



Players' Guide to **TWILIGHT: 2000** (version 1.0 and version 2.2)

Role-Playing in the Aftermath of World War III

*Basic information about the **Twilight: 2000** role-playing game system.*

The 1980's were a time of apprehension. With the Soviet Union a super-power co-equal with the United States in world affairs, the globe was locked in a Cold War (and had been since the end of World War II): neither side dared escalate their conflict beyond minor border skirmishes and regional wars. Yet each side maintained massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons as deterrents to World War, and with the associated danger that they would someday use them.

President Ronald Reagan's address to the House of Commons set the tone:

“If history teaches anything, it teaches self-delusion in the face of unpleasant facts is folly. We see around us today the marks of our terrible dilemma-- predictions of doomsday, anti-nuclear demonstrations, an arms race in which the West must, for its own protection, be an unwilling participant. At the same time we see totalitarian forces in the world who seek subversion and conflict around the globe to further their barbarous assault on the human spirit. What, then, is our course? Must civilization perish in a hail of fiery atoms? Must freedom wither in a quiet, deadening accommodation with totalitarian evil?”

President Ronald Reagan
Speech to the House of Commons
June 8, 1982

It was in this pervasive atmosphere of fear of impending doom that **Twilight: 2000** burst on the role-playing scene at Thanksgiving, November 26, 1984. Traditionally, the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas period was the highest game sales period of the year, and game publisher GDW worked hard to ensure that their new game would be available by Thanksgiving. To make a strong announcement of the game's availability, GDW ran three full-color pages in **Dragon Magazine**; they appeared for November.

The response was gratifying. The initial **Twilight: 2000** boxed game print-run of 10,635 was exhausted by March and another print run of 10,000 was ordered for April.



THE CHALLENGE OF MILITARY ROLE-PLAYING

Serious role-playing games are built around drama, and there is no situation more dramatic than that of a soldier in wartime, so you might think the military is a natural setting for role-playing. However, RPGs work best in anarchic situations--- where the player characters are their own bosses--- and, in the army, discipline and coordinated group action are the keys to success. To get around this, the most successful military RPGs have settings where small groups can act with a large degree of autonomy, on commando raids, during guerilla warfare, or (most popular of all) after civilization has broken down due to holocaust or invasion.

The first attempt at military role-playing was Eric Goldberg's **Commando** (SPI, 1979), which was primarily a board game of small-unit combat that had some role-playing features. The first version of **The Morrow Project** (Timeline, 1980) was also mainly a set of combat rules, but the designers were perceptive enough to set it in a post-holocaust future where the players could have freedom of action. This was also the case with **Aftermath** (Fantasy Games Unlimited, 1981), a game of paramilitary survival after a nuclear war.

These were followed by **Behind Enemy Lines** (FASA, 1982), a World War II game; **Recon** (RPG Inc., 1982), set on the fringes of the Vietnam War; and **Merc** (Fantasy Games Unlimited, 1983), which tried to capitalize on the brief public fascination with mercenary soldiers fighting in Third-World nations. None of these games met with sustained success. It looked as there might not really be a steady market for military RPGs until GDW released Frank Chadwick's **Twilight: 2000** in 1984. Once again the setting was after civilization was shattered by World War III, but this time background was more believable and worked out in great detail. The rules were unexciting but solid, and GDW supported them with a steady stream of scenarios and supplements that catered to players' fascination with modern military machinery. Other contemporary military systems debuted in 1986 (**The Price of Freedom**, West End Games; **Phoenix Command**, Leading Edge Games; **Delta Force**, Task Force Games; **Freedom Fighters**, Fantasy Games Unlimited), but none have been able to make much headway against **Twilight: 2000**, which recently [1988] received a complete updating and revision.

Lawrence Schick

Heroic Worlds,

A History and Guide to Role-Playing Games,

Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books 1991

Game Designers' Workshop began to make a name for itself in modern military wargames with the introduction, in 1983, of its **Assault** tactical wargame series (consisting of **Assault**, **Boots & Saddles**, **Chieftain**, and **Reinforcements**). **Assault** dealt with the capabilities of small units and individual armored vehicles in the modern (World War III) military environment. Close on its heels (early 1984) came the **Third World War** strategic wargame series (consisting of **Third World War**, **Arctic Front**, **Southern Front**, and **Persian Gulf**), laying out all of Europe in consistent scale maps in four different games. **Third World War** dealt with the strategic operations of military units in a hypothetical, but genuinely possible, World War III.



Is it any wonder that board game publisher GDW turned its attention to a military role-playing game? Initially, Frank Chadwick's design concepts envisioned extreme environments with features of Mel Gibson's **Mad Max** and Andre Norton's **Star Man's Son**. Unfortunately, such concepts were already common (and not especially successful) to the market place. The breakthrough came on a long drive back from the Origins Game Convention (Dallas, 1983). In an overloaded rental van, Frank Chadwick, Loren Wiseman, Bill Keith, and Andrew Keith talked for hours about a modern military role-playing game which concentrated on equipment and realistic military situations, and by the end of the trip the concept for **Twilight: 2000** was far enough along for specific design to begin in earnest.



THE TWILIGHT: 2000 CONCEPT

Five years ago, the nations of the world began their war for global supremacy.

Three years ago, a massive nuclear exchange failed to give any side the decisive advantage they sought.

One year ago, the US Fifth Infantry Division launched a drive into enemy-held Poland, part of an offensive to knock the Soviets back to their homeland.

It failed. Now the Red Diamond is deep in enemy territory, reduced to small units without support, supply, or reinforcement. The war for Europe has turned into the war for survival.

Now what?

GDW presents a new concept in role-playing. World War III began five years ago. It's still going on, but that's the least of your problems. A few days ago, you were soldiers in the U.S. 5th Division. Now you're just fighting to survive while the world falls apart around you.

Welcome to 2000 AD. Your equipment was brand new in 1995; now it's wearing out. Gasoline is rare, so your vehicles run on alcohol you distill yourself. And 5th Division's cavalry—when there was a 5th Division—rode horses. There's not much government left in central Europe, just warlords, marauders, and free cities. Even the major powers are collapsing; some units, even whole divisions, are refusing orders and heading home.

Your division is gone, and you're hundreds of kilometers inside enemy territory; fortunately, the Soviets aren't in much better shape than you are.

Your job is to stay alive, find enough fuel and spare parts to keep moving, get home (wherever that is), and maybe even strike at the enemy.

The real trick in designing a role-playing game is to produce detailed, accurate effects with simple systems. That takes inspiration and a lot of work, and that's what we did. **Twilight: 2000's** comprehensive rules cover combat, skills, survival, encounters, and more with easy-to-use and flexible but well-defined systems.



Canon. noun. A body of rules or principles generally accepted as authoritative and fundamental in a field or art or philosophy: for example, "the neoclassical canon"; "canons of polite society."

THE TWILIGHT: 2000 CANON

The canon (the “official” texts for the **Twilight: 2000** role-playing game) consists of the rules, adventures, and sourcebooks published by Game Designers' Workshop, either directly or through **Challenge Magazine**. A few select materials have become apocryphal (that is, contemporaneous, but not quite official): **City of Angels** (3W), and three Finnish language **Twilight: 2000** modules, **Erikoisjoukot**, **Pohjoismaat**, and **Kööpenhaminaan!** (FGH).

Twilight: 2000 has three authoritative game rules systems. Version 1.0 is the original rules set (1984) associated with stock numbers in the 500 series. Version 2.0 is the revision (circa 1988) associated with stock numbers in the 2000 series. In an effort to enhance compatibility between game systems, GDW ultimately produced Version 2.2 (1991) which conformed to the GDW “house” system which made it compatible with the **Traveller: The New Era** game system.

TWILIGHT: 2000 Version 1

0500 v1.0 Boxed Set	97,518
0501 Free City of Krakow	33,037
0502 Pirates of the Vistula	20,186
0503 Ruins of Warsaw	20,367
0504 US Army Vehicle Guide	35,170
0505 The Black Madonna	13,220
0506 Going Home	16,184
0507 Red Star, Lone Star	15,183
0508 RDF Sourcebook	15,360
0509 Armies of the Night	9,972
0510 Allegheny Uprising	10,195
0511 Airlords of the Ozarks	10,011
0512 Gateway to the Spanish Main	10,172
0513 King's Ransom	10,219
0514 Soviet Vehicle Guide	20,320
0515 Urban Guerilla	10,150
0516 Small Arms Guide	21,150
0517 The Last Submarine	10,500
0518 Kidnapped	10,586
0519 Howling Wilderness	10,300
0520 Mediterranean Cruise	10,100
0521 Boomer	10,000
0522 Satellite Down	11,250
0523 Return to Warsaw	6,300
0524 Bear's Den	7,275
0525 Heavy Weapons Guide	10,200
0526 NATO Vehicle Guide	10,500
0527 White Eagle	5,100
0528 Survivors' Guide to the UK	7,110
0551 Last Battle	8,063
0552 Twilight Encounters	6,030

TWILIGHT: 2000 Version 2

2000 V2.0 Rules (includes 7,757 v2.2)	39,937
2001 V2.0 Boxed Set	5,240
2002 Infantry Weapons	14,743
2003 US Vehicle Guide	10,237
2004 Soviet Vehicle Guide v2	12,240
2005 Merc: 2000	10,073
2006 Bangkok	5,000
2007 NATO Vehicle Guide v2	7,000
2008 Merc Gazetteer	7,544
2009 Nautical and Aviation Handbook	9,940
2010 Twilight Nightmares	7,113
2011 Heavy Weapons Handbook	10,323
2012 Special Operations	7,572
2014 Castle by the Sea	5,000
2015 Referee's Screen	7,219
2016 Operation Crouching Dragon	5,000
2017 Eastern Europe Sourcebook	4,100
2018 Rendezvous in Krakow	4,450
2019 Death on the Vistula (unpublished)	0
2020 Warsaw Phoenix (unpublished)	0

THE APOCRYPHA

5401 City of Angels	2,000
0101 Erikoisjoukot (= Special Units)	1,000
0102 Pohjoismaat (= Scandinavia)	1,000
0103 Kööpenhaminaan! (= Copenhagen)	1,000
0000 Twilight: 2000 (Paragon) (computer)	23,730

These listings include stock number, title, and total units printed (and theoretically sold). Data was taken from printing records (GDW-published material) and royalty reports (3W and FGH).



COMPARING THE MODULES

The published **Twilight: 2000** modules were rated in a survey of 42 players and owners who were asked to rate each module on a scale from 1 to 10 (10 is best). No specific criteria were specified; the assumed criteria being "general satisfaction." The responses were tabulated to create a set of uniform ratings for the modules.

Normed Ratings: Some respondents clustered their ratings in the 7-8-9 range; others used the entire range of values from 1 to 10. To account for these differences, each set of responses was "normed." Each respondent's ratings were averaged. Responses above average were re-stated in equal one-fifth increments between average and 10, and responses below average were restated in equal one-fifth increments between 1 and average. For example, "John's" ratings averaged 8. That 8 is normed to 5, and all 9's become 7.5 and all 10's become 10. "Bill's" ratings averaged 4. That 4 is normed to 5 and all 5's become 5.8, all 6's become 6.6, all 9's become 9.1, and all 10's remain 10. Average rated modules are shown here as 5's: their highest rated modules are similarly high, their lowest rated modules are similarly low. Zero or no response ratings were ignored.

For the entire range of modules shown, a normed 5 is the equivalent of a raw 7.36. If one new rating of 10.0 for a module were to be received, the ranking would be increased by approximately 0.15. If one new rating of 1.0 were to be received, the ranking would be decreased by approximately 0.15.

Interpreting These Results. Any rating less than 5 is below average. By definition, half of all modules are below average. For example, *Rendezvous in Krakow* (3.3) received the lowest rating of the group; its raw average rating was 4.0. *RDF Sourcebook* (7.9) received the highest rating of the group; its raw average rating was 9.0.

No.	Title	Rating	No.	Title	Rating
0508	RDF Sourcebook	7.37	0000	Average Module	5.00
0506	Going Home	6.65	2005	Merc: 2000	4.98
0514	Soviet Vehicle Guide	6.36	2009	Nautical Aviation Handbook	4.97
0501	Free City of Krakow	6.31	2010	Twilight Nightmares	4.97
0500	v1.0 Boxed Set	6.30	0524	Bear's Den	4.95
0528	Survivors' Guide UK	6.21	0517	The Last Submarine	4.95
0519	Howling Wilderness	6.17	0520	Mediterranean Cruise	4.90
2001	v2.0 Boxed Set	5.84	0525	Heavy Weapons Guide	4.87
0526	NATO Vehicle Guide	5.75	0513	King's Ransom	4.77
0504	US Army Vehicle Guide	5.72	0522	Satellite Down	4.66
2008	Merc Gazetteer	5.67	0518	Kidnapped	4.65
0521	Boomer	5.64	0551	Last Battle	4.62
0515	Urban Guerilla	5.58	0510	Allegheny Uprising	4.59
5401	City of Angels (by 3W)	5.54	0503	Ruins of Warsaw	4.52
0512	Gateway to Spanish	5.49	2015	Referee's Screen	4.35
2012	Special Operations	5.47	0552	Twilight Encounters	4.16
2003	American Vehicle Guide	5.44	0523	Return to Warsaw	4.03
2017	Eastern Europe SB	5.41	2016	Operation Crouching	3.90
0505	The Black Madonna	5.40	0527	White Eagle	3.77
2011	Heavy Weapons Handbook	5.38	2014	Castle by the Sea	3.60
0509	Armies of the Night	5.37	2018	Rendezvous in Krakow	3.41
0511	Airlords of the Ozarks	5.36	2019	Death on the Vistula (unpublished)	0.00
2002	Infantry Weapons	5.23	2020	Warsaw Phoenix (unpublished)	0.00
2004	Soviet Vehicle Guide v2	5.23			
2007	NATO Vehicle Guide v2	5.15			
2006	Bangkok	5.14			
0516	Small Arms Guide	5.09			
2000	v2.2 Rule Book	5.09			
0502	Pirates of the Vistula	5.07			
0507	Red Star, Lone Star	5.04			



THE DESIGNERS

Twilight: 2000 was a continuing game design project within Game Designers' Workshop. Work began in earnest 1983, with the first title published in 1984. The last title in the **Twilight: 2000** series (**East European Sourcebook**) was published in 1994. Over that decade, primary responsibility for the game system lay with designer Frank Chadwick, while designer/developer Loren Wiseman handled day-to-day development and continuity.

Frank Chadwick was the lead and system designer for **Twilight: 2000**.

Chadwick, a founding partner in Game Designers' Workshop, established his reputation as a designer producing complex, detailed wargames in the 1970's. At a time, when SPI (Simulations Publication, Inc.) dominated the market for military simulations, Chadwick did them one better... designing games that were more complex, more detailed, and better researched. His design talent shaped the massive Europa Series, reproducing World War II at the division level and below. His fascination with historical warfare led him to design games on topics no one had previously explored: **Torgau, Crimea, and Guilford Courthouse**. He pioneered role-playing with the innovative **En Garde!** He dominated modern military wargames with his **Assault** and **Third World War** game systems.

In 1991, he authored the best-selling **Desert Shield Fact Book**, and later, the **Gulf War Fact Book**.

Frank has designed over 60 published historical games, and has received over 30 awards for excellence in game design. He has appeared as a military commentator on CNN. He is a founder and past president of the Game Manufacturers Association (GAMA). In 1989, he was inducted into the Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame in 1989.



William H. Keith, Jr. was a major writer/designer for the **Twilight: 2000** system.

Keith was literally "present at the creation;" he was in the rental van with fellow designers Chadwick and Wiseman when the initial concepts for the game system were hammered out.

Keith started out as an illustrator, producing hundreds of classic and iconic images for the **Traveller** role-playing game system. He is (today; 2004) an award-winning novelist, with more than sixty books published or on the way (and ranging from science fiction to action-adventure to military techno-thrillers).

But in the years in between, he was a game designer. His role-playing game **Behind Enemy Lines** won the 1982 H.G. Wells Award for Best Role-Playing Game. He wrote 8 of the 32 **Twilight: 2000** modules.

Loren Wiseman was the designer responsible for continuing development of the **Twilight: 2000** series.

Wiseman, a founding partner in Game Designers' Workshop, developed virtually every **Twilight: 2000** module, and wrote eight of them. He was also editor of the **Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society** and its successor **Challenge Magazine**.

His role-playing module **Going Home**, won the 1986 H.G. Wells Award for Best Role-playing Adventure.





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CHALLENGE MAGAZINE TWILIGHT: 2000 ARTICLES

Challenge Magazine had its origins in the **Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society**, created in 1979 to support the **Traveller** science-fiction role-playing game system. By the time **JTAS** had reached issue 24, GDW's role-playing lineup had expanded to include **Twilight: 2000**, and so the **Journal** was transformed into **Challenge Magazine**. **Challenge** concentrated on GDW published materials, but deliberately included coverage of games by other publishers.

Challenge, in recognition of its roots in the **Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society**, continued its issue numbers in sequence from the **Journal**; its first issue was No. 25. It continued through No. 77 (an Issue 78 was planned but never published).

Shown here are all **Challenge Magazine** articles for the **Twilight: 2000** role-playing game system. Each reference includes Title, Author (last name first), and Issue-Page Number.

- A Little Recon Mission, Riegel, Paul T, 58-06
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Who We Are...

Once upon a time, Game Designers' Workshop produced award-winning wargames and role-playing games. In fact, they produced an average of one new title every 22 days for 22 years. They won every major award for design excellence, and inducted two of their designers (Frank Chadwick and Marc Miller) and one of their RPG systems (**Traveller**) into the Adventure Gaming Hall of Fame. GDW closed its doors in 1996.



Far Future Enterprises, established in 1996, is the successor to GDW and publishes in reprint format some (but not all) of the game systems which originated with GDW. FFE published the **Classic Traveller** reprint series, the **Classic Twilight: 2000** reprint series, and is preparing the **Classic 2300 AD** reprint series.