

# STARGRAVE

## QUARANTINE 37



JOSEPH A. McCULLOUGH





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SCIENCE FICTION WARGAMES IN THE RAVAGED GALAXY

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**Joseph A. McCullough** is the author of several non-fiction books including *A Pocket History of Ireland*, *Zombies: A Hunter's Guide*, and *Dragonslayers: From Beowulf to St. George*. In addition, his fantasy short stories have appeared in various books and magazines such as *Black Gate*, *Lords of Swords*, and *Adventure Mystery Tales*. He is also the creator of *Frostgrave* and *Frostgrave: Ghost Archipelago*, and co-wrote *The Grey Mountains*, a supplement for the *Middle-Earth Role-Playing Game*. His continued ramblings can be read at: [therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk](http://therenaissancetroll.blogspot.co.uk)



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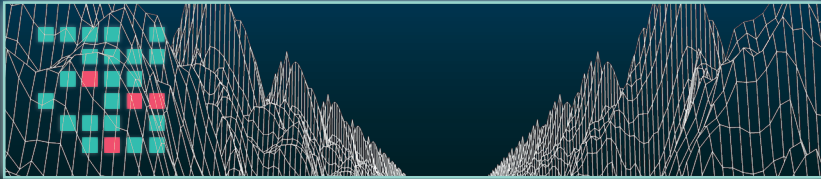
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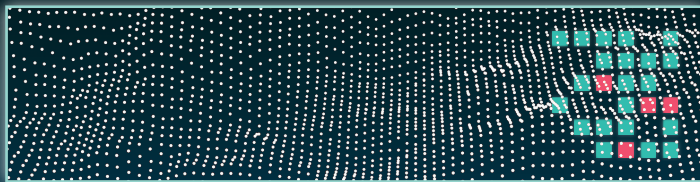


## INCOMING TRANSMISSION



At the time of its commission, Imperial Research Station 37 held nearly ten-thousand scientists and researchers, working on a vast array of biological and chemical projects. Then, six-months before the outbreak of the Last War, Station 37 went dark. There were no distress messages. No escape pods were launched. Only a solitary, repeating broadcast filled the silence, 'This station is under quarantine. Do not approach'.

When the Last War came, the station was forgotten, left to drift lifelessly in its empty system. Now, with the war over and independent crews roaming the ruins, the station has been rediscovered. Although the station must clearly be approached with caution, the technology it contains is worth many fortunes...





# INTRODUCTION

For me, wargames have always been less about competition and more about using miniatures, terrain, and dice to recreate the feeling I get when watching a great adventure movie or reading an action-packed novel. I tend to get into my games by adding sound effects for laser blasts and explosions. I like to shout orders and make garbled radio messages that usually end with a scream right before the signal goes dead. If my miniature is pushed off a high tower, I make sure that I send them screaming to the ground before I remove them from the table. If that's all a bit childish, so be it. I'm playing a game with little toy soldiers after all and, more importantly, I'm having fun.

Even before I finished work on the rulebook for *Stargrave*, I knew what I wanted to cover in the first supplement. My favourite science fiction stories have always been the ones that blended into horror. I love stories where the small group is trapped somewhere, hunted by some unstoppable killer, or besieged on all sides by an army of ravenous creatures. It's the basic plot to *Aliens*, *The Thing*, *Predator*, *Pitch Black*, and about every third episode of *Doctor Who*. The more I thought about this idea, the more excited I became. There was just one problem. I couldn't decide on what the main threat should be for the supplement. At first, I was sure I was going to use 'alien bugs', but then I decided I should go with 'plague zombies'.

I went back and forth for a while because each threat brings their own nuance to the table. Zombies, individually, aren't particularly scary opponents, especially against a soldier with a plasma carbine, but their numbers are always limitless and their slow advance seems inevitable. Zombies also present a unique horror – they are the shambling manifestation of their own threat. They are death walking and serve as a mirror for the fate of all who look upon them. No matter how many you kill, no matter how many lucky escapes you make, eventually, death will catch you.

Alien bugs, on the other hand, are individually scary. They are all teeth and claws and spiky tails. Their numbers may or may not be limitless, but that hardly seems to matter when the one right in front of you can tear you in half. Unlike zombies that will pound on a locked door forever, trying to get at their prey, alien bugs are cunning. They will find other ways into the room, they will lay traps, they will wait patiently in the ducts, under the floor, or clinging to the ceiling. Their terror comes from their ability to strike at any moment and from their complete and utter lack of humanity. Human concepts such as empathy, mercy, and pity mean nothing to them. They cannot be bribed or trained. We can never truly understand them, because they don't even 'think' in the way we understand the term.



You see my problem? They're both just such good antagonists for games of military science fiction horror, how could I choose one over the other? In the end, I didn't. Instead, I decided I would include both threats in the book. Imperial Research Station 37 is a massive structure that hosted all kinds of weird and dangerous research. I figure it has more than enough room for zombies and alien bugs. It just all depends on which of the airlocks you enter through!

So that brings us directly to the heart of this supplement, eight competitive scenarios of science fiction horror. Four of those scenarios form a mini-campaign where the independent crews venture deep into the station before they are surrounded by a horde of zombies. Then they must fight their way to freedom – while battling other independent crews for any loot they pass along the way. Four more scenarios form another mini-campaign, in which the crews unknowingly venture into the territory of alien bugs. This results in a running fight in which the crews are slowly herded deeper into bug territory, until they finally come face-to-tooth-filled-face with the alien queen!

As I worked on these scenarios, I realized how good this topic is for playing alone in a dimly lit room. So, I took four of the scenarios, two from each of the campaigns, modified them for solo-play, and mashed them together into a campaign. While these solo scenarios, and the rules presented with them, aren't meant to be a comprehensive guide to solo play, they should be enough to get your started.





Beyond the scenarios, there are lots of other bits and pieces found in this book that players might want to add to their games. There are two new backgrounds, the Aristocrat and the Hunter, that players can use for their captains and first mates, and some new powers that relate directly to these backgrounds (but that can be taken by anyone). There are also some new soldiers that can be recruited to join the independent crews. There is a whole table full of new Advanced Technology that the crews can potentially recover from the derelict station, and, of course, a bunch of zombies and bugs in the bestiary!

As I said at the start of this introduction, for me, wargaming is about capturing the feel of those heart-pounding movies and books. The rules exist to aid in that pursuit. If any rule found here, or anywhere, detracts from that experience, please feel free to change it or drop it all together. In the same vein, don't be shy about creating your own rules to capture some aspect of storytelling you really love. The more you personalize the game, the more you will enjoy it.

Thanks for picking up the first supplement for *Stargrave: Science Fiction Wargames in the Ravaged Galaxy*. I hope it gives you some great adventures, some memorable moments, and many excuses to add in the sounds of explosions, rapid gunfire, and alien shrieks. If so, please share your stories with us online on the *Stargrave* Facebook page, or any of the other great gaming sites.

Finally, a huge thanks to everyone for their continued support of my games. Without you guys, I wouldn't have the time, or near as much motivation, to keep exploring strange, new worlds and to see how far I can push my game designs. I appreciate it.

If you would like to see what I'm up to hobby-wise, and keep up to date on my games, please check out my blog: <http://therenaissancetroll.blogspot.com>.



