ALPHA LOG

ISSUE THIRTEEN EDITOR: CHRIS LANDRY

EDITORIAL

Here it is, the last issue of ALPHA LOG before the convention. A special convention update is in this copy. After the con, and for quite some time, this newsletter will be about 25-30 pages on a regular basis. I'm sure that you're all glad to hear it.

In this issue, I conclude the interview series from last spring's Science Fiction Space Happening 3. Authors Robert Adams and Janet Morris are featured. Next issue will start a new series of interviews from the SPACE: 1999 Convention '79. Another thing you're glad to hear; so far so good.

One of the items at the convention charity auction will be my donation, Alpha Publications. It is a hardcover work printed in a limited edition. It's more or less a collection of the first two years of "The Springfield SPACE: 1999 Club" and ALPHA LOGs, tied together in book form. Minimum bid is set at $15.00 and you might not want to bid on it, since you've read most of it anyways. It's a good investment for a non-member, though. Untill next time... see you in Pittsburg.

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SPACE: 1999 YEAR THREE GUIDEBOOK

Currently, the editorial staff of ALPHA LOG is compiling The SPACE: 1999 Year Three Guidebook, a guide to the ficticious third season of SPACE: 1999 episodes. I hope to include 24 of the best SPACE: 1999 stories in fandom. This book is to be distributed free with ALPHA LOG.

Many of you have allready been contacted and the contributions are coming in. All members are invited to send in their ideas. You need not write an entire story: a three or four paragraph summary is sufficient.

The staff has decided that the story Test Flight (included in this issue) will be the premere episode on the season. You may use the two new characters introduced here in your story. Your story must conform to the Year 2 series (i.e., no Victor, etc.). Other than that, I leave it up to you. So send in your ideas!

SPACE: 1999 CONVENTION '79

At press time, the second annual SPACE: 1999 summer convention lies just a few short days away; July 27-29. It will be held at the William Penn Hotel in downtown Pittsburg, Pennsylvania.

Guests at the convention will include Gerry Anderson, Barry Gray, and Anton Phillips. Tentative guests are Barry Morse, Nick Tate, Zienia Merton, and Clifton Jones. Tony Anholt and Prentis Hancock have also expressed an interest in their attending.



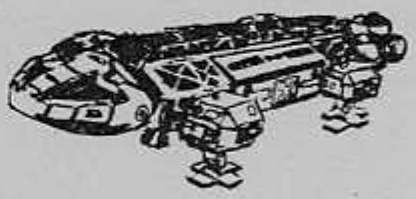
Films at the con will include many SPACE: 1999 episodes. Other Anderson movies and Catherine Schell's early science fiction film, MOON ZERO-TWO, are scheduled.

This year's charity auction is quite impressive. ITC has donated many non-SPACE: 1999 promotional packages. DESTINATION MOONBASE ALPHA press kits and original STAR TREK scripts are to be auctioned off. Your President's latest work, Alpha Publications, will also be among the many other items.

Some of the things on sale in the large dealers room will be SPACE: 1999 stills, slides, poster books, magazines, models, The Moonbase Alpha Technical Notebook, and The Alpha Book. The Starcruiser One model kit will also be on sale.

Other activities are to include an art show, the star banquet, a costume party and contest, slide shows, and an amatuer film contest. A writers get-together is planned. There will be fan club get-togethers on Saturday night. Among them is our own "Springfield SPACE: 1999 Club." Exact time and location will be posted at the con. All in all, it looks like a fantastic three days.

See you in Pittsburg!



ROBERT ADAMS INTERVIEW

BIO: Robert Adams is the author of the science fiction novel series Horseclans. Occationally uses the pseudonym of Frank Adamson.

Landry: First of all, since this newsletter is a SPACE: 1999 publication, what are your feelings towards the series?

Adams: Well, some parts of it were good. Here again, like STARLOST, they had a good idea, but then the TV people got hold of it. If they could only produce shows as they are written, it would be fine. The television industry in this country seems to think that everyone has the mentality of a retarded six year-old. Of course, I know I'm slandering retarded six year-olds to some extent. I thought it was a good idea. Apparently it wasn't commercially feasable, so... scratch another show.

Landry: How did you get interested in science fiction?

Adams: I originally was reading horror stuff back in the forties; Wierd Tales. I couldn't afford to buy them, so I'd go down to the drug store and sit behind the rack that they were on, where no one could see me, and read them. Then when I got a job and could buy them, I did. I drifted from wierd stuff into science fiction, principly because every now and then they'd print an SF story in Wierd Tales. When Wierd Tales went out of business in 1953, I started buying Amazing and Fantastic; they were pulps then. So I sort of got into SF. I was also injured in the Korean conflict and while I was in the army hospital, the Red Cross came by with a cart full of books that people had contributed. One I chose was L. Sprague DeCamp's Lest Darkness Fall and the other was a book by Andre Norton. I forget the name now, but it was one of her Mindbeast books. This got me interested in SF too. A number of things led up to my interest in it.

Landry: Of all of your science fiction works, which is your personal favorite?

Adams: Hmm. Up until about a year ago, I would have said the initial volume of the Horseclans series. But I've started a new series, Castaways in Time, which I think is my personal favorite.

Landry: How did you get into your field?

Adams: Well, I was a partner and sales manager in a chemical concern in Charlotte, North Carolina. In 1969 there was an industrial accident and our formulating plant blew up. I was in the hospital for quite a long period of time. While I was there, I wrote a pornographic book and no one has ever let me forget it. Everybody and his brother in this country; you mention Adams and they say, "Oh yeah, he writes science fiction AND porno." I've written one pornographic book, but it sold. And so I was hooked. I sold out my partnership. I'd always wanted to write. I sold my Mercedes and started writing for a living. I didn't sell another thing for four and a half years.

Landry: Do you write anything besides science fiction?

Adams: I write historical fiction. I have a trilogy that will be out in about a year and a half, something like that. We're still in contract negotiations about it. I have, on occation, written non-fiction, mostly articles. Sometimes for fanzines and sometimes for prozines. I write mostly science fiction and fantasy because it's selling right now. If it ceases to sell, I'll write gothics. I mean, I do this for a living. I have to be mercenary.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction author who's work you admire?

Adams: Andre Norton, Sprague DeCamp, Poul Anderson, living authors. The late Robert Howard, Lord Dunsany. Allright? That's about it.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction film or television series?

Adams: I go to very few films. The biggest reason is because you can't smoke in theaters in Virginia and I can't sit through a film without having a cigarette. That's one reason I liked the one movie I did see, the 2001 thing. The theater was so filled with pot smoke, no one could smell the cigarette smoke. So I could smoke a cigarette. I still like FORBIDDEN PLANET. I think they had some beautiful cinematography in that and the special effects were fantastic. So I'd say that one probably. Television? I can't remember the name of it. It was a made-for-TV movie about a giant turtle. It had Burl Ives in it.

Landry: You mean THE BERMUDA DEPTHS.

Adams: Yeah, yeah. I thought it was a very good film. Probably I would have liked it even better if I'd seen it in color, but my set was black and white at the time. But I tnought that was a very good film.

Landry: Why do you feel that science fiction has been so popular recently?

Adams: Well, litterature goes through phases. Science fiction and fantasy and horror were very big in the thirties. Then they sort of slumped off except for the hard-core fans, maybe twenty thousand to forty thousand people out of the entire population. I think it was time for science fiction again. Another reason is this: as I said in the main interview this morning (His speech. -Ed.), yes, fantasy and science fiction are escapes. Your average adult today is under a terrific amount of pressure, twenty-four hours of the day. And they need fairy stories more than children do. So, we write for them.

Landry: Do you think that its popularity will continue?

Adams: God, I hope so! I hope it continues. It's good money.

Landry: What would you like to see in the future of science fiction?

Adams: Ten cents a word for magazines. A minimum of ten thousand dollars for books of average length, larger on novels, of course. I think that publishing companies should be run with the welfare of the authors in mind, instead of the welfare of the capatilists. Okay?

Landry: Finally, do you have any current or future projects that you could tell us about?

Adams: Well, I've started a new series called Castaways in Time. The initial volume will be out in May of this year. It is called Castaways in Time. The second volume will be out next year. These are long books; one hundred ten thousand words minimum. Parallel world-type deal. Admittedly, they're derivitives. In other words, I plagurize from everybody, legally. Mostly dead authors, tnough. I'm still working on the Horseclans series. I've just finished Horseclans 7 and I'm working on 8 now. I'm doing, not exactly, a science fiction book called KillCon which is a

Adams: (cont.) mixture of science fiction, horror, magic, and a detective story. A series of rather grisly murders at a science fiction convention. The murders are accomplished by magic. I also use the book to get back at some people, y'know. I put them in as characters. Ha-ha. For instance, I have a long standing feud with Harlan Ellison. And so, the first person killed at the convention is a fellow named Hurley Egoson... which I'm sure Harlan will love.

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FOLLOW UP

I would like to take this oportunity to thank Robert Adams for agreeing to do this interview.

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ANIMATED REVIEWS

Once again I bring to you a review of another episode in the illustrated SPACE: 1999 series done by Charlton Publications. This episode is titled, "The Lonely Emperor." Next issue: "Class Determination: Alien Insecta."

THE LONELY EMPEROR (Episode 11; May 1976)
Written by Joe Gill
Animated by Carlos Pino

The planet Epsilon Rudea IV comes into range of Moonbase Alpha. Commander Koenig wishes to take a landing party to the planet, but there is some disagreement in the science department on whether the planet is habitable or not: Alphan Drs. Mastambi and Edwards have a long-standing feud in the scientific field. It is determined that the planet's atmosphere is breathable. When Eagle One enters the Rudean atmosphere, a strange alien creature is seen floating among the clouds. On the planet, the Alphans find a race of telepathic reptiles. The aliens are peaceful and agree to let the Alphans settle on Rudea. Dr. Edwards gives the okay to the environment, but Dr. Mastambi discovers that there is no ozone layer in the alien atmosphere. Edwards decides to take over the expedition and uses the aliens' telepathy against them. He hypnotizes a large group of Rudeans and turns them against the Alphans. Mastambi tries to reason with Dr. Edwards, but to no avail. In his anger, Mastambi strikes Edwards, sending the aliens into a frenzy. Commander Koenig and the landing party are cut off from their Eagle and must fight for survival against Edwards and the crazed aliens!





JANET MORRIS INTERVIEW

BIO: Janet Morris is the author of the science fiction and fantasy-related Silistra series.

Landry: Since Alpha Log is primarily a SPACE: 1999 publication, what are your feelings on SPACE: 1999?

Morris: Well, there's alot of joking about SPACE: 1999, but I like to see any reasonable science fiction series. SPACE: 1999 is not my favorite series for plot device or planning, but the technology is nice and the effects are nice. And I think the actors are good, which is something we don't often get. I'm not familiar it all that much; I catch it once in a while. It's syndicated and it comes on at something like five o'clock, which is part of my work hours. That's about all I can tell you. It's not a strong thing that I'll be seeing every week.

Landry: What got you interested in science fiction?

Morris: When I was eight, my father brought home a Galaxy. In this Galaxy was James Blish's Surface Tension. I read it and I was forever hooked. I've always read science fiction. I think for a while in the sixties I didn't read it for a while, but except for that one glitch, I've been reading it for, oh God, twenty years.

Landry: Of all of your works, which is your personal favorite?

Morris: That's really hard to say. Usually the one you're working on now is your personal favorite. My favorite is the one I'm just starting, my new series. The Dream Dancer series, which won't be available for a couple of years. Out of the Silistra books, I'd have to say its actually one long story, so it's hard to seperate them. Sometimes I'll say I like Carnellian Throne because the genetics are very strong. In Wind from the Abyss, I had a guy who used me for his PhD thesis. A systems scientist write me on Wind from the Abyss and said that it was his favorite book. So it's hard to say. I like them all, and since the characters are pretty much the same, so is the basic framework. The basis of the whole series is actually the effect of mind on probability, which I did some research for. I'm still fascinated by the concept.

Morris: (cont.) I guess that The Carnellian Throne is my favorite because it's just coming out and it's new. It's sort of a digression in a sense. The trilogy is complete on its own. The Carnellian Throne starts a second series of three. The characters are still very strong.

Landry: How did you get into your field?

Morris: I knew that I was going to write eventually. I got the idea for the first Silistra book, High Couch of Silistra, and I wrote down a ten sentence outline. I went home and I said, "My, that's alot of work to write a book, so I'll write a story." So I started to write the story, following my outline, and the story kept getting longer and longer and longer. By the time I got through my outline, I had about ninty thousand words and that was indeed the first book. I let it sit for six months before I could afford to have it typed up. I sent it in to a friend of mine, an agent, who liked it. The agent picked it up, Bantam Books picked it up, bought the other two without even seeing them, and here I am. It's not really that hard if you have a good book. I think that if I had on my first book alot of rejection, I wouldn't have gone ahead with the others.

Landry: Do you write anything else besides science fiction and fantasy?

Morris: Absolutely. I've recently sold a historical one on King Supilluious, who was the greatest King of the Hediis and ruled from about 1380 to 1342 B.C., which included the time of Tutankhamen in Egypt. To do that book, I hired Calvin Watkins who is on the faculty at Harvard University to do some research. There are texts in that book which have never been seen in English before. I was very excited and pleased with it. I would like to do some more historicals, but they take a tremendous amount of research. The next one I'd like to do would be on Prestocrates. Again, that's a heavy research book which won't be out for a couple of years. Science fiction, however, is my first love, but other things pay alot better. So once in a while, I have to write something else in order to get the money back and play with science fiction some more.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction author who's work you admire?

Morris: Well, I like alot of guys. I like Sam Delany, I like Roger Zelazny. I love Fred Pohl. I think he's probably the most competent author in the field. I like Bob Heinlein and Sturgeon, Bradbury. Bob Silverberg is a good writer, an excellent writer. The things that tend to excite me are not fiction, but science. I like Edward O'Wilson on sociobiology and I tend to plug that alot. Because I write, I don't get to read alot of fiction. I have to keep up on so many journals that when I do read fiction, it's very unusual. I usually go after an author who's better than I am. John Fowles is good, but he's not science fiction. You see, I have to read science books for my technical information and I read strong prose for my stylistic inspiration, so I don't tend to read alot.

Landry: Do you have a favorite science fiction television series or movie?

Morris: Well, I'm in there hoping for BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. I mean, I just want it to get alot better and I want it to become a wonderful success. My favorite film is definitely THE LAST WAVE, right now. I think that's a great film. If you haven't seen it, I think you should run right out and buy a ticket and see it right now. It's a tremendously effective, apocalyptic fantasy which is an area I like also. TV? Well, there's very little choice. I like SPACE: 1999, DOCTOR WHO, BATTLESTAR GALACTICA. I have yet to see the science fiction series on TV that I would like to see. Something that would do for our time what STAR TREK did for its time. I'd like to write one, and I've talked to some people about it. We've been talking to NASA a little bit about doing a space habitat series, but it's really in its very basic planning stages.

Landry: Why do you feel that science fiction has been so popular?

Morris: Well, I'd like to see it get a little more popular. I see alot of writers get together and cry about the fact that we're all in a ghetto and we don't get competetive ratings with those who write things that we feel have much less to say about the state of affairs in the world. As far as why it's popular, there's only one way we can go in time, and that's

Morris: (cont.) forward. You can't go backwards. You can't even grasp the present; it's gone in a moment. Science fiction, by its very premise, predicts that there will be a future, that we won't blow each other up, that we won't poison our atmosphere. I don't like paranoid fiction. I don't like it when a science fiction book goes mainstream because it's paranoid fiction, in other words, a disaster book. I'm really hostile to that whole concept. I'm pro-nuclear energy. I'd like to see the space program get some more budget. Science fiction could help, but often doesn't help in the areas of a more positive approach. The public needs to be more educated, not scared. There's no need for people of equality, like Pournelle and Niven, to write, "The comet comes, and..." It's really sad, but they wanted the money and did it. They said, "There's a formula for a disaster book. Let's write one." So they wrote one and made alot of money. But to me, there's a lack of integrity in anybody who's dealing with science fiction seriously to take that point of view. I'm not answering your question, am I?

Landry: Do you think that its popularity will continue?

Morris: I think it will grow. I think it's necessary. As I've said in other magazines, I think in about ten years it will be impossible to write a contemporary novel without some grounding in technical areas. You're going to have to know how to program a computer. You're going to have to know how many planets there are in the solar system. Every seven years technology doubles. We could seriously be in space in the ninties; a redundant society in case somebody does get itchy and pushes the button. I'd like to see that. I'd even like to go.

Landry: What would you like to see in the future of science fiction?

Morris: What I would like to see is alot more researched books; people grounding their stuff to what is available. I don't like to see science fiction where a society five hundred years from now has science that is plausible now. Five hundred years from now current science is going to be outdated. I'd like to see all the negativism in science fiction go through a sift and be lost and have almost

Morris: (cont.) a re-birth of the early days, in a more sophisticated and technological way. The future is where we're going. It would be nice to go there with a positive atmosphere, expecting the best. I'd like to see us raise our expectations a little.

Landry: Do you have any current or future projects that you could tell us about?

Morris: I don't know. I could tell you a little more about my Dream Dancer series. I have a very young protagonist; I start out with a fifteen year-old girl from a planet. At this point in time, planets are not much more than an anchor for a series of space habitats. They grow certain things on them, grapes and, uh, certain weeds. Technology and space manufacturing have made most Earth-based chemestries obsolite. They just don't need the planets for a hell of alot. I've had alot of fun with this book. I like to create a whole universe that you can step into and might prefer to live in, that might be interesting enough to see something like it occur.

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FOLLOW UP

I would like to pause a moment to thank Janet Morris for taking the time to do this interview. For those readers who are fans of the Silistra series, Janet Morris' new book, The Carnellian Throne, is now out in Bantam paperback.

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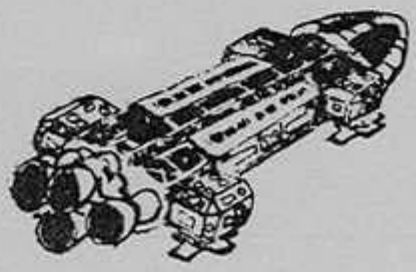


ANOTHER ALPHAN POEM

by Rebecca Eisenhuth

I sit in front of my television set.
I'm going to watch my favorite show.
I want to see those clever Alphans
Beat off another cruel foe.

Helena Russell is attractive,
Commander Koenig is so strong,
But on Alpha you keep active
So your trip doesn't seem so long.



Their exploits are so thrilling,
They calculate every fact.
No wonder they have top billing;
They're always being attacked!

Maya has many talents.
She can change her shape at will.
Whenever faced with a problem
She can act as if she will kill.

So there you have the main Alphans;
The beauty to the beast.
I will keep watching this show
Or the re-runs, at least.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank those who generously contributed to this issue of ALPHA LOG:

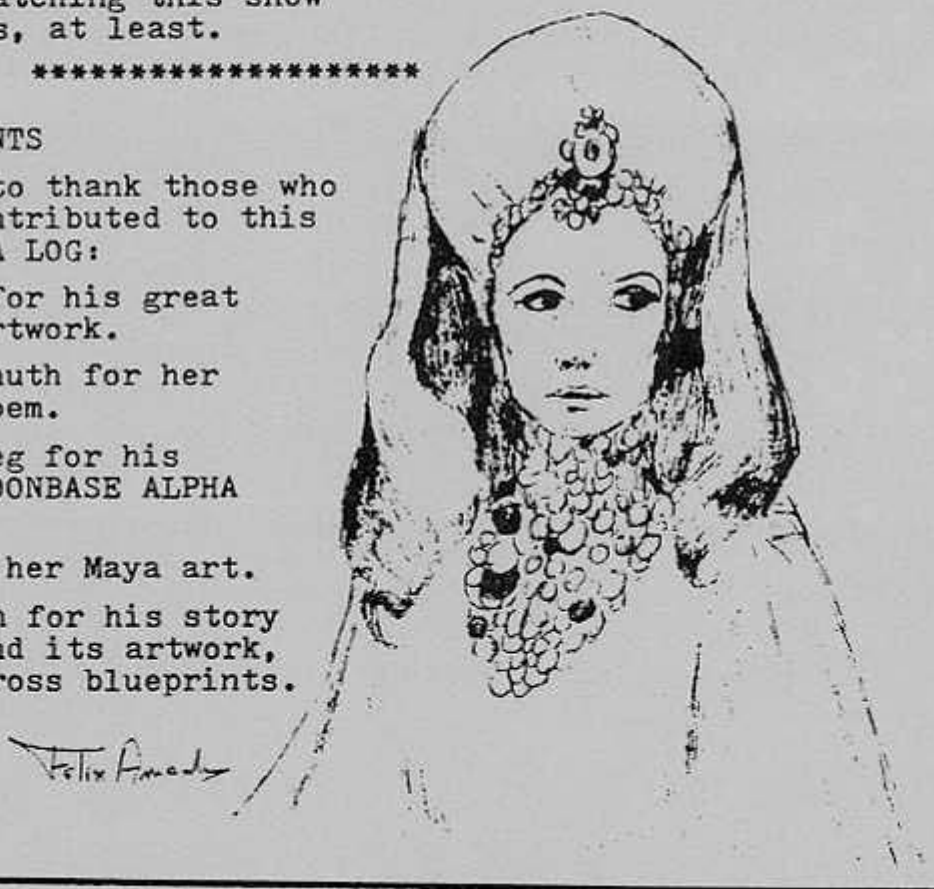
Felix Amador for his great SPACE: 1999 artwork.

Rebecca Eisenhuth for her SPACE: 1999 poem.

Stephen Hellweg for his DESTINATION MOONBASE ALPHA art.

Lisa Mack for her Maya art.

Jeff Patterson for his story Test Flight and its artwork, and his Albatross blueprints.



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TEST FLIGHT

by Jeff Patterson

Alpha Log, Doctor Helena Russell recording. 2466 days after leaving Earth orbit. Today is an important day on Alpha, for today is the testing day for the newest lunar defence craft, Albatross One. Designed by technical officers Lieutennant Samuel Morris and Doctor Raymond Shaw, and built by the Alphan Engineering and Technics Department, its ability to protect the Moonbase is unsurpassed by any method known.

Due to Alan Carter's recommendation, Commander Koenig has elected Lieutennant Morris to fly his creation in today's test run. The Commander has also chosen to test the Albatross against Eagles in close orbit. The simulated warfare should prove the Albatross' true potential.

"Sahn, give me a report on Eagles One and Two." said Koenig from his command chair.

Sandra Benes turned from her console. "Eagles One and Two are heading north over sector 141 at maximum velocity. All on-board laser batteries are set at one-tenth power, insufficient to render any damage."

"What about Albatross One?"

"Moving east at maximum speed. Will intersect with Eagles in two minutes. Laser batteries also at one-tenth power."

Sandra returned to her console. As she did, Doctor Shaw entered Command Center and stood behind Koenig's seat.

"Come to watch the show?" asked Koenig to the middle-aged scientist.

"I wouldn't miss it for anything. That six weeks of work is worth more than a chance to go home to me right now."

Koenig liked seeing entnusiasm in his crew. It gave him a feeling he couldn't explain.

"Commander," interrupted Sandra, "Alan Carter would like to speak to you."

Koenig leaned forward to his command console. "Go ahead Eagle One."

"Just want to make sure that Sam's lasers are on low, Commander."

"Don't worry Alan. Sam's got all systems set as instructed. What's your situation?"

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"Well, I'll vector the Albatross trajectory in a little more than a minute. Thompson's got Eagle Two right next to me. The Albatross just appeared on my scanner and I'm adjusting the laser aiming device to follow it."

"Good. I hope you don't mind, but I'm rooting for the Albatross." said Koenig.

"You upper ranks are all alike. Eagle One out."

Koenig leaned back again. He could feel the anxiety in Doctor Shaw.

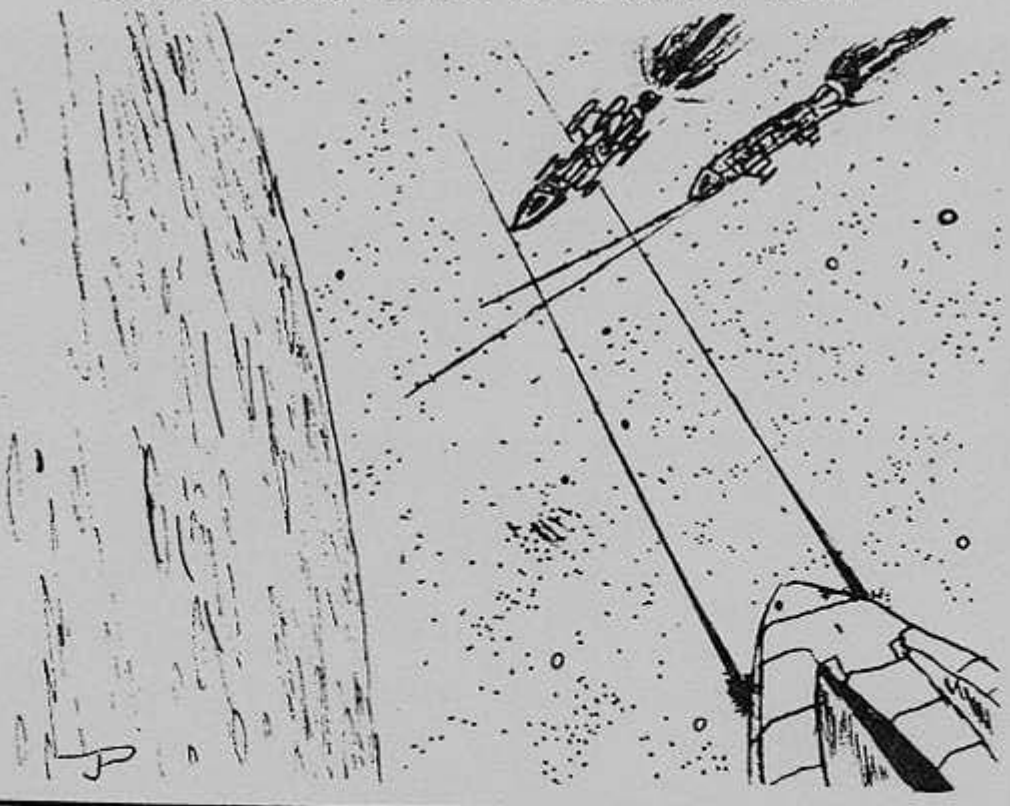
"Tell me, Doctor Shaw," he said, "Alan once told me that Lieutenant Morris considered the Albatross as more than a ship, almost like a child."

"So did I," stated Shaw, "That ship is almost a part of me, and even more so to Sam. I have confidence that the Albatross can prove itself."

Maya turned to the Commander from her station and said, "The automatic cameras are ready, sir, and the data recorder is now tracking all three ships."

"Activate cameras!" said Koenig.

The Command Center viewscreen came to life, showing two Eagles skimming towards the lunar horizon. The computer automatically zoomed in to follow them.



"Thirty seconds to intercept," said Sandra.

Shaw tightened his grip on the back of Koenig's chair. the picture on the screen went slightly out of focus; the computer compensated. The two Eagles tipped upward slightly.

"Twenty seconds."

Koenig leaned forward and fondeled his pen. Maya kept her eyes glued on the data recorder console. The Command Center door slid open and Helena and Tony Verdeschi entered.

"Did we miss anything?" asked Tony.

"Not yet," replied Koenig.

"Ten seconds."

Helena and Tony went to their respective posts and activated their consoles. Sandra checked to make sure communications between the Eagles and the Albatross were cancelled, then went back to the countdown.

"Intercept commencing."

On the lower left-hand side of the screen, a small white object appeared. It increased speed and grew, getting closer. Within seconds, it was slicing in front of the two Eagles. It was Albatross One.

At first glance, one would think it was an Eagle. However, a second look would reveal a rotating laser turret mounted behind the cockpit and a pair of angled pylons supporting two thrust units. The Albatross was sleeker than an Eagle and much more devious looking. Koenig looked upon it as a work of art.

The two Eagles turned and were soon on either side of the Albatross, slightly above it. Eagle Two wasted no time in firing on the Albatross, but missed by a hair. Before another shot was fired, the Albatross twisted and rose between the Eagles. When it came out of its maneuver, it was heading in the opposite direction. Eagle One was not taken totally by surprise and was on the Albatross' tail within a minute.

As soon as Albatross One detected Eagle One, its Beta Four Battlecomputer reacted by spinning the laser turret and zeroed it in on the Eagle's cockpit. A second later, the command viewscreen read:

-SIMULATED LASER HIT-
-EAGLE ONE DESTROYED-

A sigh of relief came from Shaw, and Koenig said, "Sahn, tell Alan to come in."

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The next picture on the screen was Albatross One in a high orbit. Before long, Eagle Two could be seen approaching from below. The Albatross increased speed, but the Eagle hung on, firing constantly. The two spacecraft zig-zagged across the screen. Just when Eagle Two looked like it had the Albatrossin its sights, a lateral flip put the Albatross in position to attack the Eagle. The screen was filled with the criss-cross laser fire until it read:

-SIMULATED LASER HIT-
-EAGLE TWO CRIPPLED-
-ALBATROSS ONE UNHURT-

"He doesn't waste time, does he?" asked Koenig.

"Commander," said Sandra, "Eagle Two is returning to base. Albatross One is still in orbit."

"Good. Tony, activate phase two."

Shaw looked at Koenig and inquired, "What's phase two?"

"Alan, Tony, and I decided that some unscheduled 'attacks' would give Sam a chance to really show off his ship!" stated Koenig proudly.

In the cockpit of the Albatross sat Lieutennant Samuel Morris, a tall, dark haired Eagle test pilot. He made some final orbital adjustments, but did not prepare to go back to base. The Eagles were too easy to take on, so he figured that Koenig had something up his sleeve.

Sam felt proud that the Albatross was his idea, and that it responded so well to his touch, as if it were part of him. He was also glad that the Battlecomputer reacted so swiftly to the attacks.

Moonbase Alpha was now visible on the horizon. Sam decided to activate the combat scanner, a device designed by Doctor Shaw to detect weapons, identify them, verify their fire-power and calculate their aim. Within seconds, the combat scanner read:

-MOONBASE ALPHA DEFENCE LASER CANNONS HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED-
-ENERGIZED AT ONE TENTH POWER-
-AIM COORDINATES: CANNON ONE: 046-29-03
CANNON TWO: 046-29-04
CANNON THREE: 046-29-05
CANNON FOUR: 046-29-07
-POSITION NECESSARY TO EVADE LASERS: 046-29-06-

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According to Sam's navigational computer, 046-29-06 was just a few feet ahead of him. He revved his thrusters slightly and was in position in seconds.

Then the laser cannons fired.

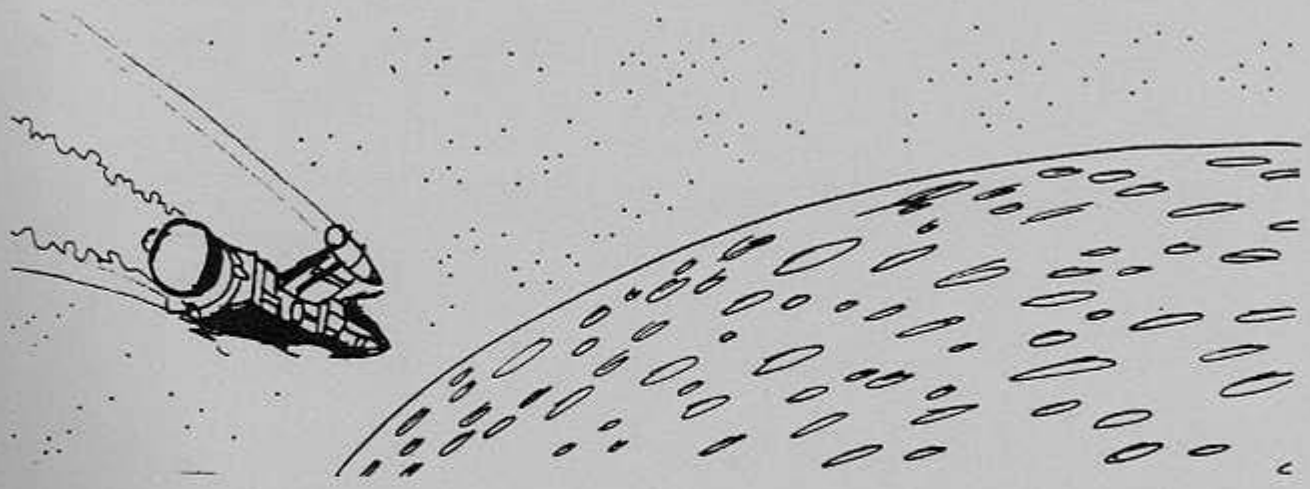
Four searing blue beams leapt from the Moonbase, each seemingly aimed at Albatross One, but missing my only a meter or so. Sam kicked in maximum thrust and dove towards Alpha. Even from six miles up, the Battlecomputer could pinpoint the four cannons. The turret spun around and released four salvos, each set just a few degrees from each other. The combat scanner screen came on again:

-LASER CANNONS ONE THROUGH FOUR DEACTIVATED-
-THREE EAGLES VECTORING THIS POSITION AT MAXIMUM VELOCITY-
-APPROACHING FROM BEHIND WITH LASER BATTERIES SET AT ONE TENTH POWER-
-CALCULATE FIRE IN TWO SECONDS-

Knowing he couldn't move in time, Sam turned on the microwave defence shield he had installed. It released a field of low frequency, high intensity microwaves in all directions around the Albatross, dispersing any energy that touched it. It was used only in emergency situations due to its massive power consumption.

The three Eagles fired simultaneously, only to see their laser fire deteriorate before hitting the Albatross.

As soon as the lasers stopped, Sam shut down the shield and headed skyward. As the Eagles turned to follow, the Albatross looped around and raced downward, right towards the Eagles. In unison, the Albatross' two frontal laser batteries and the turret fired. Each beam struck home. The computer registered three more Eagles "destroyed."



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Sam wasted no time in ascending to a higher orbit. Before anything else happened, he wanted to make sure the Albatross was still in prime condition. After a few checks, he found that his microwave field emitters were slightly unstable. He aquitted this to the lack of energy resonance it encountered by the low powered lasers.

The receiver snapped on, "Koenig to Albatross One. Come in, Morris."

"Morris here, Commander. I read you."

"Congradulations! You just left Alpha totally defenceless."

"I tried my best, sir."

"I know. You can come back to base now. No surprises this time."

"If you don't mind, sir, I'd like to stay up a little longer. My microwave emitters got a bit shaky when the lasers hit them. I think an orbit at a slow propultion rate might stabilize the power a bit."

"Request granted. See you when you get back." Koenig's face vanished from the screen. Sam activated the main propultion unit and began his orbit.

Koenig turned from the screen and faced Doctor Shaw. "Well Doctor, your ship made it," he said.

"The Albatross is more Sam's ship than mine. He was the one who conceived the whole thing."

"Still, anyone connected with it should be commended. The Albatross is the finest piece of equipment built yet and I intend to look into making more."

"Sam will appreciate that, sir. Excuse me, but I must get back to duty."

Shaw left the Command Center. Koenig turned towards the viewscreen. It showed Albatross One disappearing over the horizon. The Commander considered the time it would take to build a fleet of Albatrosses, or converting all the Eagles into Albatrosses. Then Maya spoke, "Commander, long range scanners pick up six contacts entering our sensor range."

"How fast?" asked Koenig.

"0.20 light speed. Heading roughly in our direction."

"Can you identify?"

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"Negative!" said the Psychon, "We only pick up a slight radiation. Possibly ion engines."

"Hmm. Has Eagle One landed yet?"

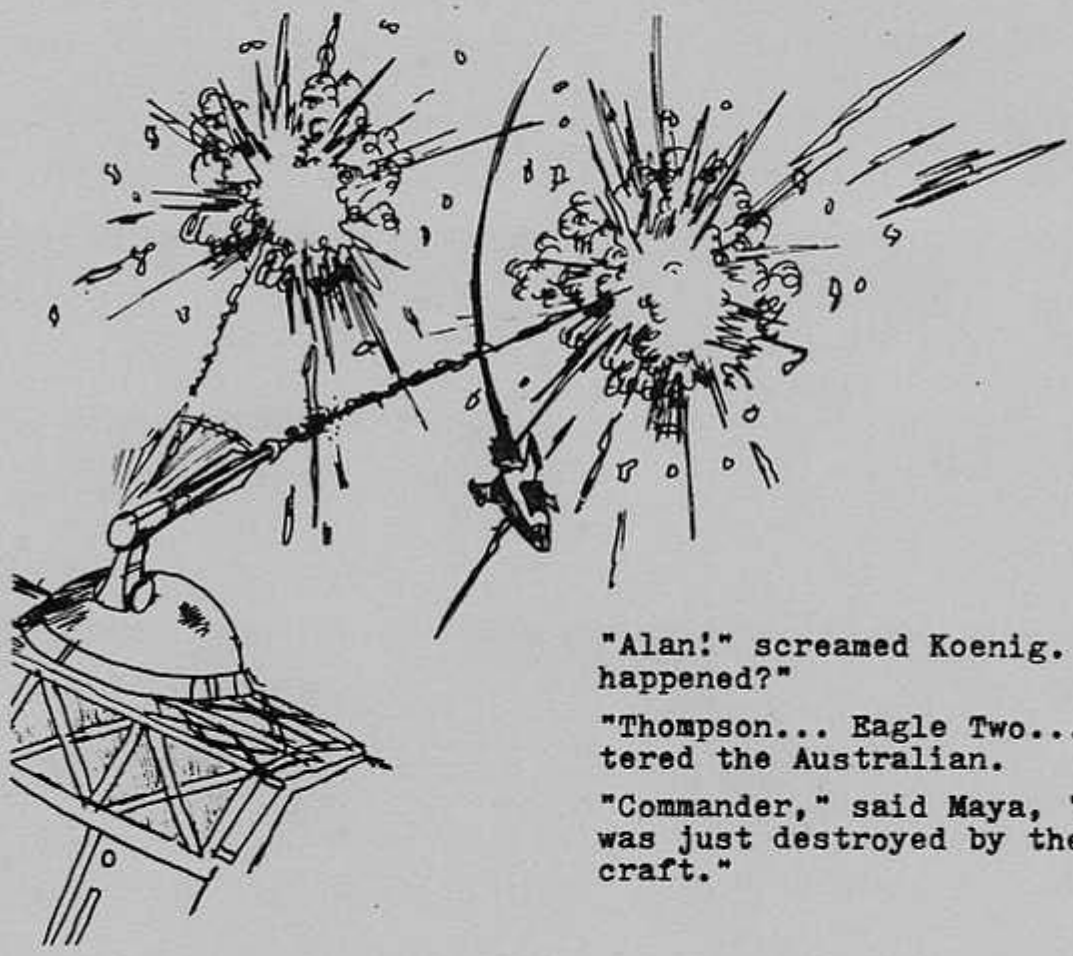
"No sir, he's approaching the base now."

"Tell Alan to take Eagle Two along with him and try to identify the objects."

Within minutes, Eagles One and Two were space-borne and moving away from Luna. Koenig spoke again. "Maya, any idea where the objects came from?"

"Scanners picked up a large mass about one light year away. It has the highest possibility of origin."

After five minutes, Alan transmitted to Alpha. "This is Carter in Eagle One. The objects are spacecraft. Small, one-man ships is what they look like. They've got a design like a warship or a recon cruiser. I've tried to make contact, but all I get is static. I think I'll try... oh my God!"



"Alan!" screamed Koenig. "What happened?"

"Thompson... Eagle Two..." muttered the Australian.

"Commander," said Maya, "Eagle Two was just destroyed by the alien craft."

"Alan, get your butt in gear and get back here on the double."

Carter snapped out of his shock and headed for Luna at top speed. The six alien ships increased speed to pursue. At Command Center, Koenig ordered all Eagles to take off and retaliate.

Alan was able to stay ahead of the ships and evade the missles they were launching. He reached lunar orbit in less than five minutes. The Eagle fleet was ascending when he hit orbit. The alien ships were right on his tail and still firing.

The eleven Eagles dispersed and commenced firing their lasers while Alan turned to join them. The first shots from the Eagles were fruitless, as were the alien missles, but the alien ships made no evasive maneuvers.

From Command Center, Koenig could see the skirmish on the viewscreen. He did not like what he saw.

The six alien fighters each made a high-speed curve, leveled out, and regrouped behind the Eagle fleet. The ships were cone-shaped with three fins adorning the rear end. A shiny plate on tne hull was apparently the cockpit and the two holes on either side were the missle launchers.

Alan Carter was the only one able to follow the alien ships and realized that they were closing in on Alpha. He energized his laser batteries and prepared to fire.

Koenig turned to Sandra and said, "Bring defence cannons to full power and zero in on the alien ships."

"Commander," said Maya, "scanners pick up life forms in the fighters, one each. Cold-blooded, low metabolism."

"Try and detect a weak point in the craft, a hull deficiency or comething," said Koenig in return.

Ten miles above Alpha, Alan fired his lasers and vaporized the alien ship bringing up the rear. The other ships seemed not to notice or take action, as if they were bent on reaching Alpha at all costs. The Eagle fleet was now descending just north of Alpha at top speed, but still not fast enough to reach the ships before they reached the base. Alan knew that he was along, but didn't give up hope.

Then, for the second time in one day, the laser cannons sent their rays into the sky. Each beam was at full power, yet only one struck an alien ship, converting it into a cloud of debris. The remaining four fighters increased speed and left Alan behind.

Koenig saw that there was nothing to stop the fighters and said, "All sections initiate full safety measures. Depressurize all non-essential areas and seal all primary bulkheads." Maya turned and said, "We've got thirty seconds before those ships hit us." Before a second passed, one alien ship fired two missles downward. Maya's sensors registered them as sub-atomic, but still able to wipe out many Alphan sections in one hit. Three seconds were left before the missles hit.

Then the sky lit up.

The sensors declared that the missles had been destroyed. In confusion, Maya looked to the big screen. The four alien craft were no longer in formation, but scattered and unorganized. In the midst of them was Albatross One.

Sam got one of the craft in his sights in no time and blew it up. His scanners calculated the path of another ship; Sam hit the accelerator switch and leapt into intercept speed. The craft was trying to climb out of danger, but could not avoid hitting the Albatross' laser fire and exploding into nothingness. Two down.

A quick scan detected the remaining two fighters preparing to fire on Alpha again. The Battlecomputer estimated six seconds before the ships fired, so Sam wasted no time in diving toward them. As he prepared to fire, the two ships veered off and headed upward.

The Albatross followed them at full speed. The Battlecomputer zeroed in on the two ships, but Sam ordered it to hold fire via manual override; an explosion that close to Moonbase Alpha could be disasterous. Sam soon regretted that act, for the ships split up and headed in seperate directions.

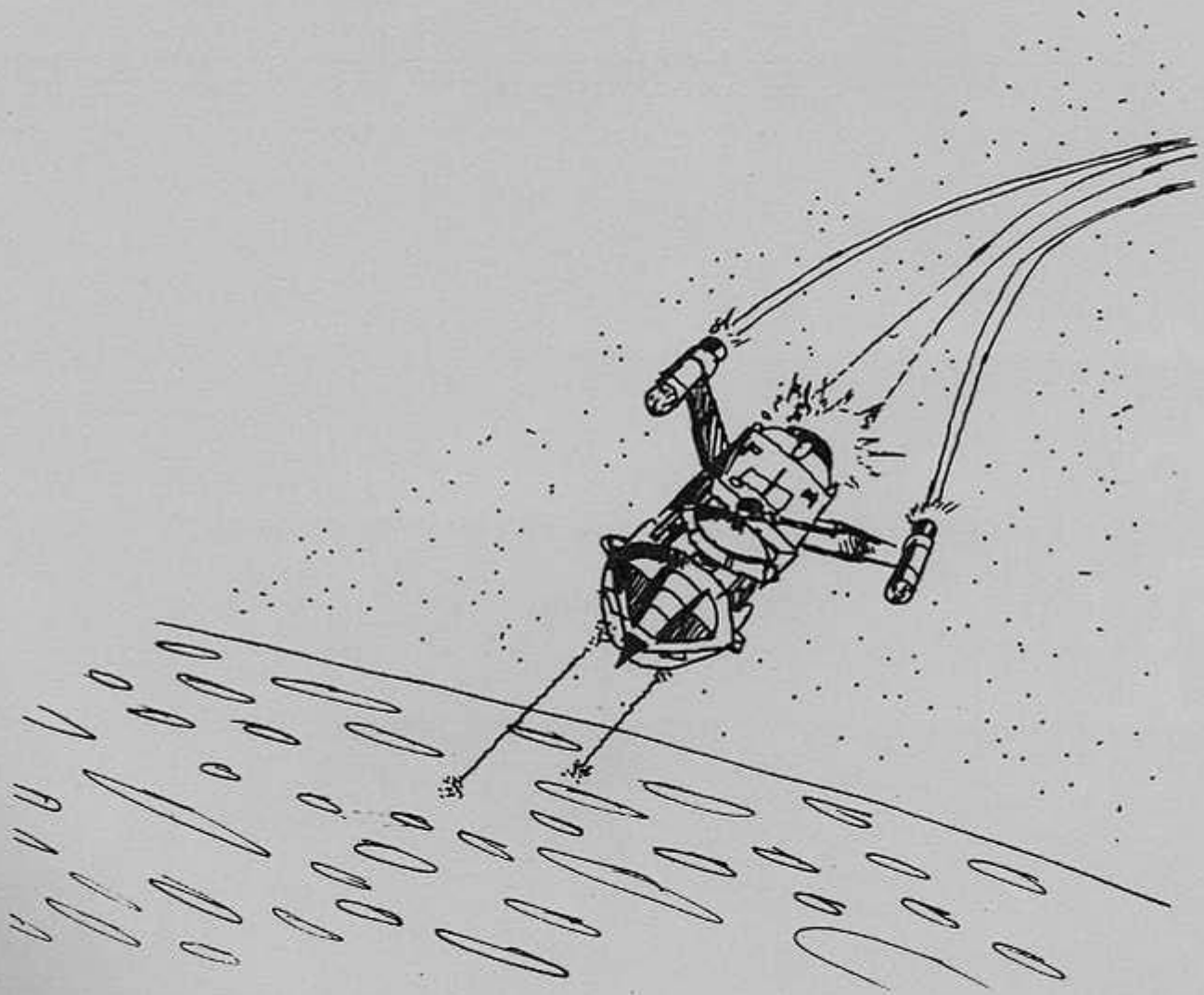
"Stay still, dammit!" yelled Sam as he let the computer fire. The first shot burned off the fins of the closest ship, sending it spinning to the ground. The turret spun and released a second shot at the last ship, but the ship was too fast and changed direction again.

The damaged ship impacted with the lunar surface outside Alpha, but didn't affect the base. Above, Albatross One was constantly firing upon the alien fighter, but the craft was too agile. Sam was beginning to run low on fuel, seeing how he only fueled it for a few hours of testing, so he decided to end this incident quickly.

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Kicking in full thrust, the Albatross lunged at the alien ship, coming within feet of it. Sam then activated the microwave shield. The field passed close enough to the alien ship's propultion unit, dispersing its exhaust thrust and cancelling its speed. It fell like a stone towards Alpha. Sam aimed the Albatross downward, cut the shield, and let the Battlecomputer have the honor of obliterating the plunging ship.

Koenig sighed with great relief. Maya did likewise. Alan and the Eagle fleet arrived over Alpha to escort Sam to his pad in honor of saving Alpha. Sam just shut off all combat equipment, leaned back and smiled. Everyone on Moonbase Alpha knew that the Albatross was the beginning of an era, and a better chance of survival.

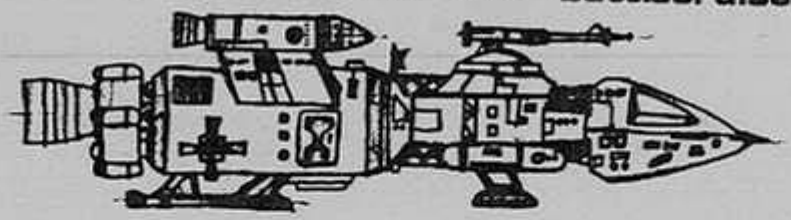


ALBATROSS BLUEBRINTS

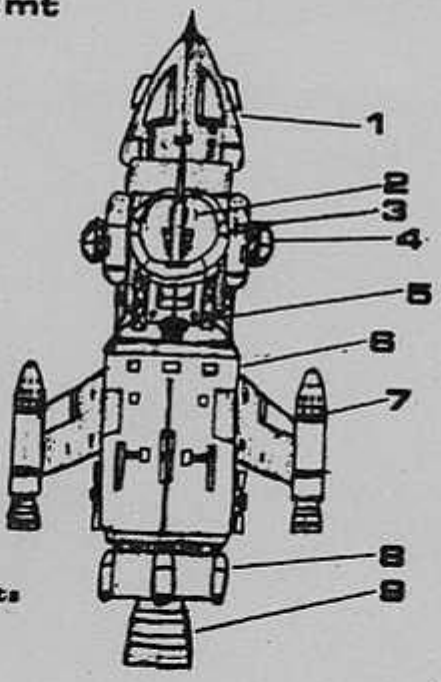
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ALBATROSS WARSHIP lunar defense battlecruiser



L·23.8m
H·7.3m
W·8.1m
WT·54.2mt



crew. 2 Pilots, 2-6 Personel

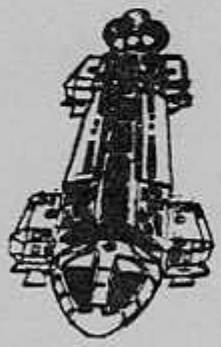
weaponry. 1 Laser turret, 2 Laser Cannons, 2 Space to Space Warheads.

code.

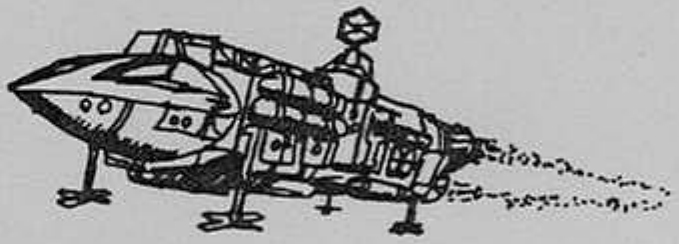
1--- Command Cockpit
2--- Laser Turret
3--- Landing Rockets
4--- Landing Pads
5--- Scanning Antenna
6--- Personel Section
7--- Secondary Propulsion Units
8--- Fuel Tanks
9--- Main Propulsion Unit



25



SCIFT



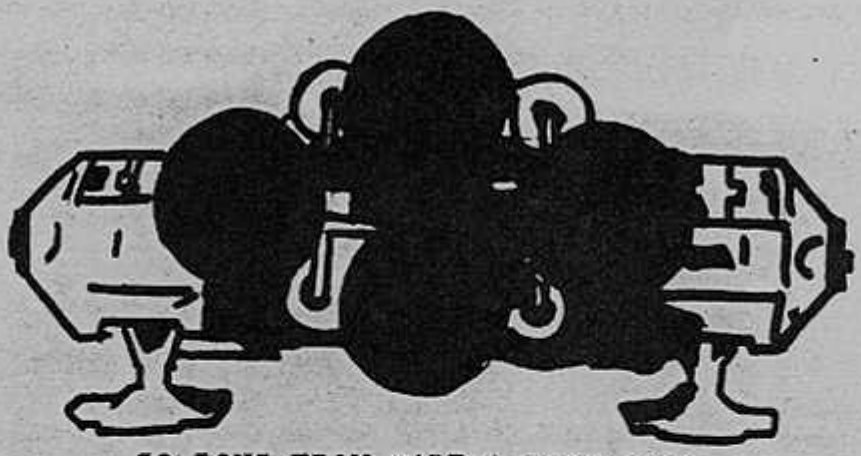
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