

ISSUE
16

A·U·S·T·R·A·L·I·A·N

PRICE
\$4.95

REALMS

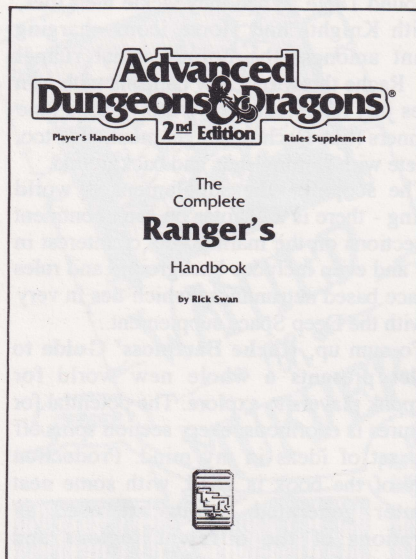
- \$500 IN PRIZES
- AD & D
- CYBERPUNK
- MAN O' WAR
- UNAE
- LONE STAR
PREVIEW



RANGER'S HANDBOOK

AD&D 2nd Ed Rules Supplement
by TSR RRP \$34.95

Reviewed by Lee Sheppard



This, the latest offering in the *Complete Handbook* series by TSR, covers one of the more popular character classes in the AD&D game, the Ranger. Coming in at 128 pages in length, it follows the standard handbook format, with chapters on new kits, proficiencies, magical items and spells and equipment. In keeping with the ranger theme, there are additional chapters on attracting followers, roleplaying, religion and forgatherings (ranger jamborees).

As always, the full-page colour illustrations are excellent, but I found many of the black-and-white illustrations (like some parts of the text) a bit juvenile. The chapters on new magical items and spells, proficiencies, equipment and forgatherings were quite useful and enjoyable to read, even for non-ranger character players (in particular, the tracking proficiency is nicely expanded). It's when the book details the new ranger kits that the problems arise.

As you read through this handbook, it soon becomes obvious that after having produced so many other *Complete Handbooks*, the various writers at TSR are probably beginning to run out of ideas for new character kits. The 15 kits provided in this particular volume therefore run from the very good and usable (the *sea-ranger*, *explorer*, *mountain man* and *pathfinder*) through the well-written but

with limited use (the *falconer*, *feralan* and *warden*) down to the down-right silly (the *greenwood ranger* - as you advance in level, you turn into a tree bit by bit!). It's a great pity that the ranger kits suggested as ideas only in the "Creating New Kits" section weren't developed fully in the handbook, as many of those (*lycanthropic ranger*, *survivalist*) sound much more interesting than the ones actually included in the handbook.

Where all of these various *Complete Handbooks* excel is in the way in which they speed up play, and this one is no exception. The initial character creation chapter and the excellent Ranger Character Sheets (for photocopying and use by the player) make creating and playing ranger characters very quick and easy, with all the relevant tables from the *Player's Handbook* reproduced in full as an additional aid. After looking at this particular handbook, I'm now tempted to rush out and buy some of the earlier *Complete Handbooks* for this very reason alone.

For those of you that play ranger characters fairly often, or would like to spice up your current ranger character, or would just like to have a complete collection of these handbooks, there is enough new material in this one to warrant a purchase. For myself though, I'll probably pass on this one and go and buy the *Complete Fighter's Handbook* instead.

FORGOTTEN REALMS

- The Player's Guide

AD&D Accessory by TSR RRP \$35.00

Reviewed by Adam Whitt

Ed Greenwood's home grown campaign has bloomed into the high fantasy world *par excellence* for AD&D. There has been so much material published and so much has happened that this handbook fills a much needed role - to give player's a cohesive guide to the campaign world and happenings. This is a newcomer's best chance to catch up.

Dipping into this 128 page softback I expected to find quite a dry almanac, but was soon hooked into the story as told by Furian Arcanus of the Seekers adventuring group - the book doubles as the annals of their adventures as they explore the Realms.

The book is produced in large type with 'generous' margins, but does include some good art, utilitarian maps and boxed text explaining many of the finer points of mystery and history to be discovered in the campaign.

As a player's guide this is a very useful book. It is good fun to read, and fills in a lot of the blanks for players who have not had the time or money to access all the many novels and sourcebooks that make up the Forgotten Realms campaign. This is TSR's main high fantasy campaign, and now into it's second edition I have no doubt it will continue to grow for some time yet. Well worth a look.

CAERNS - Places of Power

Werewolf Sourcebook

By White Wolf RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Colin Taber

This latest sourcebook for *Werewolf* comes in at 160 pages and includes a handy colour fold out map of the Earth's main moon bridges in the back. The cover art is excellent and the interior very good, this combined with a common sense structure of the content make it a good easy to use sourcebook. Better than many previous products.

What's it cover? It details various Caerns across the globe, including places such as Australia, Greece, the United States, Germany, Ireland, Hong Kong, Japan, Morocco, Russia and Tibet. In these sections it discusses all the relevant details of the caern site, history, surroundings, the local tribal custodians and maps.

Other sections of the book detail the *Kitsune*; the Japanese Werefox and also the Black Spiral Dancers. Perhaps I should also say that as it is mainly a 'background' sourcebook it shouldn't be outdated by the new *Werewolf* second edition due for release in April.

In short this sourcebook is one *Werewolf* product that is pretty close to a must. With the good detail of each site, the extra information on moon bridges and the reference map in the back it is the kind of book that will most definitely be handy.

GERMANY SOURCEBOOK

Shadowrun Sourcebook

by FASA RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Malcolm Adler

This release comes in at your Shadowrun standard 150+ pages and also includes an assortment of colour plates that are all pleasing to the eye.

The book covers the AGS, the Allied German States including details on history, German magic, equipment and most importantly the data on the German sprawls. This was all written by native Germans and translated for FASA's English edition. It reads well, is full of interesting ideas, and it has to be said is pleasingly authentic. The real thing.

So, what's the AGS like in the Germany Sourcebook? It's a mess, but its being rebuilt after a series of environmental disasters that included a full scale nuclear meltdown, toxic spirits in the North Sea, duelling carts on the Autobahns, a troll kingdom in the south, and the predictable but well delivered anarchist city of Berlin.

For more details you'll have to buy a copy, but in summary; if you are playing in a European setting, or playing a global campaign that sees a lot of travel this product will work well. If you are running in Europe it will be an asset with the London Sourcebook and Paranormals of Europe.

Well worth the wait.

LONE STAR



**A PREVIEW OF FASA's UPCOMING SOURCEBOOK ON SEATTLE'S FINEST
FOR THE SHADOWRUN GAME**



Written by NIGEL D. FINDLEY

Courtesy of FASA Corporation © 1994, All Rights Reserved.

AUTO PATROL SECTION

Auto patrol units usually consist of two officers and a car. The preferred vehicle for this operation is a Chrysler-Nissan Patrol One. The alternative vehicle is a modified Ford Americar (although some of the more specialized patrol units include a rigger with a modified Turbo).

>>>>>[The Chrysler-Nissans were first issued to patrol operatives in 2052. They've been hugely successful in the brief time they've been on the streets. However, there are still a lot of Americars and ZXs out there (especially in very large cities where operating budgets are spread too thin to upgrade all the equipment and in small backwater bergs where they just don't need the new stuff).]<<<<<

- Flashpoint (14:37:23/10-11-54)

Because patrol officers must be prepared to face almost any type of situation, they're equipped with a wide range of weapons and gear. A typical patrol vehicle will contain the following:

1 dash-mounted microcomputer with a cellular link to a sub-processor in the precinct computer system. The computer has a fold-up monitor or can be switched to a Heads Up Display on the windshield of the car. (Lone Star officers *never* jack into a computer while on patrol duty. One officer jacking in effectively cuts the patrol in half.) the computer is also equipped with an in-line data encryption and decryption system. There are also 3 colour LCD monitors that are used to display information from the vehicular cameras and transmitted images from surveillance drones.

1 full set of exterior security shock plates. Anyone touching the vehicle when these are triggered suffers the effect of a taser hit.

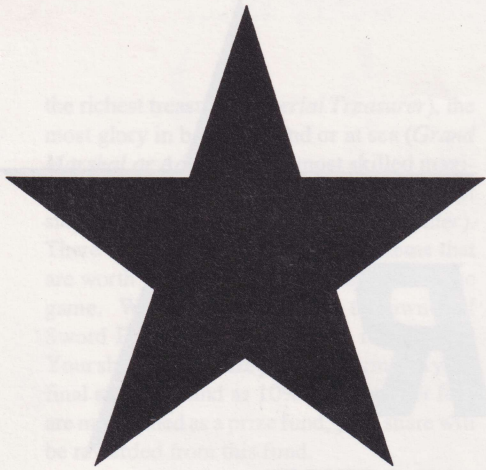
1 full-length taser pad embedded in the back seating bench. This can be activated from any of the front seat positions, automatically affecting a rear-seat passenger taser hit.

1 Defiance Super Shock taser pistols.

>>>>>[Covered in cobwebs, no doubt.]<<<<<

- Core Tex (00:56:35/10-13-54)

2 Mossberg CMDT/SM Combat Shotguns with smartgun adapters.



2 armoured torso plates stored in the trunk and easily strapped on in a heavy combat engagement. [Armour 6/4]
 Front and rear FlashPaks integrated with the top mounted light and siren array. These can be activated from inside the automobile. (See **Street Samurai Catalogue** for details.)
 6 pairs of metal hand cuffs
 3 packets of 10 plastic strip restraints and two heat-fusers.
 2 Mage masks
 3 pairs of containment manacles or 3 pairs of pulse cuffs
 2 Headjammers
 5 Jackstoppers
 2 Skilltwitchers
 1 DNA Scanner
 1 Blood tester
 1 Cyberware scanner (Rating 5)

>>>>>[Breaking Into A Lone Star System from a Patrol Vehicle Minicomp

OK. Here's how you get into an LS computer system through the back door. It's faster and easier than calling on them through their LTG system access node, but it puts you (that is, your flesh-and-blood body) at a slightly higher-than-average risk. You'll need to get access to the car, but you're resourceful right?

Next, deck the car's system and slip deep inside the LSSS system via the cellular link. Be warned though, decking through a cellular link bucks pretty bad. Something to do with insufficient bandwidth. Once your in, however, you've saved yourself a lot of hassle working your way down through the hierarchy of unimportant drek that's clustered near an LTG SAN.

One word of warning. If you set off a system alert while in the car, the system will trace you by your cellular transmission. If you're in the car or within LOS (line of sight), it'll use the car's cameras to snap your pretty mug. If you aren't, it'll simply ask a local surveillance drone to do it. Lone Star installs additional alert utilities in states that have the highest incident of computer crime. These additional alert utilities not only trace the transmission, but send an alert message to the riggers in the Department of Surveillance. In a case like this, having your picture taken is the least of your worries. The rigger cops might just track you with a high-altitude drone and wait for you to contact your shadow mates before striking, or they might send a hunter drone to shoot you down with your deck still in your lap. (You take the bad with the good, chummier.)<<<<<<

- Argent (14:27:58/10-17-54)

>>>>>[Yea, and I hear that Patrol Services has begun installing internal security systems in the vehicle. Additional shock pads, gas, fun stuff like that. They catch somebody drekking with one of *their* cars and there will Hell to pay. You have been warned.]<<<<<<

- Toby Tuna (16:02:18/10-17-54)



>>>>>[Chromer Cops

Most Patrol Division street grunts are off-the-rack, we all know that: slow, dumb, undergunned, meat for the beast.

Most.

Lone Star ends up with a lot of wizzer chrome on its hands, chummers. Gear confiscated at street scenes. Shrapnel left over when a perp's shot while trying to escape. And on and on. Where does that wizzer chrome go?

Some of it gets slapped onto street cops, chummers, that's where. Most cops don't know this, but their contract allows Lone Star to install any cybermods it feels like anytime a cop goes under the laser on the corp's tab. For example, you're a patrol street monster, and you have a difference of opinion with a troll packing a two-by-four. Licky-boom-boom-down, out go the lights, and you wake up in a recovery room.

Missing both arms, and both eyes. While you were under the laser, the Star - in its infinite wisdom and compassion - decided you could really use some of that chrome that was gathering dust on some shelves at HQ. (Even though the troll with the two-by-four never did squat to your eyes or arms...) Suddenly hey presto, you're a chromer cop. Sur-*priise*, sur-*priise*, sur-*priise*!

Some chromers end up getting transferred to other divisions or departments, like TacDiv. Some just get put back out on the street, doing the old patrol work - foot, cycle or auto. The odds are against meeting a chromer cop in any given confrontation, but the chance is always there, and it can be enough to ruin your entire fragging day.]<<<<<

- Snow White (17:16:00/9-8-54)

DEPARTMENT OF AIRBORNE PATROL

Flying the friendly skies of your local precinct is Airborne Patrol. These officers fulfil much the same responsibilities as an auto patrol officer, but much quicker and with more firepower. The most commonly-used aircraft in the Lone Star Air Patrol Department are the Northrop PRC-50f Wasp and Yellowjacket. Both of these are single-man rotorcraft, enabling Lone Star to maintain a strongly-armed air-police presence without committing a disproportionate number of personnel to the department. Almost all air patrol officers are outfitted with Vehicle control cyberware.

>>>>>[Air patrol officers aren't contractually obliged to have rigger cybermods installed, neither is it a prerequisite to joining the department, but Lone Star sure makes it worth an employee's while to get the surgery. There are all sorts of benefits, discounts on medical programs and insurance packages... the list goes on.]<<<<<

- SPD (00:09:46/9-19-54)

If a Lone Star air patrol officer is cybernetically capable, he will also have one or two hunter or surveillance drones either flying with him in formation or harnessed to his patrol craft, ready to be launched when necessary. These are slaved to the officer's vehicle control rig.

>>>>>[To cut down on costs, LS tends to go for the plain-vanilla standard models of drones. Don't count on that, though. When there's a need - and the civic contract is lucrative enough - Air Patrol pops for top-of-the-line models like Wandjina RPVs they buy direct from the CAS military.]<<<<<

- Clutch (13:41:58/9-17-54)

>>>>>[Wandjinas? Hoy Drek...]<<<<<

- Suddenly Paranoid (00:44:55/9-18-54)

cyber TYCOON

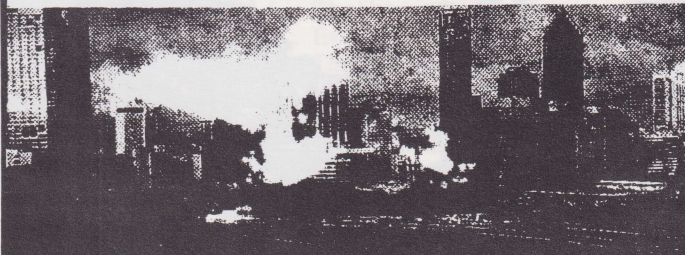
The **PLAY-BY-MAIL** game of socio-economic, tribal, and political domination, set in the squandering bilge-filth of a futuristic industrialised megalopolis.

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- ♦ Weather the economic climate of five linked sprawls, each with their own distinct flavor.
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I would prefer to set up in the following sprawl:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amsterdam | <input type="checkbox"/> Berlin | <input type="checkbox"/> Chicago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Los Angeles | <input type="checkbox"/> Tokyo | |

Name: _____

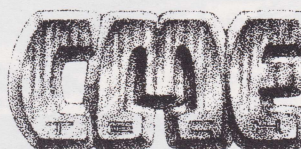
Address: _____

Postcode: _____

I enclose cheque/money order for \$19.95.

I understand that if I return Cybertycoon within 10 days, CME Tech will refund me the full purchase price, no later than 8 days after receipt of my return package.

Send your coupon to:



Reply Paid 29
CME Technologies
PO Box 293
Brunswick, VIC 3056

No postage stamp required
if posted in Australia.

NEWS

Conquest '94

This convention will be held April 1st - 4th at the Melbourne University High School, Victoria, Australia. Events include role-playing, freeforms, computer games, miniatures, board games and painting competitions. RPGA sanctioned events are also included. Registration is \$20.00 plus a small competition fee. Write to: Conquest '94, PO Box 312, Knoxfield MDA, Victoria, Australia, 3180.

Arcanacon XII

This convention will be held July 7th - 10th at the Collingwood Education Centre, Cnr Cromwell St & McCuthean Way, Collingwood, Victoria, Australia. The special guest will be Ed Greenwood. Events include role-playing, freeforms, workshops and lunchtime seminars. For further details write to: Arcanacon XII, PO Box 125, Parkville, Victoria, Australia, 3052.

Readers Poll

In case you missed it on your way to this page, I'd like to draw your attention to the Readers Poll on page 33. This chance to give your feedback to the magazine is so important to us that we've arranged over **\$500 worth of prizes** as inducement. Send in your form now and help shape the bright future of Australian roleplaying!

Walking Billboards

Ask not what the magazine can do for you, but what you can do for Australian Realms. To help promote the magazine, we're asking you to wear our colourful covers on a **T-Shirt**. These are a neat way to spread the good news and they look great on. If you don't believe me, see pic of Nick on page 41 before heading to page 34 to fill in your order form. Believe me it's what all the best people will be wearing at GAMA Trade Fair in the US this year!

Short Story Competition

Aurealis magazine is holding a short story competition for High School students. Entry is free and there are over \$500 worth of cash and prizes to be won. Stories must be either fantasy, science fiction or horror. For an entry form, send a stamped self addressed envelope to Aurealis Short Story Competition, PO Box 538, Mt Waverley, Victoria 3149.

Live Role Play Event

YSEDA's first twilight game **There's a Light** will be run on the 4th, 11th and 18th of June. Each session will run about four hours, into the night and will cater for fourteen participants in two groups. Spirit magic, mercenary soldiers and lots of creeping around in the dark, (light spells provided). For further

details and bookings, please contact Kyla Ward on (02) 764 4336 after hours.

New Releases

Chaosium Inc

Conventions are the home of the 'freeform' game. These games are popular with organisers and players because they offer freedom of role-playing expression without the encumbrance of a complex and unwieldy game system. It was only a matter of time before the games companies began looking at ways to tap into this market. **White Wolf** had a dash at it with *The Masquerade*, and now **Chaosium** are about to follow suit. **NEXUS** is billed as live action role-playing game for 44 people, 5 gamemasters, and one great weekend. The action in **NEXUS** takes place at a science fiction convention where some of the people dress up like aliens, only this time some of the guests are not really in costumes. Due out in May, it will be interesting to see how the market reacts to this entry.



FASA Corporation

In April, Earthdawn devotees will be treated to **Denizens of Earthdawn Vol 1**. This book will provide a glimpse at four of the Name Giver races - Elves, Humans, T'skrang and Windlings. An invaluable resource for both players and gamemasters. Due in late May is another adventure for Earthdawn, **Infected**

For Battletech players there's a novel - **D.R.T.** by Jim Long and a Second Edition of **CityTech** which expands on the Battletech Third Edition rules on artillery, infantry and more. This boxed set includes new 1/285th scale 'Mech miniatures two each of: Javelin, Centurion, Orion, Victor, Iller, Black Hawk, Mad Cat, and Daishi.

Shadowrunners can look forward to the **Lone Star** sourcebook (previewed in this issue of Realms), and **Fade to Black** a novel by Nyx Smith.

Games Workshop

Due out in March for Warhammer 40,000 is the **Eldar Codex** detailing the craft worlds, how to build Eldar forces and introducing Phoenix Lords (Eldar exarchs). Also not far off for WH40K is **Dark Millennium** - look for the review in Realms soon. Fans of **Blood Bowl** will be pleased to know a new edition is about to be released (April) with a support supplement for campaign rules to follow in early June. The Design Studio loved playtesting Blood Bowl so much they've set up a League. Warhammer Fantasy Battle players are not forgotten with the Undead Army lists out in May with new figures.

TSR Inc

The next in the Player's Handbook series is the **Complete Paladin's Handbook**. This should be an interesting read as the paladin has always been the toughest of classes to play. Another interesting development is a new edition of the **Ravenloft Campaign Setting**. The next **AdventureVision** game is also imminent - **WildSpace** based on Spelljammer.

R.Talsorian

We've been able to confirm that **Castle Falkenstein** is done and on its way to the printers. An advance copy has been sent to us and we'll definitely feature review it next issue as well as announce winners of the issue 15 Castle Falkenstein competition. For a foretaste of the colour plates in Falkenstein, check out the **Wild Hunt** on this issue's cover. for Cyberpunk look out for the **Rough Guide to the U.K.** and the first of the Cybergeneration supplements - **Ecofront**.

Game Designers Wanted

As Australian Realms enters the next phase of its evolution we are now looking for competent writers and artists who have developed a relatively complete game manuscript. Anything of reasonable quality will be considered - roleplay or board game - in any genre. What we are doing is compiling a list of local talent who we can call on to advance our own production schedule. If we are lucky this may include something exciting from you! Write to our address for more information: PO Box 220, Morley WA 6943.

A-Team Book

Realms is extremely pleased to announce that the A-Team book is on schedule and should be available before issue 17. Scott and Andrew have cooked up some very humorous moments for the book so look to get your copy by mail order or through Realms stockists (we will not be sending it via newsagencies).

Australian Sourcebook

Colin Taber is currently finalising the manuscript for this Shadowrun sourcebook. He has asked us to call for any last opinions or comments that you may want to make regarding the project which is based on the series of articles in issues 6-9, 11 & 15. If you would like to express an opinion send it to Realms, P.O.Box 220 Morley WA 6943.

...see you round like a d100!

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