

Star Law Returns

A new look at a STAR FRONTIERS® agency

by Matt Bandy



Over the past year or so, Star Law has been the subject of much attention in the AREST™ Section. [See *DRAGON*® issues #87 and 91. – Editor] Some of these articles, however, seemed to sacrifice a bit of reality for the sake of playability. Star Law, as previously presented, is ideal for campaigns in which player characters are members of the organization, as PCs are granted more freedom of action as individual Rangers.

A law enforcement agency with the responsibilities of Star Law, managing an area the size of the Frontier, needs to be larger and more tightly organized. The Star Law agency presented here may be useful for campaigns in which player characters are not members of the force, so the lawmen of the Frontier serve as NPC encounters. Parts of this article may be incorporated into an ongoing STAR FRONTIERS® campaign as desired.

General information

Star Law was created during the First Sathar War as a counterintelligence agency, to check the Sathar espionage organization. After the war, when the Sathar retreated to lick their wounds, the number of enemy agents in the Frontier was reduced significantly; this left Star Law overstaffed. The United Planetary Federation (UPF) Security Council chose to take advantage of the situation by expanding the scope of Star Law's responsibilities to include the control of marauding pirate bands that had arisen in the Sathar's wake. At the present time, Star Law also intervenes in minor corporate skirmishes on occasion.

One of the provisions for membership in the UPF is that Star Law be allowed to carry out its duties on member planets and their territorial possessions without interference from their governments. It must, however, obtain warrants to search private property in situations not covered by the "hot pursuit" exception.

If the investigation of a suspected Sathar agent, escaped convict, or other

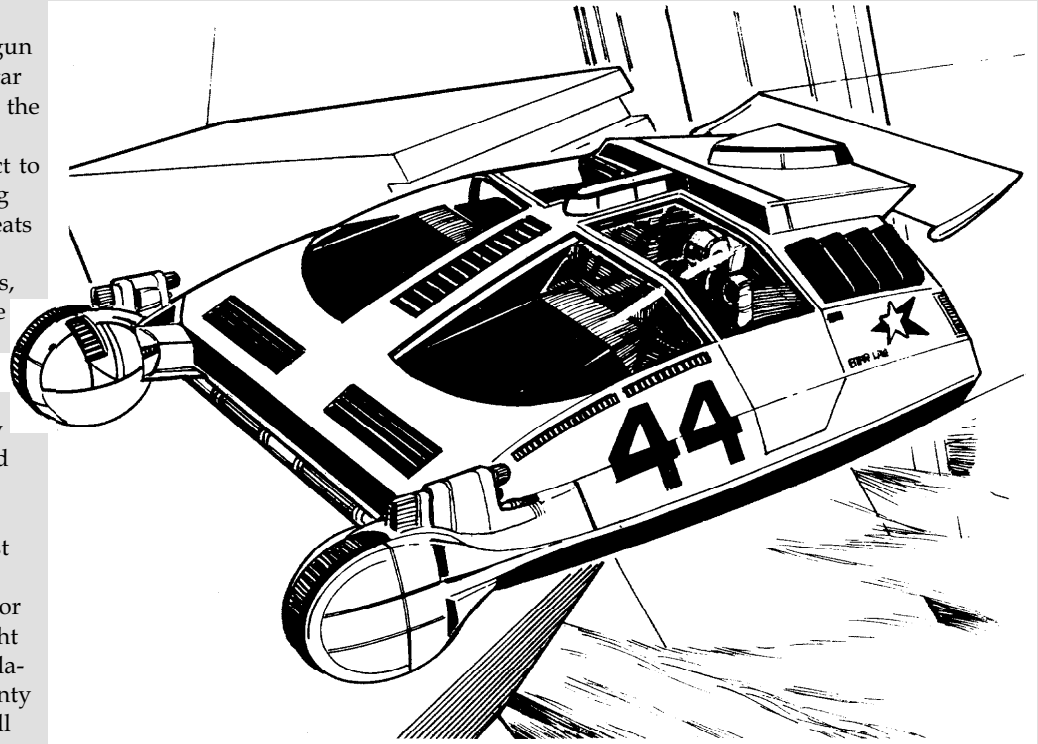
lawbreaker threatens to turn into a gun battle in a densely populated area, Star Lawmen are trained not to fire upon the suspect if there are innocent beings about. Agents must follow the suspect to a deserted area or arrange for getting innocents out of the line of fire. Threats against fugitives (in hopes of making them surrender) are generally useless, as most lawbreakers are aware of the limitations placed upon Star Law personnel by the regulations of their organization.

Freelance law enforcement (bounty hunting), without proper training and licensing, is not encouraged by Star Law. To obtain a bounty hunter's license, a character must have at least one 4th-level ranged-weapons skill. Bounties are almost never awarded for dead bodies; suspects must be brought to the proper authorities alive and relatively unharmed. Anyone with a bounty hunter's license may obtain a list of all beings wanted by Star Law and the rewards offered for their capture. Bounties are set by the referee.

The rarity of treason cases recorded within Star Law is due to the intense screening of Academy applicants. Any disobedience of orders is dealt with swiftly. Severe disobedience results in the offending party being relieved of duty and court martialed (the results of which are decided by the referee).

The Star Law Academy, located on Morgaine's World, offers one of the best educational programs in the Frontier Sector. In order to apply for admission, a being must complete a series of forms at a local Administrative-branch office and pass a personality check. The applicant must also have four ability traits higher than his or her racial average, and must never have been convicted of a criminal act. The applicant will be notified within two months of acceptance or rejection by the Academy, and must provide his own transportation there if accepted.

Once at the Academy, the being must select a PSA, if he hasn't already done so, and make a Logic check. Failure to make the check indicates that the being has washed out of the Academy. After four years of study, the cadet gains one 1st-level spaceship-related skill, one 2nd-level skill within his PSA, and one other 1st-level skill. All skills required in order to possess the spaceship-related skill chosen are also granted. After graduation, the being emerges at the lowest rank of his chosen branch, and is then posted on a planet of the referee's choice.



Organization

Star Law is split into four branches: Administrative, Penal Intelligence, and Special Forces. Each has its own responsibilities integral to the workings of the agency.

Administration coordinates the other branches of Star Law, organizes the information given over by them and by other law enforcement agencies, and recruits and trains agents in the Academy. Most Star Law offices which are open to the public are Administrative in nature; the whereabouts of other bases are generally kept out of public view.

The rank structure within the Administrative division is fairly simple. The Coordinator is in charge of the workings of the branch. It is not necessary to go into depth about the ranks within this branch, as PCs will not become heavily involved with it on most occasions. Some of the more important and most often encountered ranks are given below.

rank	xp needed	pay (Cr/day)
Coordinator	300	350
Department head	150	150
Data processor	0	100
Computer operator	0	80
Radio operator	0	60
Secretary	0	40

The Coordinator, as the head of the Star Law organization, answers to no

one but the UPF Security Council. There are three department heads within the Administrative branch, one for each of the other three Star Law branches. Each person reviews all ingoing and outgoing information of major importance, and personally handles all internal directives for his branch.

Data processors sort relevant information from irrelevant material. Any data deemed to be of importance is entered into the Administrative information pool. Computer operators are responsible for entering this data into computer systems and later retrieving it for persons who request it and possess the proper security clearance. Radio operators communicate with personnel on a particular planet or planets, taking information from them and giving orders to them; as no interstellar radio exists, radio operators (using the term "radio" loosely, to include other forms of electromagnetic communication as well) are grouped by planet, as are many computer operators. Secretaries, of course, are responsible for compiling appropriate reports, maintaining correspondence, filling out purchase orders and requisition sheets, and running accounting and payroll.

The **Penal** branch oversees the punishment of beings convicted of major felonies by UPF-member planets, through their judiciary systems. Only certain major felonies, such as mass murder, major arson, interstellar piracy, mass counterfeiting, espionage for unfriendly powers (such as the Sathar or Mechanons), nuclear or biochemical

extortion, kidnapping which involves murder, major industrial espionage (classed as a felony due to the widespread influence of corporations in the Frontier), treason, spacecraft or metropolitan sabotage with loss of life, assassination of law enforcement or government officials, and the like, are considered here. Sentences are rarely commuted after conviction, except in extraordinary circumstances, and parole is virtually unknown. It must be demonstrated that rehabilitation is not possible for the criminal in question. If death is the penalty for a crime, the prisoner is executed on the world where he was tried and convicted, and is not shipped to a penal colony. Sentences for penal colony inmates range from a minimum of 5 years to life.

Penal colonies are established by Star Law on uninhabited or sparsely populated worlds. The perimeter of a penal colony is lined with guard towers which project an energized field between them. This barrier is powerful enough to stun anyone touching it into unconsciousness, and it will disrupt the electrical field of any vehicle passing through it, causing the vehicle to stop (or crash, if it was in flight). Each tower (standing about 100-200 meters apart) is heavily equipped with laser weapons to discourage attempts by pirates and criminal gangs with starships or air cars to free prisoners. The guards themselves are heavily armed, and the entire compound is kept lit by ground and air light systems. It isn't uncommon to have a small town spring up a few kilometers from the prison, housing the prison officers and their families as well as all support personnel. A small military base, funded by a local government, may also be present.

The ranks and pay scales of penal officers follows.

<i>rank</i>	<i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i>	
Coordinator	350	300
Senior Warden	250	250
Junior Warden	150	150
Guard	0	150

The Coordinator is the top authority in the Penal branch of Star Law. A Senior Warden directs the activities at each of the penal colonies. Each Senior Warden is assisted by a number of Junior Wardens, each of whom supervises the staff and operations at a guard tower. Each tower has 2-4 guards. Academy graduates in the Penal branch of Star Law begin their tours of duty as guards.

Each penal colony has a reserve staff of 10-20 guards to replace those on leave or who are injured. Unit guards perform administrative duties when not serving directly as guards. The guards themselves are rotated from active (tower) duty to reserve (desk) duty once every 30-60 days.

In order to become a guard, one must graduate from the Academy with one technical skill and one ranged-weapons skill. To attain the status of a Junior Warden, a guard must acquire a 4th-level skill as a technician, for a Junior Warden pilots the air car assigned to his guard tower.

The Intelligence branch of Star Law is concerned with the gathering of information for the purpose of sniffing out Sathar agents (and other unfriendly spies). On occasions, the information is useful in preventing unwanted occurrences like a corporate war or smuggling operation. The ranks in the Intelligence branch of Star Law are as follows:

<i>rank</i>	<i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i>	
Coordinator	300	300
Deep-cover agents	150	200
Agents	0	150

The Coordinator runs the Intelligence branch of Star Law and answers only to the Administrative Coordinator and the UPF Security Council. Deep-cover agents are those who have been hypno-trained to know all there is to know about the organization that they are infiltrating, so they quickly arise to positions of authority. They may spend years developing their cover and will be reluctant to jeopardize their missions.

An agent is a generic operative of the Intelligence branch and must have a 2nd-level skill as a computer operator. In the course of normal duties, an agent may be called upon to perform a breaking-and-entering mission or interrogate prisoners.

Star Law is believed to have several deep-cover agents in every major organization in the Frontier, though it has been estimated that only 200 such agents exist in all. Typically, the number of agents is related to the population level of a world, though in systems such as Outer Reach, the number is proportionately higher.

The Special Forces is the largest branch of Star Law, and is responsible for nullifying the activities of pirate bands in the Frontier Sector. Ranks for Special Forces are as follows:

<i>rank</i>	<i>xp needed pay (Cr/day)</i>	
Coordinator	400	300
Marshall	300	260
Captain	200	220
Lieutenant	150	180
Sergeant	75	140
Trooper	0	100

The Coordinator is the Supreme Commander of the Special Forces branch. Thirteen marshalls are in existence, each commanding two captains. A captain is in charge of two lieutenants; each lieutenants are in charge of two sergeants, and each sergeant is in charge of five Troopers (fresh from the Academy). The term "Ranger" is a generic designation for all Star Law personnel in Special Forces.

Special Forces uniforms are gray skeinsuits with blue marking to denote rank and deployment; dress uniforms are dark blue with red markings. Typical armament for a Ranger includes a laser pistol, a stunstick, and a belt pack with two power clips each. Extra weaponry is assigned to the Rangers as befits individual missions. Rangers are organized into strike forces, battalions, squads, and units, as follows:

<i>force</i>	<i>commander</i>	<i>assigned spacecraft</i>
Strike Force	Marshall	2 frigates
Battalion	Captain	1 frigate
Squad	Lieutenant	2 assault scouts
Unit	Sergeant	1 assault scout

Planets are assigned different organizational groups depending upon their needs and populations. An outpost world might receive only one unit, while a moderately populated world might host a battalion. About 50 personnel are assigned to Morgaine's World as staff and security elements for Star Law Academy.

A unit must include at least one Ranger with each of the spaceship skills. All Special Forces personnel must be accomplished in at least one technical and one military skill area.

Equipment assigned to planetary stations includes one vehicle, usually an aircar fitted with a heavy weapon, a small arsenal, and a spacecraft. Other equipment, such as toolkits, are supplied to each individual Ranger.

These variations on the Star Law organization are offered as an aid to game play, and may be altered as desired. Hopefully, they will serve as an alternative or supplement to the previous articles on the subject.