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STAR BLAZERS

THE MAGAZINE OF SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO



ICARUS
Part 2 of 3





Based on *Space Battleship Yamato*
created by Yoshinobu Nishizaki and Leiji Matsumoto

Published by Argo Press
a division of
Voyager Entertainment, Inc.

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FROM THE CAPTAIN'S DESK

Welcome, one and all!

The biggest news this issue comes not from within our own pages, but those of Hollywood's *Daily Variety*. The following press release was published there on Wednesday, June 5, 1996:

'BLAZERS suits Disney'

Rights to the Japanese cartoon serial "Star Blazers" have been acquired for a live-action feature film by Walt Disney Studios, studio execs confirmed Friday. Disney inked the deal with Josh Kline of TAE Productions, who will produce the project, and New Jersey-based Voyager Entertainment, Inc.

Voyager's Tokyo office originally developed and produced the animated TV series, which aired in Japan in the late 1970s and in the U.S. in the early 80s, about warriors of the future aboard a WWII battleship retrofitted for space duty. The two main characters are an aging captain and his young protege.

The deal encompasses all areas, including merchandising, licensing, and TV. Howard Abramson of Behr and Abramson negotiated the deal on behalf of TAE with Disney senior VP of production Bernie Goldman and creative exec Matt Bierman. Terms were not disclosed.

-Rex Weiner

All of us here at Voyager Entertainment are very excited and pleased at the prospect of *Star Blazers* up on the big screen. Given the advances that have taken place recently in the area of special effects, not to mention the high production values of American science fiction films in general, a *Star Blazers* motion picture should be dazzling to say the least!

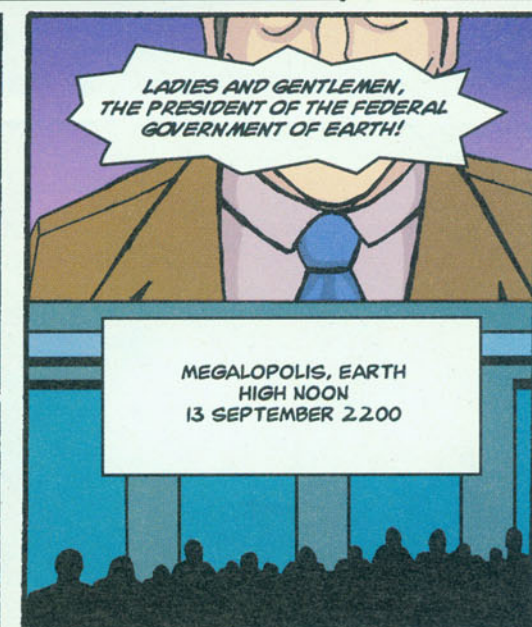
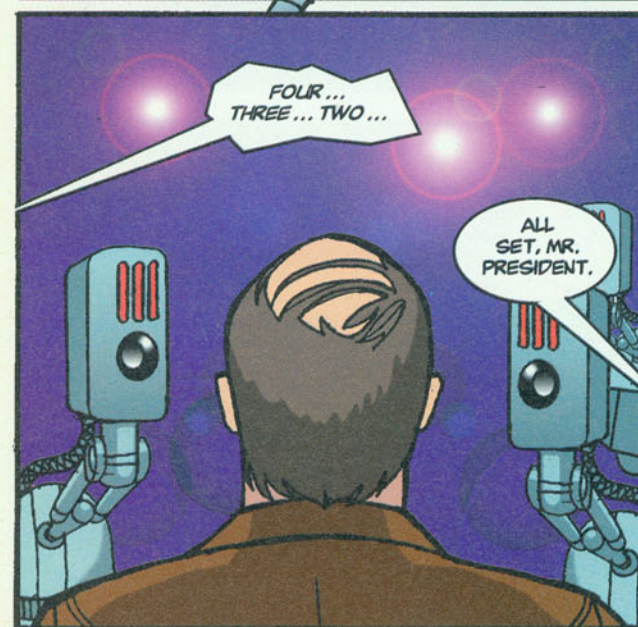
Needless to say, all the latest news and information on the cinematic *Star Blazers* will appear here as it happens!

Meanwhile, the second chapter of *Icarus* begins on the very next page. As this is the first new *Star Blazers* story to appear in many years, we are anxious to know what you think of it. Please send your comments to us at the address listed to the left of this column.

And don't miss another of our high points for the issue, a very special look at the creation of the first *Yamato* series by its famous director, Leiji Matsumoto!

Barry Winston
Publisher

Special note: the *Star Blazers Introductory Pack*, as described last issue, was not published in July as promised. We have decided to postpone the release of this product, which will contain a specially-priced video and a new issue of the comic book, until later this year. More details next issue!



FELLOW CITIZENS OF EARTH — I AM TANAKA RYU, ACTING PRESIDENT UNTIL PRESIDENT FUJIMORI'S RECOVERY FROM HIS CONTINUING ILLNESS.

AS RADIATION FROM THE GAMILON BOMBARDMENT IS REACHING DEADLY LEVELS, WE ARE GATHERED TO WITNESS EARTH'S LAST HOPE FOR RECOVERY ...

OR THE END OF THE WORLD.

SHHH! THIS IS IT!

DR. SANDOR AND HIS TEAMMATES ABOARD THE YAMATO REPORT THAT THE COSMO DNA IS READY TO BE ACTIVATED. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT...

ALL STATIONS LINKED IN. POWER LOOKS GOOD ... GRAV WAVE SYNC LOOKS GOOD. FORTY SECONDS TO ACTIVATION!

"... THE ONE THING WE DARE NOT DO IS GIVE UP HOPE, MY FELLOW CITIZENS ..."

WELL, ROYSTER, YOU WANTED EXCITEMENT!

YES, SANDOR. BUT THIS ISN'T WHAT I HAD IN MIND BACK AT THE RECRUITING OFFICE!

YAMATO, THIS IS ZERO FLIGHT! WE'RE COMING UP ON YOU NOW! CAMERAS AND SENSORS ARE RUNNING! GOOD LUCK, SANDOR!

THANKS, WILDSTAR!

EARTH'S SURFACE NEAR THE UNDERGROUND DOCKS...

POWER LINK TO COSMO DNA IS UP ... LEVELS GOOD ...

SHE'S READY, SANDOR!

OKAY, ROYSTER! BEGIN ENERGIZING PRIMARY WAVE COILS AND STAND BY!

YOU KNOW IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, THEY'RE GOING TO HANG US, SANDOR!

I CERTAINLY HOPE SO, ROYSTER. I CERTAINLY HOPE SO.

"...WHAT HAPPENS THEN, NO ONE CAN SAY!"

ALL STATIONS, THIS IS SANDOR! SLAVE ALL SYSTEMS TO THIS STATION AND PREPARE FOR ACTIVATION!

"... BECAUSE WHERE THERE IS HOPE, THERE'S LIFE ..."

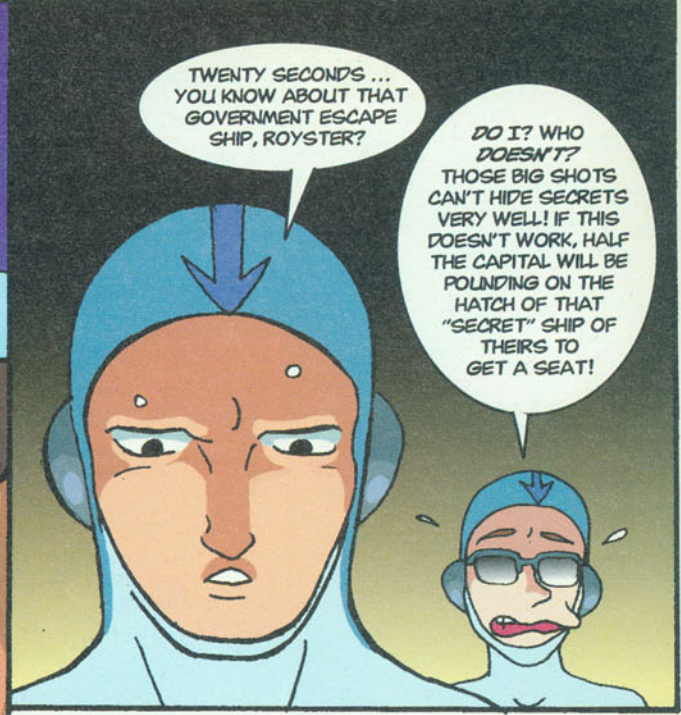
BIO CRYO 13

AVATAR 000906

ASTRA 000801



YAMATO REPORTS THAT THEY ARE READY TO PROCEED. THIS IS APPARENTLY THE MOMENT WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR. I ASK YOU ALL TO FOLLOW QUEEN STARSHA'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND IMAGINE OUR MOTHER EARTH A LIVING PLANET ONCE MORE!



TWENTY SECONDS ... YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT GOVERNMENT ESCAPE SHIP, ROYSTER?

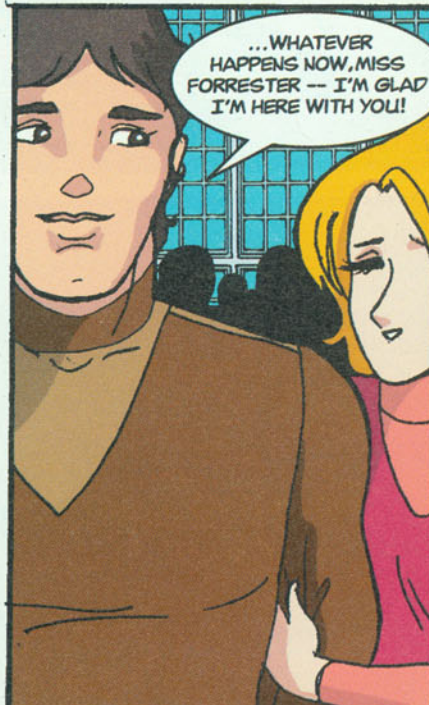
DO I? WHO DOESN'T? THOSE BIG SHOTS CAN'T HIDE SECRETS VERY WELL! IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, HALF THE CAPITAL WILL BE POUNDING ON THE HATCH OF THAT "SECRET" SHIP OF THEIRS TO GET A SEAT!



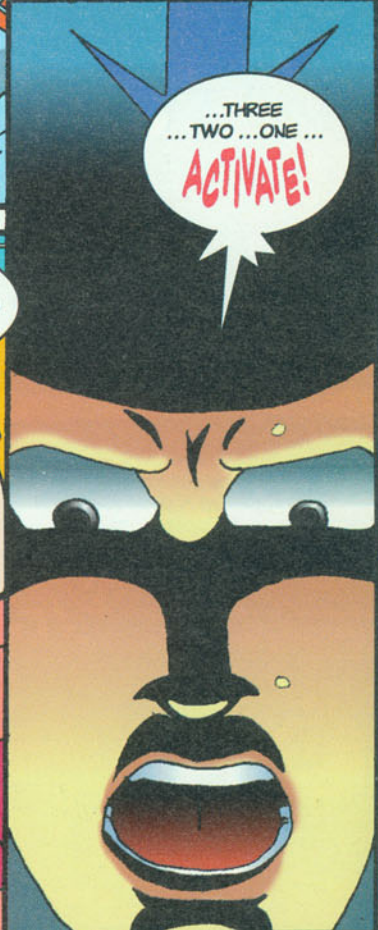
ENGINEERING TO CONTROL! WAVE MOTION ENERGY AT 100%. SWITCHING OUTPUT TO COSMO DNA ... BEGINNING FINAL TEN-SECOND COUNTDOWN! NINE ... EIGHT ...



WELL, MR. RYDER, IT'S BEEN FUN KNOWING YOU! WHATEVER HAPPENS NOW ...



... WHATEVER HAPPENS NOW, MISS FORRESTER -- I'M GLAD I'M HERE WITH YOU!



...THREE ... TWO ... ONE ... **ACTIVATE!**



Ww!



EEE--YA!



TIGER ZERO BRAVO TO LEADER! GRAVITY WAVES OFF THE SCALE -- IT'S DISRUPTING MY IMPELLER EMISSIONS --

HANG ON, GUYS! THIS COULD GET BLUMPY!



STAR BLAZERS ICARUS

CHAPTER TWO
WAXWING

by BRUCE LEWIS
color by JOHN OTT
and TIM ELDRED





IT'S HAPPENING... I CAN FEEL IT.

...IT'S TAKING THE WORLD APART.



...IT'S TAKING US APART ...

...BUT CAN IT PUT THIS POOR WORLD BACK TOGETHER AGAIN...?

CAN IT...?



CAN'T HOLD IT--! LOSING CONTR--!

MONITOR STATION 23! IT'S...IT'S HAPPENING!

HANG ON BOYS! HANG ON!

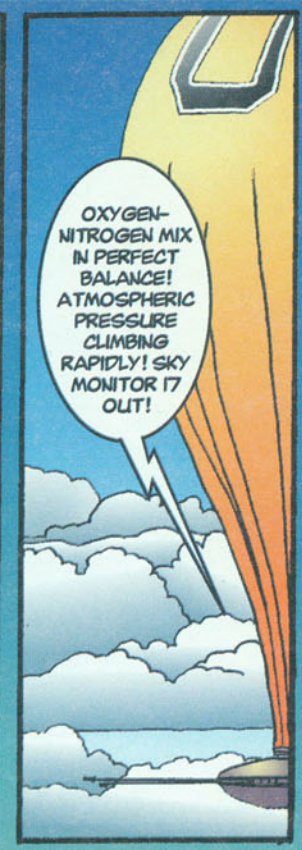


SEABED MONITOR STATION 48! WE'VE GOT WATER! SALT WATER!

IT JUST APPEARED OUT OF NOWHERE! WE'RE EVACUATING TO HIGHER GROUND!



SURFACE MONITOR STATION 9 TO CONTROL! RADIATION LEVEL ZERO! I SAID ZERO! IT'S UNBELIEVABLE!

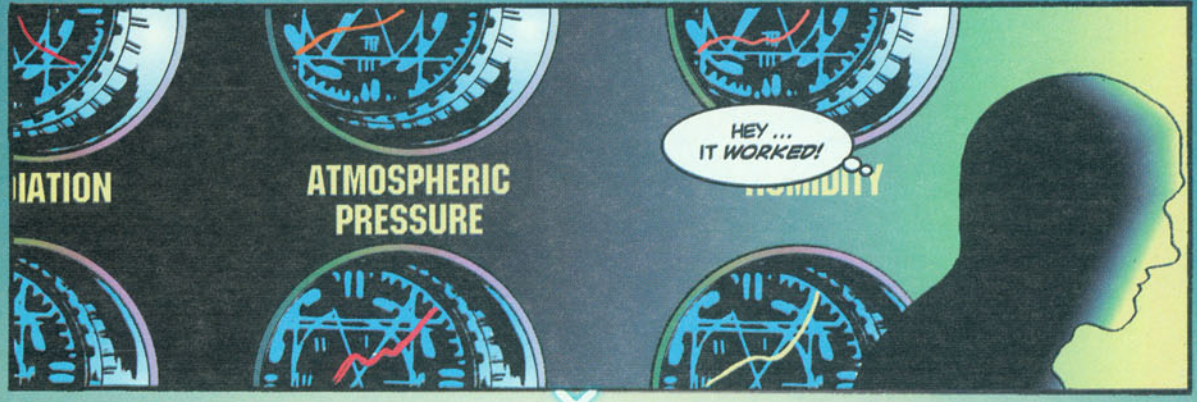


OXYGEN-NITROGEN MIX IN PERFECT BALANCE! ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE CLIMBING RAPIDLY! SKY MONITOR 17 OUT!



CONTROL, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT WE'RE SEEING! AIR, WATER, RADIATION LEVELS...IT'S LIKE A MIRACLE ALL OVER THE PLANET!

TELL SANDOR HE'S A HIT-- IT WORKED!



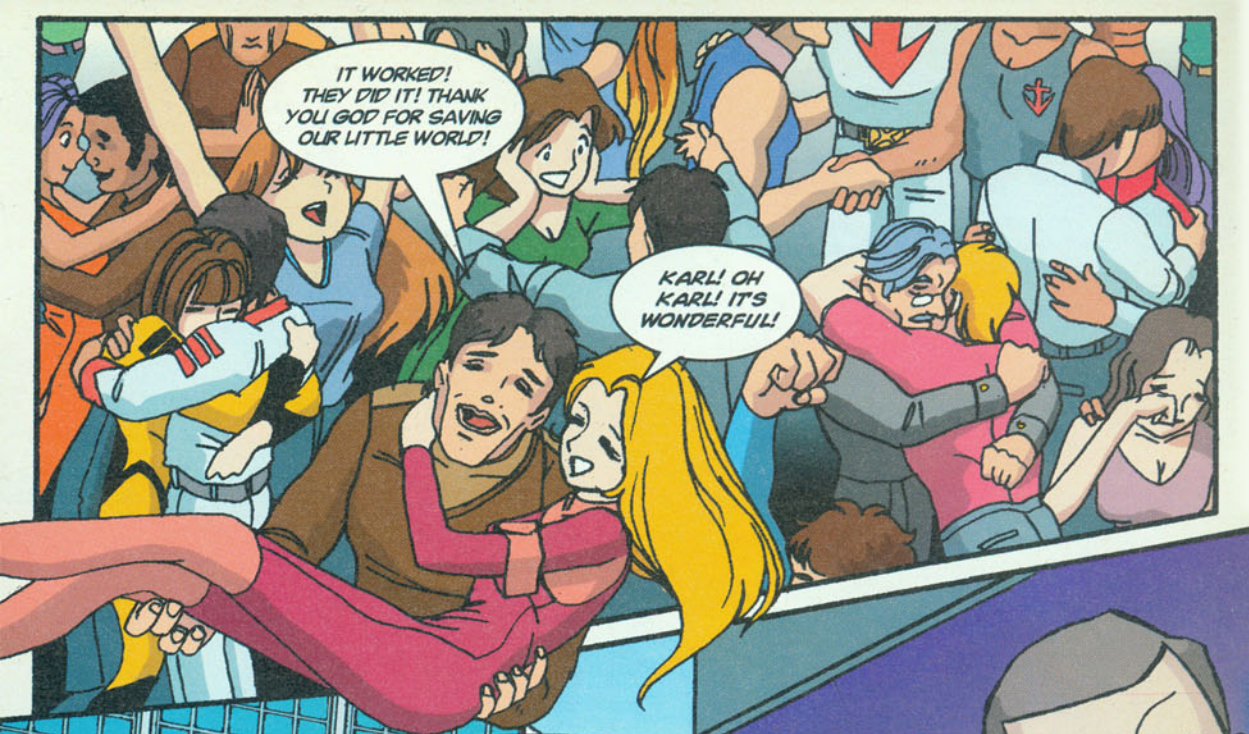
RADIATION

ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE

HEY... IT WORKED!

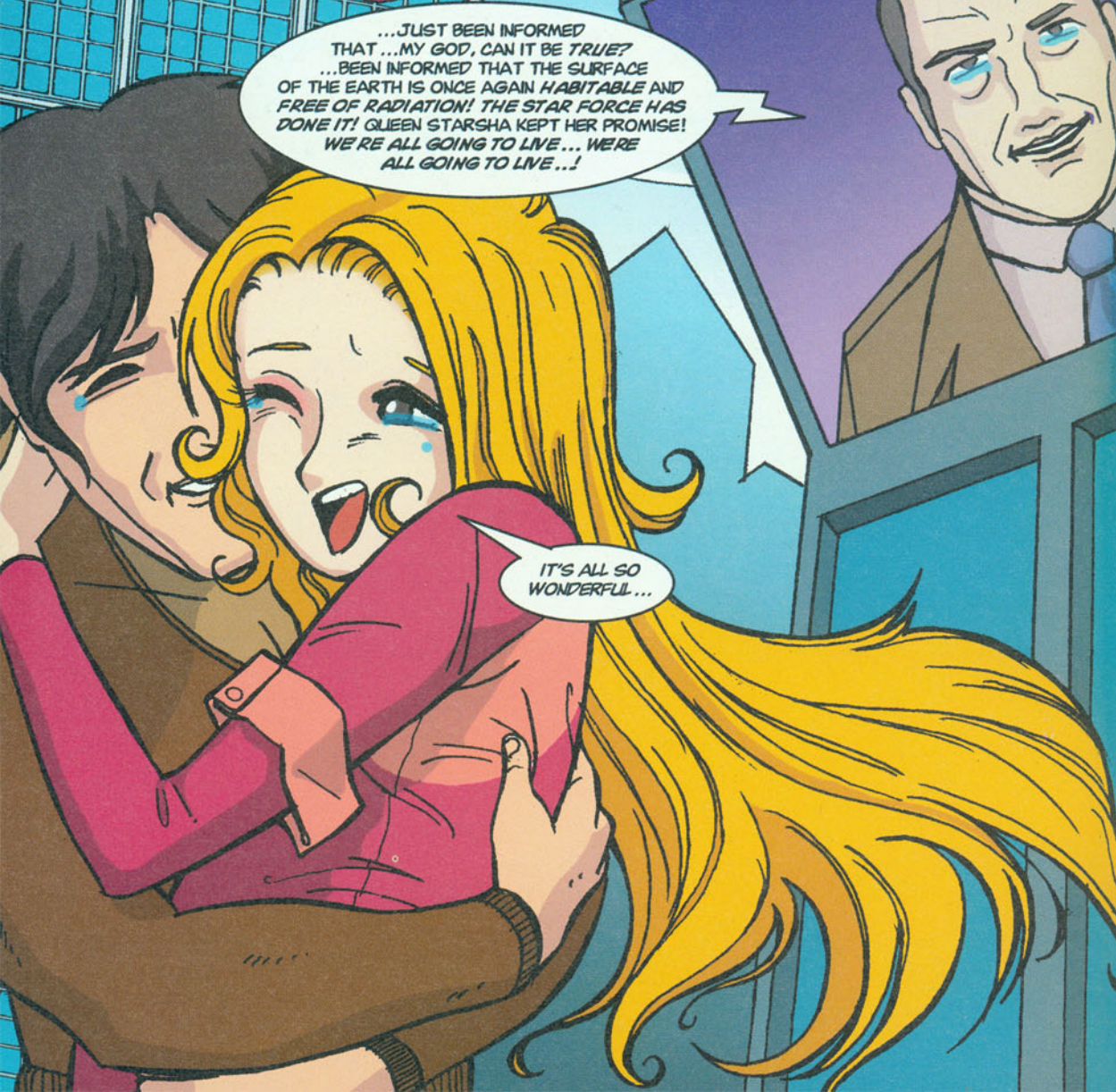
"IT WORKED!"





IT WORKED!
THEY DID IT! THANK
YOU GOD FOR SAVING
OUR LITTLE WORLD!

KARL! OH
KARL! IT'S
WONDERFUL!



...JUST BEEN INFORMED
THAT ...MY GOD, CAN IT BE TRUE?
...BEEN INFORMED THAT THE SURFACE
OF THE EARTH IS ONCE AGAIN HABITABLE AND
FREE OF RADIATION! THE STAR FORCE HAS
DONE IT! QUEEN STARSHA KEPT HER PROMISE!
WE'RE ALL GOING TO LIVE ... WE'RE
ALL GOING TO LIVE ...!

IT'S ALL SO
WONDERFUL...

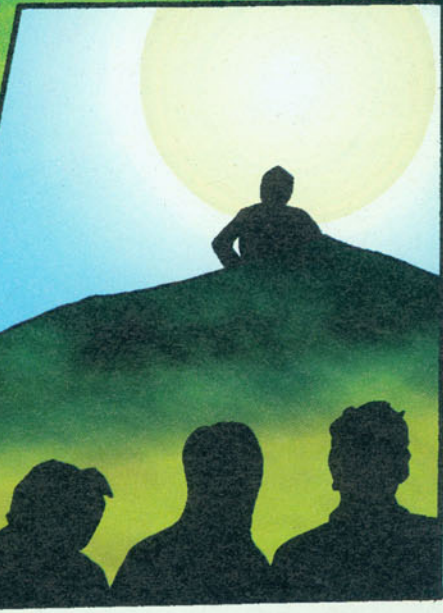
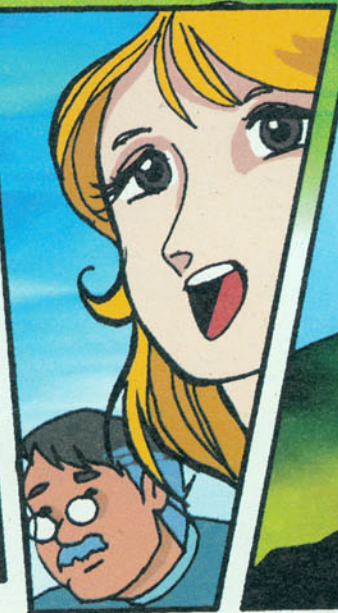
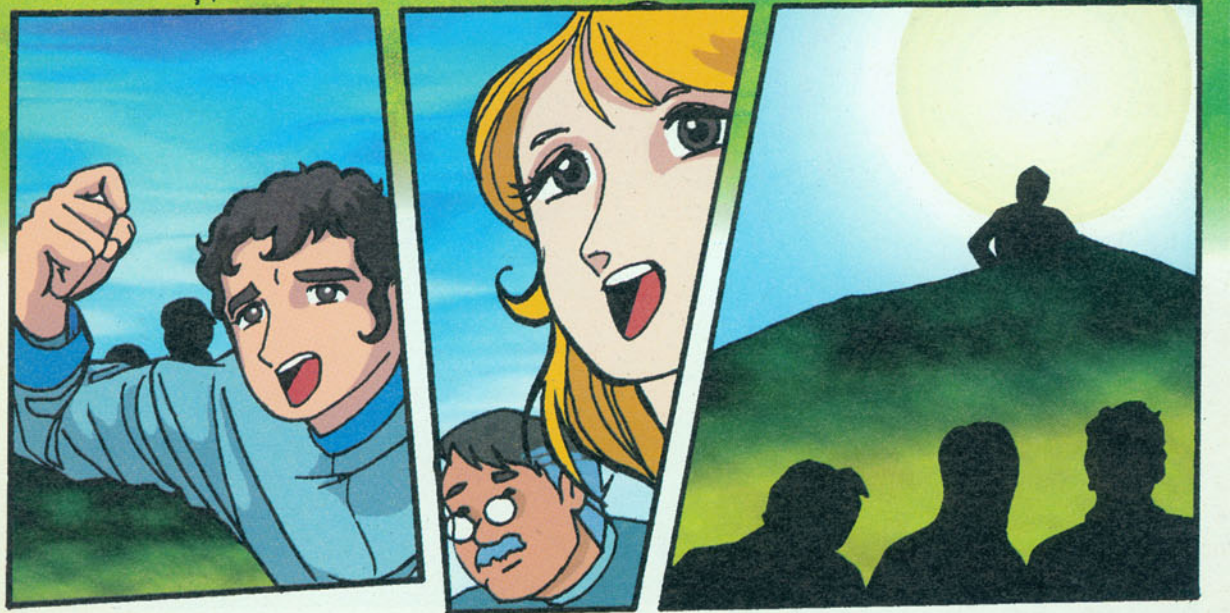


SANDOR! THE
COSMO DNA IS
DROPPING OFFLINE!
WE'RE STILL PUMPING
IN POWER BUT IT'S
NOT DOING ANY-
THING!

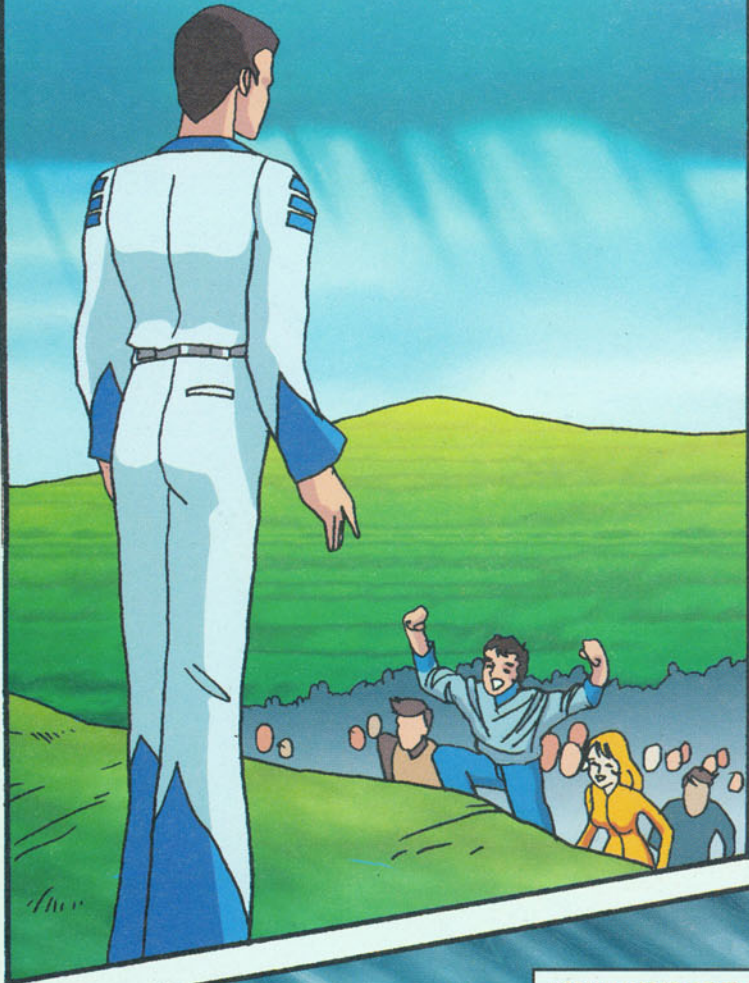
IT'S JOB
IS FINISHED ...IT DID
WHAT QUEEN STARSHA
PROMISED AND WE'D
BETTER LEAVE IT
AT THAT.

AND NOW ...
I'M GOING TO SAY
SOMETHING I'VE WANTED
TO SAY FOR A LONG,
LONG TIME ...

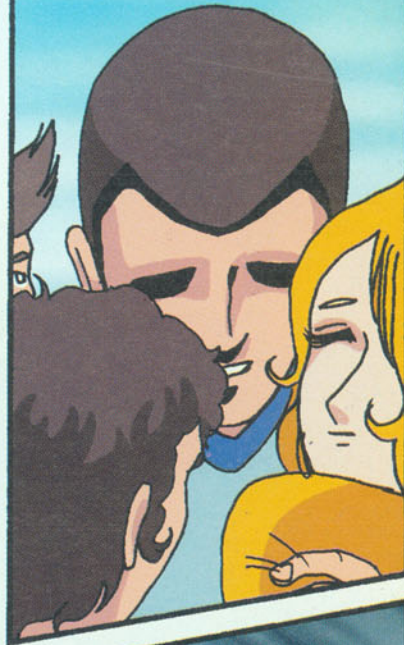
**LET'S
GO
OUTSIDE!**



"AND AS I STOOD THERE ON THAT HILL, MIO, WATCHING MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND THE REST OF THE HUMAN RACE RUNNING TOWARDS ME, ALL I COULD THINK OF WAS HOW TIRED I WAS, AND HOW GLAD I WAS THAT THE NIGHTMARE WAS OVER ..."



"...AND HOW GLAD I WAS TO BE HOME ..."



"COMMANDER STEPHEN SANDOR, EDF SPECIAL FACILITY ICARUS, 24 NOVEMBER 2202, END LOG RECORDING."

"COMPUTER, CLOSE FILE AND QUIT."

"HMM. SASHA'S SCHEDULED TO DO THE EVA SUIT CHECKS TODAY. GOTTA REMIND HER ABOUT THAT..."

WARNING:
BATTERY LEVEL LOW
NOT OPERATE SUIT

"...SHE CAN BE SO IRRESPONSIBLE SOMETIMES..."

EDF SPECIAL FACILITY
ICARUS



AHOY! AHOY OVER THERE ON THE WAVE RADAR EMITTER.

SASHA, HONEY, YOU IN THERE?

HELLO, DEKE! WHAT BRINGS YOU DOWN TO THE BAY SO EARLY?

JUST THOUGHT I'D DROP IN AND SEE IF YOU WERE STILL INTERESTED IN THAT PLANE RIDE YOU ASKED ABOUT!

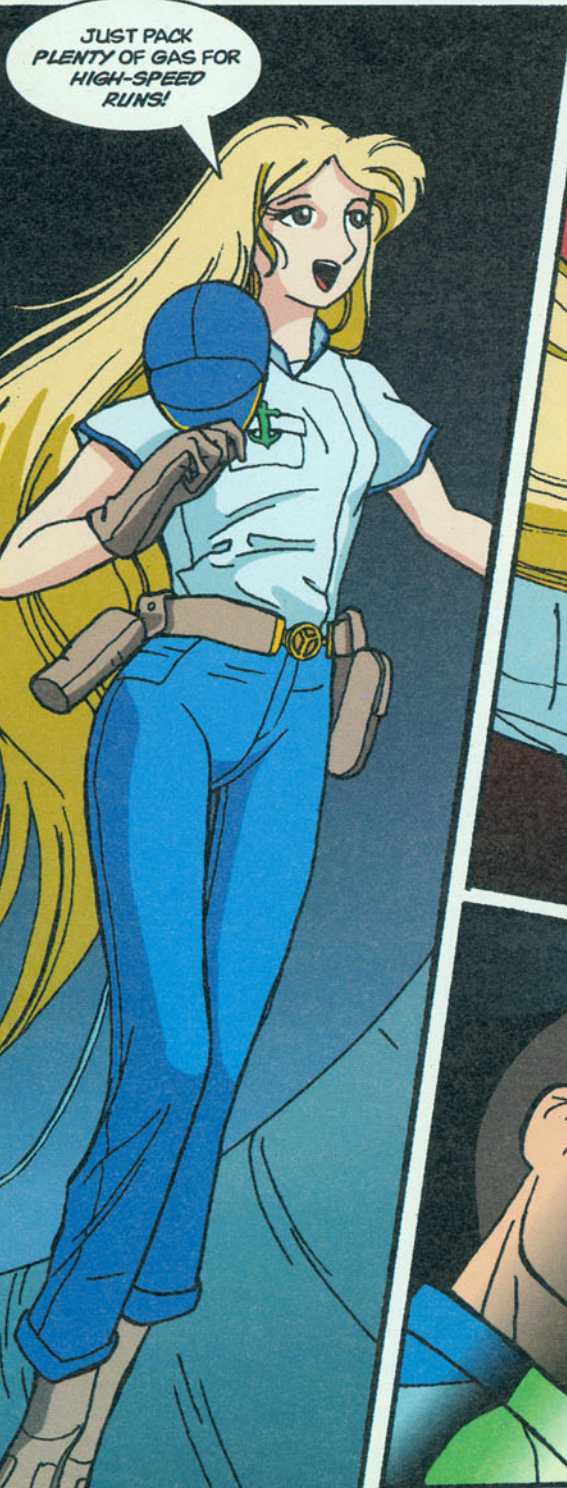
RIDE IN A COSMO TIGER? LET ME UNHOOK THIS SAFETY HARNESS AND I'LL BE RIGHT WITH YOU!





NOW IT'S JUST A RADAR CALIBRATION FLIGHT ... A FEW THOUSAND KLICKS ... COUPLE HOURS AT MOST ... IF YOUR UNCLE SAYS IT'S OKAY, OF COURSE!

OH, I THINK I CAN CONVINCE HIM!



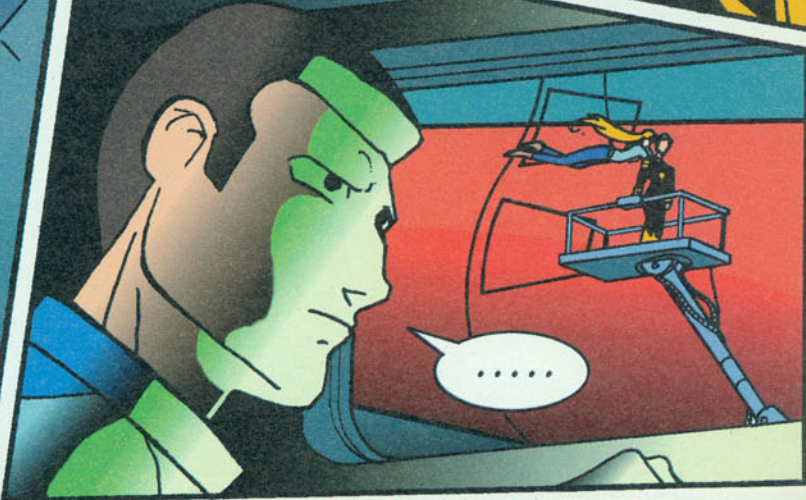
JUST PACK PLENTY OF GAS FOR HIGH-SPEED RUNS!



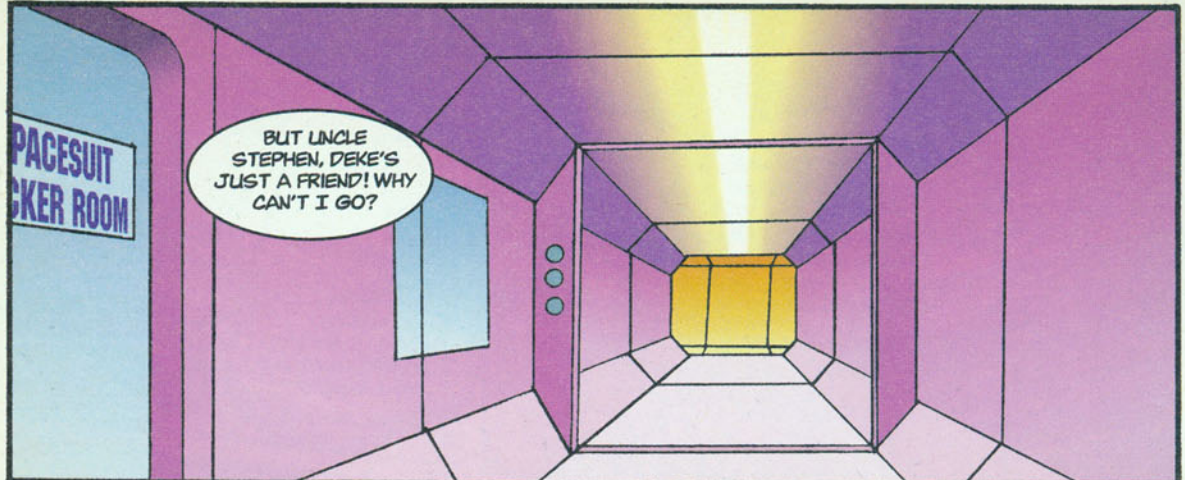
AND THANKS FOR BEING SUCH A GOOD FRIEND!

SMOOCH

HEY! NONE OF THAT!

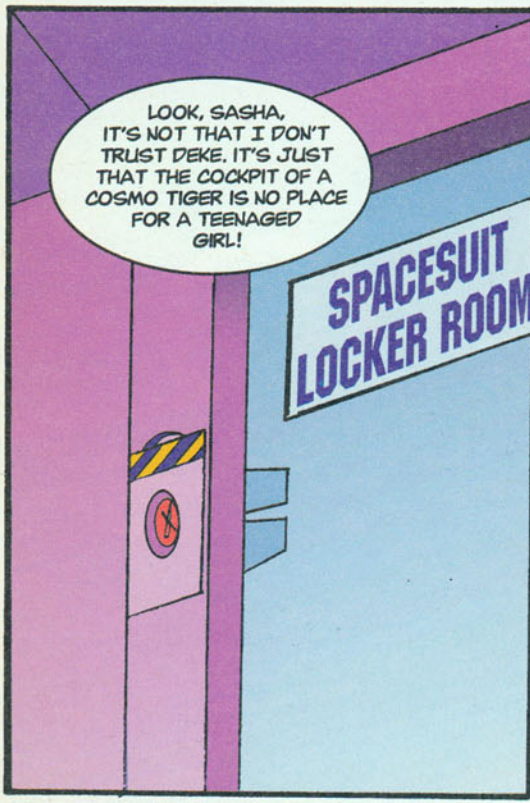


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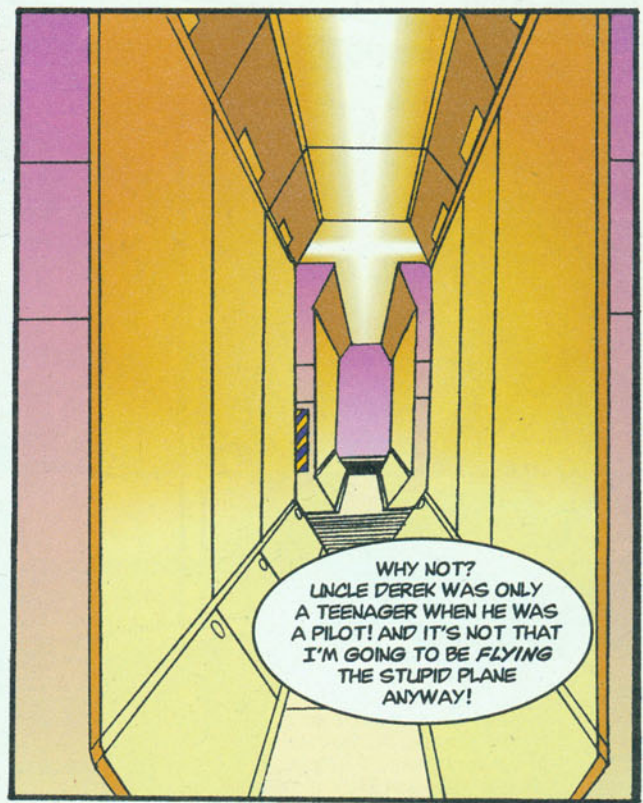
SPACESUIT LOCKER ROOM

BUT UNCLE STEPHEN, DEKE'S JUST A FRIEND! WHY CAN'T I GO?



LOOK, SASHA, IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T TRUST DEKE. IT'S JUST THAT THE COCKPIT OF A COSMO TIGER IS NO PLACE FOR A TEENAGED GIRL!

SPACESUIT LOCKER ROOM



WHY NOT? UNCLE DEREK WAS ONLY A TEENAGER WHEN HE WAS A PILOT! AND IT'S NOT THAT I'M GOING TO BE FLYING THE STUPID PLANE ANYWAY!



OH, PLEEEASE, UNCLE STEPHEN -- I GET SO BORED JUST SITTING AROUND ALL THE TIME!

YOU NEVER LET ME HAVE ANY FUN!

131-153



SASHA, IF YOU'RE BORED WE CAN ARRANGE A FULL, BUSY SCHEDULE FOR YOU!

IF WORK ON THE WAVE RADAR ISN'T ENOUGH, THERE'S THESE SUITS TO INSPECT!



AS FOR "HAVING FUN," FUN IN SPACE MIGHT GET YOU KILLED!



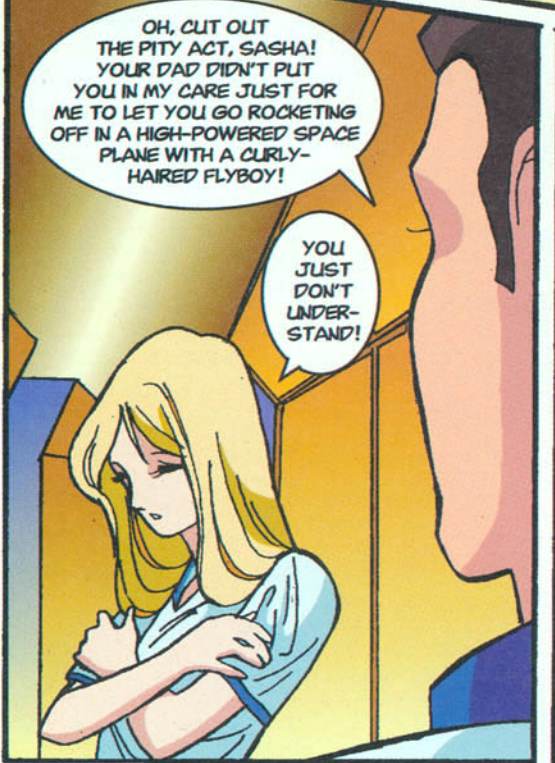
IT'S NOT FAIR ...

IT'S NOT ...



...I MEAN, WHAT DID I DO, UNCLE STEPHEN? I TRY TO BE GOOD. I TRY TO WORK HARD ...

...AND I'M AFRAID ... I'M JUST SCARED THAT ...



OH, CUT OUT THE PITY ACT, SASHA! YOUR DAD DIDN'T PUT YOU IN MY CARE JUST FOR ME TO LET YOU GO ROCKETING OFF IN A HIGH-POWERED SPACE PLANE WITH A CURLY-HAIRED FLYBOY!

YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND!

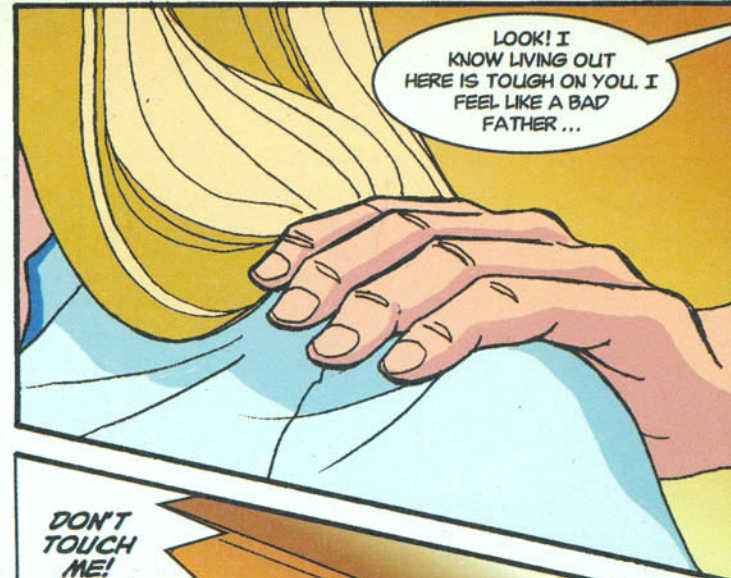


I'M SCARED THAT IF I DON'T LIVE NOW I'LL NEVER GET THE CHANCE!



SASHA... THAT'S JUST SILLY!

YOU'RE GOING TO LIVE A LONG, WONDERFUL LIFE!



LOOK! I KNOW LIVING OUT HERE IS TOUGH ON YOU. I FEEL LIKE A BAD FATHER ...



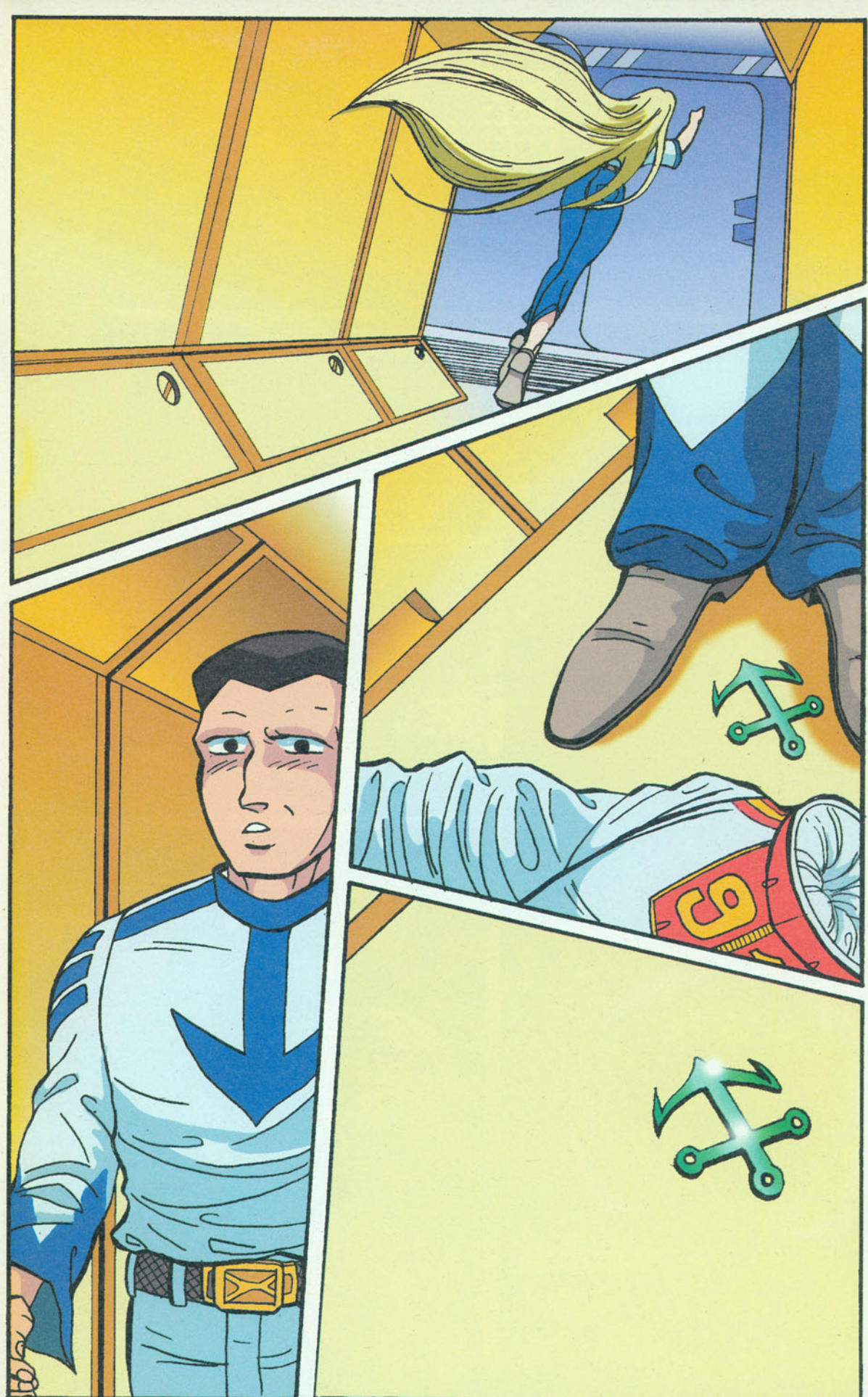
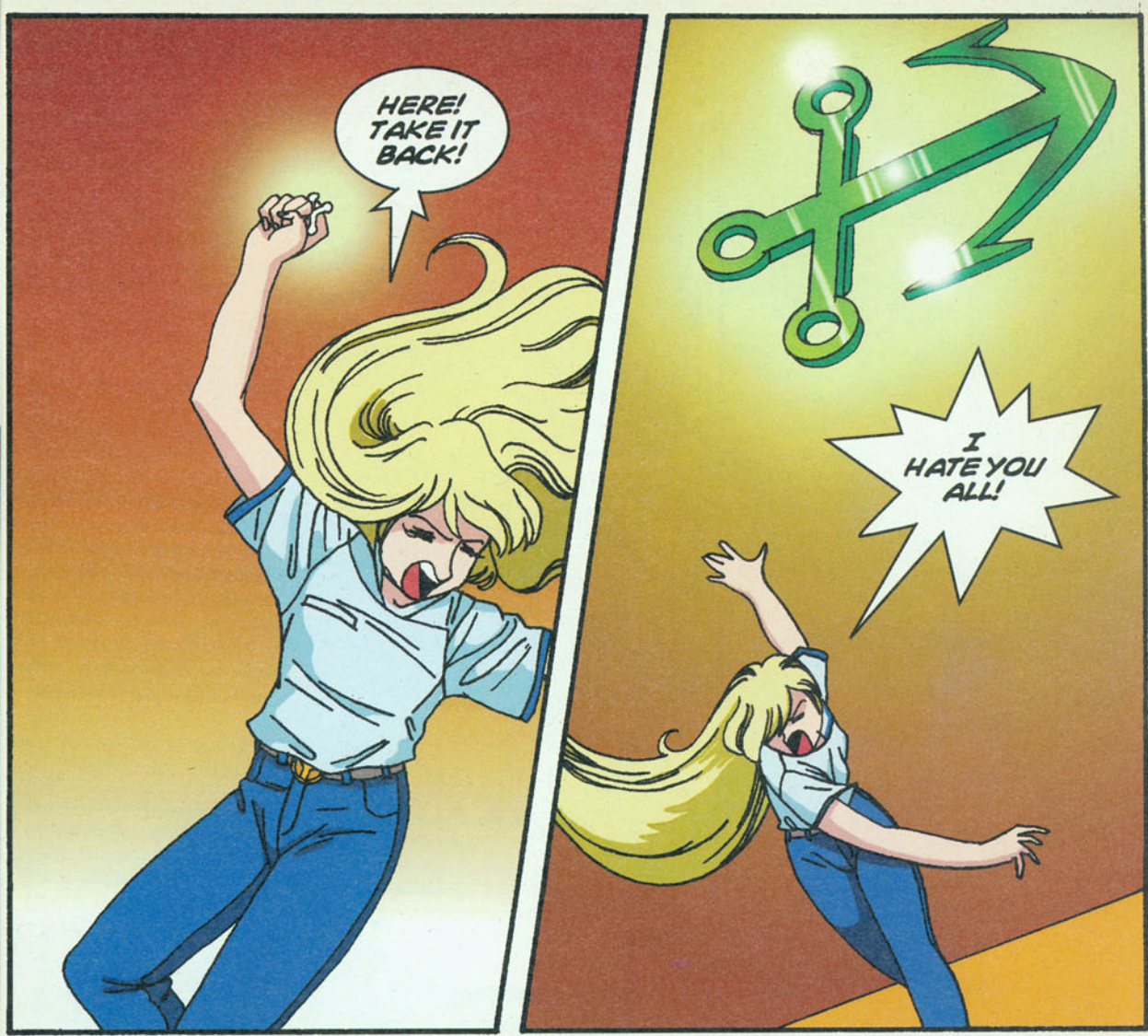
DON'T TOUCH ME!

SASHA? I DIDN'T --



YOU'RE NOT MY FATHER AND YOU NEVER WILL BE!

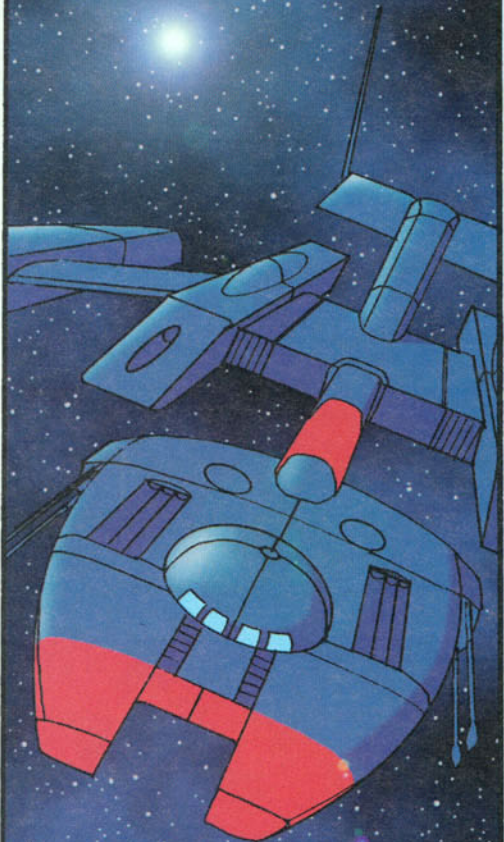
I'M SICK OF YOUR RULES! I'M SICK OF THIS PLACE! I'M EVEN SICK OF THIS STUPID BROOCH!



"WARP RADIO CONTACT ESTABLISHED WITH EARTH, CAPTAIN. I HAVE HEAD-QUARTERS ON LINE -- WE'RE READY TO TRANSMIT."

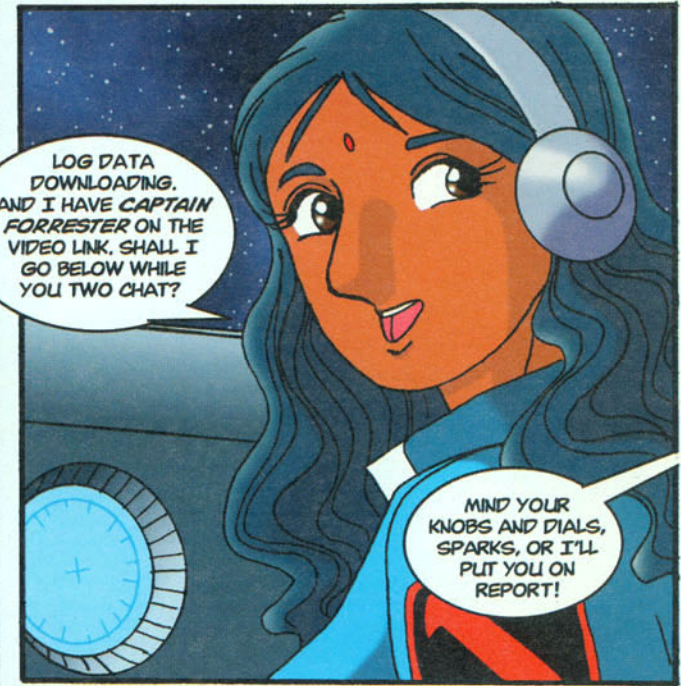


"VERY WELL, LT. NANA. TRANSMIT LOG DATA ON CHANNEL TWO -- I'LL TALK TO THE DUTY OFFICER ON CHANNEL ONE."



PATROL BOAT ED'S ADVANCE

LOG DATA DOWNLOADING, AND I HAVE CAPTAIN FORRESTER ON THE VIDEO LINK. SHALL I GO BELOW WHILE YOU TWO CHAT?



MIND YOUR KNOBS AND DIALS, SPARKS, OR I'LL PLUT YOU ON REPORT!

HEADQUARTERS, THIS IS COMMANDER DEREK WILDSTAR. I'M READY FOR MY DAILY OPERATIONAL BRIEFING. OVER.

PATROL BOAT, THIS IS CAPTAIN FORRESTER, DUTY OFFICER OF THE WATCH. STAND BY FOR BRIEFING. HELLO, DEREK!



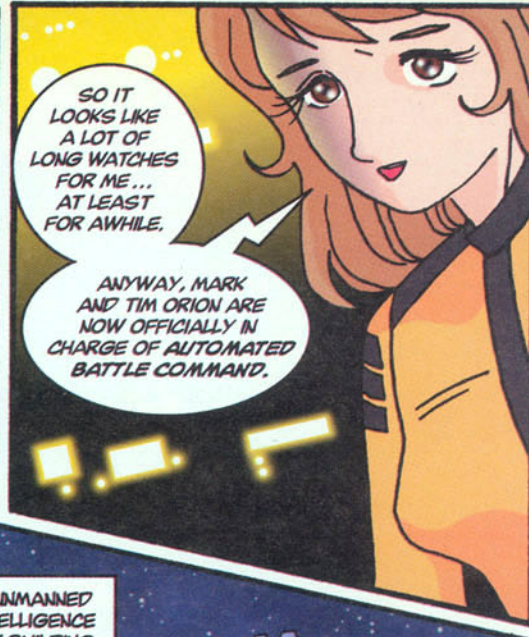
NOVA! I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU AT HQ TODAY! ISN'T VENTURE SUPPOSED TO BE ON DUTY?

VENTURE SHIPPED OUT TO HIS NEW COMMAND LAST NIGHT... HIS JUNIOR STAFF ARE SPLITTING HIS WATCHES.

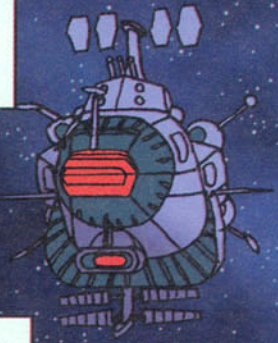


SO IT LOOKS LIKE A LOT OF LONG WATCHES FOR ME... AT LEAST FOR AWHILE.

ANYWAY, MARK AND TIM ORION ARE NOW OFFICIALLY IN CHARGE OF AUTOMATED BATTLE COMMAND.



"THOSE NEW UNMANNED ARTIFICIAL-INTELLIGENCE SHIPS THEY'RE BUILDING MAY BE POWERFUL, BUT THEIR 'BRAINS' AREN'T BETTER THAN IQ-9'S."

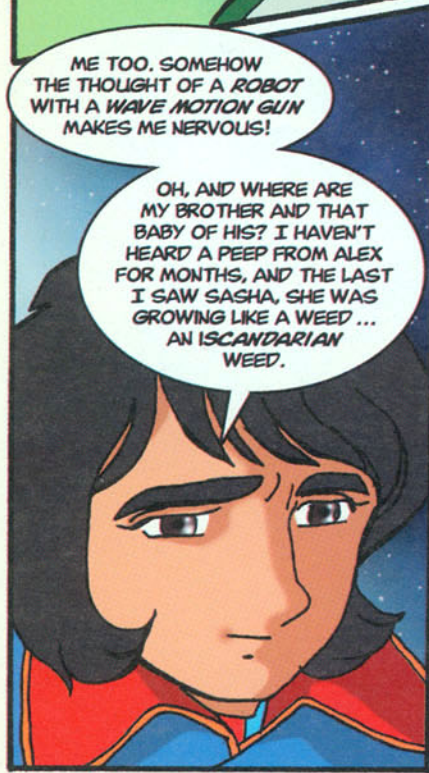


"I, FOR ONE, FEEL A LOT BETTER WITH MARK AND TIM RIDING HERD ON THEM."



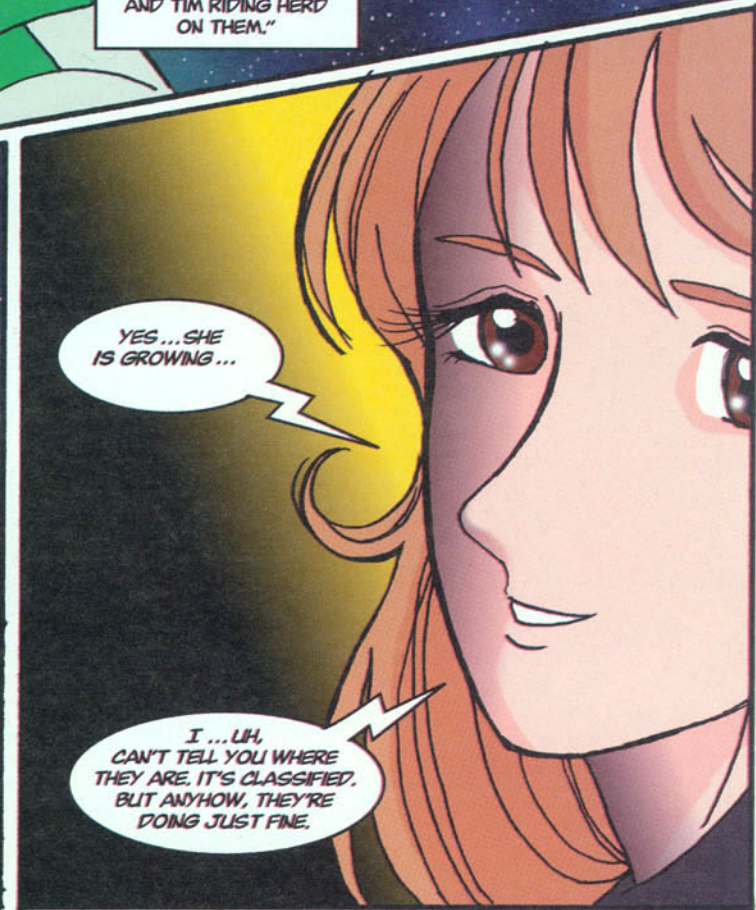
ME TOO. SOMEHOW THE THOUGHT OF A ROBOT WITH A WAVE MOTION GUN MAKES ME NERVOUS!

OH, AND WHERE ARE MY BROTHER AND THAT BABY OF HIS? I HAVEN'T HEARD A PEEP FROM ALEX FOR MONTHS, AND THE LAST I SAW SASHA, SHE WAS GROWING LIKE A WEED... AN ISCANDARIAN WEED.



YES... SHE IS GROWING...

I... UH, CAN'T TELL YOU WHERE THEY ARE. IT'S CLASSIFIED. BUT ANYHOW, THEY'RE DOING JUST FINE.





CLASSIFIED? HMMM... WELL, GIVE ALEX MY BEST NEXT TIME YOU SEE HIM, AND TICKLE THAT TODDLER OF HIS, TOO. I'LL BE BACK IN EIGHT SHORT WEEKS...

IT'S GOOD TO HEAR YOUR VOICE, NOVA. YOU TAKE CARE, CAPTAIN!

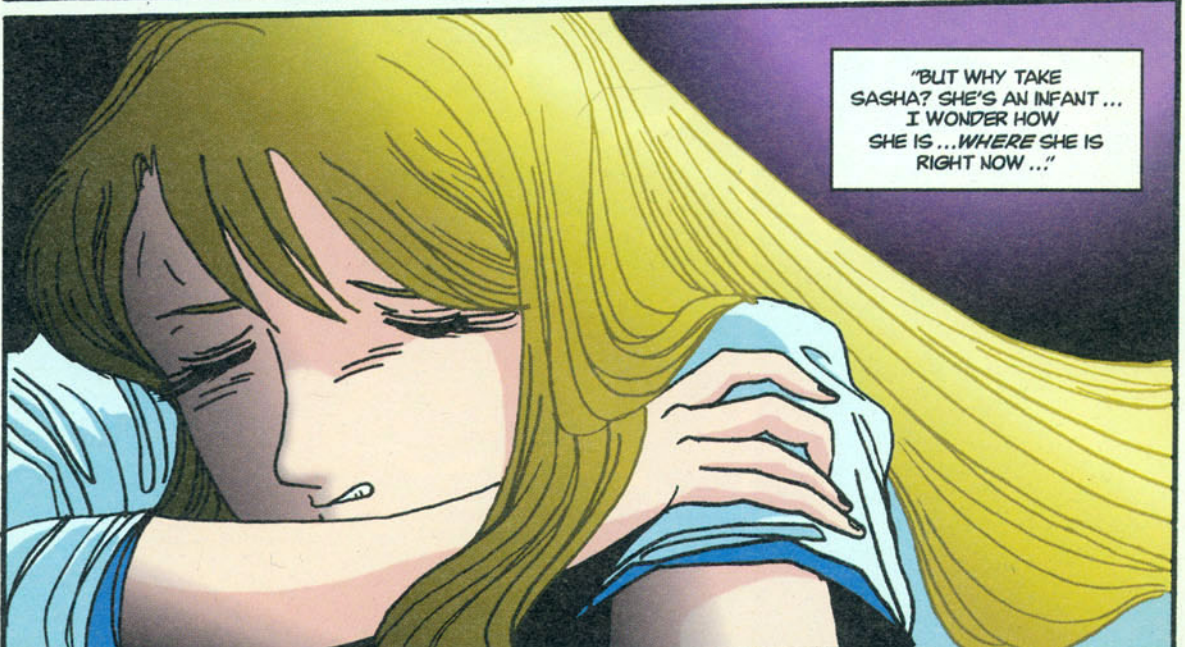


YOU TOO, COMMANDER. ED'S HEAD-QUARTERS, OUT.

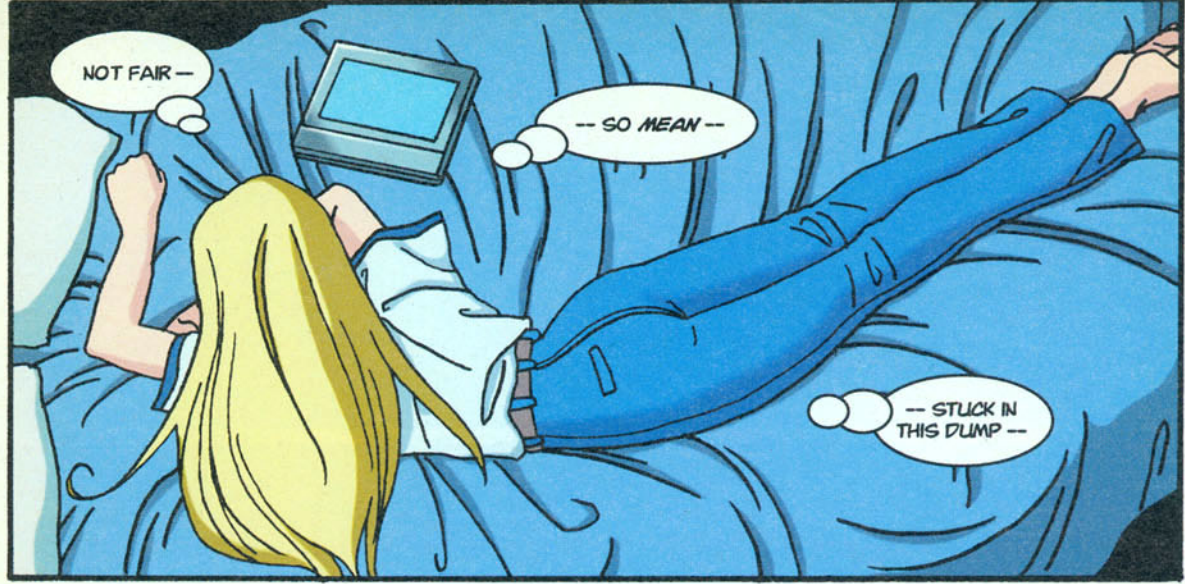
ED'S ADVANCE, OUT.



HMM. ALEX AND SANDOR ARE PROBABLY WORKING ON YAMATO'S REFIT SOMEWHERE. I'M NOT SURPRISED THE LOCATION IS SECRET...



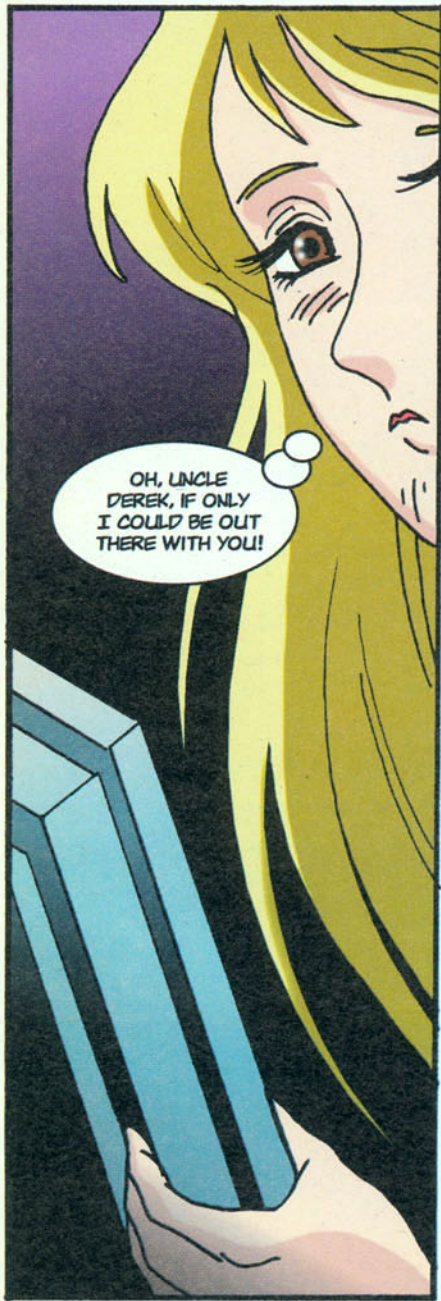
"BUT WHY TAKE SASHA? SHE'S AN INFANT... I WONDER HOW SHE IS... WHERE SHE IS RIGHT NOW..."



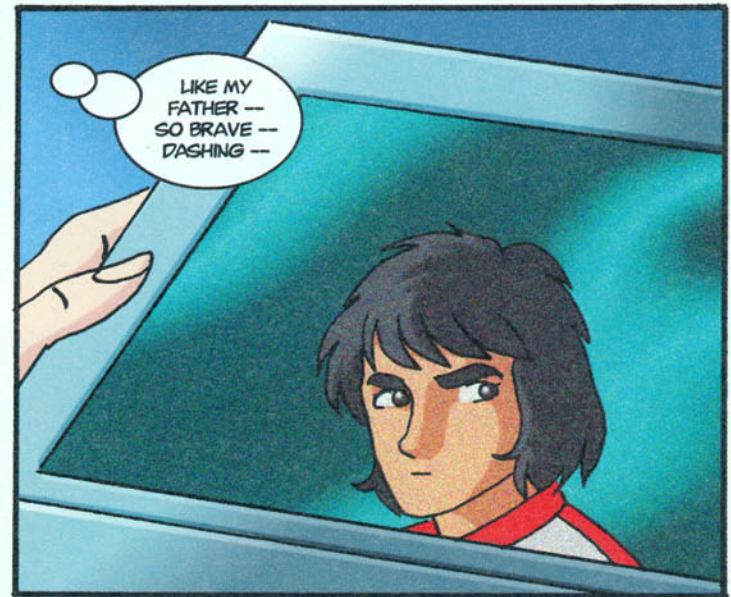
NOT FAIR--

-- SO MEAN --

-- STUCK IN THIS DUMP --



OH, UNCLE DEREK, IF ONLY I COULD BE OUT THERE WITH YOU!

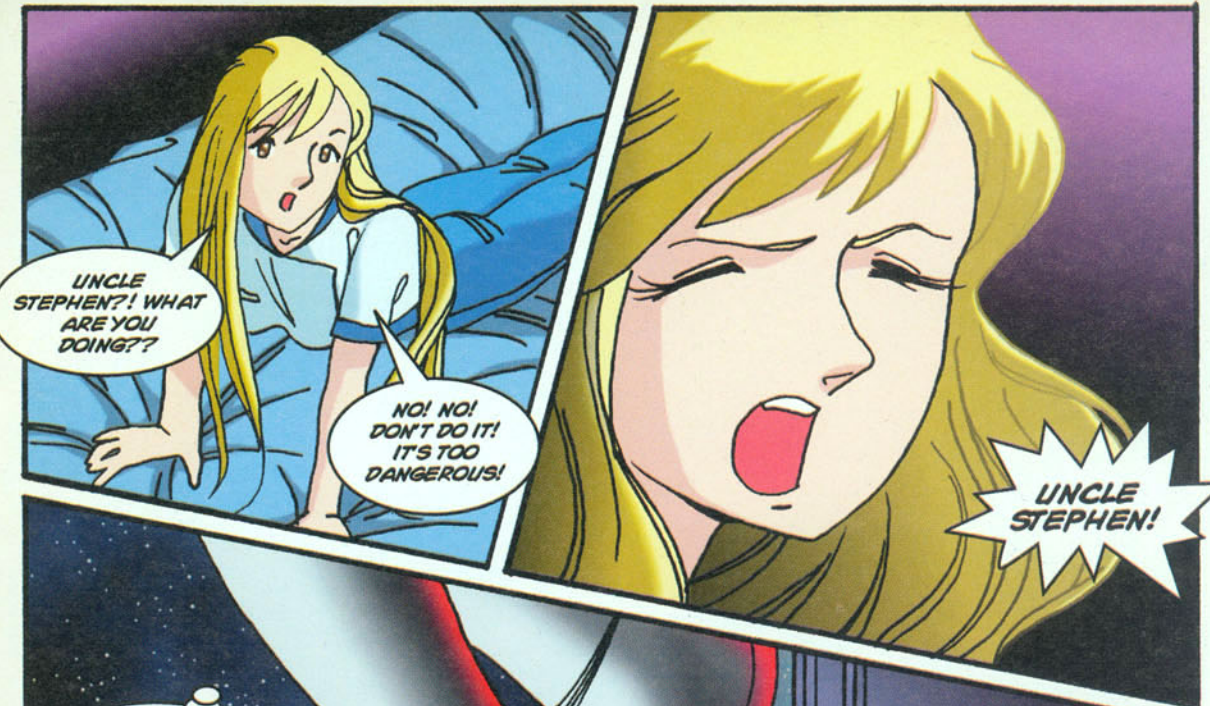
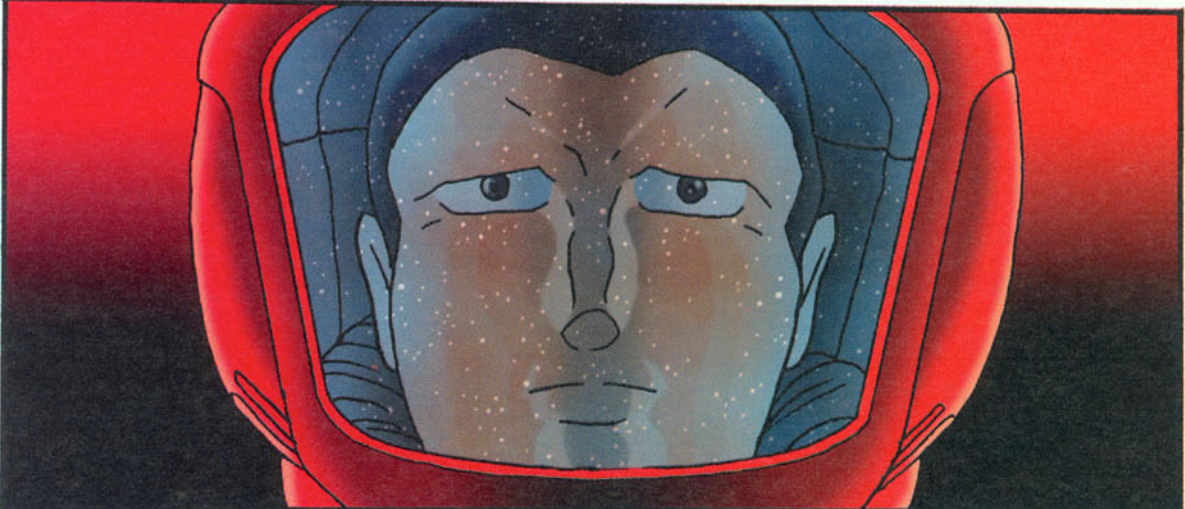
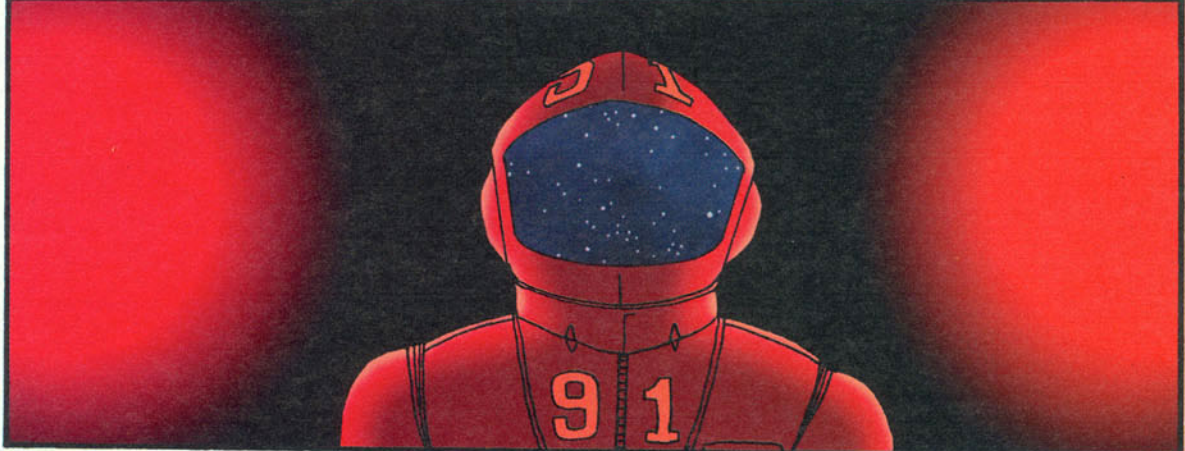
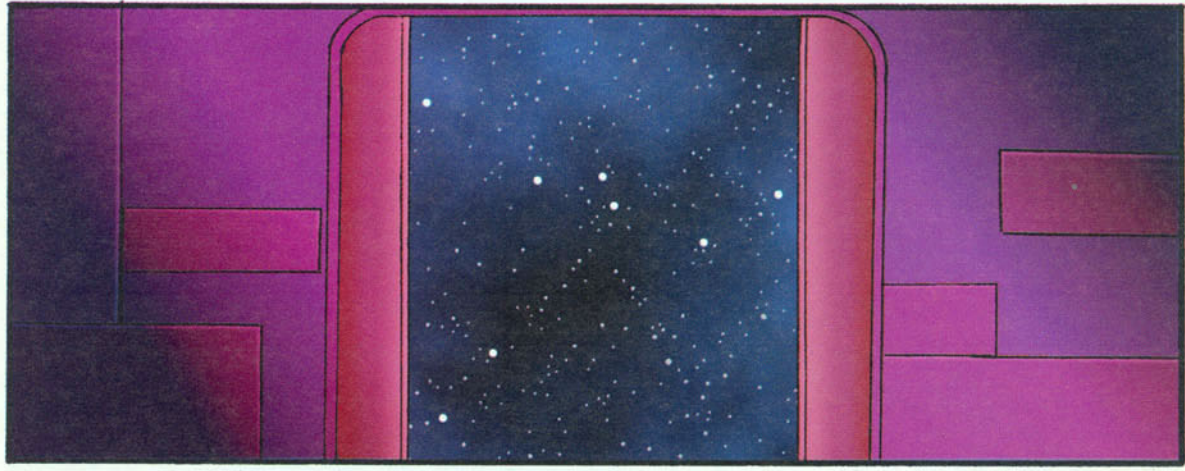


LIKE MY FATHER -- SO BRAVE -- DASHING --



-- NOT LIKE UNCLE STEPHEN -- THAT BORING OLD STI --

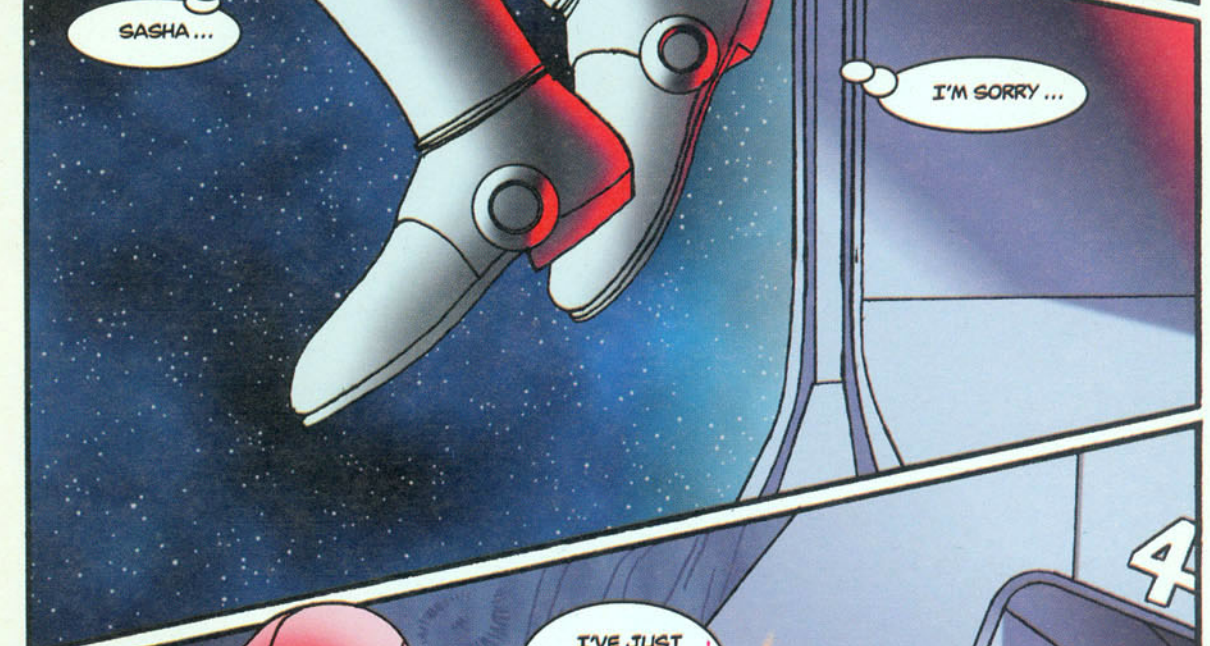
--UNCLE STEPHEN?!?



UNCLE STEPHEN?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING??

NO! NO! DON'T DO IT! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!

UNCLE STEPHEN!



SASHA ...

I'M SORRY ...



I'VE JUST GOT TO GET AWAY ... GOT TO THINK ...



"GOT
TO
THINK...!"

END CHAPTER TWO

ANALYZER

news and feature articles from the world of Yamato/Star Blazers

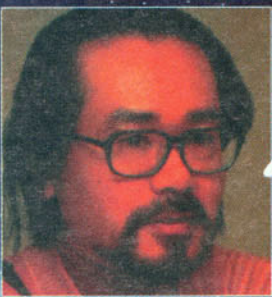
In every issue of this comic book, we credit two men with the creation of the original SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO animated series upon which STAR BLAZERS is based. It was with Yoshinobu Nishizaki that the concept first took shape...but without the directorial influence of master storyteller Leiji Matsumoto, it would not be the series that has won the hearts and minds of people around the globe.



Last issue, we presented Matsumoto's initial story treatment for the first YAMATO series. This time, we hear from Matsumoto himself about the rigors of developing the story into its animated form, what it was like in the early days of production, and how not to dress when walking around in Japan.

Also in this special section, we continue our ongoing TWILIGHT series on the history of the REAL Battleship Yamato, and take a look at the humorous side of STAR BLAZERS. All this and news of brand new YAMATO products await you on the next few pages. So don't stop reading here!

edited by
TIM ELDRED



MATSUMOTO'S YAMATO

The following was originally written by Leiji Matsumoto for *YAMATO PERFECT MANUAL 2*, published in 1983 by Tokuma Shoten. Special thanks to Earnest & Sumiko Migaki for translation services.

Initially, I was brought on only as YAMATO's Art Director, but once production got underway, I became the overall Director of the series. They left everything up to me, from the original designs to the final cut—and I kept changing things to suit my whims. In fact, I ended up doing about half of the first series' storyboards myself.

My storyboards tended to stray from the written scripts, particularly in the first five episodes. I changed a lot of the dialogue and situations through the storyboards, since they lacked the feeling I wanted to express. Before I realized it, I had re-written complete episodes through my storyboards. Whenever I watched the final footage, though, there was always something that I wish I'd done better. I'm familiar with my weak points, and seeing the finished product at least allowed me to examine them for my own improvement. Some scenes are embarrassing to me now, and they annoy me to no end when I see them.

Pre-production was an interesting process. Mr. Nishizaki had a thing about meetings, and I was attending them constantly. During this time, the backbone of our story kept changing. For example, we added the wave-motion gun and wave engine to the Yamato after carefully considering their possible chain reaction on the surrounding area. At the time, I had my younger brother ask the professor of the research section of Kyushu University about space-motion theories. Once these things were worked out, they gave us new ways to tell our story.

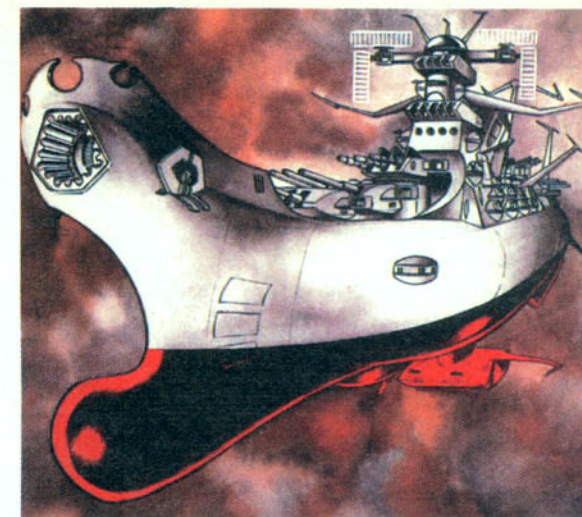
We wanted to make YAMATO a space drama with the ship being the main focus. Although our Yamato has its roots in the original battleship, we took extra care to distinguish the two. We didn't want this to be a war movie, or some tale of military history. We avoided focusing on war banners, military marches and the chrysanthemum crests on the bow of the battleship. We eliminated altogether the military ranking system, consolidating the various posts. I really didn't care for keeping a salute, but we ended up creating the special "Yamato Salute" by having the hand placed at heart-level. The Gamilas salute resembles the German "Heil Hitler", but in reality it is used around the world.

During the production of the second episode, a major uproar erupted among the staff over the inclusion of a traditional military march scene. We felt this would surely be misconstrued as a political statement. We immediately switched off the music, forwarded the tape, and changed music. This is why the Japanese military march music isn't in the episode. These days, we wouldn't be so concerned about such things, but back then we worried ourselves silly over stuff that no other anime production even considered.

There were all sorts of things we created on the fly. Even though there is no up or down in space, we decided to add a third bridge to the belly of the ship, since we felt it would be awkward to have nothing down there. In order to differentiate the ship designs between Earth and Gamilas, we put camouflage on the Gamilas ships...but when they didn't show up well on screen, we gave up that idea.

Mr. Nishizaki and I would often get into heated arguments about the use of color. For example, when it was decided to make Kodai's uniform red, I naturally thought of using blue for Shima's outfit to differentiate the two. But he told me to use green—which is a complementary, rather than a contradictory color. I'm sure he still recalls shouting at me that he wasn't color blind!

Although directing the program was my job, it was also my hobby, and there were many interesting aspects to it. When an energy beam was fired, we showed the entire process. Sometimes a ship's engines



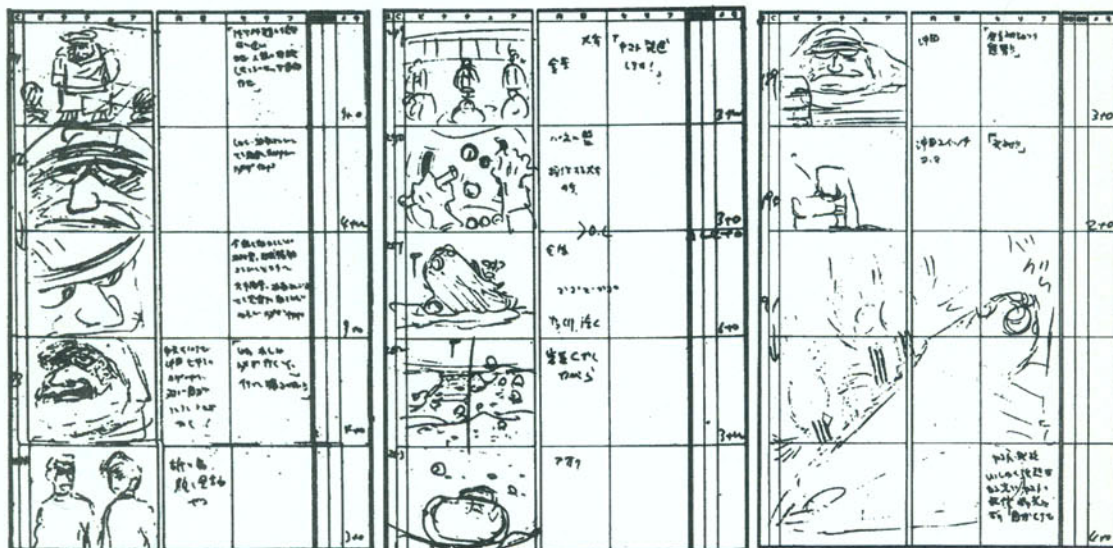
ABOVE AND BELOW: color paintings created by Matsumoto. The piece above represents an early view of the Yamato before its design was refined for animation. The piece shown below was used as the cover for a paperback collection of Matsumoto's manga version of the first television series.

wouldn't start on the first try. We did all sorts of things with missiles being fired in space. And during a session when we had eaten some smoked octopus, we went as far as creating an Octopus Army.

The schedule was extremely tough, though. At the time, the studio was in Sakuradai. The entire staff would walk around the area in rumpled or dirty clothing. There were two Swedish girls who worked part-time in a bakery just below our studio, and we frightened them so much that they ended up quitting their jobs. A police officer nearly had me arrested one evening, just because of my appearance, when I was walking to Sakuradai from a nearby junior college. I must've looked like a crook to him.

Things may not have been so bad if I'd been able to sleep after a day's work on the anime...but I also had work to do on the manga version, since they were being produced simultaneously. I lost a lot of sleep. I became emaciated as a result, and it was hell until I adapted to this lifestyle. Since the manga was a monthly publication, the TV series sped on ahead, and I had a hard time catching up with it. This wasn't like one of my other works, GALAXY EXPRESS 999, which was published in manga format before it was animated. That wasn't a problem for me. The work I did on YAMATO was interesting enough, but I vowed never to commit to such a hellish schedule again!

There was also one big disappointment for me. Originally, I wrote a plot for a 51-episode series. When they trimmed it down to 26 episodes, I nearly flipped. The story about the journey to the Magellan Clouds, about Mamoru Kodai being Harlock aboard the Space



ABOVE: Matsumoto storyboards from episode 2 of the original YAMATO television series. At the left, Captain Okita explains the mission to Kodai and Shima. Center, the ship rises from its rocky bed. At right, Captain Okita fires the ship's cannons for the first time against a Gamilas missile.



Pirateship Deathshadow—all of this had to be eliminated.

Three years later, the theatrical version of SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO became a major hit. Since it was an anthology of the 26-episode TV series, there was every indication that the story could continue and be a success. We began developing a sequel called FAREWELL, SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO. A big animation boom began to take hold in Japan, and we all felt that we were going to blow people away with the new story.

Then I saw STAR WARS and CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. They left me in a daze. The thought of having these movies compete with a new YAMATO film was a shock to me. The stakes had been raised, so from that time on, our projects had to have a larger vision. However, if one looks closely at the materials used in STAR WARS, you notice some similarities to our work. An early costume design for Princess Leia resembles the uniform of Kei Yuki, one of the characters in my CAPTAIN HARLOCK series. There were similar elements of ship design as well, like the way the access hatch of the MILLENIUM FALCON opens downward. They managed to come up with some fairly sensational designs, and we were determined not to be left behind. This all had an incredible impact on us at the time we developed FAREWELL, YAMATO.

The first screenplay for FAREWELL was written by three people and timed out at nearly three and a half hours. The budget for this would have been huge, and required us to print the film on 16mm celluloid instead of the usual 32mm. This would have meant a loss in picture quality. The film distributors were apprehensive about this, so we cut it down to 151 minutes.

Mr. Nishizaki's original vision that inspired this film was an image of the Yamato disappearing into endless cosmic space, taking all the characters with it. I got into a big argument with Mr. Nishizaki over the idea of killing everyone off. One of my fundamental beliefs is that humans will do anything to survive, even if they



ABOVE: in this page from the Matsumoto manga, the Yamato crew counts down their first firing of the wave-motion gun at the floating continent of Jupiter.

must resort to cannibalism. I'm not fond of the actions of the Japanese Special Forces, myself. I don't agree with sending youths on suicide missions. That's why we allowed our characters to live in the TV version of FAREWELL, which was called SPACE BATTLESHIP YAMATO 2. (THE COMET EMPIRE to American audiences.)

I originally became a manga artist because I always wanted to do animation. I'm a die-hard anime fan, and I had to become involved in every aspect of the process. In the end, I just couldn't keep up with it all. That's why I limited my involvement in later YAMATO projects. Working on this series was a once in a lifetime opportunity for me, for which I owe Mr. Nishizaki a debt of gratitude. If not for him, I'm sure it would have been a long while before I did anything in the field. I was there at the right time, and I'm very happy about that.

IN APRIL OF 1945, THE LARGEST BATTLESHIP EVER BUILT LEFT JAPAN ON A LAST-DITCH SUICIDE MISSION. HER ENEMY: THE MOST POWERFUL NAVAL ARMADA EVER ASSEMBLED. THIS IS THE STORY OF THAT SHIP—AND OF ONE MAN WHO SAILED ON HER.

BY BRUCE LEWIS

1220 hours, 7 April 1945: Yoshida stood at his post on the bridge of *Yamato* as the Number Two lookout shouted his count of the approaching American airplanes into the thick air. "Five...ten...thirty planes incoming, sir!" The lookout lost count at one hundred, but Yoshida didn't care; the five or more American aircraft carriers deployed against *Yamato* had certainly sent more than enough of them to put the great battleship and her escorts on the cold floor of the sea. That's where I'll be soon, thought Yoshida, as *Yamato's* captain, Rear Admiral Kosaku Ariga, stepped firmly to the ship's intercom panel and addressed the crew over the all-hands circuit. "This is the commanding officer," he said calmly. "Stand by to repel air attacks. The decisive battle has begun." Then, turning to the ship's gunner, he gave the order to open fire.

With a deafening roar, *Yamato's* one hundred and fifty machine guns and twenty-four anti-aircraft cannons thundered into life, raising a steel cloud in front of the oncoming American planes. Yoshida gritted his teeth as a group of Grumman Avengers broke through, turned noses-on to the ship, and came straight at the bridge, boring in at no more than 500 feet off the deck; he could see quite clearly as they each released their 1000-pound armor-piercing bombs. Then, all thought was lost as a shattering rain of 50 caliber machine gun shells from the American bombers ripped through the bridge like a rain squall. Yoshida dove for cover; he could feel *Yamato* heaving beneath him as the bombs found their marks somewhere aft. The bridge was filled with a slashing miasma of bullets, shrapnel, and gore as the Grummans roared past and away — but even now more

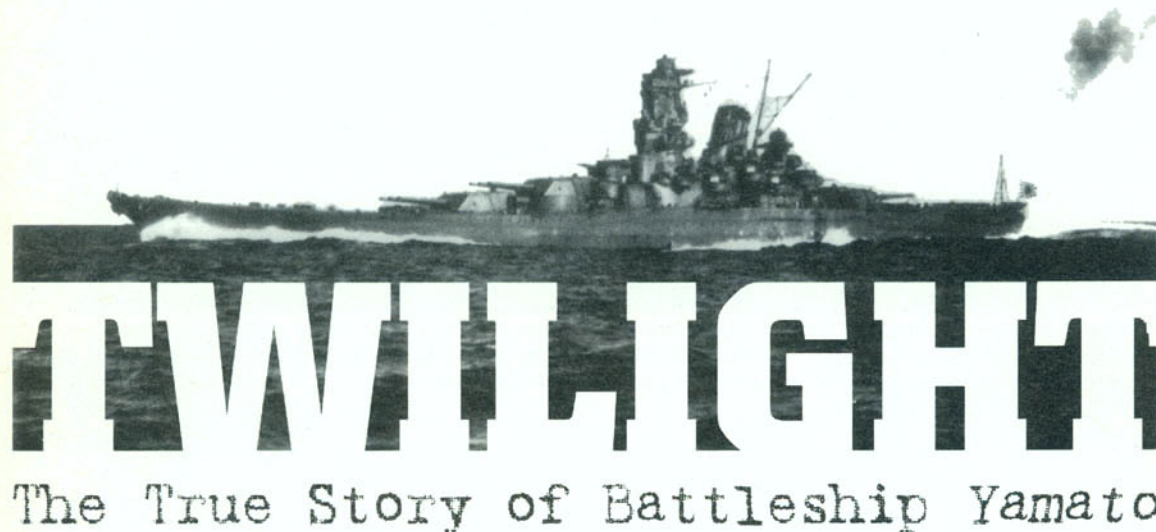
of them were surely lining up for another attack. Struggling to his feet, Yoshida was horrified to see a twisted corpse before him, the body of the sailor who'd been standing next to him only moments before, his skull now shattered like a melon by a careening shell fragment. Looking away in horror, Yoshida caught sight of the destroyer *Hamakaze*, frantically turning off the ship's port bow just as a two thousand pounder fell between her four stacks. With a thunderous crack the enormous bomb exploded, and within instants the small ship was engulfed in flames; seconds later, she broke in two and sank bow-first into the deep, cold water. All around *Yamato* Yoshida could see the silver traces that were torpedo wakes, narrowing in on the desperately rolling ship, unstoppable, unavoidable; for *Yamato* — and for Ensign Yoshida — there could be no escape.

"Thus the three carriers, whose destruction would have been far more disastrous than that of the entire Battle Fleet, were absent on December 7 — a slight concession that the god of battles made to us on that fateful day."

—Samuel Eliot Morrison, *The Two-Ocean War*

Spring, 1942: for America and her Allies, the war's lowest ebb. In spite of his brilliant string of victories against the Westerners, however, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto was troubled. The fact that the U.S. Navy's three Pacific Fleet aircraft carriers had survived his Pearl Harbor attack meant the Americans were still a viable fighting force in the Pacific. The carriers — *Enterprise*, *Lexington*, and *Saratoga* — were at that time all that stood between the Japanese Empire and its goal of establishing a

PLEASE TURN THE PAGE



"new order" in Asia, a "Co-Prosperity Sphere" over which Emperor Hirohito (or more accurately the military junta that actually controlled Japan) would rule with absolute power. With this in mind, Yamamoto set in motion a plan to draw the Yankee flattops into a trap — a trap from which none of them could hope to escape. Its bait: the furthest outpost of the Hawaiian Islands — tiny Midway Atoll, some 1100 miles west of Pearl Harbor and the site of a tiny Naval Air Station. At Midway, Yamamoto hoped to deal the U.S. Navy its coup de grace.

Opposing him was the new Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Pacific Forces, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. The canny Texan had been named to the post of "Cincpac" only weeks before; now, even with the addition of carriers *Hornet* and *Yorktown* to his forces, Nimitz was forced to limit the fleet to hit-and-run attacks against the Japanese until his forces were strong enough to engage them in a straight-on confrontation. The most famous of these early raids, the famous "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo" attack led by Army Lieutenant Colonel James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle, used Army Air Force B-25 bombers launched from a pitching carrier deck! Doolittle's pilots flew their land-based planes from *Hornet* and across 668 miles of open ocean to strike Tokyo itself at high noon, 18 April 1942. The direct attack on the capital city itself by the supposedly cowed and fleeing Americans had infuriated and frightened the Japanese military dictatorship; as a result, the general staff of the Imperial military hurriedly devised a plan to eliminate the American challenge in the Pacific once and for all. With the Americans gone, Japan could finish off the last bastions of Western interference in the hemisphere at her leisure. Even as the sailing date for the Midway mission approached, plans for the destruction of Sydney, Melbourne, and other Australian cities were being completed, with the long-awaited invasion of Hawaii set for August.

With this in mind, Yamamoto created a four-part plan to divide and conquer the American fleet. Intelligence reports from Japanese agents in Hawaii indicated that carrier *Yorktown* was badly damaged and in dry-dock, leaving Nimitz only *Enterprise* and *Hornet* to fight with; a screen of 16 submarines would take up station between Pearl Harbor and Midway in hope of putting a "fish" or two into the two Yankee carriers en route to the battle area. Meanwhile, Rear Admiral Kakuji Kakuta's Second Carrier Strike Force of light carriers, cruisers, and transports would make a diversionary attack on Alaska, drawing away the small fry of Nimitz' fleet and leaving the carrier groups thinly defended. This done, Admiral Nagumo's four-carrier Pearl Harbor Strike Force would close with the American flattops and engage them at torpedo-bomber range. Finally, the Main Body of the battle fleet would arrive, with *Yamato* in the lead; in the unlikely event that one of the carriers survived Nagumo's aerial attack, the Imperial flagship and her two sister battleships would quickly pound it into scrap with their big guns. As the stormy month of May ended, the war games and planning for the mission ended as well; for *Yamato*, there was nothing left to do but fight.

Nimitz' forces were substantially diminished by the loss of carrier *Lexington* and the near sinking of *Yorktown* during the Battle of the Coral Sea (3-8 May). Despite Yamamoto's overwhelming numerical advantage, however, the American admiral had two secret weapons about which his Japanese adversary

knew nothing. First was *Yorktown*: the great carrier was back at sea in only two days, thanks to the incredible efforts of Pearl Harbor's yard crews. The second was knowledge — the knowledge of the Japanese Navy's secret codes, cracked by U.S. intelligence analysts some weeks earlier. On 20 May, intercepted Japanese radio messages indicated that Yamamoto's next target would be in the northern Pacific — at a target designated "AF." After some confusion, AF turned out to be Midway Atoll.

Eight days later, Nimitz' two carrier task forces sortied from Pearl Harbor, headed for a point northeast of that island group. In command of the mission and of the still-under-repair *Yorktown* and Task Force 17 was Rear Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, veteran of the Coral Sea; Rear Admiral Raymond A. Spruance commanded Task Force 16, consisting of *Enterprise* (Captain George D. Murray, commanding) and *Hornet* (Captain Marc A. Mitscher, CO). Along with them came an escort of six cruisers and ten destroyers. Further code-breaking had revealed to Nimitz the exact size and intended course of the Japanese strike fleet, as well as the knowledge that the Aleutian raids were diversionary in nature; adroitly slipping his ships through the Japanese submarine "fence", Admiral Fletcher had his ships in position north of Midway by 2 June. The next morning, at 2:58 a.m. local time, the first Japanese bombs fell on Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians, right on schedule, but fooling no one. The real show was thousands of miles south of Alaska: just over twenty four hours later, a U.S. PBY search plane near Midway detected an assault transport column headed for the atoll itself.

Some several hundred miles west, the great battleship *Yamato* knifed through the black midnight fog at battle speed, leading the Main Force of the Midway strike fleet. Ahead of her ranged Admiral Nagumo's four fleet carriers *Akagi*, *Kaga*, *Hiryu*, and *Soryu*, their swords still bloody from the raid on Pearl; behind them, aboard the Imperial flagship herself, Yamamoto sat listening to reports coming in from his reconnaissance airplanes near Midway. American carriers reported sighted — but how many, and where? His transports had already been bombed by U.S. B-17s from Midway itself; although none had been hit, it was clear that the island's own air forces would have to be dealt with before Nagumo's carriers could turn to and destroy the enemy flattops. Unwilling to break radio silence to warn the carrier group commander of the suspected American presence in the area, Yamamoto chose to let his orders for a Midway assault stand, and a few hours later, at 4:30 a.m., the Japanese carriers began launching the first wave of bombers from their pitching black decks. Minutes later a PBY from Midway sighted the 108-plane attack group and warned the island to prepare for combat. The news was instantly relayed to Fletcher aboard *Yorktown*; just after 6:00 a.m., the Admiral ordered *Enterprise* and *Hornet* to the southwest to "attack enemy carriers when definitely located." As the great carriers began turning into the wind to launch, the first bombs began to fall on the base at Midway Atoll. It was 6:30 a.m., 4 June 1942, and in the next few minutes the crucial battle of the Pacific War would be won or lost. For Chester W. Nimitz and Isoroku Yamamoto — and for *Yamato* — the show-down had finally come.

Next: *Yamato* at Midway — The Crest of the Wave.

"SPRING WATER"

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF YAMATO

As loyal fans well know, the first YAMATO series was animated well over 20 years ago, before the anime medium arrived at its present state of technological sophistication. It comes as no surprise, then, that little things occasionally slipped through the cracks. Here are some of the more charming examples. *At right*: Wildstar gives the order to launch. There's nothing wrong with this, except that because the animation cells were switched, he's doing it from outside the bridge...and he appears to be several hundred feet tall!



At right: In episode 1, Wildstar and Venture investigate the wreckage of Astra's crashed space capsule on Mars. Wildstar peers inside...and in the very next frame, he pops out in front of the open hatch. Could it be an unprecedented warp phenomenon...or tired animators pulling an all-nighter? You be the judge!

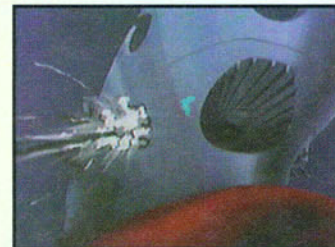


At left: In episode 3, we get a look at Captain Avatar's son and daughter in one of his precious family photos. In episode 26 (the end of the series) we get another look at the same photo...but one or two things have mysteriously changed by this time. It just goes to show you, even in the distant future you want to go with name-brand photo finishing!

At right: In episode 4, a squadron of Black Tigers launches to head off a bunch of Gamilon while the *Yamato* prepares for its first space warp. All well and good...but when they come back they've somehow turned into Cosmo Zeros!

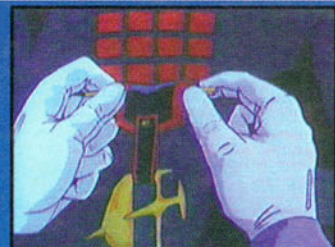


Below: in episode 9, the crew fires *Yamato*'s starboard rocket anchor at Ganz' battleship in order to disrupt its inertia. A good enough idea...

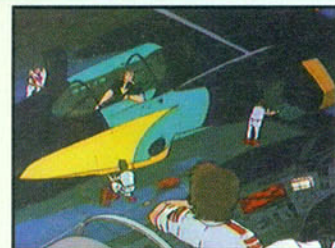


...but it's the port-side rocket anchor that gets ripped off in the ensuing tug-of-war. Don't blink, or you'll miss it!

At right: In episode 13, Desslok awards General Lysis a medal for his latest successful military campaign. For some strange reason, though, the medal changes from one scene to the next. Mysterious Gamilon shape-shifting metal? Yep, that must be it!



At left: In episode 15, Wildstar and Conroy trade banter while they work on their fighters. But somebody should tell Conroy he's in the wrong ship—that's a Cosmo Zero sporting a Black Tiger paint job!



At right: Probably the oddest blooper of them all, from episode 11. Two heads may be better than one, but this is just silly!



YAMATO SHOP

FIRST LOOK: THE STAR BLAZERS FLEET BATTLE SYSTEM

Musashi Enterprises, in a joint venture with Voyager Entertainment, Inc., is in the process of developing this exciting new tactical simulator game. For the first time, gamers can recreate the space battles from the animated series or generate their own original campaigns. Over 30 miniature spaceships representing the Earth, Gamilon, and Comet Empire fleets (some shown here) have been manufactured for use in this game module. The game is specifically designed for simplicity, allowing players to complete a session in three to five hours. More advanced rules will add complexity at a players' discretion.

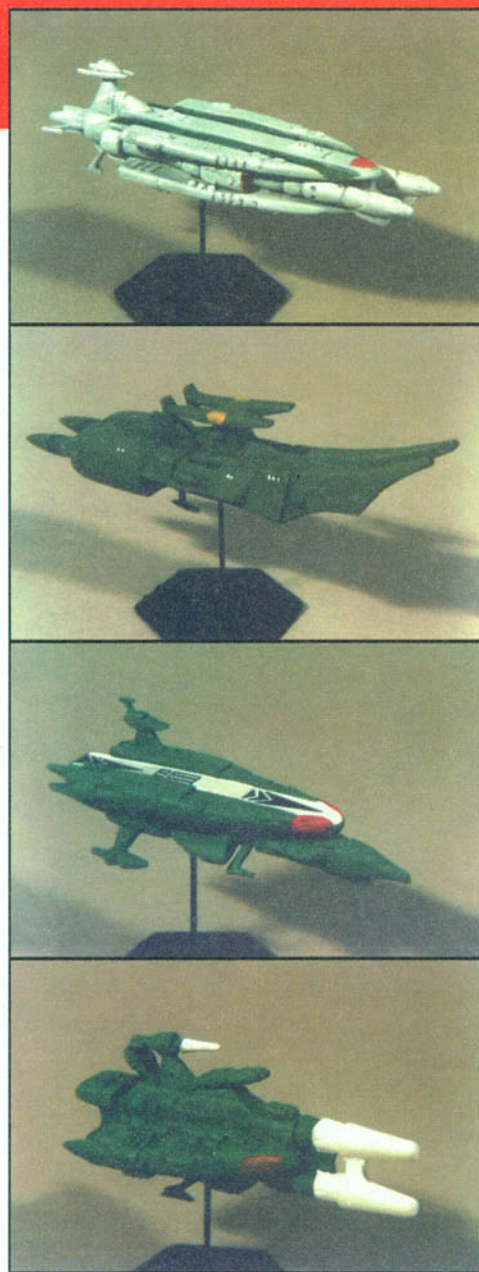
A strong feature of the game will be its authenticity. After translating material from dozens of Japanese books about the animated series, a tremendous volume of detailed data has been accumulated. The sheer amount of weapons, ship, and battle information presented in the game should satisfy even the most demanding *Yamato* fan. The process of refining this information into a game will also lead to the publication of a separate reference book covering all the technological aspects of the "Journey to Iscandar" and "Comet Empire" animated programs. It will serve as a companion volume for the game and a guidebook for the animated series with background information that has never before appeared in English.

Interestingly, the research for this game led to the discovery that the destructive power of many of the weapons systems, as depicted in the animated series, would allow few ships to survive long in the game. To make the game playable, uniform reductions in power were necessary, but the unique flavor of the storyline is unaffected, and there is still plenty of firepower to go around.

Musashi Enterprises will be debuting the game at the Gen Con Gaming Convention, August 8-11 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All *Star Blazers* and *Yamato* fans are encouraged to attend free gaming sessions and acquaint themselves with this new product. Other items available from Voyager Entertainment, such as comics and videos, will also be available at the convention.

If the *Star Blazers* Fleet Battle System is well-received, Musashi Enterprises hopes to expand the line by producing modules for the other *Yamato* television series and films, in addition to a role-playing game, fighter combat and surface combat games. Watch this space for further information!

Comments and questions can be sent to:
Musashi Enterprises, Inc.
2613 South 30th St.
Milwaukee, WI. 53215-2831
tel. & fax: 414 383 7791



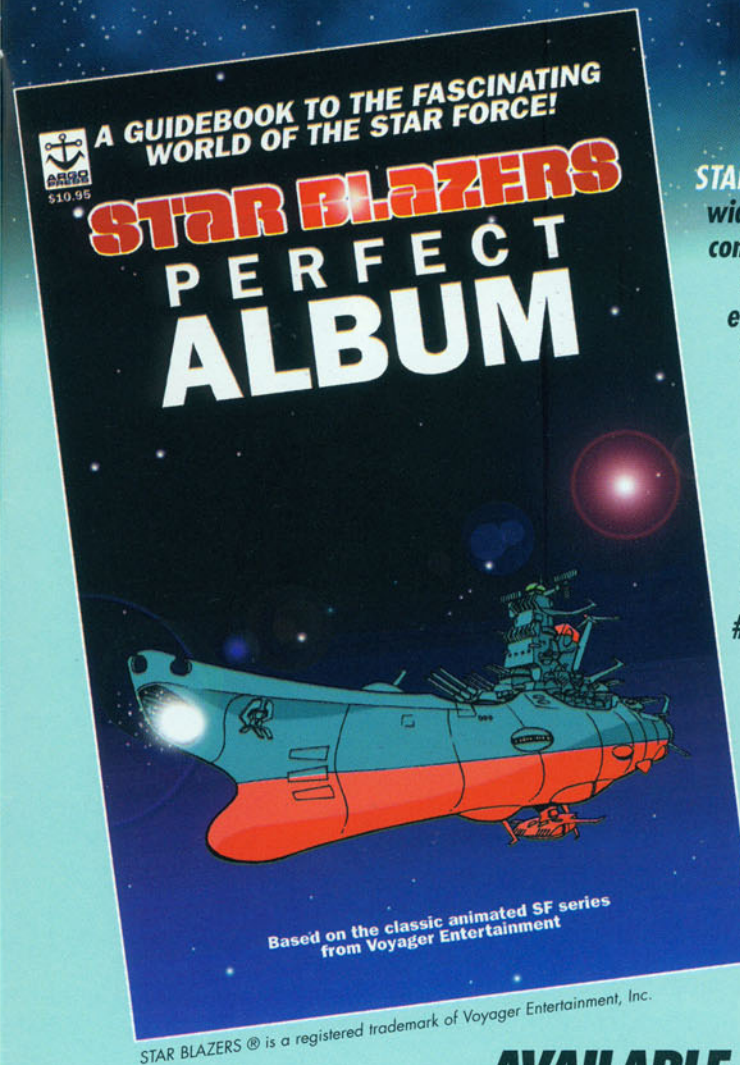
NEXT ISSUE



The concluding chapter of ICARUS! Yamato's refit inside the asteroid Icarus is drawing to a close, and with it Sasha's tour of duty there. But her desire to join Sandor and the rest of the Star Force on their next mission leads to conflict and Sandor must finally face the difficult choice between Sasha's future and the heartaches of his own past.

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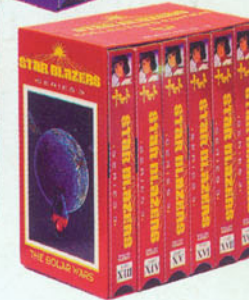
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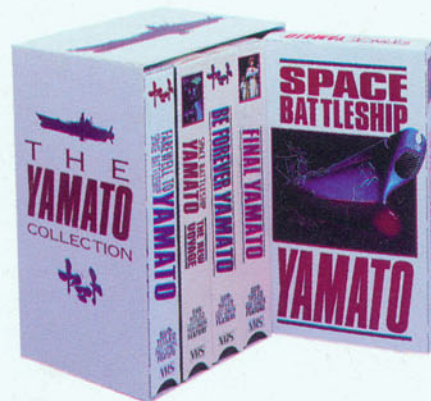
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