Aurum where the prisoners were being held. The prisoners must be saved at all costs because they possess vital information on the Metallix mining complex.

Deployment

LASER SQUAD Deploy at the top left and top right of the map.
METTALLIX CORP. Deploy on the squares at the center of the map.

Victory Conditions

LASER SQUAD All three of the prisoners must escape to guarantee victory. Once a prisoner is released from his cell move him to an elevator door and move into the elevator to escape.
METTALLIX CORP. The Metallix corporation wins if at least five of the Rebels are killed, or if the Rebels fail in their rescue mission.

Mission Four-The Cyber Hordes

The Rebel successes appeared to be a minor irritation to the vast Imperial bureaucracy. But then the rebels started to deploy a technologically advanced starfighter which was soon brought to the attention of the Imperial Peace Council. The Marsec corporation lost the Imperial Peace contract in sector 9, owing to its incompetence and failure to stop Rebel operations. Elite units of the Empire were dispatched to sector 9 to locate the Rebel base and capture the technology for the starfighter. One such unit located the planet Azar and suspected a Rebel presence. An elite droid squad was sent into a valley containing a facility with planetary stabilizers. The rebels were caught off guard, and realized that if the stabilizers were destroyed then the whole base was threatened by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. A desperate battle to fight off the attackers ensued.

Deployment

REBEL SQUAD The rebels must deploy inside the base on the right half of the map.
DROID SQUAD The droids deploy on the top left and bottom right of the map.

Victory Conditions

REBEL SQUAD In the two player game, the Rebels must eliminate all eight of the droids in order to win. In the one player version, the droids receive reinforcements. The Rebels must destroy 100 points worth of droids in order to win. The Rebels will also win if they successfully defend the stabilizer cores.
DROID SQUAD The droid squad wins if at least five of the stabilizer cores are destroyed, or if all the rebel squad are killed.

MISSION FIVE - PARADISE VALLEY

The destruction of the planetary stabilizer base left the Azar colony in ruins. Volcanic eruptions destroyed most of the Rebel installations and the Imperial assault ships hover above the atmosphere like vultures waiting for their prey to die. The massive attack on the Rebel base was designed to capture and recover the advanced starfighter technology. However the Rebels have destroyed the few existing starfighters and stored the blueprints in a small security device. A squad is assigned the task of escaping from the base with the device in order to reach a distress beacon on the western plains. The route through Paradise Valley is very dangerous because all the local wildlife is hostile and deadly. An underground network of tunnels can make the job easier, but the entrances and exits are all hidden. A sentient race known as the Sectoids tend to collect and store weaponry taken from humans unfortunate enough to meet them, and they have the ability to use these weapons as well. In the valley above, the vegetation provides cover for the vicious venomous splurges whose acidic spit is lethal. The Rebels must succeed if they are to salvage years of hard work.

Deployment

REBEL SQUAD The Rebels must deploy on the left hand side of the valley.
ALIENS The aliens do not have a deployment phase. They are deployed randomly in their natural terrain.

Victory Conditions

REBEL SQUAD The Rebels must take the security device, which is initially carried by Corporal Hansen, over to the right hand side of the valley.
ALIENS The aliens will win if all the Rebels are killed or if the Rebels fail to reach the right hand side of the valley with the security device.

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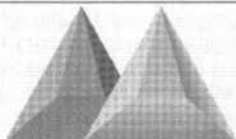
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WEAPONS, AMMUNITION & ARMOR CHARTS

WEAPON	WEIGHT	SIZE	CONSTITUTION	AP COST IN MAP	% CLOSE COMBAT COST	% CLOSE COMBAT ACCURACY	CLOSE COMBAT DAMAGE	% CLOSE COMBAT STRENGTH BONUS	% CLOSE COMBAT AGILITY BONUS	% AUTOMATIC FIRE AP COST	% AUTOMATIC FIRE ACCURACY	% SNAP SHOT AP COST	% SNAP SHOT ACCURACY	% AIMED SHOT AP COST	% AIMED SHOT ACCURACY	% SKILL FACTOR	RANGED COMBAT DAMAGE FACTOR	AMMUNITION CAPACITY	AMMUNITION TYPE
M4000 AUTO-GUN	10	12	106	2	25	40	8	20	10	3	5	25	16	50	40	8	46	20	M4000 GUN-CLIP
MARSEC AUTO-GUN	12	14	116	2	25	38	10	20	9	6	5	25	18	50	45	8	58	20	MARSEC GUN-CLIP
SNIPER RIFLE	7	8	96	1	20	52	6	20	13	-	-	33	26	67	56	13	52	12	RIFLE CLIP
MARSEC PISTOL	6	4	100	0	20	50	6	17	17	-	-	13	10	25	22	7	40	8	PISTOL CLIP
L50 LAS-GUN	18	14	120	2	33	34	10	17	10	5	4	20	12	50	24	5	30	40	L50 LAS-PACK
HEAVY LASER	28	34	126	3	50	24	11	17	7	3	3	17	10	33	16	6	45	50	HEAVY LAS-PACK
ROCKET LAUNCHER	12	22	86	3	50	26	9	14	8	-	-	33	10	67	18	5	160	1	ROCKET
DAGGER	1	2	6	0	17	58	20	13	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
AP50 GRENADE	2	2	60	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	90	-
EXPLOSIVE	15	8	80	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	70	-
M50 AUTO PISTOL	5	4	103	0	25	26	5	25	13	10	3	20	12	50	30	5	42	12	PISTOL CLIP
L80 LAS-GUN	14	18	112	2	25	30	8	17	8	-	-	25	28	50	64	4	48	10	L80 LAS-PACK
PUMP SHOT GUN	9	9	106	0	25	40	8	20	14	-	-	25	16	50	38	7	64	6	SHOT GUN CLIP
MS AUTO CANNON	26	30	120	3	33	26	11	17	7	13	8	25	20	50	40	7	78	12	CANNON CLIP
MK-1	14	12	136	1	25	36	6	17	13	6	12	33	24	33	57	10	53	30	MK-1 CLIP
AP75 GRENADE	4	3	130	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160	-
LIGHT SABRE	5	4	180	0	20	46	84	17	33	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

ARMOR TYPE	WEIGHT	WEIGHT CARRYING LIMITS			PROTECTION VALUE	COST
		FRONT	SIDE	REAR		
1	1	96	10	8	6	8
2	2	90	20	16	12	12
3	4	80	30	22	18	16
4	2	80	38	30	28	20

