

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

Version 1.3b (Beta)

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Table of Contents

Disclaimer and Warning.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Acknowledgements.....	1
Part 1: The Phalons.....	3
Physiology.....	3
Social Structure.....	4
Technology.....	6
Suggested <i>Stargrunt II</i> Rule Changes.....	8
Small Arms Impact Die.....	8
Close Combat Odds.....	8
Cross Training.....	8
Phalon Specific <i>Stargrunt II</i> Rules.....	8
Organization.....	8
Cross Training.....	9
General Rule.....	9
The Equipment Recovery Test.....	10
Recovering Equipment Between Two Squads.....	10
Phalon Confidence and Reaction.....	11
Leader Replacement (Phalon "Mutiny").....	11
Independent Figures.....	12
Movement.....	12
Sensors.....	12
Personal Armour.....	12
Target Priority.....	12
Close Assault.....	12
Infantry Weapons.....	13
Pulser.....	13
Support Pulser.....	13
Plasma Projector.....	13
Missile Launcher.....	13
IAVRs.....	13
Small Arms Impact Die.....	13
Heavy Weapons.....	14
Heavy Pulsers (HP).....	14
Heavy Plasma Projectors (HPP).....	14
Artillery Systems and Explosives.....	15
Mass-Driver Artillery (MDA).....	15
Vehicles.....	15
Sample Phalon Organization.....	15
Phalon Mechanized Platoon.....	16
Platoon Command Unit.....	16

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

Forward Artillery Observation Unit.....	16
Missile Team	16
Medic Unit.....	16
Three Infantry Squads.....	16
Recon Squad.....	16
Phalon APC	17
Phalon Recon Pod	17
Phalon Light Tank.....	17
Part 3: Painting Phalon Figures	18
Part 4: Design Notes.....	19

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

Disclaimer and Warning

This is a beta test version of the *Stargrunt II* rules for the alien race known as the Phalons, created by Allan Goodall under the auspices of Jon Tuffley.

These rules are also "in development". They are OFFICIAL but still in a beta test state. These rules have been playtested 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 superseded 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 Fulton 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 four 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 contains the *Stargrunt II* rules for Phalons. Part 3 is a painting guide for Phalon figures. Part 4 is a set of 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, Adrian Johnson and Roger Burton West for their general comments; David Stuckey for some ideas on Phalon physiology, suggested painting schemes, and for suggesting polypod movement, along with a description of how it could work; and Oerjan Ariander for his comments about Phalon weaponry (sorry the FAEs didn't make it into this; I have them on my web site), and for his suggestion for applying polypod mobility to Phalon vehicles. 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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

I have received feedback on the rules since they were released to the overall *Stargrunt II* community. I wish to thank Matt Tope for his comments on Phalon government, Brendan Robertson for prompting me to change the support pulser settings and for supplying the description of the Phalon IAVR, Mark Donald for suggesting that I change the die roll for weapon recovery, and Oerjan Ariander for suggesting that the weapon recovery die roll be based on the Quality Die.

If I have left anyone out, I sincerely apologize. This document couldn't have been done without each and every one of you.

Part 1: The Phalons

Physiology

Phalons are bilaterally symmetric creatures with two arms, two legs and a head at the top of the body. This is where their similarity to humans ends. Phalon limbs have an extra joint, the Phalon head has a single large eye with three lobes, and a Phalon's body is covered in a hard, protective carapace.

Phalon limbs are longer than that of humans. This allows them run more quickly and jump higher than the most accomplished human. Their large, wide feet spread their weight over a broad area, lowering their ground pressure. This, historically, aided them in traveling through the ancestral bogs and bayous of their home world. While they have spread out to almost all climatic regions on their home planet, as well as other oxygen-rich worlds, they still prefer a hot, humid environment for maximum comfort. Humans who have visited Phalon buildings and starships find them uncomfortable but tolerable.

Phalons have 3 genders: fertile male, fertile female, and an asexual third gender that humans term the "mule". The female lays clutches of 1 to 5 eggs. Roughly 3 or 4 eggs out of every clutch gives birth to mules, with the other offspring being evenly split between males and females. Males and females physically mate in a manner roughly equivalent to Terran mammals. Fertile females are only capable of laying eggs for several stand weeks during the Phalon year. Like humans, Phalons mate for reasons other than procreation. It is known that they mate for pleasure, but it has also been suggested that they mate for political and religious reasons. There is increased interest in copulation between breeding sexes when the female is in her "laying cycle", presumably due to pheromone production.

Despite sperm secretion occurring within the female's body, Phalon eggs are *not* fertilized within the female. The sperm is captured on the surface of the eggs and enzymes trigger a process known as "hardening" while the eggs remain within the female. A layer forms over the egg, trapping the sperm between the original egg surface and the newly formed external shell. The eggs can be laid at any time during the female's "laying cycle" as long as the outer layers of the eggs have been fully 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. Females expel all unfertilized eggs at the end of their "laying cycle".

The mules serve an important function in the egg development process. The mules squat on the egg and secrete an enzyme that is absorbed through the outer layer. When the enzyme hits the inner layer a chemical reaction triggers the breaking down of the inner wall. At this time the sperm become active. Once the inner wall is 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 the sperm can remain dormant for two or three Terran 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. If the Phalons have synthesized this enzyme there is no record of it. It has been theorized that along with the enzyme the mule passes on antibodies, making eggs secreted with synthesized enzymes non-viable. It is known that the mules do not pass on genetic material.

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. About one in every two hundred breeders is unusually independent, and actually prefers to be totally alone. They are bigger and more aggressive than typical breeders. They most closely resemble mules, but they are fertile and fully capable of producing offspring. They can be of either fertile sex (male or female).

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

The origin of these breeders is unknown to humans. One theory is that they are genetic mutations, "defectives" with characteristics of both 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 and beneath the water's surface). This helped proto-Phalons see aerial predators that were otherwise camouflaged against the hazy sky, and it made it easier for them to 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 skin 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. The Phalon skin forms a natural camouflage that can vary with their surroundings. They do wear clothing in inhospitable environments. 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 skin 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, skin colouration is believed to be an important part of the Phalon mating ritual. It is also believed that Phalons have used the ability shift colours in their skin cells in order to communicate silently between one another during face-to-face negotiations with humans.

Social Structure

Phalon family life is more complicated than that of humans. Phalons do not mate for life, but they do form clan bonds. A clan consists of members of the breeding genders ("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 of two human couples who have children, get divorced and then remarry, but remain friends. These two extended human families (consisting of a father, a mother, a step-father, a step-mother, and the resulting offspring) would constitute a small clan in Phalon society.

Since Phalon breeders mate more promiscuously than humans, 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 at any time. When these breeders split from the clan they usually take several mules along with them, for breeding and protection.

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 to mate and live with a member of the opposite sex in another clan. Relatively rare - but not unheard of - is a breeding pair leaving their familial clan to form a brand new clan. The new clan may or may not

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

have strong ties to the old clan. The rarest of all clan relationships results from the male of one clan, the female of another, and one or more mules from a third bonding together to create a new clan. This usually occurs as part of a political negotiation to cement relations between all three original 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. This resulted in the seemingly contradictory formation of a strong warrior caste within a species that extols the virtue of individual opportunism.

Since mules controlled which eggs would and would not be fertilized, they were able to use this ability to exert authority over individual breeders within a clan. Mules saw an advantage in banding together with other mules within the 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.

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, skin hue, 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 toward 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. Otherwise, Phalon religion is at least as varied in doctrine and dogma as human religion. Phalon religions tend to be fairly flexible in structure, with new sects forming, 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 best interest of a clan, it is religion. In that respect, they are very similar to humans.

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 inevitably 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 home world had many predators that preyed on Phalons. There was safety in numbers, so a cruel dictator 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 incapable of producing 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. Clan formation is still as dynamic as ever, but individuals are likely to remain within a particular mega-clan. "Likely" is still a relative term, prompting humans to describe Phalon society 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 these attempts have mostly failed. Phalon society is too dynamic to plot on an organization chart. If such a chart was possible, at the top would be the Phalon Conglomerate. A vast, complex hierarchy of clans and mega-clans exist within the Conglomerate. The Conglomerate itself is the closest thing the Phalons have to a nation-state, or a planetary government.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 prestige, wealth, and influence within the super mega-clan. As they gain an advantage, the mega-clan gains members from other clans and mega-clans, increasing its size and influence. Imagine a column of fluid with bubbles in it. As a bubble gets bigger, it absorbs more bubbles and rises faster to the surface.

High-level mega-clans are essentially cartels, though they dominate many different areas of interest. Those interests are subject to rapid change.

Breeders are considered "flighty" by mules. In human terms, breeders are more "right brained" and mules are more "left 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 tend to worry more about the future. 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 society may be more heavily stocked with leaders of a particular gender. The Phalon military is top-heavy with mules, while biomechanical engineering disciplines are most often led by females.

Injustices between individuals, clans, mega-clans, different races and different religions are remembered and even acted on, but long running vendettas and grudges are rare, and considered anti-social. It is considered a virtue among Phalons to seize an advantage. Walking away from an advantage is 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. That's not to say that Phalons don't show affection to one another. It's just that Phalon affection is fleeting. The only thing approaching true 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. Except for mutant breeders, Phalons prefer to be in the company of others of their kind.

The impact of mutant breeders on Phalon society is unclear. Some have suggested this is an indication that mutant breeders are a relatively recent development, but without positive proof this view is still very much debatable. It is believed that mutant breeders make up the bulk of the professions that require long periods of isolation. In the military, most scouts and snipers are mutant breeders. Although it is almost impossible to tell, there's a suggestion that the Directorship of the Phalon Conglomerate is dominated by a female mutant breeder.

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 unless they believe they have a very good chance of winning. They will not shy from war if their society, religion or race is in jeopardy.

Technology

Due to the nature of the Phalon home world (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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 home world. 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 bioelectricity.

The Phalons, more than any other species, 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.

Phalon vehicles use two primary modes of transportation. Most Phalon vehicles are of a "polypod" design. The bottom of the vehicle consists of hundreds, even thousands, of tiny tentacle-like appendages that spread out when in contact with the ground. These tentacles are a direct result of Phalon mastery of organic chemistry and electricity. The polypods are made of polymer plastics with piezoelectric memory. An electric current rapidly changes the shape of the polymer tentacle. Each tentacle is capable of 360° rotation, affording an incredible degree of motion and control.

The polypods spread the weight of the vehicle over a surface area equal to the dimensions of the bottom of the vehicle. This results in low ground pressure and incredible traction. Besides the traction benefits, Phalon polypod vehicles are very quiet. They behave much like human hovercraft and GEVs, but with far superior movement capability over rough terrain. Polypods offer some amphibious ability, by forming a curved lower surface to the vehicle. The vehicle floats on water and can move by paddling with some polypods or by way of a secondary propulsion source. The main drawback of the polypod design is a relatively slow speed.

To overcome the speed problem, the Phalons have been experimenting with anti-gravity propulsion. This technology is still in its infancy with the Phalons. Currently the only vehicle using the technology is the Phalon recon pod.

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.

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 attacked by two figures, shift the figure's quality die down 1. If a figure is attacked by three or more figures, shift its combat die down 2.

Example: A Veteran Phalon (D10 quality) squares 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

The Cross Training rules, below, are suggested for all *Stargrunt II* games. They are required for Phalons.

Phalon Specific *Stargrunt II* Rules

The following rules are required when using Phalons in your *Stargrunt II* games.

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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 on page 15 in the **Sample Phalon Organization** section.

Cross Training

General Rule

This rule is optional for human forces. This rule is *required* for Phalon forces.

If a squad is cross trained, any figure in the squad can use any weapon or piece of equipment assigned to that squad. This includes support weapons, Electronic Warfare equipment, medikits, Forward Artillery Observer sighting equipment, etc. Unless stated otherwise, assume human squads are cross trained. All Phalon units are cross trained.

Weapons and equipment may be recovered. "Recovering" applies to weapons and equipment picked up from figures that are untreated casualties, figures that were wounded, or figures that were killed. In order to recover equipment or weapons, a unit must perform a Reorganise action, and the unit must pass an Equipment Recovery Test (see **The Equipment Recovery Test** on page 10).

The Reorganise Action used to recover equipment can also be used for other purposes, such as bringing figures back into integrity range, creating a detached element, treating wounded figures, etc. This Reorganise action does *not* have to be used for anything other than weapon/equipment recovery, or it can be used for some other purposes and not others. For instance, you might want to use a Reorganise action to recover a support weapon from a wounded trooper, but you may not yet want to determine the status of the wounded trooper (you are waiting for a medic to join the squad before treating the squad's wounded). In this example you could use the Reorganise action only for the purpose of recovering the weapon.

Restriction: All troopers in a squad are cross-trained in the use of all equipment and weapons in that squad. Assume that troopers in one squad are cross-trained in the use of weapons and equipment in another squad *only* if both squads normally have the same weapon or piece of equipment.

Example: A platoon has a command squad consisting of the platoon leader, an NCO, an EW trooper, a SAW trooper, and four troopers with Advanced Assault Rifles. The platoon also has three regular squads with AARs and SAWs, and a Forward Artillery Observer team with AARs and FAO equipment. During play, the EW trooper and the SAW trooper in the command platoon are wounded. Any member of the command squad can attempt to recover either the EW unit or the SAW. Any regular squad can attempt to recover the SAW, but can not attempt to recover the EW equipment. This is because the squads do not regularly carry EW equipment, but they do carry SAWs. Likewise, the FAO team may *not* attempt to recover the SAW *nor* the EW equipment.

Exception 1: A scenario designer may declare any weapon or piece of equipment as cross trained by some or all squads in a scenario. For instance, a scenario designer may declare that all troopers are cross trained in the operation of SAWs, even if their squad or team wasn't issued a SAW. Assume that all troopers are cross trained in the standard weapon of that force, such as the Advanced Assault Rifle for most human armies.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

Exception 2: Snipers and other independent figures attached to a squad do not count for cross training purposes. For example, if a squad has a sniper attached to it, the sniper's weapon can not be recovered if the sniper is wounded, nor can the sniper recover the squad's special equipment or support weapons (unless the scenario designer allows it, as per exception 1, above).

Exception 3: Phalons are cross trained in all Phalon weapons and equipment.

The Equipment Recovery Test

An Equipment Recovery Test must be made for each weapon or piece of equipment being recovered. If the test succeeds, the equipment or weapon is recovered.

An Equipment Recovery Test is essentially identical to a Threat Level 2 Reaction Test. Roll the squad's Quality Die. The Equipment Recover Test succeeds if the die roll exceeds the sum of the squad's Leadership Value plus the Threat Level.

- If the Equipment Recovery Test succeeds, the wounded figure's weapon or piece of equipment may be given to another figure in the squad.
- If the Equipment Recovery Test fails, assume that no other trooper can figure out the weapon or piece of equipment, or that it was damaged, lost, out of ammunition, or in some other state such that it can not be used by another trooper. In the case of a failed Equipment Recovery Test, mark the wounded figure to show that its weapon or equipment can not be recovered.

Any number of Equipment Recovery Tests can be made per Reorganise action, though only one Equipment Recovery Test can be made per piece of equipment or weapon being recovered. If the Equipment Recovery Test fails, the figure is marked to show that the weapon or equipment can not be recovered.

The Equipment Recovery Test is made during a Reorganise action. The squad is still considered to have taken the Reorganise action even if all they were doing was attempting to recover equipment or weapons *and* the Equipment Recovery Test failed.

If a casualty figure is treated and he turns out to be okay, he can use his weapon or equipment even if a previous Equipment Recovery Test failed.

Troopers with small arms may keep their small arms when they recover a support weapon or piece of equipment. Troopers with one support weapon or piece of special equipment must discard it if they intend to use a different support weapon or piece of equipment.

Example: A Veteran/2 Phalon squad consists of a squad leader, a support pulser trooper, a plasma projector trooper, a missile trooper, and five pulser troopers. The support pulser trooper and the plasma projector trooper were wounded. The squad conducts a Reorganise action to recover the two support weapons. Since the squad's Leadership Value is a 2 and the squad is Veteran, the player must roll greater than a 4 on a D10 in order to recover the weapons. The player rolls a 4 for the support pulser and a 9 for the plasma projector. The support pulser trooper is marked to indicate that the support pulser is not recoverable. The plasma projector is recovered. If the wounded support pulser trooper has his wounds treated and he is okay, the support pulser can be used again. Otherwise, the support pulser can not be recovered.

Recovering Equipment Between Two Squads

Equipment and weapons can be recovered by a different squad as long as they follow the restriction listed above.

If recovering a weapon or piece of equipment from another squad, the squad attempting the recovery must conduct a Reorganise action. The casualty, wounded, or dead figure from the other squad must be within the integrity range of the squad attempting the recovery.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

To keep things simple, assume that in science fiction scenarios it is impossible to use weapons captured from the enemy. In historical games (such as World War II games), or if the scenario designer chooses for science fiction games, weapons may be recovered from an enemy casualty, or a wounded or dead enemy.

Phalon Confidence and Reaction

Phalons react to combat stress much like humans. However, 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 a 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. 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 one 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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test 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 may join squads, but they usually operate alone.

If a mutant breeder joins a squad it automatically become the squad's leader. Mutant breeders that join squads are classed as breeders for their effects on Confidence Tests. Mutant breeders are *not* immune to Phalon Mutiny.

Independent Phalon figures each carry a support pulser as their weapon.

There is rarely more than one of independent mutant breeder per 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. This does not shift their armour die type.

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. A "mixed unit" is a unit with both breeders and mules.

When attempting to enter Close Assault, 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 mule unit stands in place against a Close Assault charge, the mule 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 may *not* enter into close assault. If a mixed unit is the target of a close assault, the unit must make a normal Confidence Test (as there are breeders within 6" of the mules at the beginning of the attack, there is no die shift). If the test fails, the unit loses one or more Confidence Levels (as per the Confidence Test rules) and the unit retreats. If the test succeeds, the breeders automatically form a detachment and run away from the close assault

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

while the rest of the unit – consisting of the mules – stays behind and defends. If the test is passed, the unit does not lose Confidence.

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).

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: FP1, Impact D12; FP2, Impact D10; FP3, Impact D8. The default setting is FP2, Impact D10.

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: FP D12, Impact D6; FP D10, Impact D8; FP D8, Impact D10*. (The asterisk means that the weapon does double damage on a Major Success against point targets.) The default setting is FP D10, Impact D8.

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. These rockets are plasma based, but behave just like regular *Stargrunt II* IAVRs.

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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 FP2, Impact D10. The support pulsers are set to FP D10, Impact D8. Since there are more support pulsers than pulsers, the impact die would be D8.

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 pulser is set to FP D10, Impact D8, 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 D6, so the squad has a D6 impact.

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".
- Range Band size is the Base Range Band size x the target's size class.
- Impact Value Multiplier is the weapon's size class.
- Comes 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" on one side and "L-Pulser" on the other. 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:

- Base Impact Value is a D12.
- Base Range Band Size is 12".
- Impact Value multiplier is DOUBLE the weapon's size class.
- Comes in size classes 1 to 5.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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. 1. The heavy plasma projector can only be set in a fixed mount; it cannot be placed in a turret. 2. 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.

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. The main difference lies with the way their vehicles move.

Most Phalon vehicles use polypod technology. An array of myriad tentacle-like feet move the vehicle ("polypod" means "many feet"). The feet support the vehicle over a wide surface area, giving it the ability to move quietly over even rough terrain.

Polypod vehicles have the following Terrain Effects on Mobility:

Clear = Roads, Open, Light Scrub

Poor = Rough, Cultivated, Slopes

Difficult = Light Woods, Rivers/Streams, Open Water, Swamp

Impassable = Dense Woods

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 Phalon 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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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).

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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

Phalon APC

MOBILITY TYPE: Polypod

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 Tank

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

MOBILITY TYPE: Polypod

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: Painting Phalon Figures

Phalons don't wear uniforms, as such. Their skin is their uniform, and it can change colour, much like a terrestrial octopus or chameleon. As such, they can be painted pretty much any colour.

Jon Tuffley's trade stand samples are "painted a darkish orange-red". My own 25mm Phalons were primed in black, and "painted" with a cosmetic sponge technique in dark green and then brown.

Another option is to paint them the predominant colour of your tabletop terrain. If you have dark green trees, rust orange lichen and light green grass, use those colours. If you want the figures to stand out, paint them in colours that you do *not* use on your tabletop.

David Stuckey, a member of the Ground Zero Games Playtest List, suggests finding a good book on amphibia (frogs, toads, newts, salamanders) and use something in there as a guide. Such books can easily be found in your local library. In 1936, Karl Capek - a Czech science fiction author - wrote a book called *The War With The Newts*. The newts, as painted in Wayne Douglas Barlowe's book *Barlowe's Guide to Extraterrestrials*, have a muted blue-grey as their basic colour, with green and brown spots for camouflage. David also suggests that players look at South American Arrow frogs, which are black and orange.

Due to their ability to change colours, Phalons allow a wide range of options for players when it comes time to paint their figures. Be creative and have fun.

Part 4: 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.

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

- Phalons 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.
- Phalons 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.
- Phalons 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.
- Phalons have different races and different religions
- Phalons 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.
- Phalon 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".

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 to figure out how Phalons behave regarding 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 standpoint 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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 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 suggest 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 D6, then swing over to D8/D10* 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.

Phalons in Stargrunt II

Public Beta Test Rules

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 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 wanted them, so rules for them were included.

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 simply hasn't sculpted any yet. The other Phalon vehicles looked like they might be ground effect vehicles. David Stuckey suggested polypod movement for some sort of biotechnology driven race. I was leaning more toward polypods being used by the Sa'Vasku, but Oerjan Ariander thought that polypods were better utilized as a Phalon propulsion technology. This worked well, as it explained why the Phalons were starting to move toward anti-gravity technology.

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.