

Spacers Toolkit

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

Spacers Toolkit is a collection of equipment, ground vehicles and space ships. It's designed to be used in conjunction with the Terran Empire Space Opera setting, but is easily adaptable to any Space Opera campaign.

In each section the book provides both Human (Terran Empire) and Alien version of weapons. Not every alien empire in the Terran Empire setting gets examples in each section. But enough do to add a great deal of diversity to your campaign.

Chapter One - Personal Equipment. Jumping right in the book starts with weapons of all sorts. Five tech-based human hand weapons are detailed, from the non-lethal shock baton to the power sword. Several low tech alien weapons are described as well to add some low tech flavor to the non-human species. After that a number of ranged weapons of the future are described. Laser, Plasma, Ion and Gamma weapons are all described. The varied types and tech levels allows for some differences in various parts of the galaxy, or even within the Terran Empire itself. Grenade Launchers, EMP Weapons and a few miscellaneous firearms finish out this section.

Once you've picked out your weapon of choice it's time to get some armor on. Only three species (Human, Fassai and Mon'Dabi) are given full descriptions for their standard battle armor, but notes on how to adapt armor to other species are provided. There is also a short section on personal force fields, or rather on how the tech described in the Terran Empire setting book progresses through advancements.

Sensors And Communications are an important part of any space campaign. We get a number of devices to detect things, atmosphere analyzers, bio-scanners, and the like. There are a few communications devices provided, a holographic communicator, Se'ecra translator (an insect species that communicates with wing flutters) and a stealth communicator device.

Medical Tech is next, with a few healing devices, some combat enhancement chemicals and psionic devices.

Survival Equipment gives us an EVA Suit, and several add on parts, and a good number of environmental gear for when your players leave the ship and travel to unknown planets.

Nanotech is next, with some notes on how Nanotech is treated in the Terran Empire setting. With some write-ups for Nano-military Tech, Medical tech and Enhancement tech.

Computers, Bots And Androids is next. A Data Extractor computer and a Learning Computer are provided. Several robots are written up, from mundane house robots to military androids.

Personal Enhancement covers cyberware and bioware of the Terran Empire setting, from useful to military.

Miscellaneous Items provides less useful tech, but more flavorful items you might find in a Space Opera setting. The most interesting is a few paragraphs dedicated to Mon'Dabi liquors, and Fex Sculpted Stones. Neither of which are tech so much as some cool flavor items to use in a campaign.

Chapter Two - Ground Vehicles. Most Space Opera games take place in space almost exclusively. But every now and then you have to go down to a planet, whether for recreation, war or exploration. And this chapter provides a number of vehicle from around the galaxy to do all that in.

Civilian vehicles start out the chapter. Going through wheeled vehicles, hover vehicles, and some miscellaneous vehicles. The neat feature here is that many descriptions are written up as an advertisement for the vehicle itself as well as the normal bit on how and where it's used. It includes personal transports, public transportation and utility vehicles of both Human and Non-human origin.

Military Vehicles covers the second half of this chapter. Two wheeled vehicles are presented, a military jeep and a troop transport. There are three treaded vehicles, another troop transport, an anti-infantry tank and a battle tank. The cross section provides most types of vehicles a military, or police, force needs. The two other Terran vehicles are hover vehicles. The first is a weapons platform and the second a hover tank.

After that the chapter provides alien military vehicles. Unfortunately there are only two. An Akalakian tank and a Thorgon warstrider, which is a rather interesting tank on legged vehicles.

Chapter Three - Starships. Chapter three takes up almost half the book, and provides the meat of any Space Opera campaign.

Like Terran Empire, this section starts out with component parts that make up a Space Ship. Propulsion, Weapons and Defenses are presented. Since Terran Empire introduced most of the settings major devices this has little to add. The propulsion adds a few more variations on the engines in the setting, giving even more variety. The new weapons are more Plasma cannons and missiles. The good part is the other weapons types, a Hyperspace weapon, an Armor Depletion Beam and a Force Field Sponger. The last two are alien technology that add some flavor to non-Human space ships. The Defenses section provides more variations on the basic Defensive Systems provided in the Terran Empire source book.

The rest of the book is dedicated to write-ups of Spaceships. Starting with Terran ships, there are fourteen military ships provided. Five civilian or other government ships are also provided. They cover the wide range of ships from space fighters to super-dreadnoughts, exploration ships, and merchant ships. Really, the only thing missing are luxury ships.

The Alien Spaceships has fourteen more write-ups of ships, two each of other seven major governments in the Terran Empire setting. The write-ups themselves aren't very different from the Terran empire, a bit of tweaking on either side could easily mean that write-ups can be used universally for any size ship of any alien race. The nice part of the alien ships section is that it takes some space to describe the design philosophy and elements of alien races, setting them apart descriptively from each other.

The Downside:

If there's one complaint I have about this book it's that it is too short. At 128 pages it's one of the shortest published Fifth Edition books to date.

It really could have used more future gadgets, alien and human, more vehicles and especially more spaceships. On the spaceships portion it really could have used some more on civilian ships, some text of descriptions at least.

The Otherside:

Being mostly Hero write-ups of various equipment for a Space Opera game the book has limited use to non-Hero Gamers, unless you want to do conversions. Still, the ideas alone are good enough to have appeal to anyone running a Space Opera game.

Overall, even taking into account the brevity of the book, it's an awesome addition to a Space Opera game. Even if you're not using the Terran Empire setting the write-ups are highly useful. At that very least you can use the book as a starting point for your own setting.

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