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STARDATE (ISSN 0749-6745) is published bi-monthly for \$12.00 per year by Associates International, Inc. Third Class Postage paid at Wilmington, Delaware, and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to STARDATE, Dept. P-30, 700 Orange Street, P.O. Box 1992, Wilmington, DE 19899-1992. Copyright 1985, Volume 1, Issue 8, Number 8.

STARDATE magazine presents science fiction in both the written and visual forms. Each issue features general science fiction; comics; columns on movies, books, and people; and game material including articles and features on **Star Trek** and **Doctor Who**.

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Submissions: STARDATE welcomes free-lance material including fiction, illustrations and game articles. Publisher assumes no liability for unsolicited manuscripts, photos, or artwork. For a copy of writer's guidelines, style sheet, and payment rates, contact: David Bischoff, STARDATE, 1010 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 910, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 393-5233.

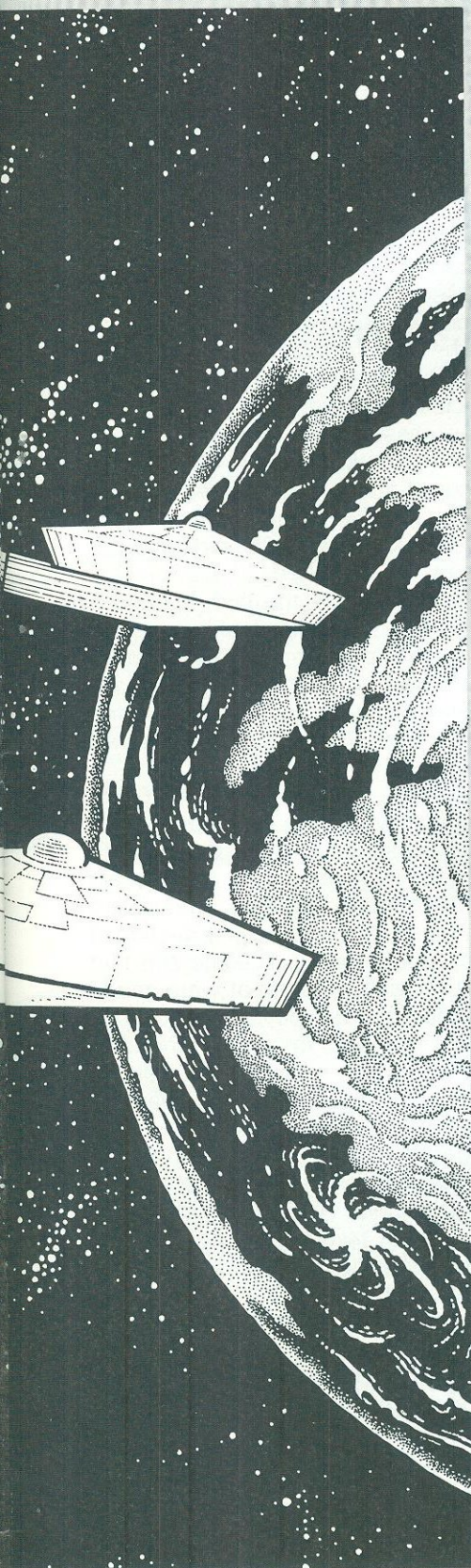
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Operation Shadowfall



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STAR TREK

Role-Playing adventure

by Blaine Pardoe
and Dale L. Kemper

Illustration by
Matt Howarth

Datafile
United Federation
of Planets

Top Secret Datafile
1550-BP-JAP

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Operation Shadowfall

The first indication that a cloaking device had been developed was when the *U.S.S. Enterprise* encountered a Romulan warship with such a functional device, (See Datafile 1476-AB-6). While efforts were then harnessed for the Federation scientific community to develop such a device, these efforts resulted in nothing but failure.

In an effort to gain a functioning copy of such a device the *Enterprise* was sent on a clandestine intelligence mission into Romulan space, (See Datafile 1588-FD-9). The results of this mission were the capture and use of such a device and its return to Federation space.

Upon its arrival at Starbase 6, Dr. Larc Milvin, an Andorian physicist, was placed in charge of the cloaking

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what he wants it to do, he would sit down and program it himself."

For a science fiction writer and an electronics engineer to develop a new computer and a new programming language in their spare time seems wildly ambitious. To Herbert, however, it's an exciting game rather than a formidable challenge. His infectious optimism and remarkable vitality tend to belittle any problem, as if he can overcome obstacles by willpower and force of personality alone.

With characteristic modesty he describes himself as a "farm boy" with relatively little formal education. This means that, whenever he has needed special knowledge, he has had to go out and get it himself. His design for a high-tech windmill was a case in point.

"It occurred to me that wind machines had not been redesigned fundamentally since windmills were introduced in Holland, centuries ago. We've learned a lot since then about the flow of air over laminar surfaces, as a result of designing airplanes. So I started researching that and adapting it to windmills.

"I myself am not an aeronautics engineer, but I can read the research and make my models and test them. And I did; I made a lot of them out of balsa wood. All you need is an alert mind and a new idea; and you go test it, to see if it works."

He first became interested in windmills in the late 1970s, as a possible means of pumping water and generating electricity in his home. The configuration that looked best to him is technically known as a panamone. It consists of a vertical shaft driven by vertical blades attached to it, the whole assembly resembling an eggbeater pointing upward.

Testing his concept was a problem. It was impossible to build the kind of full-scale wind tunnel used in the aerospace industry. So, lacking any means of moving large volumes of air through the windmill at a steady, controlled speed, he chose to move the windmill through the air instead. He mounted his first full-scale prototype on a pickup truck whose speedometer had been calibrated by means of a radar gun supplied by friendly local police. The truck was then driven to and fro at various speeds, while the windmill's power output was measured. ▶

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Results were encouraging, refinements were made, and, a little over a year ago, the first working model was installed on the roof of a building in Astoria, Oregon.

"It was four feet in diameter and ten feet tall. In a fifty-knot wind, it developed seven-and-a-half horsepower. This present model is more efficient than any other type of windmill I know of.

"My design is quiet enough to be installed on the roofs of houses in the Northeast and Midwest. This is an application which I think is quite valid. In the winter in that part of the country, the wind-chill factor is just as important to a house as to an individual. It can double the heating bills. But a windmill could generate direct current to power a simple electric-resistance heating system, so that the harder the wind blew, the more the windmill would heat the house. This would negate the wind-chill factor."

While the windmill remains the most impressive end product to emerge from Herbert's amateur-science activities, he has made smaller experiments that demonstrate the feasibility of other energy sources, including a solar collector and a methane generator.

"I built a passive solar heater, using seconds of thermo-pane, four feet wide by six-feet-four. They cost me eleven bucks each because each one had a little scratch or something in it. Four inches behind them are banks of beer cans cut in half and stacked like a honeycomb. These panels are tipped in the general direction of the sun. You don't need to make them follow the sun precisely with a tracking system, because it shines into the cans from a wide range of angles. The cans trap the infrared, so they heat up. Their heat is transferred to air that flows over them by convection. It's very effective."

This system is the one installed in his own home. The methane project, on the other hand, was rigged up temporarily in a shack outside at the back of his house.

"I experimented generating methane from chicken manure in various ways. I wanted to see if it was practical, and it was practical, to a degree. The simplest way was to slit a truck inner tube, insert the manure, then patch the tube. As the manure decomposed, creating the gas, the tube expanded, producing the pressure that you need to use the

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device. Due to its use aboard the *Enterprise*, the captured device was damaged and unable to function. Out of fear of Romulan sabotage the device along with Dr. Milvin and his team was moved under deep security to a lab further within the boundaries of the Federation. The project of rebuilding and testing another cloaking device was named *Shadowfall* and is the subject of this datafile.

As of Stardate 2/1202 Dr. Milvin and a team of fifty of the Federation's top scientists were working on the reconstruction of a functional device using the captured Romulan as a working model to build from. Several small versions were eventually developed and tested on a planetside basis. While these small operational tests were successes, several problems did seem to arise. One was that the cloaking device was only functional for a small amount of time and the other was that it created severe mental discomfort in the form of headaches, if exposure times were extended.

By 2/1203 the Starfleet Medical Branch had developed an antidote for the mental discomfort and Dr. Milvin and his team had completed work on a full size working model of the cloaking device. A Wizard Class star vessel, the *U.S.S. Sparrowhawk*, was dispatched and assigned to Dr. Milvin and his project, now referred to as Operation Shadowfall. The *Sparrowhawk* along with a support ship set off to conduct tests of the device.

Operational testing began on Stardate 2/1208.14 with the *Sparrowhawk* being cloaked for five minutes at a dead stop with no crew on board. Further tests followed piloting the ship by remote control and cloaking under impulse power. On 2/1208.31 the first tests with a crewed vessel took place with nearly complete success.

The final battery of tests were to involve the *Sparrowhawk* at warp speed using the device. It was to be a five hour trip at warp factor three to the Delta Omega system and the R1 Orbital lab there, DO-2. The support ship was to fly a close escort on the journey in case difficulties developed. At 0800 hours both vessels warped out of Delta Zeta on course. After a

final check of all systems the *Sparrowhawk* cloaked.

One of the difficulties of the operation was the fact that communications with a cloaked vessel was impossible. In the long flight this difficulty was solved by the *Sparrowhawk* discharging buoys with data and status reports while in flight. The support ship picked up the reports and all seemed to be going fine aboard the cloaked vessel. As time passed, though, several seemingly minor problems arose.

The first of which was that the drug developed to counter the discomfort of cloaking seemed to be failing as time passed. The medical team on board the *Sparrowhawk* was handling the problem with the equipment on board. Even though Dr. Milvin himself was affected he did not order the test to be halted.

At 1230 hours the buoy carried a message that the cloaking device seemed to be altering the structure of the ship's warp field. Initial tests showed that it was only a small problem and Dr. Milvin still ordered the vessel to continue.

As the ship entered the Delta Omega system, it dropped out of warp as scheduled and the cloaking device was disengaged. The captain of the support ship noticed outward damage to the warp engine section of the *Sparrowhawk*. Despite the fact that the ship was not at warp speed the damage the device had caused still continued in the engineering section. The anti-matter containers had lost their integrity and a dangerous situation had arisen.

Captain Strover of the *Sparrowhawk* attempted to jettison on its warp engines with no luck due to an equipment failure. Despite the dangers involved, the captain of the support ship brought his vessel close enough to transport the crew of the doomed ship away. A total of 15 men were transported when the *Sparrowhawk* exploded, taking 12 men as well as the project coordinator with it.

A Starfleet Board of Inquiry failed to discover the exact cause of the difficulties aboard the *Sparrowhawk* that led to its destruction. While there was no evidence to indicate sabotage, some suggestions have been made to the effect that the proj-

ect was damaged not in concept, but from within. These accusations have not resulted in any charges being filed.

Introduction

Beginning the Adventure

This short scenario is designed for use with the *U.S.S. Merlin* (NX-607), a *Wizard* Class vessel (see the "Jaynz Ships" column and deckplans in this issue). The players are the members of the ship's security section during the second attempt to test a Federation cloaking device. Considering the outcome of the first such test and the destruction of *Merlin's* sistership *Sparrowhawk*, security is intended to be very tight.

The players of this scenario will be bunked in the security area (Room 3, Deck 2) of the *Merlin*. Commander Jack Tarrow is the ship's security chief and is considered to be one of the best qualified men in Star Fleet for this type of mission.

In his final briefing, Commander Tarrow expressed his fear that the Klingon or Romulan governments might have had a hand in the failure of the first trials of the Federation cloaking device. He is afraid that they will try to bring an end to Operation Shadowfall II as well. After careful evaluation of the entire crew's records, Tarrow suspects that enemy agents could have infiltrated into the *Merlin*. He has drawn up a list of who he considers to be the most likely suspects in the crew. Tarrow's list contains the following personnel: Lt. Harvey Dobson, Engineering Division; Lt. Commander Joyce Dvishom, Science Division; and Lt. Martin Callin, Defense Weapons Specialist. All of these personnel were aboard the *Sparrowhawk* during her final mission. Tarrow reminds the security team that the greatest threat to the ship would be while it was cloaked and out of contact with its

support ship. With that the team is advised to take their anti-migraine medication and sent to their stations as the ship prepares to cloak.

Entering the Shadow

At 0800 the *U.S.S. Merlin* entered a cloaked state on a course for Delta Zeta at Warp factor five. While the players are posted at their respective stations; the bridge, security monitors, and in the cloaking room itself (Deck 4, Room 7), Commander Tarrow says that he is going down to Engineering to check on things. He is not heard from for over an hour until Lt. Harvey Dobson contacts the bridge, reporting that Commander Tarrow has been found on Deck 4 with a severe headwound, possibly from a fall down a Jeffries Tube. He has been taken to sickbay. Preliminary examination by the ship's Vulcan doctor, Sormil, indicates that he has a bad concussion and could be unconscious for several days. The Captain of the *Merlin*, Ivan Trimski, sends a message buoy to the support ship *Nhat-Le* (NC-4391), informing them of this, but decides that the experiment should not be halted because of this incident.

This is all the information that the players should be provided with before the adventure begins. Gamemasters should allow any investigations or questioning of various crew members by them as events begin to progress.

Gamemaster's Information

If the players decide to take a look at the scene of Commander Tarrow's "accident" they will be sent to the after part of Engineering on Deck 4. Tarrow was found under the access

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gas. I was raising chickens then, and we did our own slaughtering. We used the methane for singeing them, to burn off the feathers. So that was like using everything of the pig except the squeal—and maybe even the squeal as well," he laughs.

"There was a spigot and a pipe attached where the valve used to be, in the truck tube. This could also be connected to a small stove, which we sometimes used for boiling water. The whole thing was improvised, and it looked—well, it looked pretty weird."

This kind of primitive farm technology seems reminiscent of communes of the late 1960s, but Herbert doesn't endorse the counter-culture philosophy that suggests we should opt out of society and become wholly self-sufficient.

"People say to me, 'You're trying to build an independent establishment in your farm,' and that's absolutely wrong. The independent, self-sustaining farm is the modern version of building a sailboat and rowing to Tahiti. There's a myth about it. I don't believe in it. You're part of society and you ought to be aware of the necessity for interacting with it."

However, he does agree with decentralization where it's practical, and in dispersing concentrations of political power.

"I do believe in putting power in the hands of the people. We have never used the jury system to the extent that we could. Now I'm not saying that juries always do right, and always give you justice. But the people who are governed should be able to say, 'This is the way we will be governed.'"

"For example, I would put an automatic jury review, at the local level, on any school-board expenditure over \$100,000. Automatically, you'd have twelve jurors who are called up at random from among the people who voted in the last election. And I'd give them subpoena power, so that they can ask for records, and get them, and then say yes or no to the expenditure.

"Now, of course, this brings you head-to-head with the educational bureaucracy, which will say—never in these words, but this is really what they're saying—'Surely you don't think some stupid housewife can determine the complexities of these things that we know so much better than they do?' ►