# PREFACE

Welcome to WARPS; a role-playing game (acronymically known as an RPG) system. I named it WARPS because it is an alternate means of traveling through different RPG worlds. It was designed to handle virtually any genre; sword and sorcery, modern day; science fiction; and any others that might pique the imagination. WARPS is a system for playing in RPG worlds but does not include world information. The game-master (GM) must create his own game world or use a pre-existing one from any of the many games available.

Why develop yet another game system? Personal dissatisfaction with the various ones that I—and by extension, my regular gaming group—have played was my primary motivation. No single system filled my needs as a GM; so, it was time to come up with one that did. The list of RPGs we have tried, some for extended periods of time, includes: *D&D*, *AD&D*, *Aftermath*, *Bushido*, *Daredevils*, *Earthdawn*, *Empire of the Petal Throne*, *Gamma World*, *Middle-Earth Role Playing System*, *Rolemaster*, *Serenity, Shadowrun*, and *Traveller*. This does not include the many others I have in my collection.

I wanted a system that is fairly easy to administer—one that is balanced and has sufficient capability and flexibility to handle those times when a player character (PC) might attempt something beyond the written letter of the rules. I also wanted a system whereby the GM wasn’t consigned to spending an interminable amount of time figuring out the combat action of each non-player character (NPC) while fumbling for innumerable combinations and configurations of dice in order to make the proper die rolls and subsequent calculations in enough time so that his players didn’t wander off in search of alternate diversions.

Spending several minutes on each combat action of every NPC can slow the progress of the game. Then when you add the various combinations of talents, skills, bonuses, etc. that must be taken into account for every situation, things can come to a grinding halt. Now, I like different dice as much as anybody, but methods such as *Earthdawn*’s Step System with its progression of die rolls contributes more to the tedium of the mechanics than to the fun of actual play as the characters and game master continually have to change dice whenever they have a bonus or penalty. In *Shadowrun,* the number of rolls and calculations became prohibitively time-consuming (roll the attack, count the successes, divide by two, stage the damage up, roll the body roll, count successes, divide by two, stage the damage down; whew!). Where’s the fun in that?

Another concern I have as a GM is the ability to challenge the players without necessarily bringing in bigger and badder monsters or NPCs each session; quality vs. quantity. This is a real issue with many RPGs as the PCs gain experience (or legend points, karma, whatever), and become so powerful that little can challenge them. I don’t have a problem with powerful PCs, but I do have a problem with hit point based systems where a PC can have more hit points than a dragon (or a windling warrior with more hit points than most horrors). While some players may dispute this, I know as a GM that PCs with no fear of dying in a combat or other physically challenging situations, are generally bored PCs who will look for other entertainment sooner or later.

The final gripe I have with many RPGs is using levels as a strict basis for determining a character’s skills and capabilities. This is closely related to the hit point bugaboo that I mentioned above. In fact, this is biggest reason that I haven’t gone with D20 games (although I have heard that the latest D&D edition is better, I haven’t checked it out). The dependence of character development on milestones represented by arbitrary level figures just turns me off. Also, I believe that in such games, players begin to chase levels as the goal of the game, rather than just taking pleasure in exploring their characters and the game world, as well as enjoying the adventure. I much prefer the *Earthdawn* method of development wherein a character increases his skills or talents to a certain degree and the level (circle) then follows.

At the encouragement of my gaming group then, I embarked on the mission of writing my own rules to have a game that doesn’t succumb to these complaints (although the game will likely have its own set of complaints from other GMs and players). In developing these rules, I drew on over 40 years of experience in RPGs as a player and GM. I also freely integrated ideas drawn from the RPGs in my collection.

The challenge in designing a system is to address all the issues and details inherent in an RPG in such a way as to make the system easy, playable, and most of all, enjoyable. Games should be fun, and rules that become too detailed or constricting can seriously affect the level of enjoyment the players and GM can achieve. Hopefully, it will be the judgement of any persons who play using this set of rules, that games based on this system are fun!

Since WARPS is a rules system and not a game setting, it only provides a framework for the resolution of game actions. To this end, statistics for a variety of armor and weapons have been included. However, there are no equipment purchase lists; no rules detailing car chases; no rules for starship battles; etc. Those details are all up to the GM to furnish, either through his own invention or from elsewhere. Running a fantasy campaign? Perhaps *D&D* or *Earthdawn* would be a good source for equipment lists. Embarking on a space campaign? Either *Traveller* (in any of its various incarnations) or *Serenity* or *Star Wars* might serve as a basis for vehicle combat. The various *D20* settings and rules may be used or adapted to supplement WARPS.

Finally, I hope your role-playing experience with WARPS is a good one. Enjoy!

Legal Disclaimer: The use of the names of various role-playing games throughout these rules is intended for instructional purposes only. I fully recognize and acknowledge the legal rights of the copyright and trademark holders, and the use of these names is not intended to be a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks.

Politically Correctness Disclaimer: I have used the masculine pronouns throughout these rules as I was taught in English class many years ago. I work for a living and have written this in my spare time. Ergo, I haven’t put the time into it to use feminine pronouns in every other paragraph or use the artificial s/he nonsense. I hope that female GMs/players will not take offense where none was intended.