

***Stargrunt II* – Phalons**

Disclaimer and Warning

This is a Beta version of *Stargrunt II* rules for the alien race known as the Phalons, created by Allan Goodall under the auspices of Jon Tuffley. Jon promised alien rules in the *Bugs Don't Surf* supplement to *Stargrunt II*. The intention of these rules is to release aliens for *Stargrunt II* to the Ground Zero Games community while *Bugs Don't Surf* is still in development.

These rules are an "in development". They are currently *not* OFFICIAL, though Jon has given me his blessing to post these to the community at large. These rules have seen limited play testing by members of the Ground Zero Games playtest list. We would like to invite further testing from the members of GZG-L and other GZG-oriented mailing lists.

Do not post these rules to websites (other than the mailing list archives), or disseminate/distribute them outside their local play groups. We invite and encourage the wider community's opinion and feedback, pro and con. Jon Tuffley has reserved the right to summarily change or ignore any of these rules.

Introduction

These rules for Phalons in *Stargrunt II* are a beta test set, which the GZG playtest list has been trying them out since January, 2003. The design criteria was to come up with rules for the alien Phalons that made as few changes to the *Stargrunt II* rule set as possible, but gave the aliens a unique "feel". See the Design Notes section for more details.

Early in 2003, someone asked the Fullthrust-Stargrunt Yahoo Group a question about aliens. Someone else mentioned that they were still waiting for *Bugs Don't Surf*. I suggested to Jon that we should create alien rules for SG2 and put them up on a web site. The rules would do until they were included in, or superceded by, the eventual release of *BDS*. To my surprise, Jon agreed! A number of people started talking about the Kra'vak and the Sa'Vasku. Beth made a comment about the Phalons being "beyond the pale for some". I took this as a challenge!

The result is this set of rules, which have been in development for over a year. When Dean Gundberg released the UN rules as a beta test to the GZG mailing list, I thought it would be a wonderful idea to do the same thing for the Phalon rules. After all, why should the vac heads have all the fun?

This document is split into three sections. Part 1 is a detailed description of Phalon physiology, society, and technology, based on the information published previously in Ground Zero Games books and catalogues but with additional data based on assumptions about Phalon evolution. This section is also known as "PSB". Part 2 are the *Stargrunt II* rules for Phalons. Part 3 are the design notes. The design notes are important as they explain the rationale behind the other parts of this document.

If you have any questions or comments, please e-mail me at agoodall@hyperbear.com.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank Jon Tuffley for giving me the opportunity to create *Stargrunt II* rules for Phalons, which has become a labour of love. I would also like to thank Jon for producing the wonderful Phalon miniatures (both 25mm and 15mm) sold by GZG, and the *Stargrunt II* rules themselves.

I wish to thank the GZG playtest mailing list for their comments, constructive criticism, and suggestions. In particular, I would like to thank Tom Barclay, Chris DeBoe, and Roger Burton West for their general comments; David Stuckey for some ideas on Phalon physiology; and Oerjan Ohlsen for his comments about Phalon weaponry (sorry the FAEs didn't make it into this; I'll have them on my web site). I would like to extend special thanks to Noam Izenberg for the "mega-clan" concept and helping me figure out the evolutionary process behind the three Phalon genders, and Beth Fulton and Derek Fulton for their playtesting activities. If I have left anyone out, I sincerely apologize. This document couldn't have been done without each and every one of you.

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Part 1: The Phalons

Physiology

Phalons are bilaterally symmetric creatures with arms, legs and a head. Beyond this, their similarity to humans ends. Their limbs have an extra joint, their head has a single large eye with three lobes, and their body is covered in a carapace.

Phalon limbs are longer than that of humans. This lets them travel quickly and to jump from tree-to-tree. Their large wide feet allow them to spread out their weight over a large area, lowering their ground pressure. This, historically, aided them in traveling through the ancestral bogs and bayous of their homeworld. While they have spread out to most areas of their home planet, as well as other oxygen-rich worlds, they still prefer a hot, humid environment for maximum comfort.

Phalons have 3 sexes: fertile male, fertile female, and an asexual third sex that humans term the "mule". The female lays clutches of 1 to 5 eggs. Roughly 3 or 4 eggs out of every clutch give birth to mules, with the other offspring being evenly split between male and female. Males and females mate in a manner roughly equivalent to mammals on Earth, but the egg is not fertilized within the female. The sperm is captured on the surface of the egg and enzymes trigger a process known as "hardening" within the female. A layer forms over the egg, trapping the sperm within the two layers. The egg is laid when this outer layer is completely formed. This results in eggs with a "double hull" design. The outer layer is protective, while the sperm lies more-or-less dormant between the outer layer and the inner layer.

The mules serve an important function in the egg development process. The mules sit on the egg and secrete an enzyme that is absorbed through the outer layer. When it hits the inner layer a chemical reaction triggers the breaking down of the inner wall. Once broken down, the sperm fertilizes the egg. It is not known precisely how long an egg can remain unfertilized and still produce viable offspring, though some reports suggest that it's as long as a couple of standard months. Mules are unable to secrete this enzyme when stressed, suggesting that the process is an evolutionary one designed to delay the birth of vulnerable children until the mule "caretakers" are no longer in a stressful environment.

Humans have trouble telling the fertile sexes apart, particularly from a distance. Phalon female genitalia is internal to the creature, while male genitalia remains retracted within the carapace until copulation. The mules tend to be larger than the other two sexes. They have a thicker carapace with no weakened area for the genitalia (as they have no genitalia). This makes them ideal warriors and hunters. The males and females tend to be faster than the mules, but not as strong or well protected.

Phalons are usually social creatures that feel comfortable and safe in large groups. This is particularly true of breeders. Every now and again a breeder comes along that is very independent, and actually prefers to be totally alone. They are bigger and more aggressive than typical breeders. They more closely resemble mules, but they are fertile and fully capable of producing offspring. They can be of either fertile sex (male or female).

The origin of these breeders is unknown to humans. One theory is that they are genetic mutations, "defectives" with characteristics of mules and breeders. Another theory is that the drive that makes these Phalons anti-social (or as anti-social as Phalons become) is from a hormonal imbalance that results in an irresistible urge to leave the clan, and that this imbalance may be a normal part of Phalon societal development. A third theory is that these "mutant breeders" are the products of Phalon genetic manipulation experiments, producing a cross between a breeder and a mule with the creature having the best characteristics of the breeding and non-breeding genders. Whatever the reason, these "mutant breeders" are exceptional individuals.

Phalons have one eye with three large lobes. Each lobe cuts out light polarized in a different direction. Two lobes supply stereoscopic vision, while the third eye resolves the image with polarized light filtered out. With a slight tilt of their head, they can see through the ever-present haze on their home planet. This allowed the ancestors of the modern Phalons to filter out glare bouncing off the surface of water (both from above the water and from beneath the surface). It made it easier for these proto-Phalons to see aerial predators that were otherwise camouflaged against the hazy sky, and it made it easier for them to

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hunt water-dwelling prey. Aside from the ability to filter polarized light, the Phalon eye captures light in wavelengths similar to humans. Their lobes are larger than the human eye, allowing them to see more effectively in reduced light environments.

There are several different races of Phalons. Racial differences are subtle to humans, but distinct to the Phalons themselves. There are subtle differences in colouration, shape of the head, leg length, overall height, etc. Few humans have spent enough time interacting with Phalons to note the differences between males and females, let alone the more subtle racial variations.

Phalons have an ability to change their carapace colour, an attribute they share with a number of Terran creatures. Phalons do not generally wear clothing in combat, though they do wear functional accessories, such as belts with pouches. Their carapace forms a natural camouflage that can vary with their surroundings. They do wear clothing in environments where they need to retain body heat. Some Phalons also wear clothes in various religious rituals, often to differentiate various participants.

While humans may not be able to tell the breeding sexes apart, Phalons have no trouble. All Phalons can communicate by way of polarized light. Cells in the upper layer of their carapace can polarize light in a way similar to some species of the Terran octopus. Phalons use this as a crude form of communication. The sexes have subtle differences in colour patterns seen only through a polarizing filter. Although the precise nature of the patterns is unknown, carapace colouration is believed to be an important part of the Phalon mating ritual. It is also believed that Phalons have used the ability shift the colours on their carapace in order to communicate subvocally between one another during face-to-face negotiations with humans.

Social Structure

Phalon family life is more complicated than humans. They do not mate for life, but they do form clan bonds. A clan consists of members of the breeding sexes ("breeders") that have mated amongst each other, and their offspring (both breeder and mule). Often two members of a clan have no genetic connection between each other. The closest analogy in human society is that that of two human couples who have children, get divorced and then remarry. These two extended families (consisting of a father, a mother, a step-father, a step-mother, and the resulting offspring) would constitute a small Phalon clan. Since Phalon breeders mate more promiscuously than humans, these clans can become rather large and genetically diverse. The clan as a whole takes care of the hatchlings. Phalons have an attachment with other members of their clan, but Phalon opportunistic tendencies mean that one or more breeders may splinter from a clan and form a new clan, taking several mules along with them.

Mating within a clan is the most common form of bonding between males and females, but the bonding of breeding couples from two different clans is almost as common. This usually occurs when a male or female leaves one clan to join with another. Relatively rare – but not unheard of – is a breeding pair leaving their clan or clans to form a brand new clan. Usually they take mules from one or both clans with them, both for protection and for breeding purposes. This new clan may or may not have strong ties to the old clan. The rarest of all clan connections is when the male is from one clan, the female from another, and one or more mules are from a third. This usually occurs as part of a political negotiation to cement relations between all three clans.

The breeding sexes tend to be more individually opportunistic than the mules, though all genders show a level of opportunism that many humans find appalling. The mules are the protectors of the clan. This is an offshoot of their physiology. Mules do not contribute to the gene pool, but they are vital for egg fertilization. Only one individual mule is needed to begin the fertilization process, so mules are interchangeable at the clan level. They tend to be bigger and more powerful, so they can throw themselves at an enemy in order to protect the clan. As long as one mule survives along with a breeding pair, the clan can survive and grow. Mules have a strong sense of protection towards any breeder, while breeders see individual mules as expendable. Since mules controlled which eggs could be fertilized and which couldn't, they were able to use this ability to exert authority over individual breeders within a clan. Mules saw an advantage in mules banding together within a clan. Other breeders saw the advantage in courting the favour of mules. This was the beginning of a Machiavellian society of internecine competition within a structure of mutual cooperation.

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Like human society, much of Phalon history is filled with conflict between races and religions, as well as between neighbouring clans. Racial rifts in Phalon society healed comparatively quickly compared to similar rifts in human society. The Phalon embrace of opportunism overrode any prejudice based on something as trivially cosmetic as carapace shape, or a perceived difference in behaviour.

Similarly, religious strife was less widespread and not as long lasting in Phalon society as it was (is) in Terran society. Phalon religions have a strong tendency towards ancestor worship. The number 3 is considered lucky by many Phalon faiths, as it features prominently in their eyes and in the number of sexes. Phalon religions tend to be fairly flexible. New sects form, and existing sects amalgamate, with little difficulty. However, if there is anything that will cause the usually pragmatic Phalons to act against their best interest or the interest of a clan, it is religion.

Phalon government tends towards an oligarchy. The head of a clan has dictatorial powers and is usually surrounded by a support group of functionaries and bodyguards. Similar structures in human history usually resulted in corrupt regimes, downtrodden masses and a bloody overthrow. Not so in Phalon society. Phalons are traditionally nomadic, so they tend not to be connected to any one location. Being nomadic there is less likelihood that the "downtrodden masses" wouldn't just walk away from a cruel leader. The Phalon homeworld had many predators that preyed on Phalons. There was safety in numbers, so a cruel oligarchy would eventually find itself alone and unprotected. Since Phalon societal connections are dynamic, there were fewer artificial conditions legitimizing one ruler over another. The concepts of "divine right" and "right of birth" are foreign to Phalons. Breeders needed the willing participation of mules to continue the bloodline, and mules that rose to positions of power were physically unable to produce a bloodline. The only reason Phalons would follow or keep a leader was if that leader achieved positive results.

The mules were the first to see the advantage in "mega-clans", several clans bonding together into a more powerful organization. Clan alliances are traditionally easily formed and broken. The development of the mega-clan formalized these alliances. While clans are still as dynamic as ever, individuals are more likely to stay within a particular mega-clan. "More likely" is still a relative term, and so humans felt that Phalon society is best described as "chaotic".

A large mega-clan may have smaller mega-clans within it, just as human nations may have provinces or states within a country, counties within a state, and towns within a county, etc. Mega-clans containing other, smaller, mega-clans are known as "high-level mega-clans". "Low-level mega-clans" are those that consist of nothing but individual clans. There's a vast area in the middle where it's hard to tell if a mega-clan is high-level or low-level. Humans have tried to categorize Phalon organizational structures, but have mostly failed. At the top of the Phalon organizational chart is the Phalon Conglomerate. A complex clan hierarchy exists within the Conglomerate, the Conglomerate itself being a sort of super mega-clan.

Mega-clans were originally based on race, religion and geography, but contemporary mega-clans go beyond these limitations. They are more likely to be based on opportunity and advantage. Low-level mega-clans tend to specialize in a particular field of endeavor, or several related fields, forming a monopoly in some product, service, or area of knowledge. This allows a low-level mega-clan to gain an advantage over other low-level mega-clans. As they gain advantage, the mega-clan gains members from other clans and mega-clans, increasing its size and influence. Higher-level mega-clans are essentially cartels, though often in many different areas of interest, and with those interests subject to rapid change.

The breeders are considered "flighty" by mules. In human terms, breeders are more "left brained" and mules are more "right brained" (though the Phalon brain is not set up this way). Breeders tend to be more artistic, mules tend to be more calculating. Breeders tend to think more about the here and now, while mules are more forward thinking. Most of the military (and almost all of the combat troops) are mules. Phalon leadership is split almost evenly between mules and breeders, though some divisions within Phalon leadership may be more heavily stocked with one type of gender or another.

Injustices between individuals, clans, mega-clans, different races and different religions are remembered and even acted on, but it's considered a virtue by Phalons to seize an advantage. Walking away from an

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advantage is considered equivalent to the human concept of cowardice. Permeating everything is the Phalon desire to rise when the opportunity presents itself. Just as ancient Phalon males and females escaped predators by sacrificing mules, and just as mules competed with each other for survival, Phalon society is rife with individualism. The only thing approaching altruism in the Phalon psyche is the mules' protective feelings towards the breeders. In spite of this, or perhaps even because of this, Phalons are social creatures. They prefer to be in the company of others to being alone.

The mules are the stabilizing influence in Phalon society. Phalons are not "peaceful" by human standards, but Phalon history is less bloody than human history. Wars between clans were common in the past, but mule protective instincts and the general Phalon sense of self-advancement and preservation meant that protracted wars were rare. Once it was obvious that one side stood to lose, a negotiated settlement quickly ended the conflict, especially if another uninvolved clan or mega-clan could take advantage of the weakened state of the combatants.

Some humans think of Phalons as cowardly. This is an inaccurate and dangerous assessment. They are not cowardly. They are practical and realistic. They will not be drawn into a war without a very reasonable chance of success. They will not shy from war if their society, religion or race is in jeopardy.

Technology

Due to the nature of the Phalon homeworld (dense rainforests, bayous and a planetary crust poor in heavy metals) Phalons developed biological manipulation technology instead of metallurgy. Phalons are older, as a race, than humans, but the difficulty in developing biotechnology and genetic engineering accounts for why Phalons are not that much further advanced than humans or the Kra'Vak.

Biotech began when early Phalons discovered how to selectively breed animals. Tools came from the shells and carapaces of other indigenous creatures. They developed life sciences more quickly than humans, resulting in an extensive ability to manipulate genes.

Biological technology forms the cornerstone of Phalon construction. Ships, vehicles and weapons are all built from organic matter. They excel in organic chemical production, particularly in the areas of pharmaceuticals and adhesives. Electrical generators were originally biologically based. Lightning always fascinated Phalons, heat lightning being an almost daily occurrence on their humid homeworld. This fascination led inevitably to directed energy and plasma technology. Advanced crystalline technology and magnetic control led to the Phalon mastery of fusion power. Phalons have excellent electronic equipment as a byproduct of their knowledge of crystal structures and bio-electricity.

The Phalons, more than anyone else, have managed to scale their weapons. The same technology can be found in everything from starship mounts down to small arms. Their primary weapon of choice is the pulser. Personal and support pulsers form the standard infantry weapons, while Phalon AFVs usually mount a heavy pulser. Plasma projectors are used as a support weapon and as an AFV mount.

Part 2: *Stargrunt II* Rules

Unless otherwise stated, regular *Stargrunt II* rules apply to the Phalons.

Suggested *Stargrunt II* Rule Changes

The following rule changes are optional. They are useful in all *Stargrunt II* games, but they are particularly useful in games involving Phalons.

Small Arms Impact Die

The *Stargrunt II* rule book states that when a squad with a mix of small arms and support weapons fires, the small arms' Impact Die is used. Do not use this rule with Phalons. Instead, use the Impact Die of the most prevalent weapon. If there is a tie, use the lowest Impact Die.

Example, an FSE squad consisting of an officer with a pistol (FP1, Impact D6) and two SAWs (FPD10, Impact D8) fire at a Phalon squad. The FSE squad hits with an impact of D8, as there are more SAWs than there are pistols. If there had been only one SAW in the squad, the impact would have been D6.

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The need for this rule will become clear when you read the Phalon infantry weapon rules.

Close Combat Odds

(Courtesy of Tom Barclay, and the *Stargrunt.ca* web site.)

When figures enter close combat, pair them off as normal. However, if a figure is paired off with two figures, shift its quality die down 1. If a figure is paired off with three or more figures, shift its combat die down 2.

Example, a Veteran Phalon (D10 quality) is paired off against two Regular NAC soldiers (D8 quality). Since the Phalon is outnumbered 2:1, its quality die is shifted down 1 to a D8. If there were three NAC soldiers attacking the Phalon, the Phalon's quality die would be shifted down to a D6.

Cross Training

This is a required rule for Phalons (see "Reorganise Action", below). At the player's discretion, all nations can use the Cross Training rules. A squad must be at least Green quality to use the Cross Training rules.

Organization

Phalons are organized into squads like human military forces. Mules make up the warrior class. Most units are either Regular or Veteran quality. A few units, made up of immature mules, can be Green quality. No mule units are Untrained. Scientific groups (such as survey teams) or "civilian" groups are usually made up of breeding sex Phalons and they would usually be classed as Untrained, or Green.

There are male and female Phalons in the military, but they generally occupy non-combat functions. They work as medics, EW technicians, and occasionally as scouts. In these cases they have the same quality and leadership values as mules.

Mutant breeders usually operate on their own. See "Independent Figures", below.

When choosing quality chits randomly for combat units, use a subset of the *Stargrunt II* counter mix. This subset consists of all of the Orange and Blue chits, and some of the Green chits. Take out all the Orange and Blue counters and mix them together. Select 8 Green chits at random and mix them with the Orange and Blue chits. As stated in the *Stargrunt II* rulebook do not include more than a very few, if any, Red (Elite) chits in the mix. Select quality chits for each Phalon squad randomly from this mix of Orange, Blue, and Green chits.

In general, Phalon squads consist of a *minimum* of 3 figures. This is not a hard-and-fast rule, and a team of three may be reduced to two, or even one, due to attrition in combat. Full strength units will usually appear on paper as a multiple of three. The standard, full strength Phalon squad has 9 troopers.

Phalon organizations are more fluid than equivalent human units. Platoons and companies often find themselves under strength or reinforced depending on the perceived importance of their mission or position. As such, there is no true "standard" table of organization for the Phalons. A sample table of organization is given, below, in the "Sample Organization" section.

Reorganise Action

Cross Training

Phalons are trained in all weapons within their squad. If a support weapon trooper is wounded or killed another Phalon may take his place. This must be done with a Reorganise Action, though the action may be used for other purposes, such as treating wounded or replacing a leader.

A D6 is rolled during the Reorganise Action. On a 1, the support weapon was damaged and cannot be replaced. On any other roll, a Phalon trooper may exchange his regular weapon for the support weapon.

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Confidence and Reaction

Phalons react to combat stress much like humans. Their unique psychology results in some important differences.

Note that "mutant breeders" are classed as breeders for Confidence and Reaction purposes.

Phalons are not affected by abandoning wounded mules. It's "every mule for itself." Mules and breeders may choose to carry away the wounded but they are not required to, nor are they penalized for leaving them behind.

Breeders may abandon wounded breeders with no penalty. Phalon mules do suffer from the regular "abandoning wounded" modifier if they abandon a male or female.

Phalon units do not make a TL 4/3/2 (for Low/Medium/High motivation) Confidence Test when a leader is wounded. Instead, treat the leader loss the same as a regular casualty. A leader casualty means that someone else in the unit has a chance of advancement. Since mules are born warriors, the loss of a leader is less traumatic than in human squads. Note that the squad *still* receives an additional Suppression Marker for losing the leader (page 16 of the *Stargrunt II* rule book) due to the confusion it causes.

If a breeder (male or female) is in a unit with at least conscious mule (i.e. the mule is not wounded), and the breeder becomes a casualty, the unit suffers a TL 4/3/2 Confidence Test.

If a Phalon COMMAND UNIT loses its leader (platoon commander, company commander, etc.), all Phalons in that organization make a TL 2/1/NTR (for Low/Medium/High motivation) Confidence Test. They are affected by the loss of command, but this effect is less startling than in human units.

When a Phalon unit has been reduced to half strength or less, it *automatically* drops two Confidence levels (no Confidence Test is made for casualties in this case; treat the loss as though the Confidence Test was rolled and failed). The Confidence chit is inverted as though the squad had failed a Confidence Test (see "Phalon 'Mutiny'", below). When a unit takes heavy casualties, it suddenly becomes apparent to the remaining Phalons that they are in jeopardy. Morale plummets as individual preservation overwhelms the needs of the squad as a whole.

Leader Replacement (Phalon "Mutiny")

If a unit fails a Confidence Test or a Reaction Test, the unit's Confidence Level marker is flipped over. If a unit passes a later Confidence Test with an inverted Confidence Level marker, flip the marker right side up. During the End Turn Phase, any unit with a flipped Confidence marker must roll for leader replacement. This represents the members of the unit deciding it is no longer in their best interest to keep the current squad leader, and so they band together to oust the current leader.

The replacement roll is the same as the roll made for replacing a wounded leader as found in the *Stargrunt II* rulebook. The replaced leader is not wounded; he is merely "demoted" on the spot by his squad mates.

Exception: the marker is not flipped over if the Confidence Test is failed after a combat result that wounds the squad's leader, as leader replacement is automatic in this case.

Phalon command unit leaders are immune from leader replacement during the battle (but may be subject to it afterwards). This includes platoon leaders and higher-level commanders. This only applies to the leader of the command unit at the start of the game. If the leader of the command unit is replaced because he was wounded or killed, his replacement *is* subject to the leader replacement rules.

Independent Figures

The only independent figures allowed in a Phalon force are "mutant breeders". "Mutant breeders" typically act as lone scouts, Forward Artillery Observers and snipers. They are usually Veteran or Elite quality. They

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may join squads, but they usually operate alone. If they join a squad they automatically become the squad's leader (they are classed as breeders for their effects on Confidence Tests). They are *not* immune to Phalon Mutiny.

These independent figures each carry a support pulser.

There is rarely more than one of these independent Phalons in a platoon.

Movement

Phalon mules have 6" movement (D6 x 2" combat movement). Phalon breeders have 8" movement (D8 x 2" combat movement). Mutant breeders have 8" movement (D8 x 2" combat movement).

Swamps, mud and rough/broken terrain are treated as CLEAR terrain for Phalon infantry.

Sensors

Due to their exceptional eyesight, the basic Phalon eyeball is D6.

Phalons usually have Superior (D10) sensors and fire control systems.

Personal Armour

The Phalon mules' carapace counts as full suit light armour and gives a D8 armour die. Males and females have a natural D6 armour die. Mutant breeders have a natural D8 armour die.

Some Phalons have been known to wear helmets, which shifts the armour die up one type (helmets are favoured by mutant breeders).

Target Priority

Phalons follow the usual target priority rules with the following modification. If a unit with mules in it has a choice of targets, it will always fire on an enemy that wounded a breeder first.

Close Assault

Phalons are less prone to enter Close Assault than humans.

A "mule unit" is a unit with no breeders (mutant or normal) in it. A "breeder unit" is a unit with no mules in it.

When attempting to enter Close Assault, Phalon mule units must make a Reaction Test as normal, but their Quality is shifted down one die type.

When making a Confidence Test in order to see if a Phalon mule unit stands in place against a Close Assault charge, the Phalon unit's Quality is shifted down one die type. There is one exception to this. If there are breeders within 6" of a mule unit, that unit's quality is *not* shifted down.

Mixed units of breeders and mules may *not* enter into close assault. If a mixed unit is the target of a close assault, the breeders automatically form a detachment and run away from the close assault. The rest of the unit, consisting of mules, must still make a normal Confidence Test to see if they stand and accept the charge (as there were breeders within 6" of the unit at the beginning of the attack, there is no die shift).

Breeder units do not make Close Assaults and they automatically run when subject to a Close Assault (the Confidence Test is still made to see if the unit's Confidence Level drops and to see if Phalon Mutiny applies, but the unit runs even if the test is passed).

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"Mutant breeders" do not automatically run away from Close Assaults. They do not suffer die shifts when making a Close Assault or as targets of a Close Assault. If they are within 6" of a mule unit, they are considered breeders and cancel the Quality die shift of those nearby mule units.

Infantry Weapons

Pulser

The primary Phalon small arms weapon is the personal pulser. This is a small portable version of the primary Phalon ship-mounted energy weapon. Like the ship-based weapon, it has three different settings. The default setting is FP2, Impact D10. However, the weapon can also be set for FP3, Impact D8 or FP1, Impact D12.

This setting change is accomplished by changing the weapon's crystal focusing mechanism and can be done relatively quickly. The weapon setting is stated before the dice are rolled. If the player doesn't specify a setting, the default setting is used. Each member of a squad firing in the same Fire Action must have the same weapon setting.

Support Pulser

The primary support weapon is the support pulser. Like other Phalon pulser weapons, the support pulser has three different settings. The default setting is FP D10, Impact D10. The other two settings are FP D12, Impact D6 and FP D8, Impact D12*. (The asterisk means that the weapon does double damage against point targets.)

Like the pulser small arms weapon, the player must specify the setting for the support pulser before rolling the dice, otherwise the default setting is used. If a squad has more than one support pulser, they may be given different settings.

Plasma Projector

The secondary Phalon support weapon is the Phalon plasma projector. This weapon has the same stats as the Infantry Plasma Gun in the *Stargrunt II* rulebook: FP D6, Imp. D12*.

Missile Launcher

The Phalons have portable missile launcher systems similar to those used by human forces. This weapon has the same stats as a GMS/P, except that the launcher typically holds three missiles instead of four.

IAVRs

Phalon troops may be armed with Infantry Anti-Vehicle Rockets.

Small Arms Impact Die

The *Stargrunt II* rule book states that when a squad with a mix of small arms and support weapons fires, the small arms' Impact Die is used. Do not use this rule with Phalons. Instead, use the Impact Die of the most prevalent weapon. If there is a tie, use the lowest Impact Die.

Example 1, a Phalon squad consisting of a Phalon trooper with a pulser and two Phalon troopers with support pulsers fires at an FSE squad. The pulser is set to FP3, Impact D8. The support pulsers are set to FP D10, Impact D10. Since there are more support pulsers than pulsers, the impact die would be D10.

Example 2, a Phalon squad consisting of two Phalon troopers with a pulser and two Phalon troopers with support pulsers fires at an FSE squad. The pulsers are set to FP3, Impact D8. One support pulsers are set to FP D10, Impact D10, and the other support pulser is set to FP D12, Impact D6. Since there are the same number of support pulsers and pulsers, use the lowest impact die. In this case, one support pulser has an impact die of D8, so the squad has a D8 impact.

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Heavy Weapons

Heavy Pulsers (HP)

These are large weapons similar to the pulsers found on Phalon starships. Like other Phalon pulsers, heavy pulsers have three settings that can be changed in the heat of battle.

A heavy pulser may have one of three settings. The setting affects the pulser's Impact Value and its range band size. Heavy pulser's have the following settings:

Close setting: Base Impact Value is a D12. Base Range Band Size is 9".

Medium setting: Base Impact Value is a D10. Base Range Band size is 12".

Long setting: Base Impact Value is a D8. Base Range Band size is 15".

The heavy pulser's Range Band size is the Base Range Band size x the target's size class.

The heavy pulser's Impact Value Multiplier is the weapon's size class, and they come in size classes 1 to 5.

The default setting for the heavy pulser is medium.

Example 1: a Size Class 3 heavy pulser (HP/3) in the medium setting would have a Base Impact Value of D10. If this heavy pulser fires on a size 2 vehicle, the heavy pulser's impact would be 3D10 (the weapon's size class of 3 x D10), and the range bands would be 24" long (12" x the target's size class of 2).

Example 2: If the same Size Class 3 pulser was set to close range, the pulser would do 3D12 damage (the weapon's size class x D12), but the range bands would be reduced to 18" (the target vehicle's size class of 2 x 9").

Example 3: Finally, the pulser could be set to long range. The impact would only be 3D8 (size class 3 x D8), but the range bands would be 30" long against a size 2 vehicle (target size class 2 x 15").

Changing a heavy pulser's setting requires a Reorganise action. The setting can be changed in conjunction with other Reorganise activities. Note the pulser's new setting on a piece of paper. Players may wish to create their own counters marked "C-Pulser" or "L-Pulser". A vehicle or mount with a "C-Pulser" counter has the heavy pulser set for close range. A vehicle or mount with a "L-Pulser" counter has the heavy pulser set for long range. A vehicle or mount without a counter has a default value of medium range.

Heavy Plasma Projectors (HPP)

The heavy plasma projector is similar to the standard Direct Fire Fusion Gun (DFFG) in the *Stargrunt II* rulebook. It has the following stats:

The heavy plasma projector's Base Impact Value is a D12.

The heavy plasma projector's Base Range Band Size is 12".

The heavy plasma projector's Impact Value multiplier is DOUBLE the weapon's size class.

The heavy plasma projector comes in size classes 1 to 5.

Example: a HPP/3 would have an impact value of 6D12 (size class 3 x 2 x D12).

There are two main differences between the heavy plasma projector and the DFFG. The heavy plasma projector can only be set in a fixed mount; it cannot be placed in a turret. Due to the targeting ability of the weapon, it has an arc of fire of 90 degrees instead of the usual 30 degrees for fixed mount weapons. It costs the same amount of capacity points as other fixed mount weapons.

Artillery Systems and Explosives

Conventional Phalon artillery is based around mass driver artillery instead of tube artillery, as Phalons are strong in magnetic technology. In practical terms, Phalon artillery is identical to that found in the *Stargrunt II* rulebook.

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Phalons have the same mine and minefield options as humans.

Mass-Driver Artillery (MDA)

Phalons use mass-driver artillery to deliver warheads by indirect fire. Phalon artillery vehicles can also employ these weapons in a direct fire mode. These vehicles use the rules for On-Table Artillery Fire on page 47 of the *Stargrunt II* rulebook.

When designing vehicles carrying MDAs, treat the weapons as direct fire heavy weapons for capacity purposes. The burst radius is equal to the size class of the weapon. For instance, an MDA with a 2" burst radius is considered a size class 2 weapon, and a weapon with a 5" burst radius is considered a size class 5 weapon.

Vehicles

Phalon vehicles are similar to those of other races even though they are made from biotechnology. Most Phalon tanks and APCs are Ground Effect Vehicles (GEVs) due to the swampy nature of the Phalon homeworld and their preference for such an environment. In spite of this, they have built tracked and wheeled vehicles for environments where GEVs were not practical.

The Phalons have begun to deploy anti-gravity technology. The first example of this is the Phalon recon pod. The recon pod is small, carrying only one mule as an operator, and lightly armed and armoured. Much of the recon pod's space is taken up with the anti-gravity unit.

Due to their small size, recon pods treat Light Woods as Poor and Dense Woods as impassable.

Sample Organization

Phalon organizations are fluid. This is seen in their combat units. While squad size seems to be standardized around 9 troopers, the number of squads per platoon and platoons per company changes as the need arises. Phalons seem to be able to accept these changes with less difficulty than humans, reflecting the "warrior instinct" inherent in Phalon mules.

Phalon Mechanized Platoon

This is the standard Phalon mechanized platoon, or as standard as Phalon units are. Most squads contain 9 mules and operate with a GEV APC. The APC has a separate crew of 3 mules. Phalon units tend to add and subtract sub units fairly easily, so it is possible to see platoons of considerably different organization.

Platoon Command Unit

Contains 6 mules, consisting of the Platoon Commander, a Platoon NCO, and 4 other mules. The Platoon Commander is immune to replacement by other members of the unit. If the Commander is killed, the NCO takes over. The NCO *is* vulnerable to replacement. One of the regular mules has a support pulser or plasma projector, while the other three have standard personal pulser small arms. One of the mules may be an EW specialist. A GEV APC with a three-mule crew accompanies the unit. The unit has superior sensors (D10).

Forward Artillery Observation Unit

The platoon's FAO team consists of three mules with pulsers and communication equipment. A GEV APC with a three-mule crew accompanies the unit. The unit sometimes has its own GEV APC, but often it is forced to share a GEV APC with another unit, usually the platoon Missile Team or the Platoon Command Unit. The unit has superior sensors (D10).

Missile Team

The platoon's missile team consists of three mules, one with a pulser and observation equipment and the other two with missile launchers. The Phalon with the pulser is the team leader/observer. A GEV APC with a three-mule crew and missile reloads accompanies the unit. The unit has its own GEV APC, but often it is forced to share it with the platoon's FAO unit. The team has superior sensors (D10).

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Medic Unit

The platoon's FAO team consists of three Phalons with pulsers and medical equipment. Usually at least one of these medics is a breeder. The medic unit does not have its own APC. It rides with another unit, usually the command unit. The unit has superior sensors (D10).

Three Infantry Squads

Each full strength infantry unit consists of nine mules. Each unit has a mule with a pulser acting as a Squad Leader, 1 mule with a support pulser, 1 mule with a plasma projector, 1 mule with a missile launcher, and 5 mules with pulsers. The five regular mules usually have one IAVR each. A GEV APC with a three-mule crew accompanies the squad. The squad has superior sensors (D10).

Recon Squad

The recon squad consists of three recon pods, each with a single mule as its crew. Recon pods operate in a number of ways. They can operate as a single squad, or they can divide and operate as individual vehicles. They can also be attached to infantry squads, one recon pod per squad. Each recon pod has a Confidence Marker of its own. If acting as a single squad all three recon pods are activated at the same time. If acting as individual vehicles, they are each activated as if they were separate units. If a recon pod is attached to a squad, it activates when the squad activates and moves or fires along with the squad.

Phalon GEV APC

MOBILITY TYPE: GEV

SIZE CLASS: 3 (Medium)

ARMOUR CLASS: 3

WEAPONRY: Remote turret mounted size class 2 Heavy Pulser (HP/2) with Superior fire control (D10). 1 support pulser.

CREW: 3 (Driver, commander/support pulser gunner, heavy pulser gunner)

TROOP SPACES: 9

OTHER EQUIPMENT: Superior ECM (D10), smoke launchers, decoy launchers

Phalon Recon Pod

MOBILITY TYPE: Grav

SIZE CLASS: 2 (Small)

ARMOUR CLASS: 1

WEAPONRY: 1 support pulser.

CREW: 1

OTHER EQUIPMENT: Superior sensors and ECM (D10), smoke launchers

The Phalon recon pod is the race's first excursion into anti-grav technology. Much of the vehicle's size is taken up by the anti-grav unit.

Phalon Light GEV Tank

Although not listed in the above organization, this is a description of the Phalon light GEV tank seen in the GZG catalogue.

MOBILITY TYPE: GEV

SIZE CLASS: 3 (Medium)

ARMOUR CLASS: 3

WEAPONRY: Fixed mount size class 3 Heavy Plasma Projector (HPP/3) with Superior fire control (D10). 1 support pulser.

CREW: 3 (Driver, commander/support pulser gunner, heavy plasma projector gunner)

TROOP SPACES: None

OTHER EQUIPMENT: Superior Phalon ECM (D10), smoke launchers, decoy launchers

Part 3: Design Notes

There are only two sources of "official" Phalon background information. These are Fleet Book 2 and the short blurb on them in the GZG catalogue.

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Here is what we know from published material, and from the actual figures:

- they are bilaterally symmetric. They have an extra joint in their limbs as compared to humans, and they have a single three-lobed eye (think Martians from George Pal's *War of the Worlds*). Their body is covered in an exoskeletal carapace.
- they have mastered biological technology, their ships and hand weapons being at least semi-biological (made from organic material, though the material is not necessarily living). The inside of their ships has been described as similar to being inside an internal organ.
- they are oxygen breathers, though they prefer a hotter, more humid climate than humans. They can speak, though their command of English is heavily accented and lisping.
- Phalons are born from eggs, with 1 to 5 eggs laid at a time
- there are three Phalon sexes: breeding male, breeding female, and non-breeding third asexual gender. This last gender forms a warrior class, and some (but not all) of the leaders. There is no discernable difference, for humans, between the breeding males and females.
- they have different races and different religions
- they tend to be machiavellian in nature. They will make and break alliances and agreements whenever it suits them. They seem to be individually opportunistic, but they will band together in defense when necessary. They will also ally with any side that suits them at the moment.
- their weapon systems are heavily energy based. Their ships have pulsers (beam weapons) and plasma based weapons. Their vapour shrouds are, of course, water based. The ship based pulsers are adjustable. Their infantry carry hand-held pulsers, support pulsers, plasma projectors, and missile launchers (most of these were only discovered when the Phalon 15mm figures were released).
- Phalon fighting vehicles observed to date are GEV based (though their recon pods could be grav based). It is unclear if the recon pods are "manned" or "unmanned".

In order to come up with rules for the Phalons, I decided to look at them from an evolutionary standpoint. Using their physiology, environment, and psychology as a basis, I tried to develop an internally consistent social structure. This is important in order to figure out how Phalons behave with regard to morale rules. I've based their technology on extrapolations from their ships.

I started with the idea of the Phalons having three sexes. I then wondered what the evolutionary need for the third, asexual sex would be. Since the vast majority of Phalons are this third sex, there are a lot of beings to feed that do not directly contribute to perpetuation of the species. Since they form the warrior class, and due to inspiration of the ship class names from FB2 (*Great Warrior*, *Warrior*, and *Protector*), I figured that the "mules" as I called them would protect the Phalon breeding sexes. Although warrior and worker classes show up in insects, I preferred the more Nivenesque feel of a protector class (think *Pak Protector* from the novels of Larry Niven). The social order seemed to suggest less of an insect nature, too, as mules form a good portion of the leaders. The term "mule" is also inspired by literary science fiction. It comes from the "name" of the powerful, impotent character in Isaac Asimov's second *Foundation* book, *Foundation and Empire*.

This ties in with their psychology of banding together for the good of the whole, but being individually selfish and opportunistic. I imagine the breeding sexes having no qualms about sacrificing mules for their safety, so I figured this is a product of evolution, whereby this third sex -- otherwise useless from the stand point of biological success -- protects the breeding sexes. I therefore jumped to the conclusion that they evolved into better warriors. Their carapace would be thicker. The only defense for the males and females would be that they were faster, thus, predators would more likely catch slower mules and feed off them. This also meant that the mules would be stronger and more likely to exert their physical abilities to rise to positions of influence.

Since the mules have no chance of offspring, the whole human concept of immortality through offspring is non-existent. Therefore, the mules would tend to be selfish and Machiavellian amongst themselves. I imagine a family structure like humans where the offspring revere and protect their parents and the parents (or extended clan members) protect the young.

The mules would compete with each other for primacy. Since many leaders are mules (but not all, as Jon implies in the FB2 write-up), there must be some competition and cooperation between mules and the

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other sexes. This suggests Machiavellian power struggles, with competing clans and shifting alliances. The clan concept seems to work best with the idea of the mules acting as protectors, and with the concept of seizing opportunities.

If you want a psychological reason for their ship designs, you can assume that Phalon mules are jealous of the breeding sexes in a Freudian sense...

Phalons live in hot, humid worlds yet they have a single three-lobed eye. Each lobe is larger than a human eye. This suggests they developed in an environment of less light. So, I assumed that they evolved in a rain forest, or a hot, wet planet orbiting around a large, dull star. Swamps and rainforest as their "birth environment" would explain why they seem to have no qualms about living in moist, claustrophobic starships. The only trouble with this was the development of Phalon legs. The extra joint conjures up images of horses, not swamp animals. They have big feet, though. If you think of the feet as needing to spread their body weight over soft ground (like a floating bog, or something), the extra joint in their legs would be very useful for jumping. I now live in Louisiana. Phalons would be at home here, what with their carapace (lots of turtles and snails around here), and the heat, humidity, and large water-based trees. The large eye lobes (low light level) once again suggests swampy rainforests.

Why three-lobed eyes? The obvious idea would be to have the eyes see different wavelengths, but this idea has been done to death, both in fantasy and science fiction. Being a photographer and thinking of the humidity, I hit on the idea of them seeing light polarized in three different directions (a polarizing filter cuts out haze and fog when taking pictures).

The chameleon ability in their skin comes from looking at Phalon figures. They do not wear armour, except for the occasional Phalon with a helmet and heavy pulser, but they do have belts and satchels. This suggests that their natural colouration allows them to blend in with a range of terrain. This ability is easy to reconcile with the ability to polarize light.

I made an assumption that figuring out biotech would be more difficult than figuring out metallurgy, but the Phalons had no choice as they lived on a planet where you couldn't easily get to metals. This explains why their ships are biologically based, and not metal based. Since I live in a hot, humid climate (at least in the summer), I see a lot of heat lightning. This suggested that the Phalons may have a fascination with lightning. Since electricity can be biologically formed, I figured that they eventually developed directed energy weapons (pulsers). If you can master electricity, you can master magnetism, which allows them to create plasma bolt launchers. I'm assuming that radiation is shielded with advanced crystal matrices instead of metals.

I imagine the Phalons being somewhat practical, more so than humans. Considering their nature to change sides at a whim, I envisioned a race where mutiny was not just accepted but expected. Tying this nature with a warrior class, I thought of a race where if things weren't going right, a squad would in effect say, "You're out Bob, it's Joe's turn." This is chaotic, but would work with a warrior class that thinks of itself as equals at the squad level. That's my "excuse", anyway. In actuality I thought it would make for an interesting force to play.

I've been working on the idea of variable FP/Impact weapons for a while, as this is how laser weapons work in Living Steel, which I'd been thinking of adapting for SG2. I had playtested it a little and it showed real promise. Allowing a squad to decide the support weapon's FP seems a bit excessive, since it's obvious that in most cases they will set the support pulsers to FP D12, Impact D8, then swing over to D8/D12* for anti-vehicle fire. I figure this offsets the fact that Phalons run quickly when they take too many casualties.

The Phalon heavy pulsers need some testing, but I like the consistency of pulsars being weapons with variable settings. The rules I came up with seem to be the easiest way to offset range for impact in the *Stargrunt II* rules. Plasma bolt launchers are just DFFGs with the 90 degree fire arcs.

Artillery is one of those areas where *Stargrunt II* has been toned down in favour of an infantry-heavy game. I came up with some ideas for plasma bolt artillery rounds, but these would be nasty, far nastier

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than artillery available to other forces. I left them out as I think it tips the scale of the game to use them only for the Phalons. The only way you could use plasma bolts for artillery is if you allowed the equivalent of PDS fire for artillery, which opens up the entire artillery system for rewriting. That's out of the scope of the alien rules. Oerjan and I discussed Fuel Air Explosives. I loved the idea of giving these to the Phalons, as well as other races. In the end I thought that the explanation was too involved. I will post them on my web site, instead.

I'm still up in the air as to whether Phalons should use IAVRs. I was leaning towards "no" but the members of the playtest list seemed to want them.

The vehicle descriptions are based on the vehicles in the GZG catalogue. The one I'm haziest about is the recon pod. It doesn't look like it has GEV skirts, so I made the assumption that it's an anti-grav vehicle. This could be the Phalon equivalent of PA. There are no Phalon PA units, but that could be because Jon hasn't sculpted any yet.

I hope these notes help explain why the Phalon rules developed the way they did. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at agoodall@hyperbear.com.