

# *Space Gamer Magazine*

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***TRAVELLER***  
*Science-Fiction Adventure*<sup>®</sup>  
*in the Far Future*

Game Designer's Workshop

# ROBOTICS FOR TRAVELLER

by  
TONY WATSON

Call them what you will, robots, automations, androids, cyborgs or mechanical men, machines which have taken on the general appearance of men and the capability to perform many tasks that humans can, have always been an elemental part of science fiction. Isn't it fitting that they also be an important part of SF gaming?

One of the few omissions of GDW's role playing game **TRAVELLER** is in the area of robots. These interesting "creatures" have generated much enthusiasm lately. Two well known members of the mechanical race nearly stole the show from their human compatriots in **STAR WARS**. Their inclusion in any campaign could be interesting. The following rules are just one way to go about it.

In the technology tables in **TRAVELLER's** Book 3, "artificial intelligence" is listed as possible under tech 17, just about the highest level provided for. If robots are to be construed as artificial intelligence, then we can see why they are not covered in the rules; tech 17s are not common on the tech index matrix. For our purposes, I'm going to define robots as something less than artificially intelligent. Rather, they will be something like our modern computer: limited in function and capable of only doing what they are instructed (programmed) to do.

We'll begin by introducing some projected robot types.

## Summary of Robot Types

**SERVIBOTS** — are the simplest and cheapest of all robots. Their scope however, is very limited. They are capable of performing most menial tasks and labor. They can fulfill the specific role of ship's steward.

**MEDIBOTS** — are able to fulfill just one function, that of Medic. None are as skillful as a surgeon and thus no DMs are allowed.

**REPAIRBOTS** — possess both basic *mechanical* and *electronic* skills as outlined in Book 1, and thus are capable of most repairs, even of other robots suffering breakdown.

**ENGIBOTS** — can perform the duties and basic role of ship's engineer.

## CHART I

TYPE	STR/DEX/END	BRKDN	COST	TECH
Servibot	8 6 6	11	100,000 cr	13
Medibot	6 8 6	9	150,000 cr	14
Repairbot	6 8 6	9	150,000 cr	14
Engibot	5 5 6	9	200,000 cr	14
Navibot	5 5 6	6	250,000 cr	15
Pilotbot	5 5 6	6	350,000 cr	15
Warbot Mk I	10 9 10	9	500,000 cr	14
Warbot Mk II	12 11 12	6	750,000 cr	15
Warbot Mk III	10 9 10	6	1,000,000 cr	16

**PILOTBOTS** — are high technology robots that may serve as starship pilots. Mk II Pilotbots may serve as pinnacle or ship's boat pilots.

**NAVIBOTS** — may function as ship's navigator.

**WARBOTS MKS I, II, III** — are the only type of robot that may violate the "Three Laws of Robotics" (mentioned later). They are primarily machines of war, and may engage in personal combat with blades and weapons. More detailed data is available in Chart II.

Most of the information in Chart I will be clarified in the appropriate areas of the rules. Players should note however, the correlation between tech, price, function, and breakdown. Generally, robots of higher tech may perform more involved and complex functions, but cost more and are more susceptible to breakdown.

## PROGRAMMING

As the supplementary text to Chart I reveals, robots are fairly restricted in their actions. These rules are not intended to plug robots into the game as full fledged characters; robots should clearly play subordinate, but complimentary roles to their human counterparts.

As mentioned, robots generally do what they are told and that only. This rule should not be taken too literally. A Servibot work-

ing as a steward aboard a starship would know enough to ask passengers for their dinner selections at the appropriate time and would certainly possess initiative enough to tidy staterooms on its own. Conversely, the same Servibot would not approach the ship's captain with the intent of lecturing him on better methods of establishing parking orbits around gas giants. (A Navibot however, might be able to provide such information if it were requested, because such is in his realm of programming and function).

The idea is to achieve some balance. Robots are not to be supra-human creatures of amazing intellectual powers; but then again, they're a bit brighter than microwave ovens.

Robots will have a one track mind, being pretty much confined to their particular discipline. Generally, they won't show much initiative beyond their select field; gamemasters will have to make their own decisions as to their abilities in confusing situations.

## PERSONALITIES

The above restrictions are not meant to make robots dry and, if you will pardon the expression, "mechanical" characters. Each should be a little distinct, just like people.

Robots come with their own personalities

pre-programmed, mainly to make them more human-like and easier to get along with. Characters purchasing a new robot may request specific character traits, but once these are decided on and programmed in, they may only be altered during a major overhaul. The gamemaster is usually required to provide the responses for robots throughout the game (this is a good way for the gamemaster to project himself into the game).

Robots are given names, usually by their owner, during initial programming. These names may be anything the owner wishes (Beep-po, Robbie, Fido or Montgomery — whatever). The robot will answer to this name, as well as its serial number. The serial number may be a random set of numbers and letters or it may be a more structured system. Personally, I do the following: the first letter in the robot type is capitalized and followed by two random digits. This is followed by the first letter (again capitalized) of the world of origin and two more random numbers. Hence a Warbot from the planet Civitas might be called W03C54.

In all cases, the serial number takes precedence over more conventional names.

### THE LAWS OF ROBOTICS

The orders of a robot's owners are always fulfilled in preference to those of a relative stranger, save in very special cases. Only Warbots may violate the following three rules (swiped, incidentally straight from Dr. Asimov.)

- 1.) A robot may not injure a human being, or through inaction allow a human being to come to harm.
- 2.) A robot must obey orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the first law.
- 3.) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law.

If your campaign runs into aliens of a sentient and intelligent variety, they too will be treated as humans with regard to these rules.

Bear in mind that these laws will make robots fair game for unscrupulous humans.

### ROBOTS AND COMBAT

Generally, robots do not engage in combat, save in certain circumstances. A Servibot tagging along with a planetary mission as a porter might be attacked by an alien creature. Indeed, the first law would require the same Servibot to come to the aid of any humans in the party so attacked.

Robots function in combat just as a human does (refer to Chart I for dexterity, strength, and endurance). All non-Warbots are assumed to be armed with the equivalent of a cudgel. Medibots, due to the special nature of their work and the fact that their instruments are built into their appendages, may be considered armed with a scapel (dagger). Their armor is as jack. Warbot attributes are listed in Chart II.

### CHART II.

TYPE	PERSONAL WEAPON	GUN	ARMOR
Warbot Mk I	Bayonet	Carbine	Mesh
Warbot Mk II	Bayonet	Laser Carbine	Cloth
Warbot Mk III	Bayonet	Laser Rifle	Cloth + Reflec

Please note that these are merely equivalents and not to be taken literally. A robot may not actually be carrying a laser carbine *per se*, but has a weapon mounted somewhere (head, arm, torso, etc.) that is equivalent to a laser carbine.

The nature of Warbots is a bit different than other types. Primarily, they may violate any of the three laws upon receiving a command from their controller (usually owner). Warbots will obey only their controller, and to switch the robot to control of another person requires the services of someone with computer knowledge.

In addition to combat with personal weapons, Warbots may also serve as gunner aboard ships. The Mark IIs and IIIs may function as crew members for auto-cannon or other crew-served, laser weapons. The Mark IIIs, due to their high level of intelligence, are capable of considerable independent action. In addition to other combat functions, they may operate land vehicles and be used as forward observers. They may even direct other Warbots in simple combat operations.

When engaged in combat, Warbots receive the appropriate DMs for their strength and dexterity. They never grow tired (no weakened swings). Loss of all strength will result in the loss of the ability to use hand-to-hand weapons, while loss of all dexterity means damage enough has been taken to prevent fire. In combat situations, robots always move one on the tactical display and lose this ability only when they have taken damage exceeding their endurance.

Robots are considered destroyed when all abilities are reduced to zero or below.

### ROBOT PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE

Robots are purchased in a manner similar to space ships, only they are paid off in ten years rather than forty. When purchased, the buyer must advance 20% of the cash price as a down payment. Thereafter, he must make payments equal to 1/60th of the cash price each month for the next one hundred and twenty months. Thus, the purchase of a new Engibot (200,000 cr) would require a down payment of 40,000 cr, and 120 monthly payments of 3333 cr each.

Robots are available at industrial planets or the appropriate tech level or higher. Additionally, purchase facilities may be found at class A spaceports, though the specific

type the character wants may not be available (roll 9+ for type to be available, with a +1 for non-warbot types.).

Used robots may also be available (roll 10+ for specific type with a +1 for non-warbots) at 75% of their cost new, paid in cash. Used robots are generally less reliable (roll for breakdown twice a month), and have a chance (10+) of having a serious defect known only to the gamemaster until an appropriate time.

Once a month a breakdown roll is made for all robots. If the total of two dice yield the number in the breakdown column for that type exactly, that robot breaks down and is considered non-functional until someone with mech and electronics abilities (Repairbots qualify) works on it. The repairs may take from 1-6 days. Repairs may also be had on A or B spaceports.

Every year, robots must undergo a two week annual overhaul, usually concurrent with the ship's overhaul, at a cost of 0.1% of initial price. Robots do not of course incur salaries, nor are lite support costs applicable to them.

### HUMAN/ROBOTIC RELATIONS

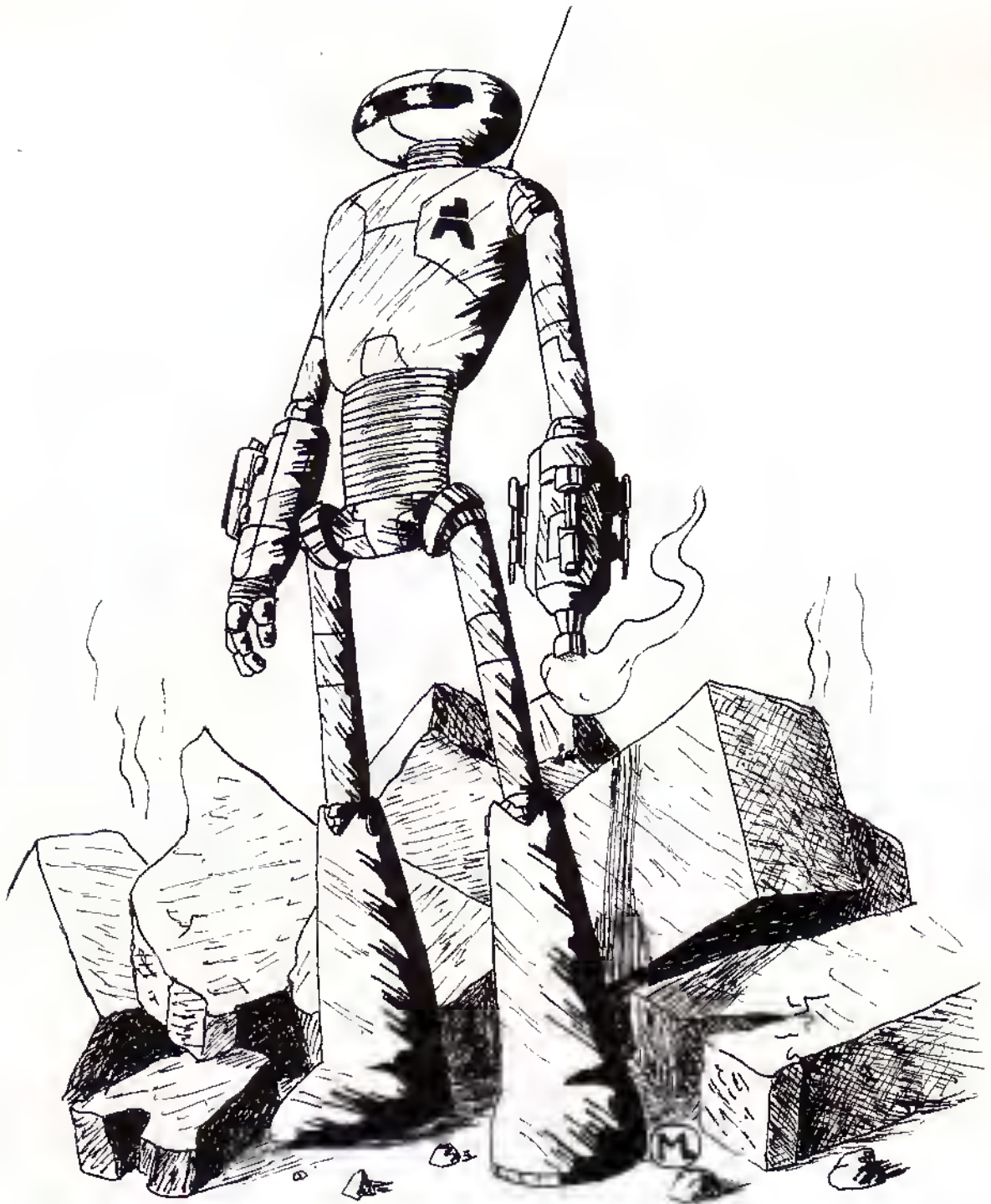
Considerable prejudice exists against robots, and many see them as intruding on human rights. As such, robots should never be elevated to positions higher than humans of the same type (even though the robot is probably more efficient). Thus, of two stewards, one human and the other a robot, the human would order the robot, but not vice versa. Robots are not placed in the position of "chiet" anything as long as there are humans serving in the same capacity, even if the robot is more skilled or experienced.

Warbots are especially feared. They are generally outlawed on planets of law level 4 or higher.

Robots are feared and misunderstood by people of lower tech planets. Parties travelling with a robot on a planet of tech level might expect problems of various sorts when they make any encounters with natives.

Statutes decree that the owner of a robot is responsible for any crimes the robot commits, unless it can be proven that the act was committed at another human's behest. In such cases, the robot is impounded and the responsible party is tried just as if he had committed the crime. Robotic testimony is especially useful in court, due to their infallible memory banks, and the fact that they do not lie if directly confronted by humans.





### OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT AND ABILITIES

Robots may be equipped with communication systems which will allow them to talk with their commander at long range. Such a system costs three times the normal price for the appropriate range communicator as listed in Book 3, and includes terminals for both robot and controller.

Also, for a cost of 2500 cr, robots may be fitted with a camera that transmits back to a base station. (A Mk I Warbot equipped with both camera and communicator is often called a Spybot).

Additional modifications can be made; specific costs and other considerations will have to be determined by the gamemasters.

Remember, due to their mechanical nature, robots may operate in all types of environments without vac suits or other

protective gadgetry.

If the gamemaster desires, he may allow players to attempt to upgrade the programming of their robots to receive DMs for them in their specific abilities category. The same procedure is followed as is done for attempting to write a ship's program with the addition that an immediate roll is made for breakdown.

### SOME USES OF ROBOTS IN CAMPAIGNS

Used skillfully, robots can add much to a campaign. The prime thing to remember is the nature of the robots themselves. When included, try to take advantage of their unique nature.

Some ideas are listed below:

A planet of a long dead civilization where now only robots exist.

A race so unprolific that robots are used for most menial tasks and combat. A ship of such a race might have a crew ratio of one or two aliens to five or ten robots.

Ships of robot berserkers left over from some age old war.

A black market in stolen robots.

An interstellar crime ring that uses robots for the dirty work.

These just scratch the surface. A number of other possibilities spring to mind and each gamemaster will best know how to apply robotics in his own campaign.



# Traveller

## addendum equipment & weapons

by

Robert P. Barger

(illustrations by author)

I think almost everyone is in agreement on **TRAVELLER** being the best SF role-playing game published to date. I have had a lot of fun with it, and during all those campaigns, I have had the urge to add various equipment and weapons to the tables in my **TRAVELLER** notebooks, weapons and equipment that appear in several of my favorite SF novels and stories.

Probably the most obvious thing missing from the **TRAVELLER** rules is laser pistols. Goodness! Everyone from Hawk Carse to Luke Skywalker has had a laser pistol, or at least some sort of beamed energy handgun at his or her disposal. In my universe, the average character can be expected to be able to purchase, on a suitably high technology planet and with the proper permits, a laser pistol that will do anything a laser pistol out of traditional SF ought to do: burn BEMs, drill holes through the baddies, and just generally make the Galaxy safer for the Good Guys (or Bad Guys, depending on your character's moral standards).

A laser pistol has a DM of +1 at close range, a +3 at short range, -3 at medium range, -4 at long range, and at very long range (in atmosphere), no hit is possible. But in vacuum, with no air to be ionized by the blast and thus diminish the beam's energy, one could, at least in theory, make a hit at even very long range. Thus, DM at very long range, in vacuum only, is -8. A character will have to be very very lucky or very very good, and most likely both, to make a hit.

Laser rifles and carbines should really be treated in a similar manner when in vacuum. Lasers should, after all, be much easier to aim since there is no problem of ballistics and most especially no recoil (in zero gee there is little or no ballistics problem to consider with normal guns, thus characters used to aiming above their targets in gee fields, may or may not have their reactions confused when firing standard firearms in vacuum where the bullets do not drop; lasers and characters using them will not be affected by zero gee. A laser beam is a straight line on planet, or

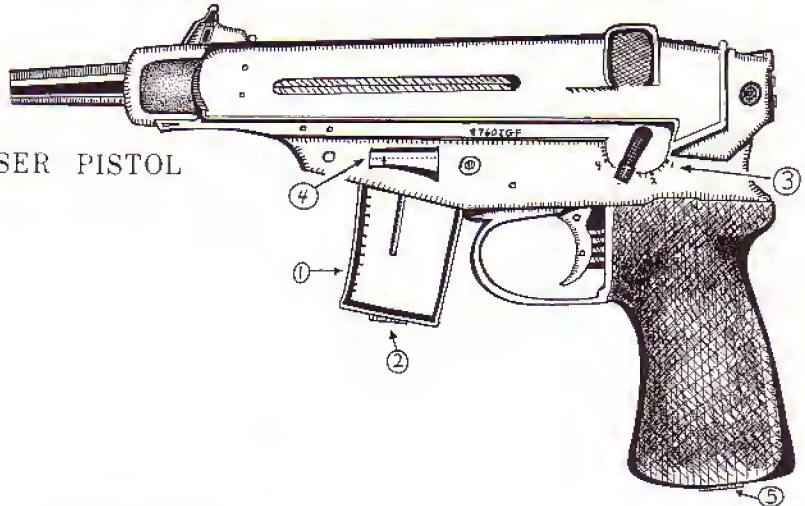
off. But, all this is up to the individual Game Master. And anyway, if a Game Master is creative enough in his planets and societies, not many characters will want to adventure out in the cold, lonesome vacuum of space.

A laser pistol requires a dexterity of 8, has a required dexterity DM of -3, and an advantageous dexterity level of 11. The advantageous dexterity DM is +2.

A laser pistol costs 2,000 CR and masses 1500 grams. It contains an internal, un-removable, rechargeable energy clip which contains enough energy for 10 full strength shots. The large and bulky powerpacks of the laser rifles and carbines may be adapted to fit pistols (an adaptor is needed), or a powerpack may be bought especially for a laser pistol. This powerpack is identical to that of the laser carbine, except that the purchaser has the option of the powerpack being either in the standard backpack form as

in the case of the long laser weapons, or in a broad belt which is more easily concealed under clothing. This belt will not interfere with the use of a vacc-suit. Many times characters will wish to use laser rifles or carbines while in vacc-suits. This is something I don't usually allow without special preparation by the character. Consider: it is traditional for vacc-suits to have their lifesupport systems in the form of backpacks. It was like that in SF in the 30's, and on the Moon in the 70's. So where does the backpack for a laser rifle or carbine go? On the chest? But, that is traditionally reserved for suit controls and communication devices. Where then does one strap the powerpack to a laser weapon when in a vacc-suit?

The pistol's belt powerpack solves the problem, and I also allow laser carbines and rifles to be plugged into such powerpacks, provided they have suitable adaptors attached. A belt-pack does not inter-



BASIC LASER PISTOL

1. Ten round clip
2. Recharging port for clip
3. Blast intensity setting
4. Charge indicator
5. Port for attachment of 50 round powerpack

ferre with either the wearing of the vacc-suit or the movements of a character. For a character trying to lug around a laser rifle and its backpack powerpack in a vacc-suit, I generally decrease his vacc-suit skill by "1".

Laser pistols do 4D damage (the same as laser carbines). But, laser pistols have adjustable fire controls, and a character can decide before he pulls the trigger just how many dice (up to the maximum allowable of 4D) damage he wishes to inflict on the target. For instance, the pistol user might decide to thumb the weapon to its lowest setting and only do 1D damage on the target, or thumb the selector to the maximum 4D, and inflict 4D damage if the target is hit.

The idea here is that a hit by a 4D blast will many times kill, while lesser blasts will sometimes only reduce one of an opponent's attributes to "0", thus rendering him unconscious. The equivalent of Mr. Spock setting his phaser on "stun". I recommend all laser weapons be given the ability to vary the intensity of their shots, since this sometimes adds a very interesting feature to the game.

Each combat round, a character can change the intensity of the weapon's fire. It is much too confusing to make a player take a combat turn to change the setting on his weapon, and anyway, unlike Spock's badly designed phaser which needs both hands to change the intensity setting, it is only logical to assume the weapons of the future will be as well designed as those of today: a mere flick of the thumb or trigger finger should be all that is needed to switch settings on a weapon. (A Game Master who is a realism nut might add a DM of -1 for the slight wavering of the weapon as the little switch is flipped to a new setting, but certainly no more.)

Each die of potential damage is considered to be energy. I.e., a laser rifle powerpack contains enough energy for 100 5D shots, or potentially 500D of damage. A laser pistol's internal energy clip holds 10 shots as mentioned before, each shot (if it connects) being worth 4D damage. Therefore, if a character wanted, he or she could dish out the contents of his pistol's self-contained clip in 10 4D blasts, or 40 1D blasts, or anything in-between.

Suppose Dirk Broadbent is walking down a jungle trail and is suddenly confronted by a small, deadly Vagan spider-snake. Should he whip up his laser pistol and blow said spider-snake away, taking along with it 4D worth of his precious laser clip's energy supply (which is already half depleted from a previous run-in with some screaming nergabats earlier in the day) not to mention also blowing

away half the rare bornoeclyptus tree from which the spider-snake was dangling, and thereby enraging the environmentalists of Vega III--or should he quickly flick his power setting to 1D and blow the critter's head off, thus saving his pistol's precious energy and keeping the environmentalists off his back (that is, unless they find out he has shot a specimen of the near-extinct spider-snake)?

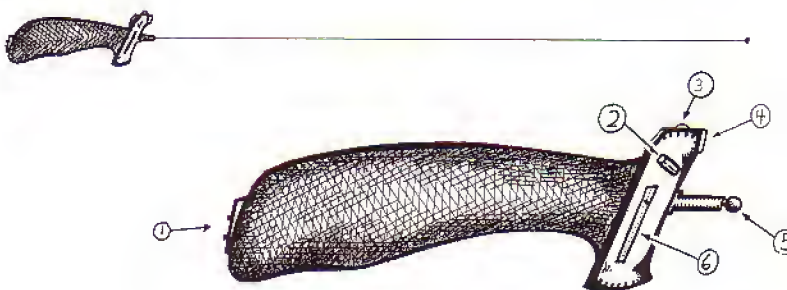
Remember, Dirk still has 40 miles of jungle to traverse before he makes it to the nearest Federation outpost, and saving energy in his small clip could be very important. I like this idea of variable power for lasers because it adds to the game's potential for recreating the almost cliché, but nevertheless enjoyable situation of the protagonist having an almost all-powerful weapon, but having to carefully conserve the use of its limited energy supply.

In an emergency, a laser pistol's internal clip can be recharged in one combat round by plugging it into a powerpack from a laser rifle or carbine or even pistol. Though for the rifle and carbine powerpacks, an adaptor is needed. Laser pistols are normally recharged at one's leisure at any electrical power source and cost is only 25 cr or so . . .

Another weapon I like, this one taken

from Larry Niven's books, is the variable sword. This weapon consists of a pommel and hilt similar to that of a normal sword, but contains a battery, force-field generator, and an almost microscopic metal filament. The filament is unwound by pressing a stud on the grip, and given rigidity by the force-field it can slice through almost anything, from human beings to gun barrels. The Game Master must use his common sense in deciding upon just what a variable sword can and cannot cut through. Such a sword is very light, strong, and durable. A very strong man could cut through anything short of hull metal with one. But variable swords take a lot of energy, and can only be used for 10 combat rounds before recharging is needed (much like laser rifles, though only at about one tenth the cost). Base weight is 400 grams, length is 15 mm retracted to 1200 mm fully extended. It does damage against most targets, including armored humans. Nothing short of full battle armor has any effect on its destructive effects. Unlike other cutting weapons, strength does not determine one's ability with a variable sword. Variable swords require a dexterity of 8, and have a required dexterity DM of -3, an advantageous dexterity level of 11, with an advantageous dexterity DM of +1. If the user's dexterity is less

### STANDARD VARIABLE SWORD



1. Recharge port
2. Safety catch
3. Energize button
4. Laser beam projector for night fighting
5. Knob for day fighting (you see, the "blade" is virtually invisible and something is needed to show its location)
6. Charge indicator



than the required 8, each combat round conducted at close range requires that character to make a saving roll to keep from cutting himself with the weapon's nearly invisible blade. Roll 8+ with expertise a positive DM. If the character cuts himself, it is only 1D damage, rather than the full 4D. Close range DM is -1, short +4, and farther than that, forget it.

Variable swords are easily hidden and concealed. They are illegal for civilian ownership on all worlds, though similiar instruments can be found in industries which use a similiar principle and can be stolen, bought, or converted. The variable sword is the standard side arm of all Marine officers of rank Major or higher, and all scouts who survive three or more terms, (or such is the case in my universe).

And last but not least, a major piece of equipment that no self-respecting asteroid miner or space pirate would be without: a skin-tight vacc-suit.

A skin-tight vacc-suit, or vac-skin, is simply that: a second skin of super-strong, super-tight bodystocking from the neck to toes (and individual toes in the garment for each of the wearer's toes too, else they be uncomfortably scrunched up as in a too tight pair of shoes). Each character's vac-skin must be tailored to his or her individual body, and only he or she can wear it. It takes approximately 30 minutes to struggle into a vac-skin but when worn, it increases the wearer's vacc-suit skill by "1". This is because such a suit allows a character complete and unrestricted freedom of movement, and as an added bonus, it can be worn under any other clothing.

A vac-skin can be used with all standard makes of space helmets and life support systems, but it offers less than adequate insulation from heavy radiation and in such cases reflec should be worn over the vac-skin. Vac-skins are temperature controlled, but do not come with helmet or life support. There is a deluxe model which comes completely outfitted, from magnetic boots and helmet and life support, to laser pistol and sanitary attachments. A deluxe vac-skin can be worn for an indefinite period of time without discomfort. A punctured vac-skin is quickly sealed with a patch/bandage, since the suit can hardly be punctured without human skin and tissue also being punctured. Price for a regular vac-skin if 15,000 cr, while a deluxe model costs 30,000.



## BASIC LASER RIFLE

power cable to powerpack



# MAYDAY

a review

by

Tony Zamparutti

Most space games are about large ships in battles between worlds or galactic empires. However, Game Designer's Workshop's latest science fiction game, **MAYDAY**, is about battles between small spaceships--the largest ship in the game weighs only 800 tons. **MAYDAY** is designed to go with GDW's very popular role-playing game, **TRAVELLER**. The design of **MAYDAY** is based largely on the miniature rules in the second booklet of **TRAVELLER**, and also on another previous GDW game, **TRIPLANETARY**.

**MAYDAY** contains an eight-page rule booklet, four geomorphic 8½ x 11 map sheets, and about 150 die-cut counters of ships, missiles, and planets. The rule book cover (which is also the game cover, since **MAYDAY** is packaged in a plastic zip-lock bag) depicts a spaceship that resembles the hulk of an F-4 Phantom after it had been attacked by a horde of souvenir hunters. (Ever notice how many spaceships look like airplanes?) The only other artwork in the game is the silhouettes on the counters. All of the ships have the same silhouette on them (it resembles the X-wing fighter in Star Wars). The rule booklet is easy to read, and there are few problems in the rules. The scenario instructions, on the other hand, are very vague; many neglect to tell you just where the ships start. Over all, the components of **MAYDAY** are of high quality.

The scale in **MAYDAY** is fairly large in comparison to the small ship sizes--each hex is one light-second in size (about 186,000 miles) and each turn is the equivalent of 100 minutes. In comparison, the **TRAVELLER** miniature rules on which the game is based have 10 minute turns, while each inch represents 1000 miles.

The large scale of **MAYDAY** makes some rules seem ridiculous, such as the boarding rule, or the collision rule, which states that if two ships are in the same hex at the same time they may collide. This seems a little odd considering the scale of the game.

The turn sequence in **MAYDAY** is fairly standard, with movement followed by combat in each player-turn. However, there are also phases for return fire, programming ships' computers, and launching missiles.

The movement, as in many space games, is only two-dimensional. But, the game does use a system drawn from **TRIPLANETARY** for acceleration, inertia, and their effects on a ship's course. However, **MAYDAY**'s system is applied much differently from the grease pencils used in **TRIPLANETARY**. To record movement, each ship in **MAYDAY** has three counters. One marks the ship's past position (the last turn's position), another, its present position, and the third, its future position (next turn's). When a ship is moved, the present position counter is then placed in the hex in which the ship would be if it continued its present course (which is marked by the other two counters). The future counter can be shifted one or more hexes (depending on the ship's acceleration) to signify a course change. This easy system is fairly effective in showing the effects of velocity and inertia. The three counters per ship can make things a little confusing for the first game or so, but players will be able to get used to it. The system is easier (in some ways) than the constant grease pencil writing in **TRIPLANETARY**. In a large battle in that game, the board could get quite messy.

Combat in **MAYDAY** is drawn almost directly from **TRAVELLER**. The weapons used are lasers and missiles. Lasers do not differ in power between the smaller and larger ships in the game; more powerful ships just carry more lasers. Missiles are described in detail: there are several different kinds of guidance, propulsion, and detonation systems for missiles. These can be combined in various ways to make sort of *custom-designed* missiles.

Ship computers and their programming form a very important part of the game. The computer rules are also drawn from **TRAVELLER**, although they are modified slightly. Each ship has a computer which has storage and CPU (Central Processing Unit) sizes. These computers are fitted with various programs to do essential jobs in controlling the ship. For instance, the program "Maneuver" is needed for the ship to make any course changes. Programs are placed in the storage, and are moved into the CPU for execution. The programs in the CPU can only be changed at the end of the player-turn, so players need to anticipate which programs they will need the following turn.

Battles in **MAYDAY** involve a lot of maneuvering. Unlike **TRIPLANETARY**, players do not have to worry about running low on fuel, but programming ships' computers does keep them busy. Combat involves a hit table which determines which part of the ship has been disabled. These hits can be repaired indefinitely (God knows how . . .), and the only way to destroy a spaceship is to hit it four times in one turn (or three times in three successive turns). Thus, it is not very easy to disable an enemy. Unless of course you try to board his ship.

By itself, **MAYDAY** is not that exciting of a game. Although its movement system is innovative, the game as a whole is not as good as many other tactical space games, such as **ALPHA OMEGA**, or the tactical game of **BATTLEFLEET: MARS**. The rules could use some polishing in places, and more attention could have been given to the various scenarios. However, **MAYDAY** should make a fairly good game for owners of **TRAVELLER** who do not want to bother with the miniature rules in that game, or who want to have an expansion of the missile rules in **TRAVELLER**, which were glossed over. For that matter, **MAYDAY** might be pretty good for some of the other space role-playing games on the market.

**MAYDAY** was designed by Marc W. Miller, and is sold by Game Designer's Workshop, 203 North Street, Normal, Illinois 61761 for \$5.

# PSIONICS IN TRAVELLER

by

Kenneth W. Burke

My main complaint with the psionics of TRAVELLER is the conservatism that surrounds their acquisition and usage. Even though a character undergoes psionic training, he or she is not guaranteed psionic abilities; those which do receive psionic talents rarely acquire more than three. The talents themselves are lacking—telepathic mind assault is all but impossible to launch; telekinetics can move but mediocre weight amounts; teleportation-users find it all but impossible to gain skill. Due to these (and other) problems, I have rewritten a good portion of the psionic rules to TRAVELLER; players may consider anything in the TRAVELLER psionic rules that I do not change to remain as is. The new rules are as follows:

**1. Psionic Institute-** To determine if a qualified planet has a branch of the Psionic Institute, roll three dice; a 6+ die roll result means a branch is present. Psionic Institute branches can only exist on planets that have a population level of 9+ or have a technological level of 18+. If a planet has both, roll the dice *twice*. Two successful die rolls would mean the planet has *two* Psionic Institute branches (they could exist as allies or enemies, depending on the referee's desires). When rolling the dice to see if a character can get a psionic strength examination free of charge, apply a DM-1 for each social standing level the character has above seven.

**2. Psionic Strength Ratings-** Those characters aged fifteen to eighteen at the time they undergo their psionic strength examinations have no DMs applied to their die roll result; characters aged eleven to fourteen have a DM+1 applied to their psionic strength rating die roll result; characters aged seven to ten have a DM+2 applied to their P.S.R. die roll result;

characters aged three to six have a DM+3 applied to the die roll. Those characters that are aged zero (the fatal stage of development) to two cannot have their P.S.R. determined for them; those characters who have their P.S.R. strengths determined for them at the ages of three to eighteen are considered to be the "students" and "wards" of the Psionic Institute. Students and wards wield considerable power (the only difference between the groups is that the students, being of aristocratic families, attend the Psionic Institute for training sessions *only*, while the wards, being a combination of runaways, orphans, outcasts, the children of psionic parents, and bastards have the Psionic Institute as their home; ten years after they begin training, students and wards are expected to have reached their maximum individual psionic talent levels. The Psionic Institute rarely requires a student or ward to perform missions before reaching adult age; once in a great while, though, the Institute *will* employ the services of a student or ward to act as a courier, a spy, or an assassin. Life at the Psionic Institute is never dull!

**3. Psionic Training-** A character can have up to six separate psionic talents; they are telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, awareness, teleportation, and mind-blast (to be described in the next section). The "special" psionic talent is given at will by the referee. For a character to make use of the psionic talents, the number of psionic talents that a character has must first be determined. This is done by simply rolling a die; the resulting number equals the number of separate talents of psionic ability that a character possesses. The exact psionic talents that the character has are then determined by rolling a die once for each separate talent a character has, and consults the following table:

DIE ROLL	TALENT
1	Awareness
2	Clairvoyance
3	Mind-Blast
4	Telekinesis
5	Telepathy
6	Teleportation

If you roll a number that has been rolled before, ignore the number and keep on rolling the die until only separate talents have been determined.

**4. Mind-Blast-** The telepathic ability of mind assault is now considered to be a separate talent altogether, known as "mind-blast"; a user of the mind-blast talent has the choice of either stunning, injuring, or killing an opposing character. Greater descriptions of mind-blast abilities are as follows:

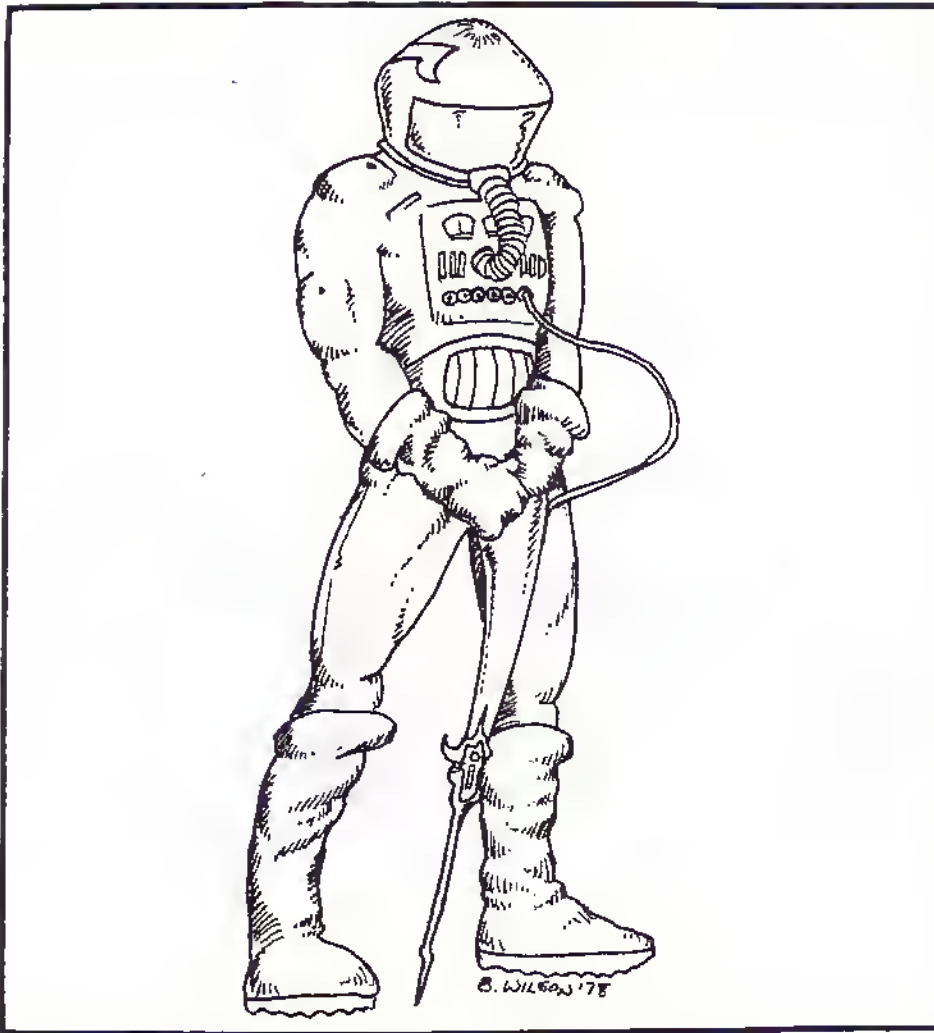
**STUN:** Stun is a level three ability, requiring three psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point costs due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to a "stun" mind-blast will be automatically rendered unconscious; in cases involving a shielded mind, determine the success of the attack as you would a telepathic mind assault against a shielded mind.

**INJURE:** Injure is a level six ability, requiring six psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point costs due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to an "injury" mind-blast will be automatically rendered unconscious and the character it belongs to suffers twelve points worth of wounds; "injury" mind-blasts directed against shielded minds are resolved in the same manner as "stun" mind-blasts.

**KILL:** Kill is a level nine ability, requiring nine psionic strength points to perform plus any additional psionic strength point cost due to range. An unshielded mind subjected to a "kill" mind-blast will be annihilated, the character that the annihilated mind belongs to being automatically killed; "kill" mind-blasts directed against shielded minds are resolved in the same manner as "stun" mind-blasts.

Mind-blasts that are successfully resolved against shielded minds have the same effects on the minds as if they were unshielded; the range costs of mind-blasts, from close to distant range (a mind-blast cannot be launched beyond distant range), are one, three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. A character launching a mind-blast must always be aware (via psionic or non-psionic methods) of the victim's location; it takes less than one second for a character to launch a mind-blast. Psionic assaulting animals will always attack via "kill" mind-blasts.





5. *Telekinesis*- Telekinetics are now able to move more plentiful weight amounts. These new weight amounts, along with the levels of training necessary to move them, are as follows:

Levels	Weights
1.....	1 kg
2.....	5 kg
3.....	10 kg
4.....	25 kg
5.....	50 kg
6.....	75 kg
7.....	100 kg
8.....	250 kg
9.....	500 kg
10.....	750 kg
11.....	1 mg
12.....	5 mg
13.....	10 mg
14.....	25 mg
15.....	50 mg

One "kg" (kilogram) equals 2.2 pounds; one "mg" (megagram) equals 2,200 pounds. Megagrams are also referred to as "metric tons".

6. *Mind-Control*- Mind-control is a telepathic ability; a character must have a telepathic level of nine and expend nine psionic strength points plus any additional psionic strength point cost due to range to perform it. Mind-control allows a telepath to be totally in control of a victim's mind and therefore, action; the victim acts as if he, she, or it were but a mere extension of the telepath's own body, such as an arm or a leg. The telepath does not leave his, her, or its own body while using mind-control; rather, the telepath has his, her, or its consciousness in both bodies at the same time. The victim can be made to do anything the telepath desires the victim to do, suicide included; if the victim is killed while under mind-control, the mind-controlling telepath is rendered unconscious for twelve hours. The ability of mind-control lasts as long as the telepath is rendered unconscious for twelve hours. The ability of mind-control lasts as long as the telepath using it desires, or until (a) someone puts an artificial shield on the victim, (b) the victim dies, (c) the victim is moved out of

range, or (d) the mind-controlling telepath dies. Mind-control can only be used against an unshielded mind; psionic-users, because of this, cannot be subjected to mind-control. It takes six seconds for the mind-control technique to take effect.

7. *Artificial Shields*- Artificial shields allow those who wear them immunity to all forms of telepathy and a psionic shield strength of nine.

8. *Experience*- At the end of each game month, two dice are rolled once per psionic talent that a character has, to determine possible experience gains. For each roll of 8+, a character advances one level of experience in whatever individual psionic talent that was rolled for.

9. *Recovery*- Characters now recover any psionic strength points they had to spend to perform psionic talents the moment they stop performing those talents that caused them to spend the psionic strength points to begin with.

10. *Psionic Devices*- As there are certain drugs which increase a psionic-user's power and abilities, there are also certain types of artifacts, known as *psionic devices*, that do likewise. Psionic devices come in many sizes and shapes; they usually fall into one of three categories--devices which allow a character the use of a certain psionic ability; devices which allow a character the use of a certain psionic ability plus the necessary psionic strength points needed to perform the psionic ability. Because of the psionic nature of the devices they are usually outlawed on planets with law levels of one or higher; even on planets with a law level of zero, discovery of them by planetary authorities will almost always result in their seizure. Roll an 11+ on two dice to avoid such seizures. The devices themselves cannot be bought at a store; rather, they must be found. Psionic devices can be found in such places as ancient ruins, excavation sites, or derelict spaceships. The Psionic Institute offers generous rewards for psionic devices; these rewards have, on occasion, exceeded CR 1,000,000,000!

The psionics of TRAVELLER are not the only part of the game that needs revision; I can think of several sections of the rulebook that need to be redefined, overhauled, or dropped altogether. Hopefully, G.D.W. will do this; TRAVELLER is at the same stage of development that DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS was at a few years ago, and, if given time to develop, will be as successful. Its future now lies in the hands of the Game Designer's Workshop; let us hope they improve it.



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# MERCENARY

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*a review*  
*by*  
 TONY WATSON

GDW's science-fiction game TRAVELLER is fast becoming one of the most popular role playing games available, the perennial D&D notwithstanding. Perhaps then, it was almost inevitable that the hunger for additional rules and material these games engender in their players, would crop up with TRAVELLER. MERCENARY (TRAVELLER Book 4) is an attempt to satisfy this want.

Mercenaries have been a standard feature of SF for many years. This book is an attempt to bring this aspect, as well a generally more comprehensive military system, to the game.

The people at GDW have come up with a fairly clever system for supplementing the original game of three volumes. Publications concerned with TRAVELLER will be of two types: Books and Supplements, one of each having appeared so far. The former are merely aids to the referee, saving him some time, but essentially offering no new rules. The existing 'supplement', 1001 CHARACTERS, is just that: a listing of non-player characters, divided by service, giving characteristics, skills and material possessions. The book serves as a great aid to the referee who needs

to come up with some non-playing characters in a hurry and doesn't have the time to go through the normal generation process.

'Books', however, are quite a different thing. These are full-fledged rules volumes, containing new material. Such is the case with MERCENARY.

If you are running a campaign and have found the original rules for Army and Marine types to be a bit lacking, or you wish to **emulate** any of the heroic exploits of countless other mercenaries appearing in the pages of SF, this volume is perfect for you. However, if you are looking for more in depth space combat or new material for world creation, then this book will have only a secondary value for you. It deals exclusively with the subject of its title.

The rules to MERCENARY add to, supplant and amend some of the original TRAVELLER material, and have a greater emphasis on military matters.

One of the major changes in the new volume is the process for generating characters of the Army and Marine services. While generally similar to the original, it is considerably more

complex.

After enlisting in either the Army or Marine services, the player must choose a specific arm of that organization. Army sub-categories include the Infantry, Cavalry, Artillery, and Support. Marine categories are more limited, just Infantry and Support. Players then gain a basic training skill of Gun Combat 1, and an advanced skill dependent on the roll of a die and consulting a table for each arm. After this initial segment, each term is divided into four, single year, segments (basic training comprises the first year of the first term). Each of these segments is resolved via a number of die rolls.

First, a die roll is made for general assignment, with the possibility of a command position being available for an officer occurring or a special assignment, such as cross training or commando school, cropping up.

Then, a specific assignment is rolled for, consulting a separate column for each arm. The results range from garrison to counter-insurgency, with a variety of others between.

Once the specific assignment has been determined, die rolls are made for survival, the chances of promotion and decoration, and

acquired skill, with the numbers needed depending on the arm of service and the type of assignment. As one might expect, the die roll required for survival in a raid situation is higher than for garrison duty, but the chances for decoration, promotion and skill are much better.

If a player accrues a skill for that year, he may roll on one of two charts, the Military Occupational Specialty table emphasizing skills associated with the arm or service, or the Skill Table, which offers a broader variety as well as changed to improve the character's basic makeup. The skills list offered in *MERCENARY* is considerably expanded over that in *TRAVELLER*; skills such as "Zero-G Combat", "Recruiting" and "Recon" are now possible.

Once a player figures he has had enough of the military life, he may muster out, using the same rules as in *TRAVELLER* for the procedure.

The next major section of the rulebook deals with "tickets" or the contracts, made between mercenary groups and their employers. Tickets address such essentials as the nature of the mission, weapons to be used and who provides them, and, of course, payment for services rendered.

Players who do not have their own bands may attempt to join any group they encounter, the success of the attempt determined by a die roll, modified for prior service and any skills pertinent to the mission at hand that the applicant might possess. Further tables list the salary the mercenary can expect and the number of "shares" or percentage of any final profit, he will receive. In addition, an explanation of the duties and position of each rank is included. This section concludes with five examples of tickets. These should give the referee a number of ideas of his own.

The next major area addressed is recruiting. This is for the player characters who wish to organize their own mercenary group. The number of recruits available, and their quality (raw recruits, veterans or mercenaries) is determined by die roll, modified by the planet's tech, law, and government levels. Players then train the recruits (this is where instructional skills come in very handy) and organize them into fire teams, squads and on up to battalions. Morale is figured for each team, considering such variables as terms served by its members, and any decorations awarded. A host of minor rules follow, addressing such things as heavy weapons and support and maintenance personnel.

The purpose of a mercenary organization is fighting, and the *MERCENARY* rules offer three ways to handle battles. The first system builds on the basic personal combat system given in *TRAVELLER*, adding some modifications to cover the slightly different situations and weapons existing in military confrontations. The Abstract System is just that, a group of charts and tables to be used in resolving

combats on a unit to unit basis with a few die rolls. The third system is the Free Form system, which is very much as the name implies since only a brief paragraph follows. The referee is pretty much left to his own devices when using this system.

The last sixteen pages of the fifty-two page rulesbook are devoted to weaponry and appropriately tagged "Ironmongery". For those who were disappointed with the rather mundane nature of the weapons in *TRAVELLER*, *MERCENARY* may be the cure. The nature of the weapons included in this volume is decidedly futuristic and very lethal. A number of new, small arms are included, such as the electro-magnetic Gauss rifle and the Snub pistol, used especially for shipboard actions. There are also some high energy weapons (with the emphasis on **high**—these weapons are very nasty) in the form of plasma and fusion guns.

There is a variety of new support weapons and grenade launchers, plus a complete listing of field artillery from simple mortars and howitzers on up to mass driver guns and Meson accelerators.

The volume ends with the combat charts necessary to include the plethora of new weapons into the *TRAVELLER* combat system.

Over all, *MERCENARY* is a good effort, worthy of the game it supplements. Players and referees who have an inclination towards the more martial aspect of the game should be sure and include the book into their campaigns.

The only drawback to *MERCENARY* is its relatively high price; \$5.98 for the single volume.

*MERCENARY*, designed by Frank Chadwick, is available from GDW at 203 North Street, Normal, Illinois.



## Featured Review

# SNAPSHOT

by Tony Watson

The analogy between vast and stormy seas and the immensities of interstellar space is one that has held throughout SF gaming and fiction. Both posit a breed of brave, if sometimes ruthless, men. Piracy, hijackings, boarding parties and the slicing of laser beams down narrow corridors are natural parts of SF adventure gaming.

SNAPSHOT is a new game by GDW which deals with just these intriguing actions. The game is a derivative of the popular *Traveller* SF role-playing system, though it is intended to be a game unto itself. Its rule book is basically a compilation and extrapolation of the personal combat system and weapons outlined in Book I of *Traveller* and the *Mercenary* supplement. Like a previous GDW release, *Mayday*, which dealt with starship-to-starship combat, SNAPSHOT takes a section of the main *Traveller* rules and structures a new game around it. The result is an interesting stand-alone game, or a helpful addition to the *Traveller* system.

As usual with material from GDW, physical quality and presentation are very nice. The game comes boxed, with a three-color illustration by Paul Jaquays on the cover.

The rulebook is nicely laid out in nine major sections and a number of smaller subsections, facilitating reference. Much of the material has been covered in the Personal Combat and Weapons sections of *Traveller*, and is repeated here for those who do not have the parent game.

These rules are supplemented by a double-sided pull-out sheet for the combat tables. These tables are precalculated for range and armor factors; one needs only to figure in personal bonuses for the character in question. This saves considerable time and effort over the original system, which required referees or players to make such calculations for every attack or prepare a chart of their own.

Counter design is rather simple, yet still functional and colorful. Each counter represents an individual, denoted by the silhouette of a man or woman in an action pose, armed with one of a variety of weapons. The counters carry a letter for ID purposes. There are four color-groups of counters, as well as a number of extra counters depicting explosions, incapacitated or dead characters, or

hexes covered by individuals with fire weapons. There are also imaginative "creature" pieces, ranging from a tree kraken to something like a praying mantis.

Probably the most impressive component is the map. It represents deck plans of a Type S Scout/Courier and a Type A Free Trader. These plans are carefully done, striking a nice balance between function and style. The map is gridded out in half-inch squares, used to regulate combat and movement. Symbols are used to denote a variety of doors, hatchways, iris valves, tunnels, stairways, and other features. Staterooms, drive-rooms, common areas, and the bridge are all labeled. These plans are somewhat different from those offered by Judges' Guild, but the same half-inch grid is used.

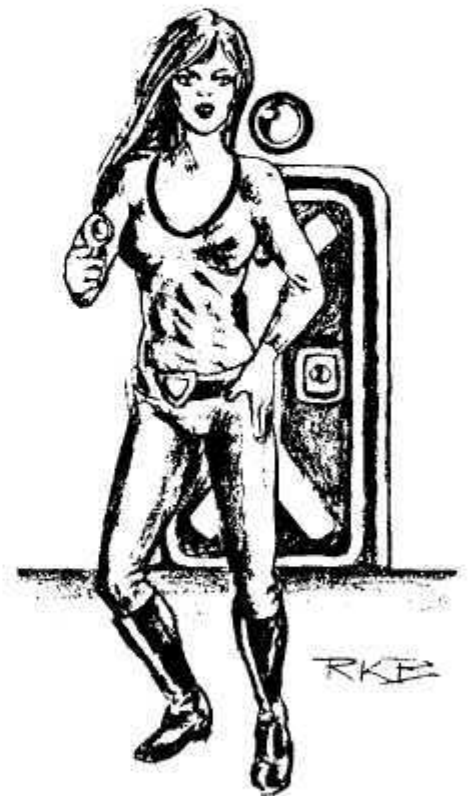
SNAPSHOT draws heavily on *Traveller's* personal combat system, but there are some important, and interesting, changes. Where the original system was somewhat abstract, SNAPSHOT'S combat rules allow more structured play. Personal combat seems to play a smaller part in *Traveller* than in most role-playing games (at least, it has in my campaign and those I have participated in), so the abstractions offered in the Book I rules did not seem so important. SNAPSHOT represents a refinement and improvement of these combat rules and allows skirmishes and firefights to be nicely simulated. While the game includes only two ship plans, I see no reason why the game system could not cover cover combat in and around buildings and other structures; this is a project I have undertaken for my own campaign by acquiring some half-inch graph paper and applying a ruler, felt-tip pens, and some imagination. With some additions, SNAPSHOT could serve as an all-purpose personal combat module for *Traveller*.

The most important change in the game is the concept of Action Points (APs). As players familiar with *Traveller* will recall, three traits are important in combat . . . strength, dexterity, and endurance, each determined by the roll of two dice. A player's APs are equal to the sum of the first two of these characteristics. This is an excellent new concept.

APs determine the sequence of character movement, with lower-AP characters moving first and higher-AP characters

having the ability to pre-empt them and move first if they so desire.

APs are spent to perform actions during a turn. A variety of movement and combat actions are possible, each costing a certain number of points to execute. Movement actions include regular movement, running, sneaking (tripling normal movement costs but affording some defensive bonus), changing or picking up items, and opening or closing portals and doors. Combat activities include reloading, arming and throwing grenades, engaging in hand-to-hand combat, and firing ranged weapons. In the last, players can make an aimed shot or "snapshot." The latter costs only half the APs of the first, but is less effective. Players may also forfeit all their APs for a turn to set up a covering shot on a particular hex, and as long as an enemy is in that hex, he can be fired at. Needless to say, this is pretty handy for setting up an ambush or sealing off a corridor.



The actual procedure for resolving combat is fairly simple, and essentially identical to that outlined in *Traveller*. First the attacker must spend APs commensurate with the type of attack being made, and determine if he has a clear line of sight to the target. The combat table is then consulted. The attacker's weapon is indexed against the defender's armor and the range, to yield a number that must be met or exceeded on two dice to achieve a hit. This die roll may be



modified negatively by sneaking or running on the part of the defender, or positively by skill level in the weapon fired by the attacker. These skills are determined via the character-generation process of Book 1 when the game is integrated with *Traveller*, or using two tables provided for the purpose in SNAPSHOT.

If a hit is made, then a number of dice, as determined by weapon type, are rolled to determine wounds. These wound points are applied to the character's three combat-related traits (strength, dexterity, and endurance). These hits may be spread out as the player wishes, save on the first time he is hit, when they must all be applied to one, determined randomly. When an individual reaches zero in any one characteristic, he is rendered temporarily unconscious; reduction of two characteristics to zero means serious injury requiring medical care. Loss of all three means death. Because of the lethality of weapons (most do from two to four dice damage, some considerably more), fire-fights tend to be short and to the point.

The game also includes a host of rules for special situations. These allow for group hits by automatic weapons and high explosives, breaching walls, gas and tranquilizer rounds, and even a few paragraphs devoted to the subtleties of Zero-G combat.

The game concludes with a set of scenarios. One particularly imaginative one has the four-man crew of a scout craft facing a half-dozen escaped animal specimens intended for the Emperor's zoological gardens. Other scenarios include attempts at highjacking or mutiny, and boarding parties. Optional ideas are included with each scenario so that games may be varied each time they are played. It would be easy for imaginative gamers to come up with interesting situations on their own.

Of course, when used in conjunction with *Traveller* campaigns, combats will arise in the context of the role-playing game. While SNAPSHOT is a solid game in its own right, I think it truly realizes its potential when used with *Traveller*. Players must consider character survival more carefully and think of goals and ambitions beyond the immediate combat.

*SNAPSHOT*, published by Game Designers' Workshop; companion game to TRAVELLER. Designed by Marc Miller (designer of TRAVELLER and many other GDW games). Boxed, with 28-page 6"x 10" rulebook, 112 counters, 2 dice, 18" x 22" mapsheet, and combat charts. For 2-6 players (or more); 1-4 hour playing time; published 1979.



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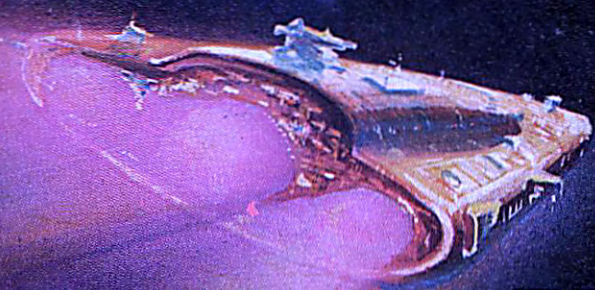
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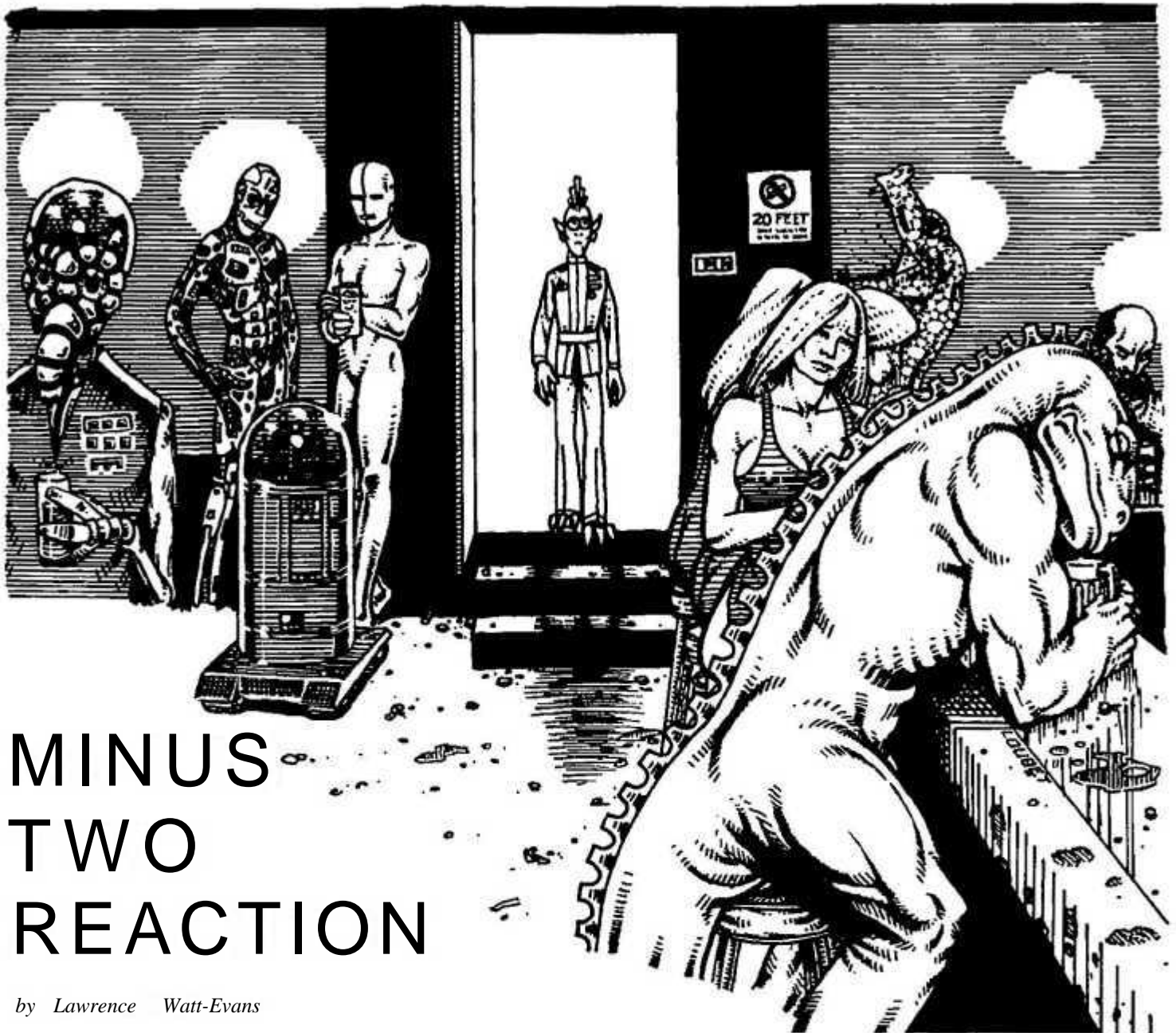
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# MINUS TWO REACTION

by Lawrence Watt-Evans

Hanging half a meter from the top of the glossy black facade, glittering **star-dust** spelled THE ORIGINAL OLD-TIME JOE'S BAR & GRILL; below, five fuzzy edged spots of depolarized transparency chased one another across the surface, giving **passersby** tantalizing glimpses of the dim, red-lit interior. Xahh paused and peered longingly. The ruddy warm glow was painfully reminiscent of his far-off home.

*Varkles*, he thought, *why not!* He wasn't due back aboard ship for five hours, and the door stood invitingly ajar just a meter away. He'd never been in a joint like this before, and had heard discouraging tales of the hazards, but that friendly glow made him dismiss such stories as xenophobic fabrications. The door swung open as he approached.

The place was bigger inside than he had expected; one wall was covered with

game-machines, half the opposite wall with dispensers, and the remainder by a huge, old-fashioned wood bar with ornate brass and crystal trim. The rear wall was totally invisible, lost in the smoke and darkness. Close at hand there reared up a large brass serpent, polished to a ruddy gold in the crimson gloom. Where its snout should have ended in a pair of slit nostrils, there were instead three **upward-curving** horns, each capped by a solid brass ball, and its mouth gaped open impossibly. A sniff in its direction told Xahh's sensitive nose that it was dispensing pure oxygen, for those who chose to start the evening's intoxication with an oxygen jag.

Psychbeat music filled the room, blending subtly with the hum of conversation from the two dozen occupied tables. Xahh relaxed as its soothing ef-

fects reached him, and crossed to the bar. Clambering awkwardly onto an empty stool, he glanced around at the other patrons and waited for the bartender to notice him.

To one side were three unoccupied seats and the end of the bar; to the other side a single stool separated him from an immense green lizard-creature, looking almost black in the red light, which sat contemplating a half-empty glass of some viscous purple fluid. Beyond it — or probably him, but Xahh was uncertain — were arrayed three identical young pure-human women, presumably free clones, sniffing cocaine. They struck Xahh as being misshapen, with far more chest than seemed reasonable. There was a gap after them; at the far end of the bar there sat a withered old man with chocolate-brown skin, wearing a tattered and



archaic pressure suit but no helmet. The bartender was talking to him, though Xahh couldn't hear a thing at that distance.

Behind him sat a representative sampling of the port's grounding population: naked loading androids, human administrators in uniform, gleaming metal mobile A.I., inhumanly graceful cyborgs, and all the other specialized or purebred people that one found in Terra's greatest starport.

"What'll it be?"

The bartender's voice startled him, distracted as he was by his study of the bar's patrons. He turned back around and said, "Ah, whisky and water, please." It was the only local drink he was familiar with; he had been too timid to do much adventuring in his brief stay on Terra, but one of the old hands among his **crewmates** had introduced him to this concoction that was both cool and fiery at once. It didn't have that same intoxicating effect on him that it did on humans, but a few of them would give him a slight feeling of euphoria.

He had only seen the bartender reach below the counter, without mixing anything, but here his drink was. Obviously an automatic drink dispenser was at work. Some "old-time authenticity"! He barely restrained a snort as he handed the bartender his credit card. Well, at least they had a human bartender; most bars had gone completely modern.

Assuming, that is, that the bartender was human. Xahh peered at him suspiciously, but couldn't decide. There were no visible signs that the bartender was anything but pure, but they made convincing cybers and androids of even his own small people these days; a thing the size of that bartender, a portly two meters **tall**, could hold any intelligence around with room to spare.

The man, if he was a man, returned the card, and Xahh restrained another snort as he saw his new balance registered on the display. At these prices they could sure afford a human! Tucking the card away, he sipped his drink, and was pleasantly surprised; it *was good*, almost worth what it cost. Whatever else they might stint, the bar's owners didn't scrimp on their booze. No wonder it was a popular local hangout.

He sipped again, and glanced up at the mirror behind the bar. His eyes met the reflected gaze of the lizard-thing, who seemed to be bleakly studying Xahh's image. Xahh turned away, looking instead at a cobwebbed bottle below the mirror, as the stories of beatings and robberies at these dives came back to him.

"Hey, Shorty."

The unsteady voice came from the **lizard-creature**, who was now studying Xahh himself rather than his reflection.

"Yeah?" He hoped his voice didn't give away his nervousness.

"You new 'round here?"

"Passing through."

"Oh." The green creature turned back to his purple goo long enough to suck up some through a hollow tongue, then went on, "Wa's yer name?"

"Xahh."

"Kha?"

"Close enough; Xahh."

"Khah, right. Please **t'meet** yer. I'm called Argonath; Argo for short."

Xahh nodded politely.

"Gonna be 'round long?"

"No, my ship leaves tonight."

"Ship? Oh. Never ridden one, myself."

That caught Xahh by surprise; his crest twitched as he took another sip of his drink. He looked up at the creature. "You're from around here?"

"Yeah. From the plant down the road." Holding its drink in one three-clawed hand, it motioned vaguely with the other, then hiccupped; Xahh saw sparks scattering from the thing's mouth. He would have liked to dismiss it as an illusion, but he couldn't imagine why he might be hallucinating. Had he gotten the wrong drink? Maybe whisky had effects he hadn't noticed before.

He said, "Oh," and took another gulp of whisky and water.

"Yeah, I'm a, I'm . . ." The creature tittered drunkenly, then abruptly stopped and whined, "I'm a factory reject, **tha's** what I am. S'posed to be a dragon, for some entertainmen' or **somethin'**, but I didn' come out like they wanted."

"Too bad." Xahh was honestly touched by the creature's pitiful expression, but he was also increasingly nervous of his own safety.

"Where you from?"

Xahh shrugged. "Nowhere special."

"Ah, **c'mon**; you sure aren't a purebred, you must be from somewhere."

"I'm second pilot on a starship."

"**Oh**, so *tha's* why yer so small! Save weight!"

Xahh nodded.

"Where y' from originally?" Xahh could smell the creature's acrid breath; it was leaning toward him, and he knew he couldn't avoid answering much longer. He considered lying, but he knew he wouldn't. It would be worse to be caught in a lie than to admit the truth, and he didn't know enough terrestrial geography to lie convincingly.

"Arcturus III."

"Arc . . .?" The dragon-thing sat up straight. "You're an **alien**?"

"Yeah." He might brazen it out yet, he thought.

"An **ALIEN**?! In *Joe's Bar*?"

He wasn't going to get away with it, he knew. With a gulp, he finished his drink, as conversation died and the occupants of the bar all began to stare in his direction. One of the big-chested clones pulled a needlegun from somewhere, and leaned past the dragon toward him, weapon raised and pointing at the mirrored ceiling. The dragon itself was still too astonished to do much but gape. She said nothing, merely glared, letting the weapon speak for itself.

"Hey, buddy, this is a nice joint." It was a naked, sexless android that spoke.

"Yeah, we don't need you here," said a glittering, golden cyborg.

"This is a Terran bar, freak." The monotone voice came from the wheeled box of a cryogenic artificial.

"An alien!" The dragon still gaped.

Xahh knew when he wasn't wanted; he slipped from his stool and walked, with all the dignified calm he could manage, out the door. Behind him he heard a clone saying, "Damn foreigners! C'mon, Argo, I'll buy you a drink."

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Where are the aliens?

Everyone who plays *Traveller* must wonder about that. Where are the Vulcans and Wookies and other creatures that enrich science fiction? Everyone is so depressingly human. Where there is a role for an alien, as in *Azhanti High Lightning*, the game treats him much like a funny-looking human.

GDW, in its wisdom, will doubtless give us some aliens in due course. For those who do not care to wait, I would like to offer some guidelines for creating alternate characters.

### Character Types

Alternate characters may belong to one of a number of categories:

**Aliens.** Non-humanity, like the Vargr, and Humaniti subspecies, like the Zhodani, may be included under this heading. Aliens have little in common but their diversity.

**Cyborgs.** On some high-population worlds, it is common for parents to pay for modifications to their children, in order to improve their chances of finding employment in adulthood. Cyborgs differ from other characters in that they have prosthetics which may give them higher effective strength or intelligence, or special abilities, but usually handicap them in some way. Basically, a cyborg can have any of the features of a robot except programming. Cyborgs may be high or low in social standing, depending on the profession for which their modifications were intended.

**Androids.** Artificial people. They require some special comments. They are created on high-technology, low population worlds to supplement the military or labor force. Androids are organic constructs, not robots. They cannot be

# Alternate Characters for *TRAVELLER*

by Forrest Johnson

programmed. In common practice, an android owes its creator twelve years of service. Then it is free. At best an imperfect substitute for a human, an android ages ("wears out") somewhat faster. This factor is offset by intensive development and training; an android's effective career is just as long as a human's.

Start an android character at "age 18." (Its true age is much lower.) Give it the same enlistment roll as everyone else. (This represents the probability it will be assigned to the work for which it was created.) An android will serve three sequential terms. (It does not need to make a **re-enlistment** roll.) An android may continue to serve in its profession beyond age 30 if it makes the required re-enlistment roll. Check for age as humans. Androids are usually of low social status.

**Robots.** Really machines, rather than characters. They have been discussed in *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. I have nothing to add.

### Designing Characters

The average dice roll for a *Traveller* character is 7. Hence, the average total of the six characteristics is 42. The GM may allow any character type he wishes, but to be fair, he should make sure that the average probable value of its total characteristics equals 42.

Since 2d6 is worth an average of 7 points, it follows that 2d6+1 is worth 8; 1d6, 3½; 1d6+1, 4½, and so on. One could go farther, and allow 1d3 to be worth 2 points, or 1d5 to be worth 3. For purposes of this article, we **will** stick to six-sided dice as a basis for character generation.

Since characteristics are supposed to range between 1 and 15, die rolls are limited. A roll of 1d6-1 might result in zero. 2d6+4 might result in a characteristic of 16. Therefore, we are limited to a range of die rolls between 1d6 and 2d6+3.

### Example

A player wishes to create a character who is a Vulcan. The GM decides that Vulcans are stronger, smarter, and more dextrous than humans. On the other hand they are likely to have difficulty if they try to establish themselves in human society. A Vulcan might be rolled up like this:

**Strength 2d6+1 (8 pts.)**  
**Dexterity 2d6+1 (8 pts.)**  
**Endurance 2d6 (7 pts.)**  
**Intelligence 2d6+1 (8 pts.)**  
**Education 2d6 (7 pts.)**  
**Social Standing 1d6 (3½ pts.)**  
 (Total: **41½ pts.**)

Looking at his creation, the GM thinks 4154 points is a very untidy figure. Besides, he has not allowed points for special Vulcan abilities — the Mind Lock and the Nerve Pinch.

Consulting the basic books, he decides the Mind Lock is the same thing as a psionic probe (III: 36), not really a special Vulcan ability. The Nerve Pinch is probably a close range combat ability, useful against Humaniti and a few similar species. The GM decides it is worth one point. But that raises the total average value of a Vulcan to **42½** points, half a point too high. He decides a Vulcan cannot use a Nerve Pinch unless he has a skill at brawling. That reduces the value to ½. He now has a 42-point average and is ready to roll.

(Note that the 42-point total is only the expected *average* of the die rolls you make to create the character. Once the die rolls are made, your alien may have a high or low total, just like any human character . . . but the average alien should have about 42 points.)

### Special Features

As you may have gathered from the example, alternate characters may have special features, which should be evaluated and subtracted from the 42-point

total. GMs should be most cautious about which abilities to grant, and at what price. Some examples:

**1-point features** — gills, nocturnal vision, claws, epidermis equivalent to jack, or aging delayed 2 years.

**2-point features** — extra limb, immunity to tainted air, stinger, epidermis equivalent to mesh, or aging delayed 4 years.

**3-point features** — personal antigravity vacc suit, thrasher, epidermis equivalent to cloth, or aging delayed 6 years.

Obviously this can get pretty expensive. To put things in perspective, remember that an ordinary man, with his full 42 points and a few thousand credits worth of equipment, can outperform a super-android with a bushel of built-in features.

### Special Handicaps

In order to increase its 42 points, the GM may gift an alternate character with some special handicaps. Special features subtract from the available points; special handicaps add. Some samples:

**1-point handicaps** — colorblind, flabby (+1 to be hit), spindly (takes +1 damage per hit), cannot use human drugs, or ages 2 years earlier than normal.

**2-point handicaps** — smelly (-1 to all reaction rolls), neurotic (becomes hysterical in the presence of large invertebrates), requires special food or frequent recharging, or ages 4 years earlier than normal.

**3-point handicaps** — unable to speak a human language, no immunity to microbes (away from home planet), collapses under gravity of worlds size 7 and up, or ages 6 years earlier than normal.

### Another Example

#### Military Service Android

Strength 2d6+2 (9 pts.)

Dexterity 2d6+2 (9 pts.)

Endurance 2d6+2 (9 pts.)

Intelligence 2d6-1 (6 pts.)

Education 1d6 (3½ pts.)

Social Standing 1d6 (3½ pts.)

**(Total: 40 pts.)**

Special Features: two extra arms (4 pts.)

Special Handicaps: begins aging at 30 (2 pts.)

Comments: cheap, expendable, deadly in combat.

### A Final Example

#### The Arcturan

Strength 1d6+1 (4½ pts.)

Dexterity 2d6+3 (10 pts.)

Endurance 1d6+1 (454 pts.)

Intelligence 2d6+1 (8 pts.)

Education 2d6 (7 pts.)

Social Standing 2d6 (7 pts.)

(Total: 41 pts.)

Special Features: sensitive nose (1 pt.)

Special Handicaps: none, except possibly a tendency to go slumming (Opts.)

Comments: a race well adapted to space travel. (Note that Xahh, in the story, did not receive his bad reaction through any fault or unpleasant characteristic of his own.

The people in Joe's Bar just didn't like aliens.)

### Playing Alternate Characters

This takes discretion. One or two alternate characters in a party add interest. Twice as many are not twice as good.

Until GDW sets some standards, each GM must decide for himself what **kind of** characters he will allow in his universe. If the GM won't let you play your battle-armored cyborg with the built-in auto cannon, don't blame me!

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# EXPANDING TRAVELLER



*Traveller*, GDW's science fiction role-playing game, is a system that cries out for expansion. Its limits are as indefinite as the reaches of outer space that serve as its background. In the past several months, a number of gaming companies and groups (not to mention GDW itself) have heeded this cry and have issued what is rapidly becoming a flood of supplements, adventures, and play aids (shades of **D&D!**). Among the best of these *Traveller* expansion materials are those of Judges Guild, all approved by GDW and entitled to the term "official" *Traveller* variants. In the following paragraphs, we will briefly review a number of *Traveller* offerings.

**ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL**, *Traveller* Double Adventure 2 (For Referees Only), (GDW); \$4.98. Designed by Marc Miller. 9" x 6" 44-page booklet. One referee and two to eight players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Cross-country adventure is the theme of *Traveller* Double Adventure 2. Whereas **Double Adventure 1** took players inside two large alien structures, **ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL** takes place mostly in the open, pitting adventurers against the elements as they cross the Bright Face of **Dinor** or the frozen surface of **Mithril** in the Sword Worlds. Although similar on the surface, each adventure is varied enough so that there will be no feelings of *deja vu* when playing the second of the two scenarios. **BRIGHT FACE** features the players as bodyguards whose patron has been murdered in a miners' revolution and who must avoid both pursuing miners and treacherous terrain to reach safety at the spaceport. **MITHRIL** concerns a mapping survey of three anomalous spots on the planet that the characters must conduct in exchange for vital repairs on their ship. Both scenarios require only the basic *Traveller* books and each provides a set of pre-generated characters and new, special equipment - including the heretofore absent laser pistol. Introductory sections describe each planet (with full-page maps) and the background situation for the players. Specific terrain and event tables are provided for the referee. **MITHRIL** also features special animal encounter tables for peculiar planetary fauna and weather tables to reflect changing meteorological conditions. Stats for the use, operation, and administration of the Horronon tracked ATV used in both scenarios are located at the end of **BRIGHT FACE**. Either scenario will guarantee plenty of excitement for player and referee alike.

Several features of **BRIGHT FACE/MITHRIL** are of note, particularly the upgrading of

vacc suits to the equivalent of cloth armor rather than the almost worthless jack armor, which usually spell certain doom for any vacc-suited character fired on. Also, it is interesting to note that the pre-generated characters for **MITHRIL** are the same as those used in *Shadows* and, with one exception, *Research Station Gamma*, making it quite simple to string the three into a continuous adventure-to-adventure campaign.

I find little of which to complain in this double adventure. There is some uncertainty involved with **MITHRIL**'s weather table and the appearance of the ephemeral glades, and provisions for the monorail mentioned in **BRIGHT FACE** seem to be missing, but generally both adventures are quite well done.

All in all, **ACROSS THE BRIGHT FACE/MISSION ON MITHRIL** will prove to be a helpful addition to the collection of any *Traveller* referee - and player.

- William A. Barton

**DRA'K'NE STATION** (Judges Guild); \$4.95. Designed by Bill Paley. Adventure approved for use with *Traveller*. One 60-page 8½" x 11" booklet. For two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

Picture an alien research station constructed in the center of a huge asteroid, two miles long by half a mile thick, armed with anti-matter guns, defended by laser-equipped security robots, shock traps, and - possibly - survivors of a long-dead reptilian race and fully equipped with technological devices of an unknown nature. Now picture yourself entering this station, either out of necessity or just curiosity.

There are several nice points about this adventure, perhaps one of the most interesting *Traveller* scenarios yet released by anyone. First is the completeness of detail. All twelve levels of **DRA'K'NE STATION** are completely mapped out in typical Judges Guild fashion, leaving no room for ambiguity - yet leaving enough features to chance or the referee's discretion (whether or not certain systems are still working, if there are any living Dra'k'ne aboard, etc.) to keep the adventure fresh and interesting every step of the way. I particularly like the "Table for Describing Indescribable Knick-Knacks" that may be found in individual Dra'k'ne staterooms. The Dra'k'ne themselves are an intriguing race; more so, I'm afraid, than the few aliens GDW has allowed so far to trickle into *Traveller*. The possibility left open for some of the players to take the part of defending Dra'k'ne against the adventurers should not be overlooked. The anti-matter weapon found on the station is a worthy - and quite lethal - addition to *Traveller's* arsenal of ship-to-ship weaponry, though referees should be cautious about letting it fall into the hands of over-zealous players (the sort that want to overthrow the **Imperium**) - it could unbalance your campaign drastically. (Poof! Your battle cruiser just disappeared!).

The only minor flaw I see in the whole scenario is the length of time it will take the

adventurers to salvage the station and to learn anything really useful from its research - should they manage to survive that long. But again, this is a minor complaint and shouldn't spoil the overall enjoyment of the game.

Bringing things to a close, I recommend **DRA'K'NE STATION** as well worth the investment for any *Traveller* aficionado who wants a challenging adventure and who doesn't mind the possibility of losing a character or two in the process. I look forward to Judges Guild's next offering.

- William A. Barton

**FICTIONEERS** (Stan Johansen Miniatures). \$3.00. 25 mm science Fiction figures and accessories for wargames. Released 1979-80.

This line of figures is suitable for use with *Traveller* and other s-f games. The sample pack I have here is an especially nice one - a set of 6 computers and instrument banks, very "Star Trek"-looking. Could be useful for the dioramist, or just for the gamer who likes a control room to look real. The \$3 price isn't unreasonable for this amount of lead. Detail is fairly good; quality control high (no flash visible anywhere).

My only criticism is that some of the pieces must be handled very carefully once assembled or you'll be re-gluing them every game.

Recommended for s-f miniatures play.

-Steve Jackson

**MINIATURES FOR TRAVELLER** (Martian Metals); \$2.95/set. Twelve 15mm figures per set (except for the aliens set, which contains ten figures). Released 1980.

Nine sets are currently available - adventurers (2 sets), soldiers (3 sets), thugs, robots, Vargr, and aliens. Figures range from Buck Rogers-style to creatures from the movie *Alien*. Almost all are armed. There is some duplication within each set, except for the adventurers, who are all different.

These figures go well with the game. A few sets are all you need to play *Snapshot* or *Azhanti High Lightning*. The miniatures fit without too much crowding on a half-inch grid. The detail is nice and the variety is spectacular.

Unfortunately, buyers will find a speckling of the usual problems - flimsy weapons, inadequate bases, mold marks, and so on. Not too bad. Most of the figures are OK; the rest can be redeemed. More seriously, a lot of the figures are spread-eagled, with the arms away from the body. Easy to cast, but they look dumb, and cannot always be bent into shape without cracking the lead.

The selection is good, but not perfect. Some of the robots might be used with *Research Station Gamma*, and three of the aliens are suitable for *Shadows*. (There is, however, nothing resembling a chirper.) There is a set of Vargr, but no Vargr among the adventurers. There is a Zhodani among the adventurers, but not (yet) a set of Zhodani.

All in all, a B plus effort. Recommended to *Traveller* fans and SF miniatures gamers in general.

-Forrest Johnson





**PEN-LATOL'S WORLD** (Group One); \$7.95. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 32-page mimeographed 8½" x 11" booklet, 23" x 34" map, cover sheet, bagged. One referee and 7-12 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Published by an apparently new company, PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is an approved adventure for *Traveller*. And, if nothing else, the designers of this adventure are most ambitious. PEN-LATOL'S WORLD concerns the adventures of a scientific/mining team on the aforementioned world, it seems to encompass the entire planet in its scope, including a complete alien society, most of the planet's biosphere and the customary ruins of a lost civilization, now degenerated into barbarism. This time it is an abandoned city and an ancient planetary defense fortress situated inside a mountain - both well stocked with dangerous animals. A large, though flimsy, map illustrates the major planetary terrain features for the purposes of cross-country travel.

The most notable facet of PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is its alien race, the Cleashitar. Group One has created in these six-limbed beings a fascinating — if improbable - alien race (though it is possible to detect traces of the Green Martians of E.R. Burroughs' *John Carter* series). Unfortunately, the Cleashitar aren't quite alien enough. A highly psionic human race could have served just as well. It's a good try, however, and perhaps one that will lead to more aliens in *Traveller*. In any event, the Cleashitar are a step in the right direction.

The main weakness of PEN-LATOL'S WORLD is that much of appears to have been a last-minute rush job. An abundance of typos clutter the rules booklet and numerous omissions hinder one's understanding and total enjoyment of the adventure. Several encounter situations seem incomplete, the floor plans for the miners' camp are left unexplained and it is often difficult to correlate the small maps in the booklet with the main map - which, incidentally, doesn't even indicate which direction is north. A small typewritten slip lying loose in the bag was all that revealed the map's scale. Clearly the game could have stood one more editing before release.

All in all, however, Group One deserves a "GT" (for "Good Try") rating on this offering. Their next attempt should be pretty good. Considering the price and the game's incompleteness, though, I'd have to recommend it only to those who don't mind filling in a lot of gaps. For such highly imaginative gamers, PEN-LATOL'S WORLD will provide a wealth of playing situations for any *Traveller* campaign.

- William Barton

**SCOUTS AND ASSASSINS** (Paranoia Press); \$3.00. Designed by Donald P. Rapp. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 10-page 5½" x 8" booklet and 11" x 17" insert. Number of players and playing time variable. Published 1980.

For those *Traveller* players who have yearned for "more clout for Scouts" and yet have wanted something more "official" than the variants that have appeared in *77e Dragon* and elsewhere, Paranoia Press has produced a *Traveller* supplement that should fill their longings - and more. SCOUTS & ASSASSINS not only features an expanded *Mercenary-type* character generation system for the scout service, but includes rules for creating an entirely

new class of character - the assassin. In addition, this slim but meaty booklet contains a method for non-violently disposing of a character who fails to make his survival roll, but who is too good a character to be killed off, and an insert page with technical data and deck plans for the Serpent class scout ship, completely compatible with *Snapshot*.

SCOUTS AND ASSASSINS designer Donald Rapp is no novice to *Traveller*; his Serpent-class scout ship was featured in *The Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* during his first year and he is listed as a playtester for *High Guard*. His experience shows in how well these character generation systems mesh with the original *Traveller* systems. The scout system sends characters through a full year-by-year assignment schedule each term with a Scout Occupational Specialty (SOS) table, general and specific assignments, assignment resolution, and specific skill tables. New skills for scouts include xenology (for contacting alien sentient life forms), linguistics (for conversing with said aliens), and small ship tactics (for handling groups of scout ships).

Enlisting your character into the League of Assassins will prove most exciting - and dangerous (survival roll is even higher than that for scouts) - and will yield a formidable character with such skills as poisons/antidotes, unarmed combat, stealth, and disguise. He may even be awarded membership in the Assassins' Guild. And the Unfit for Service table was just made for the *Traveller* player who can't stand to see a character he's nursed through so much die on what was to be his last term in service.

The only problem I have with SCOUTS & ASSASSINS is that, even with the instructions, someone who is not familiar with *Mercenary* may experience some difficulty in following this system. This should, of course, be no trouble to an experienced player. The Unfit for Service section is also unclear as to whether discharged characters still receive mustering out benefits, so players will have to decide this on their own.

Until GDW publishes their own, if you want an "official" scout system, SCOUTS & ASSASSINS is it.

-William A. Barton

**SPACEFARER'S GUIDE TO PLANETS: SECTOR ONE** (Phoenix Games); \$8.00. Designed by Ed Lipsett. Play aid for use with SF role-playing games such as *Traveller*, *Space Patrol*, *Space Quest*, etc. One 60-page 8vi" x 11" book. Number of players and playing time variable. Published 1979.

SECTOR ONE contains descriptions of nearly all your favorite planets from science fiction literature, from Suzette Elgin's Abba to Lin Carter's Zha, from Frank Herbert's Arrakis to Issac Asimov's Terminus, all couched in gaming terms so that they can be easily inserted into any campaign. Now your characters can tread the sands of Dune, fight the gravity of Mesklin, or brave the wrath of the Deathworld, Pyrrus. And, in addition to the planetary descriptions, SECTOR ONE includes encounter charts to determine if your spacecraft might have a run-in with a ship from any of these worlds and star system generation tables that allow the referee to determine not only planetary characteristics, but star types, number of planets per system, moons per planet and whether or not the system has any "special" features such as black holes, Ringworlds, or Dyson Spheres.

Without question, SECTOR ONE is a study in completeness. Each planet listed in the book is thoroughly described with notes on physical make-up, the mentality of the dominant race, the planet's cultural quirks, its technology, imports and exports and any unique features, such as unusual flora or fauna or Imperial installations located on its surface. Each planet is assigned planetary statistic numbers, similar to the universal planetary profile used in *Traveller*, for easy reference. Happily enough, the individual biography of each world is complete enough so that players should not have any trouble getting the feel of whatever planet they find themselves on.

The only problem evident with SECTOR ONE is that in being designed to be broad enough to fit into several SF role-playing systems, it doesn't quite succeed in fitting totally into any single system - a common flaw with such "universal" play aids. SECTOR ONE seems best suited to mesh with *Traveller*, which was probably the major influence behind its creation. It shouldn't be too difficult, however, for ingenious players to work SECTOR ONE into their favorite system.

SPACEFARER'S GUIDE TO PLANETS: SECTOR ONE should prove a valuable play aid in the hands of any creative referee.

- William A. Barton

**STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT** (Judges Guild); \$5.50. Designed by Dave Sering. Playing aid approved for use with *Traveller*. Three 22" x 34" three-color sheets. Published 1979.

Did you ever wonder exactly what a Type S Scout ship looked like? Or what shape a Type C Cruiser has? And just what is the interior configuration of a Type M Subsidized Merchant? If your *Traveller* campaign has ever suffered from such visual deficiencies, Judges Guild's STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT will be a boon to your mind's eye. This play aid consists of three large sheets of deck plans, technical data, and summary sheets of all the standard types of starships and auxiliary craft listed in *Traveller* Book 2 (*Starships*). One side of each of two sheets consists of deck plans color-coded in shades of blue, red, and black and white and laid out on a half-inch-square grid. The other side is filled with technical data on each starship auxiliary, accompanied by exterior drawings and descriptions. The third sheet has ship's summary sheets and ship's papers on one side and, on the other, deck plans (in black and blue only) and a large half-inch-square grid so that you can design your own ships should you wish.

The size of the deck plan grid is such that the plans are completely compatible with *Snap-shot* (*Traveller* Game 2) and thus can be invaluable as an expansion set for that game, increasing their worth beyond their visual use in *Traveller* itself. And the designer of STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT is to be congratulated for avoiding the too-common error of back-printing plans with data. The plans for any particular ship are on one sheet and the data for that ship is on the other, making reference possible without disrupting any on-board situation you've set up with counters or miniatures. Another nice touch of realism on these plans is the existence of "freshers" aboard each ship, laid out in convenient locations. I'd always wondered if one was just expected to eliminate wastes out the airlock, or wait until the next interstellar rest stop (ouch!). Now we know.

The only omissions I can find in STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT is a lack of deck plans for the lifeboat, air/raft and ATV pictured.

Perhaps those will be included in the next such supplement, along with ships described in *Citizens of the Imperium*: the Corsair, Seeker, Lab ship, and Safari ship.

STARSHIPS & SPACECRAFT should prove quite helpful in making your *Traveller* campaign even more realistic to players. It deserves a place in your *Traveller* library.

- William A. Barton

THE TRAVELLER LOGBOOK (Judges Guild); \$3.00. Designed by Dave Sering. Approved supplement to *Traveller*. One 62-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Published 1979.

If you're one of those *Traveller* players who, as a hot-shot ex-Imperial Marine, has no trouble decimating whole planets with your handy PGMP-14 Plasma gun, yet find you constantly lose your best characters and your finest starships when those loose sheets of paper on which they're recorded seem to be "gone with the solar wind," then rejoice! The LOGBOOK contains printed record sheets on which

you can log up to 10 characters with their UPPs, skills, equipment, service records, names, ranks, etc. It also has summary sheets for six starships - including impressive ship's papers, and, in addition, nearly all the useful charts needed to generate *Traveller* characters from Books 1-3 and from *Mercenary* for the player's convenience. Not bad for \$3.00! In fact, the LOGBOOK would make an excellent first purchase for that gamer who wants to try out the *Traveller* system without taking the full plunge of buying the game itself. (This is how I got my wife interested!)

Several additional features keep the LOGBOOK from being merely a digest of already released *Traveller* materials. There is a series of charts designed to fill in the personal background of *Traveller* characters from physical appearance tables, generating such characteristics as height, weight, quality of sight, hearing and taste, to social background determiners - including cultural motivation, number of parents (from none up to 2 dice + 1), their occupations, family rank, reason for adventuring,

and more! These can be quite helpful in creating a character as a *role* to play, rather than as a mere extension of one's own personality. In its section on Starship Operation, the LOGBOOK brings all the tables and information on starship expenses and revenue, including an easier-to-read trade and speculation table than appeared in *Traveller*.

On the negative side (alas, there usually is one), the LOGBOOK has no provisions on its record sheets for skills - fleet tactics, gravities, bow combat - listed in *High Guard* or *Citizens of the Imperium*, making it necessary to pencil such in should you desire to roll up a character from either of these rule sets. Neither can you easily record a ship built with components listed in *High Guard*. There are no spaces for particle accelerators, meson guns, or black globes on the LOGBOOK ship's summary sheets.

Overall, though, THE TRAVELLER LOGBOOK is well worth the price. In fact, no serious *Traveller* player should be without one.

- William A. Barton

## ITHILIEN CLASS - S-2233321 -000000-00000-0

The Conundrum State Shipyards are pleased to announce the winner of the ship design contest (TSG 28) is Mar K. Chitt, formerly of the Imperial scouts. Of the 13 entries, his is not the most original, but it is (1) commodious, (2) well-equipped for its role as a deep exploration ship, and (3) cheap. As a special sign of favor, Her Splendiference, the Imperatrice Ithilien bestows her name upon the class. Chitt is instructed to report to the shipyards, Day 300, 1067 P.S., for the shakedown cruise of the prototype. It is anticipated that ships of the Ithilien class will be available for sale to the public after the shipyard satisfies the needs of the state.

Budget for the proposed ship class:

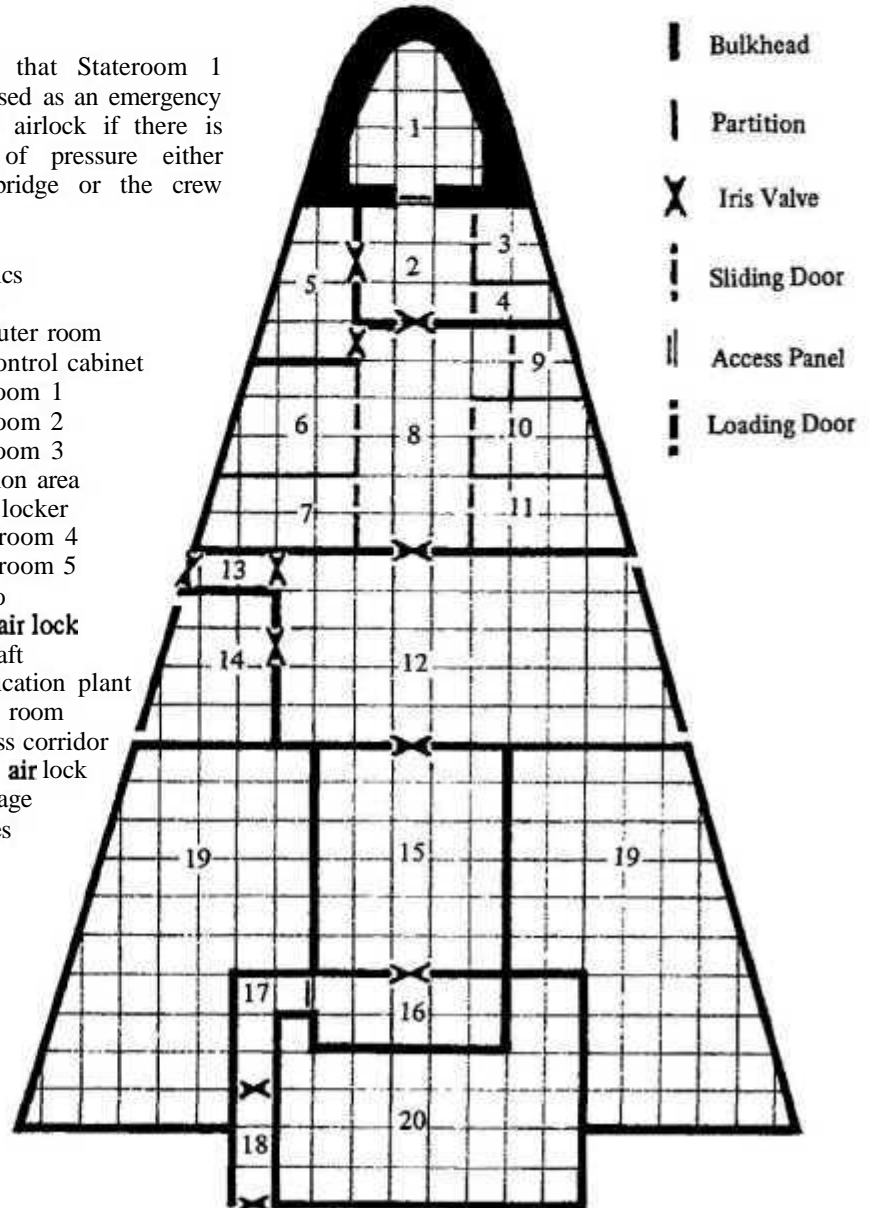
ITEM	TONS	COST
150 ton hull	-	15
Cone configuration	-	1.5
Power plant 3	4.5	18
Jump 3	6	24
Maneuver 3	7.5	5.25
Fuel purification	15	.13
Fuel scoops	-	.15
Bridge	20	.75
Computer 2	2	9
Hardpoint	1	.1
5 staterooms	20	2.5
Air raft	4	.6
Programs*	-	2.1
Cargo	20	-
Tankage	50	-
<b>TOTALS</b>	150	79.08

(All costs are given in millions of credits)

\*Programs: Jump 1 (.1), Jump 2 (.3), Jump 3 (.4), Maneuver (.1), Navigation (.4), Auto/Evade (.5), Library (.3).

(Note that Stateroom 1 can be used as an emergency intraship airlock if there is a loss of pressure either in the bridge or the crew area.)

1. Avionics
2. Bridge
3. Computer room
4. Fire control cabinet
5. Stateroom 1
6. Stateroom 2
7. Stateroom 3
8. Common area
9. Ship's locker
10. Stateroom 4
11. Stateroom 5
12. Cargo
13. Port air lock
14. Air raft
15. Purification plant
16. Drive room
17. Access corridor
18. Stern air lock
19. Tankage
20. Drives



## Featured Review:

# AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING



by William A. Barton

*There was a small, metallic "click!" - more felt than heard - as the magnetic boots of the Solomani's vacc suit made contact with the hull of the Bard Endeavour. Turning his head slightly, he was rewarded with the sight of the rest of his party touching down on the crippled Imperial warship. It would only take his team minutes to force open the doors into the boat dock, he knew - and then what? He wondered if he'd live to see Old Terra again. It had to be done, though. The capture of such a ship as the Endeavour with its advanced weaponry could turn the tide of the war - could even make possible a Solomani victory and - at last! - independence from the Empire.*

*The doors flew open. Bracing himself, the Solomani officer flung himself into the opening - for Solomani independence! - followed closely by his men. Into the withering fire of a dozen Imperial Marines. . . .*

Nobody ever promised that "Adventure Aboard an Imperial Starship" would be easy. But it can be challenging — and fun - with GDW's new Traveller game, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING. Designed to be easily integrated into the Traveller role-playing system, AHL is, nevertheless, a fascinating game in itself. Even strict boardgame addicts who disdain all forms of role-playing should find plenty to pique their interest aboard the *High Lightning*.

The first thing one notices when picking up this game is the beautiful cover

painting of the *Azhanti High Lightning* herself — quite attractive, that! The second will be the \$22.00 price tag — ouch! And this on a box no bigger than that of *Imperium*? Rest assured, it's worth it. Once you see the components, I think you'll agree.

The insides of AZHANTI consist of a sheet of 240 color-coded counters of Imperial crewmen and marines, intruders, adventurers, robots, Zhodani, the wolf-like Vargr, plus alien blobs, wine (for one scenario) and wound markers; a combat chart; two full-sized dice (a relief after the miniscule dice some companies include); a 44-page rules booklet plus a 44-page Traveller supplement (No. 5) on *Lightning Class Cruisers*; and 14 (count 'em — 14!) sets of full-color deck plans of the various levels found on the *Azhanti* or her sisters (these alone are almost worth the price of the entire game). All components measure up to GDW's usual high standards of quality.

The deck plans, each representing several decks of the same type, are nicely done with details that include color-coded conduits, hatches and valves and even individual consoles and chairs on the various bridges and gunnery decks. Each deck is laid out with a half-inch square grid, compatible with those of *Traveller* game 2, *Snapshot*, and the Judges Guild *Starships and Spacecraft* deck plans, to regulate the movement of the counters or of 15mm miniatures. All details and areas

on each deck are numbered and are explained in the "technical manual" section of the supplement.

The supplement itself, in addition to containing the deck-by-deck breakdown, outlines the entire history of the *Lightning* class, gives general specifications for the ships, names all the ships in the class, cites differences between those ships serving as naval cruisers and those converted to fleet auxiliaries, commercial service or to the Scout service, and translates the various ships into *High Guard* statistics - from both first and second editions of *High Guard*. A handy little booklet for *Traveller* lovers who are into *High Guard*-style fleet actions. GDW should consider releasing this separately later on.

The rules for AZHANTI are quite well-written with very few errors or ambiguities visible. They clearly set out all the general rules for play, the special rules and the advanced rules in such a manner that it isn't necessary to puzzle over them for several hours before figuring out how to play. All the rules are simple enough to understand — yet complex enough to add depth to the game. These rules take up the first two-thirds of the rules booklet, the final third consisting of ten different scenarios ranging from the Solomani attempt to take the *Bard Endeavour* at "The Battle of *Kagukhasaggan 2*" to a plan by mutineers to turn over the Oberlindes Lines transport *Emissary* to



the Vargr Extents in "Brother Wolf." Guidelines are given for creating original scenarios, and instructions are added for converting the **AZHANTI** system into *Traveller* and vice versa.

Some glitches did creep in. For example, there is some confusion in the rule on characters receiving collateral damage from explosions in their square. One section says that *all* characters in the same square receive collateral damage if an explosion occurs in the square, and another says all characters in the same square receive collateral damage on a roll of 8 or more - *unless* they are specified as automatically **suffering** such (which according to the preceding section would be everybody - so why roll the die at all?). There is also some discrepancy between the rules and the counters on warbot weaponry. The rules state that warbots are armed with fusion guns, the counters, plasma guns. Most of these flaws can be easily remedied by an agreement between opponents.

The AHL game system involves, like its predecessor, *Snapshot*, the use of Action Points. All actions on the part of a character — movement and combat — are made through the expenditure of the character's Action Point allotment. *Snapshot* veterans, however, may not find it such a snap converting to AZHANTI. Action Point usages between the two games are quite dissimilar.

The game is liable to go pretty slow, at least the first few times played, due both to the necessity of keeping track of APs spent and to the numerous steps involved in each turn. These consist of a decision phase, in which each player secretly decides what each of his characters will do that turn, and five action phases for the character to carry out his "orders." Each action phase consists of four sequential steps: covering fire, movement, aimed fire, snap shots. All action in a phase is otherwise **simultaneous**. The necessity of going through all these steps in each turn can make for slow going, especially in the scenarios involving large numbers of characters, and involves quite a bit of paper work. A game turn that represents only **15** seconds of **game** time could easily last several minutes of real time. Strangely

enough, though, the system works. Once players get used to the game, it moves fairly smoothly, though not at breakneck speed. One great aid is that the AP costs for all actions are printed on a separate combat chart for easy reference, eliminating the need to leaf through the rules, as in *Snapshot*. The six AP per phase limit also alleviates such unrealistic occurrences as a character with high APs running into a room of armed men, firing, and running out unscathed, as can happen in *Snapshot*.

The only real problem I see in the game's sequence of play — other than its length — involves the rule that a character, once **committed** to one of three actions (cover fire, aim, or move) in the decision phase cannot switch to any other action (though he can make a snap shot or melee) even should conditions change and a new opportunity present itself. He can only abort and wait until the next turn. This seems just a bit unrealistic, though the character's ability to make a snap shot (if he has enough points) or initiate melee (no point cost) does somewhat make up for this.

The combat system of AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING is the best feature of the game. In fact, GDW should seriously consider replacing the regular *Traveller* combat system with this or a similar system. Gone at last is **the** highly unrealistic concept of using armor as a determining factor in whether or not a target is hit (a legacy from D&D?) In AZHANTI, armor protects the target to a certain extent after he is hit, rather than making him harder to hit at all. Each weapon (guns only; blades and the like are strangely missing) is listed with an effective range, a long range and an extreme range, measured in squares on the deck plans. These ranges differ for each weapon. There is a specific to-hit roll for each range — 8+ at effective, 10+ at long, 12+ at extreme — modified only for weapon skill and target status (under cover, evading, etc.). Each weapon also has its own penetration rating which differs at each range; i.e., a weapon hit does more damage at effective range than extreme. Yes, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING definitely deserves an "A" for its combat system.

Unfortunately, the same can't be said for the melee system. It is one of the least satisfying aspects of the game. The whole thing seems to be merely a simplified form of brawling (with characters engaging in fisticuffs or clubbing each other with gun butts). The method described elsewhere in the rules for converting *Traveller* characteristics to melee values appears to bear this out. It's almost as if someone, at the last moment, noticed that they'd overlooked a rule for close combat and threw together a melee system — no time for blades and the like. Still . . . it *does* work in the context of the game, and that *is* what counts. But — Golly Gee! — where are those cutlasses the Imperial Marines are always said to be wearing? And surely the wily Zhodani carry at least daggers! Ah, well . . .

While we're on the subject of last-minute rushes, there is some evidence that AHL may have gone through one — at least in parts — in order for the game to be out in time for Origins. This is most evident in the technical manual. Several numbered items or areas on the deck plans were overlooked in the deck descriptions in the supplement. What, for instance, is location no. 20 on the Main Weapon Deck? Or location no. **10** on the lower level of the Power Plant Deck? Or no. 28 on the Gunnery Deck? And the Fighter Recovery Lock (location no. 16 on the Hangar Deck) isn't located on the map at all (though it is easy to guess by the description). Hopefully, these omissions will be corrected by GDW with an errata sheet.

In spite of such flaws, however, AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING still rates high in quality — far above the releases of a lot of other companies. It stands as a welcome addition to the *Traveller* family of games and deserves a place on the shelf of any science fiction gamer who enjoys a well-designed game that offers both complexity and **playability**. Designers Marc Miller and Frank Chadwick deserve a hefty round of applause for this offering. One wonders what they'll come up with next. All I can say is, after AZHANTI HIGH LIGHTNING, *Traveller* game 4 is going to have to be a real planet-buster to compete.

# EMPYREAN CHALLENGE

*EMPYREAN ...is defined as "the highest heavens". Control of a star cluster comprising 100 solar systems and 500 planets is the goal of this 150-player hidden-movement strategic science fiction game. For free details, send SASE to SUPERIOR SIMULATIONS, 524 Franklin Park Circle, Dept. SG1, Boise, ID 83709.*

# More Psionics for TRAVELLER

by Kenneth Burke

Since its debut, *Traveller* has experienced tremendous growth — the number of rulebooks has gone up from three to five, numerous supplements and adventures have been written for it, several *Traveller*-oriented games have been printed. Now there's even an award-winning *Traveller* magazine in print. The future is bound to see more *Traveller* materials; hopefully, a rulebook or supplement will be printed on psionics. Until that time, the following variant can be used in conjunction with the standard psionic rules of *Traveller*.

1. *Teleportation* — Teleportationists now leave training with an experience level of *one*. A teleportationist may now teleport ten kilograms of weight times their present teleportation experience level. A teleportationist expends no extra psionic strength points when teleporting the weight, he simply teleports it. This is done by touching or being touched by the weight amounts and teleporting along with the weight amounts to the intended areas where they are to arrive.

Teleportationists cannot teleport heavier weight amounts than those allowed by their skill levels; they must include their own body weight when determining the weight amounts they can teleport, thus preventing any successful personal teleportation attempt until the teleportationist reaches experience levels seven to nine. (Roll 1d6/2.) Small characters and children can usually start teleporting themselves around level four or five.

Personal teleportation with clothing, weapons, and the like is no longer limited to teleportationists with a certain experience level, but can be done by *any* teleportationist who can generate the experience level weight-amount requirement. Teleportationists can now teleport up to planetary range on planetary surfaces; they no longer have to make saving throws against disorientation. The psionic strength point costs from close to planetary range are now one, two, four, five, seven, eight, ten, eleven, thirteen, and fourteen, respectively. Teleportationists must now roll 8+ to advance one level of experience per month following their psionic training.

2. *Telepathy* — Telepathy can be used upon psionic-users who are asleep or unconscious, provided that they are not

wearing an artificial psionic shield. Psionic-users who impose suspended animation upon themselves via awareness are *not* vulnerable to telepathic abilities; those who have suspended animation imposed on them via other means, though, are.

3. *Mind Transfer* — Mind transfer is a telepathic ability; it requires an experience level of fourteen (see TSG 20), plus the expenditure of fourteen psionic strength points to perform in addition to any psionic strength point cost due to range. The psionic strength points used to conduct the mind transfer are not replenished until the mind transfer is complete.

The mind transfer ability lets a psionic-user transfer his mind from his own body to that of another, taking total control of the body from the mind that originally controlled it. The psionic-user's old body goes into immediate coma; each day it is left unoccupied it suffers four points of damage. Upon loss of a third or more of its combined S, D, and E total, the mind instinctively returns to its old body at a speed of a hundred kilometers per second. Should the body be destroyed, the mind dies. When a transferred mind leaves the body it occupied, the formerly occupied body will go into an immediate coma; in two to seven hours, the mind that originally controlled the body will regain control of the body and it will awaken.

When in another body, the mind-transferring psionic-user can use his psionic powers, the mind transfer included. It takes approximately eleven seconds for a successful mind transfer to take place; during the time, the intended victim will suffer an intensely painful headache and act accordingly (scream, run around in agony, etc.). A mind transfer can be stopped by a psionic shield; psionic-users, therefore, can only use mind transfer on other psionic-users who are asleep or unconscious. The wearing of an artificial psionic shield will allow total immunity to a mind transfer attempt.

4. *Awareness Abilities* — The following are new awareness abilities:

(a) *Full Body Functions Control* — A character with this ability has total control of those bodily functions over which he would ordinarily have no control (pulse rate, speed at which blood

flows, breathing, etc.). The character can increase or decrease these at will. Such a character can survive in any atmosphere type except "no atmosphere," "corrosive," and "insidious" without having to use protective measures; when underwater, he is treated as if wearing artificial gills. It takes a character five seconds to use the ability of full bodily functions control; the ability lasts five minutes times the character's present awareness experience level.

(b) *Full Inner Strength Potential* — A character with this ability has total control over his inner strength ("chi," "ki," the "force"); this allows him full use of his body potential, giving him abnormal abilities. His S, D, and E scores are doubled; the character can now perform any feat twice as fast as he could with normal strength and speed. In combat, characters using the ability will not lose consciousness should one or two of their melee characteristics be reduced to zero; they will remain awake and active until (a) they are through using the ability, or (b) they die. When a character stops using the ability, any wounds he received in combat while using it are reduced accordingly, normal melee affects now applying. It takes ten seconds for a character to use the ability of full inner strength potential; it lasts ten minutes times the character's present awareness experience level.

(c) *Astral Projection* — A character with this ability can separate his inner being (soul) from his body and project it to any part of the planet, starship, or wherever he is at the moment. Since the soul is not composed of three-dimensional substances, it cannot be blocked by three-dimensional objects or obstacles. A character's soul, therefore, can never physically affect the world around it; by using psionic powers in conjunction with his astral projection ability, though, a character can mentally affect the world around his soul. A character may project his inner being indefinitely. If the character's body is wounded (suffers an S, D, or E point loss), though, the character's soul will return to his body at a speed of one hundred kilometers per second, the maximum speed a character's soul can travel. A character's projected being can be detected by psionic telepathic abilities or electronic ones, such as an infrared scanner; it is never visible to the naked eye. Astral projection is a level fifteen ability (obtainable only by using the earlier psionic variant) and costs fifteen psionic strength points to perform; these points are not replenished until such time as a character stops projecting his inner being.



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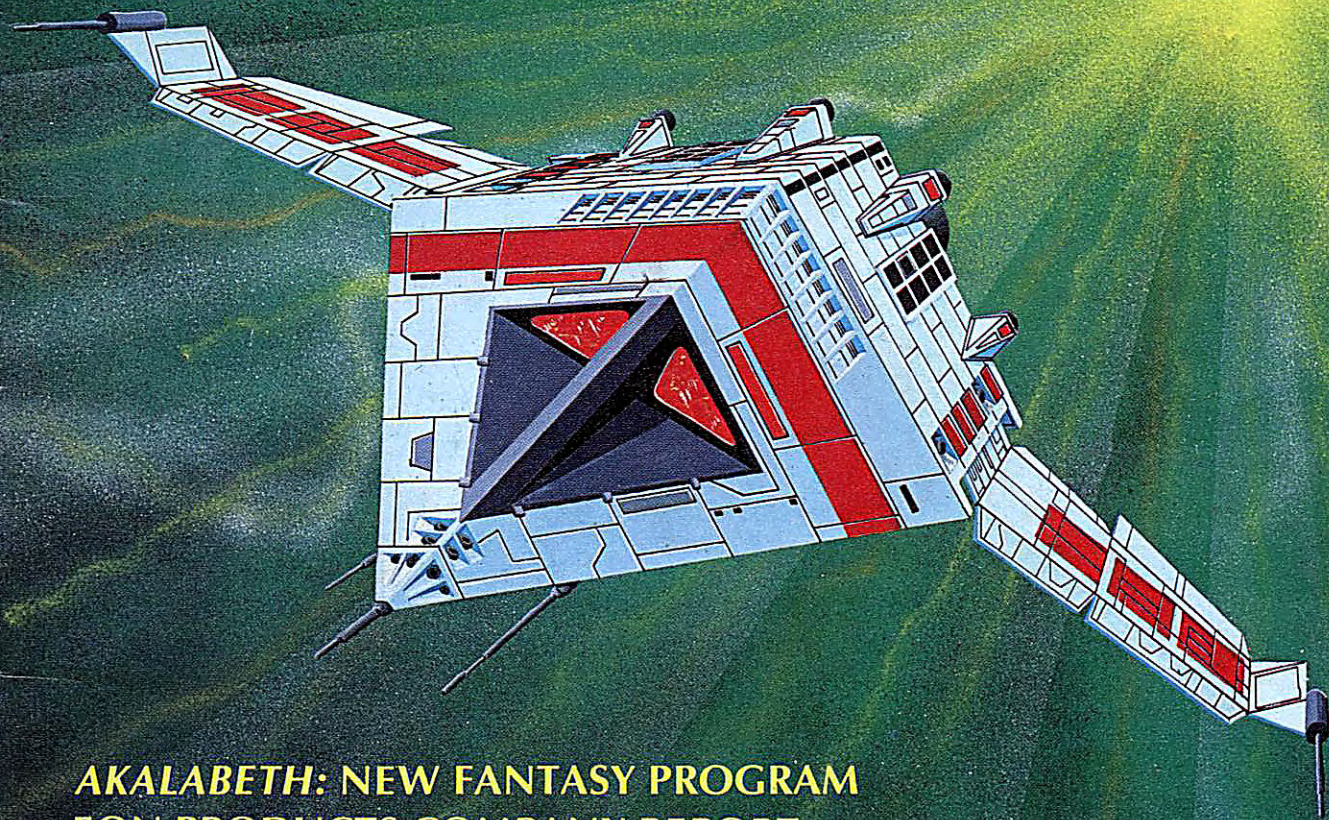
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# THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

## THE FIRE WEB

Artifact for *TRAVELLER*



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*ELITE*





# Pawn of the FIRE WEB

by K. L. Jones

The blue-green fire seemed to be dancing mere centimeters from the lenses of the view screen. He knew that the force field was holding and that the fire was at least ten meters from the hull. The instruments told him that. The instruments also told him that the ship was caught fast in the power interplay created by the web and the ship's force field. The Rodgan cruiser which had cast the web was out there somewhere. As long as it held the web on his ship he was stuck.

He pressed his tongue against the first molar on the left side of his jaw, activating the psi-link with the ship's computer.

"Suggestions," he subvocalized.

"Can you clarify?" The response was instantaneous.

"I'm asking for suggestions as to how we can get out of this mess."

There was a pause this time. Then:  
"I'm a computer, not a magician."

"I continue to be surprised by your sarcasm," he snapped back. "I didn't know that was included in your programming. Just tell me what you would do if you were me."

Again there was a slight pause before the computer responded.

*"If I were you . . . I'd take a break . . . Try and relax . . . Our force field will hold indefinitely . . . Their web will last even longer . . . Nothing will be decided in the immediate time frame . . . And your bio-readouts indicate you need a break . . . As for the sarcasm, I'm self-taught."*

He pressed his tongue against the left side of his mouth, cutting the link. Spinning in his command chair, he turned his back on the view screen and forcefully propelled himself from the chair. The gravity of the ship being somewhat less than he had expected, he almost toppled

over before regaining his balance.

Momentarily he thought of activating the link to order coffee but before he did so he noticed the steaming cup sitting under the outlet in the mess area.

"Thanks," he spoke aloud, knowing that the computer's audio sensors would pick up the message.

Sitting with his back to the view screen he sipped at the coffee and tried in vain to block out the situation he was in. It was easy for him to feel at home here. The ship, the *Doubting Thomas*, was his home and had been for the last seven years. It had been a good home. It was everything he wanted.

After leaving the service where he had received his space flight training, all he had wanted was to run his own ferry service. Cargo or people. It hadn't mattered.

But then the war . . .

Who ever understands the reasons for

war? A conflict of interests. A dispute of minor significance elevated to a blood bath. None of it really mattered, except that he, Richard Winston Cramer, was a reserve officer.

When he was called up, he was given an option. Line duty on a fleet cruiser, or the messenger service. He chose the latter because he would be allowed to keep the *Doubling Thomas* and would avoid most of the hassles of regular military duty.

Then this mission. All he had to do was ferry some new weapon plans along with several working models to the Jadini System. The only catch was that the flight plan would require three jumps, two of which would bring him into areas patrolled by the Rodgans. The admiralty had informed him that the odds of completing the mission were heavily in his favor.

When the same data had been fed into the *Thomas*, he had gotten one word in response:

*Sucker.*

Cramer smiled bitterly at the memory as he sipped his coffee.

So here he was with his ship, twenty light years away from the nearest friendly forces, caught in the power web of a Rodgan cruiser.

The cargo he carried was, he had been told, significant enough to possibly make the difference in the war. Prudence would dictate surrender. But Cramer, had he been prudent, would never have desired the life of a space pilot.

He pressed his tongue against the molar.

"Give me all the available data on the Rodgan web."

First figures then facts began to fill his mind. He wasn't interested in theory and probably wouldn't understand too much of it anyway. What he wanted and what he quickly picked up was the actual working nature of the web.

It was the one real advantage that the Rodgans had. No one was sure how the field was generated, but it did take a lot of energy. The web itself had no power unless it was opposed by a force field. The interplay of the two fields created a time-space anomaly which resulted in a pseudo-gravitational web uniting the two ships. It was impossible to penetrate a Rodgan web with any known weapon.

"In short," Cramer spoke aloud again, "we're stuck here until they let us go. Or our force field collapses, at which point they turn off their web and hit us with their lasers."

"In sum, correct," said a speaker.

"Will our field outlast their web?"

"I have no access to their energy reserve monitor . . . however, since the cruiser is at least ten times our size, designed to engage in fleet battles and apparently has simply been on patrol, I would assume that they can keep the web on us until, if you'll pardon the expression, our reactors freeze up."

"Any suggestions on tactics?"

"Surrender. That is the only option that provides any acceptable chance of survival."

"How did you ever get so pessimistic?"

"Experience. If you want I will give you various tactics that have been employed by scout ships in similar situations. However, the tactics were all unsuccessful . . ."

"Never mind. What's *the* state of our armaments?"

"We have four missiles, none of which would be able to get through our force field. We have the laser, which is equally inoperable at this time . . ."

"If we deactivate the force field, can we use our laser against the Rodgans?"

"Yes . . . But we have no way of knowing where they **are**. By the time we target them, they will have scattered our **particles** . . ."

"You have such a knack for description."

Cramer moved from his position in the control chair. The green fire continued to dance in front of him on the view screen.

"If we turn our force field off, what happens to the web?"

"It collapses. Passes through us. **Engulfs** us. No one knows for sure . . . But the web itself cannot damage **us** . . ."

"**OK.** On the count of three, deactivate the force field, launch the missiles at maximum spread. Take evasive action for ten seconds, then resume former course and reactivate the force field."

Computers can't sigh, but Cramer thought that was the response his orders got.

He fastened the webbing which bound him to the chair. Stretched his arms out before him and then brought his hands down lightly on the control panel. There was no response to the pressure, and he knew that once the command was executed, the ship would, to the extent it was capable of movement, be fully automated. Still, he wanted the feel of those instruments at the tips of his fingers.

"One, two, three . . ."

The fire leaped at him, seeming to spring through the view screen. Even as the fire approached, the ride began. Gravity shifted, pulling him forward and to the right. Then back and still to the

right. He was upside down for a second or two and then, just as he was righted, he was slammed into a brick wall.

The green fire was gone. It had left a residue, an after image seemingly burned into the backs of his eye lids, but it was gone. He shook his head, trying to clear the **image**.

The fire was back. It was no longer just a ghost image. It was there before him on the view screen.

"Report," he said.

"Missiles launched. Results uncertain. We were out of the web for . . . three minutes nineteen seconds."

"Did you get a fix on the Rodgans?"

"Yes . . . and no. I have no reliable knowledge of where they are now. We are, as I'm sure you know, back in the web."

"I know."

Cramer leaned back in the control chair. A damp trickle flowed into his mouth and he was surprised to find, when he ran his hand across his face, that it was blood. Even before he could speak, the computer responded.

"You have suffered a nosebleed . . . Several vessels in your proboscis have ruptured . . . If you will tilt your head backward, the bleeding should stop presently."

Cramer did so.

"Trapped," he said out loud. "And it had to be with a comic."

There was no response.

Time passes slowly when you are caught and **held**. Maybe time doesn't pass at **all** . . .

Cramer moved from the command chair and started pacing the small cubicle that served as bridge, mess area and cabin. He activated the link and asked for a readout on the tactics that had failed against the web. He spent some time, maybe minutes, maybe hours, reviewing the data. Then he asked:

"Which one of these should have worked?"

*"The one that seemed to have the best chance was the one involving random fluctuations of the force field."*

A scout ship held in the web had tried to escape by randomly turning its force field on and off while firing at the Rodgan cruiser that held it. The scout had even managed to inflict two hits on the cruiser before it was blasted apart by the return fire.

"Why didn't it work?"

*"Three major reasons . . . One; the random pattern relied upon was the creation of the scout's computer . . . It was not*

*completely random and was picked up by the enemy . . . Two; the scout tried to fight rather than run . . .*"

"What's the third reason?" Cramer barked mentally when the computer failed to **continuc**.

*"Lack of any real knowledge about how the web field works . . ."*

"Thanks a lot," Cramer said aloud.

Cramer began to **pace** the small area that was his home. More of a home than any place had ever been. **It** was a home he didn't want to give up, especially not to the **Rodgans**.

"We're going to do it," he said in a hoarse whisper.

"Do what?" the computer's audio speakers sounding very distant.

Cramer activated the link and fed the plan into the **Thomas** then asked: "Will it work?"

*"Probably . . . not."*

"What's wrong with the plan?"

*"The basic lack of knowledge of the web makes any plan questionable."*

"So it might work?"

*"It has as much chance as anything else . . . Except surrender . . . That would work."*

"Give me the odds."

*"Ten out of a hundred . . . one out of ten . . . With a potential error of twenty to twenty-five percent."*

"Sounds good enough for me."

*"You do realize that your plan is based on the assumption that the Rodgan wish to capture rather than destroy us?"*

"Yes," said Cramer. **"If** they just wanted to wipe us out they wouldn't bother playing with us."

*"Have you ever seen a cat with a mouse . . ."*

"Deactivate the force field," Cramer spoke the command.

He avoided the view screen for the seconds it took the green fire to collapse and pass through the ship. Nevertheless the image burned itself into his retinas. Even before the after-image faded he gave the sub-vocal command to switch to the ship's emergency energy system.

"Report," he barked, strapping himself in the command chair.

"The cruiser is ten kilometers **off** . . . at **190/30** degrees . . . It is advancing toward **us** . . ."

Cramer punched the buttons that gave him a view of the cruiser. It seemed smaller than he had expected. As he watched, a shuttle craft separated from the cruiser.

"They're coming out. That must mean they know what we're carrying."

"Either that or they don't think we're

worth a laser beam . . ."

**"When . . ."** Cramer hadn't finished sub-vocalizing his thought when the computer cut in.

*"Thirty seconds to initial position."*

Time passed. Seconds that seemed like hours.

Suddenly Cramer was pressed into his chair as the ship sprang to life, executing a hard turn at full **acceleration**.

Cramer pressed the button that sent the laser beam toward the approaching shuttle craft and was disappointed as it spattered harmlessly against the craft's armor.

The **Thomas** executed another turn; Cramer was pushed back into the chair as his ship reached full acceleration.

*"Jump point in nineteen seconds . . ."*

The ship's report was followed closely by a soundless explosion that shook the ship.

*"Minor damage in cargo section . . . Force field back on. Fluctuating at my command..."*

Cramer placed his fingers on the button that would allow him to override the computer's control of the force field. Only when his fingers pressed down would the field **be** activated. Its deactivation would be controlled by **the** computer.

He pressed, then released, then pressed. For a short moment the green fire danced before him only to be replaced by the greyness of **hyperspace**.

Cramer, feeling the tenseness drained from his muscles, laughed aloud.

"That was easy enough."

"It worked . . . But only because the Rodgans had some interest in not destroying **us** . . ."

"Do you think they know what we are carrying?"

"We are clothed in all the secrecy that Fleet Command could muster . . . Therefore, it is a given that the enemy knows more about what **we** are transporting than **we** do . . ."

"None of that **matters**," Cramer sub-vocalized. "We're the first craft to get away from the **web**."

*"It worked . . . Perhaps because we put a ship between us and the web generator. . ."*

"Well, it worked. The rest of this mission will be a piece of cake."

*"No . . . We will have to emerge from hyperspace in the **Quattro** Section . . . **That** area is generally patrolled by the Rodgans . . . And since they know what we are **carrying** . . . where **we** are going... They will be looking for us..."*

**"No** sweat. We beat 'em this time. We can do it again."

"Yes . . ." the **Thomas** responded. **"Maybe."**

Despite his years in space, and the countless number of times he had experienced the translation from hyperspace to normal space, Cramer was always disappointed. There was no pop. No dramatic manifestations. The grey of the view screens was replaced by the gold-flecked black of the star field.

"Translation completed . . .," the **Thomas** reported. **"We** are . . . three thousand kilometers off course . . . Not bad."

Cramer scanned the instruments on the command console. All systems functioning.

"We're in good shape," Cramer spoke. "And no sign of the Rodgans."

**"Wrong,"** the **Thomas** speaker sounded. "Full alert . . ."

The view screen in front of Cramer exploded into blue-green fire.

"Where are they?" Cramer said, activating the **link**.

*"Based on the **data** . . . received before the web hit us . . . they **are** . . . almost everywhere . . . There were seven cruisers . . . emerging from **hyperspace** . . . Roughly in a semi-circle to our rear . . . **This** time they really have us . . . by the **tail**."*

Cramer looked at the view screen. Again he had the illusion of the fire dancing immediately before his eyes. It was, this time, an almost solid wall of flame. And this time the instruments were fluctuating. The force field was **not** holding the web ten meters from the hull. It was fluctuating between nine and seven meters.

"Status report."

*"We are **caught** . . ."*

Cramer waited.

"Go on," he said finally, venting his impatience.

*"Our status is . . . somewhat complicated . . . **The web** is much **stronger** . . . Data; current projection . . . capacitors will overload in . . . two standard hours . . . Other than **that** . . . every thing's fine."*

Despite himself, Cramer laughed.

"We're in great shape, huh. So what do we do?"

*"Three alternatives . . . We surrender now . . . We wait two hours . . . Or we drop our force field.. and using our laser . . . **shoot** it out with the Rodgans . . . We'd last about three **seconds** . . ."*

"Right," Cramer said.

**"Would you like *more* . . . coffee?"**

Cramer switched off the computer



link and moved to the mess area. Two hours. He might as well relax.

The coffee was bitter and there was no way to relax. He put down the cup and began to pace. "If we drop the screen, how long would it take to get a scan of what's out there?"

"Two seconds . . . Does it really matter . . ."

"No."

Cramer continued to pace. "I want to know ten minutes before the field gives out," he said.

There was no response.

The ship was quiet.

He sat down and reached for the coffee cup. It was halfway to his lips when the computer spoke:

"It appears my estimate was overly optimistic . . . by some five minutes . . . We now have a reserve . . . capable of maintaining the force field for seventeen minutes."

"Thanks," Cramer said.

He pressed his tongue against the molar, reactivating the link. He took a final sip of the coffee. As he put the cup down, he glanced at the view screen. The fire vanished.

"The web is gone . . ."

"I know. What happened?"

An explosion in the after section of the ship forced him into the table.

"We are under more conventional attack . . . Twelve *Rodgans* . . . Others . . ."

Another explosion and Cramer moved toward the command chair.

"Keep the field up."

"Will not hold . . . Firepower too great . . ."

"Damage report," Cramer demanded.

"Port, starboard, and after cargo holds hit . . ."

Another shock rocked the *Thomas*.

"Forward, port, and all rear scanners damaged . . . Hull breached . . . Energy/fuel reserves . . . below critical . . . And I'm not doing too well myself . . ."

The view screen went blank even before Cramer had strapped himself in the command chair. The instruments before him were a maze of red lights.

"Craft approaching... Contact in two minutes . . ."

"Prepare self destruct on my command."

"No."

"What?"

"We have no self-destruct capacity . . . It was removed prior to start of this mission . . ."

"You're kidding."

"Would I kid . . . about a thing like

that . . ."

Then: "We will be boarded in . . . twenty seconds . . . Craft has breached port air-lock . . ."

Cramer looked wildly around the cabin. The regulations required all fleet officers to have a hand blaster. But where in blazes was it?

"Storage locker... under mess table."

Cramer moved to get the weapon.

"Thanks, Thomas."

"Ten seconds . . . before they force the cabin hatch . . . three minutes of power left . . . Bye."

The blaster was in his hand as Cramer turned toward the hatchway.

"Bye, Thomas," he subvocalized. "It's been nice . . ."

He hesitated as the hatch opened. He hesitated a millisecond longer at the sight of the first space-suited figure. He started to pull the trigger. He was too late.

He awoke with a splitting headache and in strangely familiar surroundings. His blurred vision cleared as the pain in his head settled into a dull throb.

An ensign, with fleet Command Staff insignia on his collar stood at the foot of the bunk. Cramer pressed his tongue against the left side of his mouth.

"What's going on?"

No answer. Cramer felt himself encircled by nothingness. He was alone, cut off from the *Doubting Thomas*.

"What's going on?" This time he asked the question verbally.

"I'm not supposed to answer any questions," the ensign said. "No one is supposed to talk with you until after the debriefing."

"What about my ship?"

"The admiral wants to see you as soon as possible."

"You're a very lucky man, Cramer," Admiral Dearborn said.

The admiral sat behind a desk that seemed to be as large as the entire mess area of the *Doubting Thomas*. Cramer swayed slightly as he stood at attention. The pain in his head was gone but he was hoping for an invitation to sit down. It didn't come.

"Lucky that Fleet was able to pull your eggs out of the fire before the *Rodgans* hatched them."

Cramer forced himself to return the Admiral's smile.

"Sir, what about my ship . . ."

"Of course, on the other hand, you're not all that lucky. I mean if your mission had been a total success, you'd be a big



hero. We had plans to give you the Fleet Cluster. Posthumously, of course. Doesn't do to have too many live heroes running around."

"Yes, sir," Cramer said. "I'm sorry we weren't able to get to Jadini."

"You'd be even sorer if you had managed to get through," the admiral said briskly. "You still don't understand, do you?"

The headache was **beginning** to return.

"You were bait. You **were** supposed to hold off that first Rodgan cruiser until the fleet arrived. We were going to capture it and get some first-hand knowledge about the web."

"What about my cargo?"

"Your cargo was a collection of junk. You were bait, but you got off the hook the first time. We followed you here and ran into half the Rodgan fleet. We lost two cruisers and sustained damage to three others. But, **like** I said, you're a lucky man."

"What about my ship?" Cramer said. "Sir."

"Oh, yes, the DT, or whatever you call it. It sustained heavy damage but was salvageable."

"I haven't been able to raise it on my link . . ."

"That's because this is a security area on a fleet staff ship and we are totally

shielded."

"That's what he thinks . . . Sorry . . . Took me a while to figure out how to get through the jam."

The message was a little fuzzy but the static slowly dissolved.

"**Now** as I was saying, Cramer, you are a lucky man. You single-handedly messed up a fleet staff project. You cost us two **ships** and if you hadn't been so damn slow with your blaster, you would have wiped out three Fleet **StaffNCOs** sent to rescue you."

"You did everything **right** . . . in other words..."

"Never mind," Cramer mumbled.

"What was that?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Now I'm going to tell you why you're a lucky man. We have this courier **mission** . . ."

Cramer only half listened, knowing the details would be given at a more formal briefing, and would later be fed into the *Thomas'* data banks.

"**You** know what they did," Cramer **subvocalized**. "They used us like pawns. And we're getting the blame because the gambit didn't **work**."

"*Not like pawns . . . There is always the chance . . . that a pawn can become a queen . . . We **only** had the chance of becoming so **much** . . . space junk.*"

"Are you listening to me, Cramer?"

"Yes, sir."

## Fire Web

Obviously, the technology **used** at the time of this story is a little higher than that found in *Traveller*. During the Third Imperium, fire web generators **were** known mostly through infrequent discoveries in ancient hulks. The generators varies widely in design, but **the** admittedly incomplete knowledge available at that time might be summarized thusly:

Code	Tech	Tons	EP
1	23?	1	3
2	17	50	10
3	17	100	20
4	18	75	20
5	17	200	30
6	18	150	30
7	23?	27	63
8	20?	196	92
9	19?	431	129

The discovered generators had that much in common - they had a measurable mass and consumed a measurable amount of energy. It was **also** possible to make a rough estimate of the technology level of the society which produced **the** generator. It goes without saying that discoveries of low-technology generators were more common (if that is the right word) than discoveries of high-technology generators. In fact, the numbers followed by question marks represent unique and perhaps unrelated artifacts discovered at separated points in a vast area of space over a period of hundreds of years.

**Combat:** A **fire web** can only be used at short range, at a single target which is using a continuous (**nonflickering**) black globe. The basic roll of **8+** is modified as follows:

- +web factor (code)
- globe factor
- target agility rating
- +relative computer size

A successful hit will tie **the** ships together.

Their vector will be the summed vectors of the two ships' motion. (Two ships of equal mass moving in opposite directions at equal speed would have a summed vector of zero.) If two (or more) ships **web** the same target, sum all three (or more) vectors. In practical terms, this means that the ships will remain at short range indefinitely.

A ship that makes a successful **fire web** attack can use its other weapons and its sensors freely, but not in the direction of the target ship. It can maneuver freely, if it takes the extra mass of the target ship (moving with it) into account, but it cannot **use** its jump drive. The target ship, of course, cannot fire, use sensors, or maneuver, unless it turns off the force field. It has the consolation of being invulnerable to attack from any direction, an advantage not shared by the attacking ship.

A sufficiently powerful **fire web** (or combination of the same) may overload the target ship's capacitors. This, by itself, **will** do no damage, but it will cause the force field to collapse, making the target vulnerable to other attacks. To calculate overload, subtract the defending screen factor from the sum of the attacking web factors. The result is the number of energy points absorbed per hour.

*In the Campaign:* Obviously, players will have little occasion to buy **fire web** generators, and less to install them on their ships. More often, the bad guys will play a **fire web** as a trump to players using a black globe. Also, a generator might appear in a scenario as a mysterious, but incredibly valuable, alien artifact that the players find, steal, or are hired to guard. (It should take quite a while for them to figure out what the gizmo does!)

Incidentally, a **fire web** appears on very few universal ship profiles. When it does appear, the code is appended with the letter W. For example, of W4 appears after a **USP**, that means the ship mounts a code four **fire web generator**.

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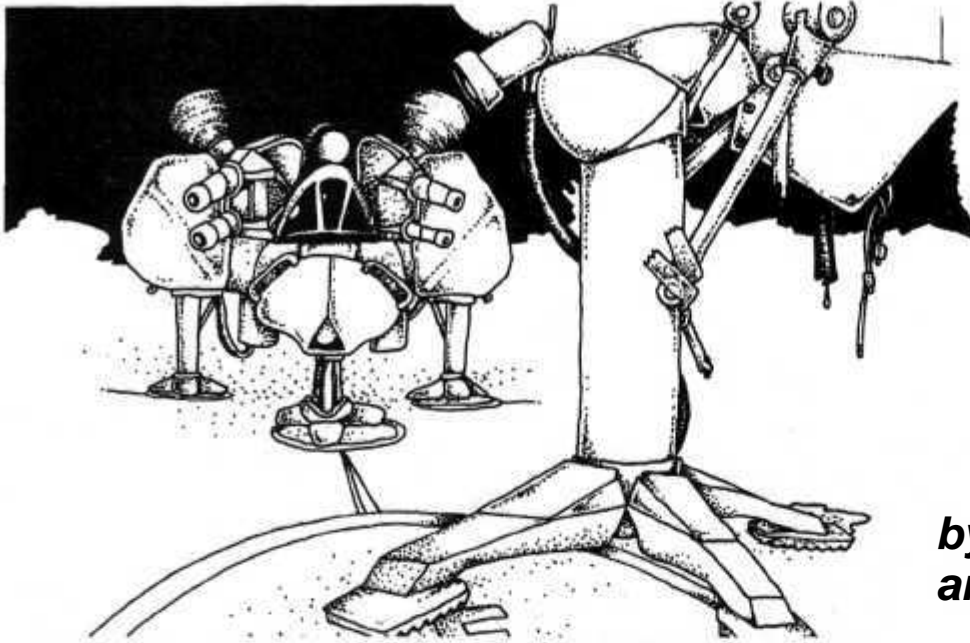
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# YA WANNA BUY A USED SHIP?

by **Tim Brown**  
and **William A. Barton**

Since construction times for ships in *Traveller* are so incredibly long, many players have been unable to purchase new ships. Therefore, I have developed a system for generating used ships for sale. Using this system, players may effectively ignore construction times (the ships have already been built) and may even obtain a ship for a cheaper price than normal, although there may turn out to be a few problems with a used craft.

Ships may be found for sale only at Type A starports, since this is where most potential buyers would congregate in search of vessels. Once players have arrived at such a starport, the referee should make one die roll with a six-sided die on Table I, cross indexing the result with the population of the world on which the starport is located.

Roll	Population									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	A
1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3	3
2	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	3
3	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2
4	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
5	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1

This will provide the number of individual ships for sale at that starport. As the number of ships for sale may change over a period of time, players may elect to remain at the starport in hopes that more suitable vessels may be offered for sale as they wait. However, a maximum of one roll on Table I per week is allowed.

For each individual ship up for sale, the referee must generate various information, such as ship type, its cost and the condition of the ship. The type of ship available is easily determined by rolling

one six-sided die on Table II.

Roll	Ship Type
1	Scout
2	Free Trader
3	Free Trader
4	Free Trader
5	Subsidized Merchant
6	Other (Roll on Table III)

**Scout:** As newer ships are constructed for the scout service, older vessels are often phased out and sold to the general public. Though usually around 40 years old, these ships are, on the whole, in good condition and have had annual maintenance since construction. Used scout ships no longer have an air/raft when offered up for sale by the service, but retain double turrets — void of weaponry. They are, in all other aspects, identical to those described in *Traveller* Book 2.

**Free Trader:** The fact that a free trader is for sale indicates that its owner was an unsuccessful merchant who has been forced out of business. The ship has been repossessed by the bank and placed on the market in an attempt to recover the bank's investment. Since the former owner was undoubtedly in financial difficulties during the final months of ownership, and the bank has probably not bothered to do so, the ship will not have undergone annual maintenance in some time. The first course a new owner should take is to initiate a complete overhaul of the drive systems and the electronic circuitry. This will require an expenditure of CR 500,000 and a one-week stay at a Type A or B starport. Should the new owner elect to forego the overhaul, the referee should secretly roll twice on Table V in addition to the initial

roll (see below), adding a die modifier of 4. Two out of six free traders offered for sale will have one double turret, but no weaponry will be installed. Otherwise, the ship is as outlined in Book 2.

**Subsidized Merchants:** There are two types of subsidized merchant vessels commonly found in a *Traveller* universe. Most are Type R; one in six, however, will be a Type M (see Book 2 for stats). Subsidized merchants of either type are usually sold by the government should their captains fail to complete their agreed-upon duties before receiving full title. The government has repossessed the vessel and offered it for sale at the nearest starport. The ship has undergone annual maintenance at government expense, but still may be subject to faults. Players buying such a ship from the government have no obligation to cover its previously assigned route and are free to roam the galaxy.

**Other:** Ships in this class may be of custom design, created on demand by the referee. General features such as engineering design, hull type, fuel requirements and base price of these ships are all that the ref need generate, unless the ship is actually purchased. In such a case, he might want to design the ship in greater detail. Or, if the referee prefers, he may use Table III.

Roll	Ship Type
1	Custom Design
2	Corsair
3	Seeker
4	Lab Ship
5	Safari Ship
6	Cruiser (1-2)/Yacht (3-6)

**Corsair:** A captured pirate ship, put up for sale by the authorities. As outlined

in *Citizens of the Imperium*, but minus weaponry and variable identification features (which can be restored by new owner, if he desires, at any shipyard on a law level 0 planet, for one-quarter the ship's base price).

**Seeker:** Seekers on sale will usually retain their mining laser (four in six chance), but will probably be old and battered due to their use in asteroid mining and the fact that no belter would sell his ship unless it was defective or he was unsuccessful at his trade (in which case it is doubtful he'd have kept up its annual maintenance). Roll twice on Table V for any Seeker for sale, and two more times if new buyer fails to overhaul it, as with a free trader.

**Lab Ship:** As outlined in *Citizen*, minus air/raft and ATV. Offered for sale by a scientific foundation unable to obtain enough research grants to keep the vessel. Usually in good shape. No laboratory equipment will remain aboard, however.

**Safari Ship:** As outlined in *Citizens*, minus air/raft. Only two in six will retain caging areas and trophy room (always void of trophies in any case). As safari ships on sale usually belong to failed hunters or spoiled nobles who have tired of them, they probably won't have undergone annual maintenance for some time, and will need overhaul as with a free trader. **Note:** The safari ship as outlined in the book has no jump drive. Players purchasing such a ship will find it necessary to install one after purchase. It is possible, however, that some (one in six) may have had a jump drive added by the previous owner.

It is also possible that a Type C cruiser or a Type Y yacht may be up for sale, though these will be less common due to the quasi-military nature of the first and the penchant nobles have for keeping the second in **their** own ranks. These are exactly as outlined in Book 2 except that all weaponry and auxiliary vehicles have been removed.

The price for which the owner will sell his ship is calculated by rolling two six-sided dice and checking the result against Table IV. The result will be the percentage of the base price of *the* ship in question (when built at a starport) which the owner will accept as payment.

**Table IV**

Roll	Percentage of Base Price
0	50%
1	55%
2	60%
3	65%
4	70%
5	75%



6	80%
7	85%
8	90%
9	95%
10	100%
11	105%
12	110%

(If, after all modifiers, the result is less than zero, treat it as zero.)

Certain skills may be used as a -DM when rolling on the Price Table, at the referee's discretion. Administration skill may be used to represent the player's skill in "talking the seller down" in price. Bribery skill could be useful if the ship is being sold through an agent; the owner **himself** would never lower the price for a mere bribe. Skills such as Streetwise, or a Social Standing of 11+, could perhaps be used to intimidate or impress the owner or agent into lowering his price but probably no greater than one for every two levels of skill and certainly no more than two tops — again, at the referee's discretion. (Excessive use of intimidation may bring in the starport police...)

Each used ship has a chance of having one or more defects when purchased. The referee must secretly roll for each ship once on Table V before purchase to determine whether or not it is faulty (twice for the seekers, above).

**Table V**

Roll	Result
2	Power plant malfunctions
3	Maneuver Drives malfunction
4	Misjumps one out of six times
5	Periodically loses cabin pressure
6	No defect
7	No defect
8	No defect
9	No defect
10	No defect
11	No defect
12	Turrets jam

If a player with Engineering-2 or better inspects the ship before he buys, these

faults will be identified before any money actually changes hands. The party may then decide whether or not they wish to buy a faulty vessel. If so, the owner will offer a 20% reduction in price. Otherwise he will have to repair the ship to the party's satisfaction. If this inspection is not made, any defects in the ship will surface in one to six weeks (roll one die) after purchase. The referee may wish to place actual breakdowns at critical times during the ship's operation to make such crises more interesting.



Players may also want to sell their own vessels to obtain additional credits. Note that a scout ship received as a **mustering-out** benefit may never be sold or disposed of in any manner while the player to whom it was awarded is alive. This applies to lab ships as well, should they be used. Any other ship is eligible to be sold. The referee should decide at random how many potential buyers will examine any given ship for sale, and then determine how many actually have the money for such an expenditure.

This system of pre-owned starship purchasing should smooth out the flow of any *Traveller* game in which players are looking for their own means of transportation, yet find themselves short on time and credits. It may even encourage more people to visit your universe!

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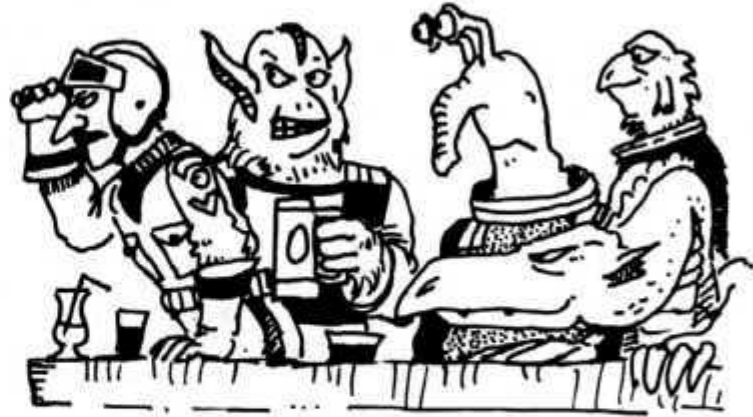
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# Rumor Reliability in Traveller



by Steve Winter

One of the most valuable commodities for player-characters in *Traveller* is information. A false rumor can launch a bogey chase halfway across known space, costing thousands of credits and maybe a few lives.

The problem facing the referee is: what kind of rumors and stories has a character heard during his "prior service"? After all, characters spend a considerable amount of time travelling the galaxy before actual play begins, and that time should be taken into account somehow. Secondly, referees need some consistent way of handling informants.

A simple table (see below) can solve this problem. A 2d throw, modified by the character's age and experience (referee's discretion) determines what he has heard about a subject. Informants are treated exactly like player characters, although some results on the table have different meanings for informants than they have for player-characters.

Rumor Table  
(player-characters/informants)

2	inaccurate, believed
3	inaccurate, repeated
4	inaccurate, rumors
5	no information/inaccurate, rumors
6	partial
7	no information/partial
8	partial
9	no information/partial
10	accurate, rumors
11	accurate, rumors
12	accurate, repeated/second hand
13+	accurate, believed/first hand

The results should be interpreted as follows:

inaccurate, believed: The character has heard the same story several times

from reliable sources, and he **believes** it. The story is either misleading or totally false.

inaccurate, repeated: The character has heard the same or similar stories repeated by several sources which may or may not have been reliable. The character doesn't necessarily believe the stories, but they do carry the weight of repetition. They are misleading or totally false.

inaccurate, rumors: The character has heard of the subject once before, but he has no idea whether the story he heard was true or not. It wasn't.

no information/inaccurate, rumors: A player character has never before heard of the object, person or phenomenon being investigated. Treat as inaccurate, rumors, for an informant.

partial: This character knows a little, but not much, about the subject. His information may or may not be helpful. **There** is always a 1/6 chance that it is false.

no information/partial: Player characters have no information, informants have partial information.

accurate, rumors: Same as inaccurate, rumors, except the story was partially or completely true.

accurate, repeated/second hand: For player characters, same as inaccurate, repeated, except the information is true. Informants may claim to have known or spoken with someone who had firsthand knowledge of, or saw computer files on, or otherwise came into direct contact with the subject under investigation.

accurate, believed/firsthand: Same as inaccurate, believed, except the stories were partially or completely true. If this is an informant, he has firsthand experience with the subject.

The referee should not disclose the actual result of the die roll, but determine the result secretly and present information to the players as they would have heard it. These stories can be as colorful or as bland as the referee cares (or is able) to make them, but it's a good idea to plan a few ahead so the players won't get suspicious. If the stories aren't plausible, you won't fool anybody.

In addition, informants should always get a reaction roll. A source with accurate information could refuse to talk to the players. Even worse, a source with misinformation could be extremely helpful, supplying maps, codes, or charts which are all wrong.

Informants who are extremely hostile or who have refused a bribe may also lie to characters. Consult the following table:

Die modifiers:

bribe offer rejected	+1
reaction roll = 5	+1
4	+2
3	+3

source **automatically lies** on 2d roll of 13+

Since any single informant can be quite unreliable or unhelpful, it is a good idea to let players roll more often for informant encounters than for patrons. Two or three rolls per week, with appropriate DMs for Streetwise, Carousing, Liason and Administrative Experience, is usually sufficient. The Patron Table works very well for determining the general character of informants.

Although this system was designed for *Traveller*, there's no reason why it could not be used in other role-playing systems like D&D or TFT. The table remains the same; only the modifiers need to be changed.



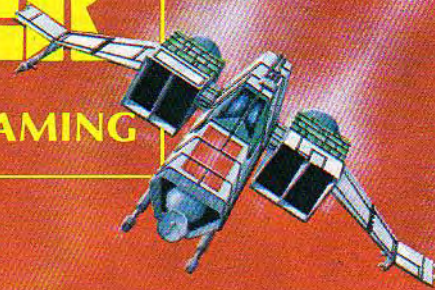
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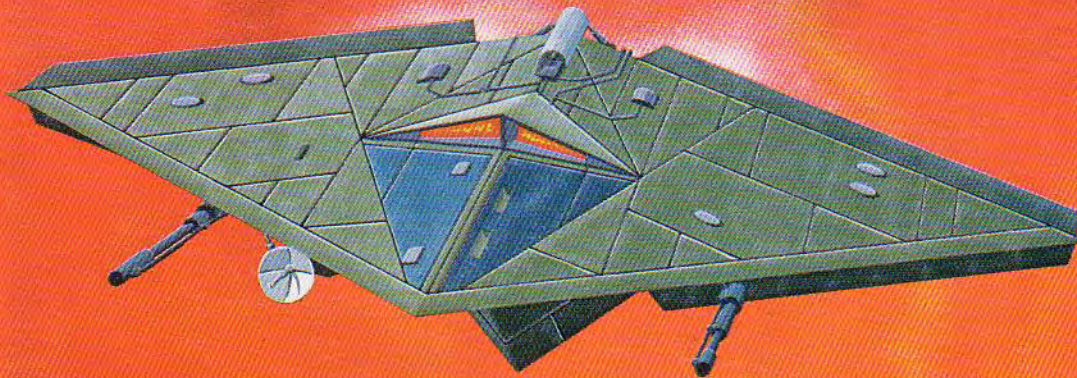
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## *Special* **TRAVELLER** *Issue*

including an article by *Marc Miller*





# Aboard the *Leviathan*

by *Marc Miller*

When my local group of *Traveller* players got together again after the Christmas holidays, it fell to me to referee *Leviathan* (*Traveller* Adventure 4) for them. That was partly because I had already read it through and knew what it was about, and partly because the other referees had been doing more than their share and wanted to get back into playing for a spell.

The adventure started off ordinarily enough with the group vying for positions on the crew list of the *Leviathan*, and then planning their journey into the Outrim Void. The first world they set upon was Vior - and I was caught up short, not having prepared too much for the night's action. I read over the information in the booklet.

## Vior 0805X500401-1 Non-industrial. Gas Giant.

In appearance this world is uninhabited (and uninhabitable); however, a detailed survey will indicate geological anomalies in one particular region. Investigation will reveal several airlock chambers giving access to an extensive underground habitat, where the Viorans lead a troglodytic existence. In one of the worst cases of regression yet found, chronic overcrowding has produced a primitive semi-cannibalistic society. Healthy crew members will be greeted primarily as a source of food.

The Viorans produce nothing of value; however, one reason for their overcrowding is longevity. After much detective work, assuming the researchers have not been eaten in the meantime, this longevity may be traced to the inclusion of a particularly repellent rodent scavenger in their diet, with remarkable anagathic properties. The planet itself has a number of extractable deposits of various minerals.

There I was. These paragraphs indicate 100% of what the adventure says about Vior. This is what I did ...

The adventurers looked over the system casually, and for a few minutes I thought that they would be moving on

without really stopping. Then they got to thinking and called for detailed scans of the main world (Vior) after refuelling at the gas giant. That showed that the world was 5000 miles in diameter, airless and waterless. It had no hint of inhabitants. Their detailed scans then showed some geological anomalies and they investigated. What they found was a group of cave mouths; they left the small ship that had brought them down to the surface of Vior, but only after Valerie had locked the pinnace and pocketed the keys.

Each of the players selected one cave mouth and checked it out, all the while staying in radio communication in case something cropped up. Several caves showed nothing. One did lead deep into the interior and showed some footprints in the loose soil. Another also had similar footprints, but these led outside ... to a deposit of crystallized oxygen snow in permanent shadow.

There was evidence of digging in the snow; the footprints around the digging led into one of the caves, and the group investigated. They found that this cave and another joined deep within the mountain. They followed and found a twisted, tortuous passage which led deeper and deeper into the stone of the mountain itself. Finally, they encountered a solid blanket (a quilt) hung across the passage and solidly blocking it. They approached carefully and very gently poked it aside. On the other side was more passage — and another blanket. They checked that one as well, and kept finding more of the same. Thirty-five blankets later, someone checked the atmosphere testers and found that the cave was no longer airless — it was up to 35% of breathable levels. They kept going, less cautiously now, and finally (90 blankets later) found a large room with several crude vacc suits, some completely hand-made, and some many-times patched antiques. They also found quite a few buckets.

While checking this stuff out, James asked (jokingly), "What is this stuff made of?"

I replied, "Looks like leather."  
"Ha! What kind? Human skin?"

"Yes. Like a large thigh, sewn and reinforced."

That slowed them down. They checked the room more carefully, and made sure that their weapons were at the ready. I checked what order they would be in as they moved through the only other exit from the room. That passage was also long and tortuous, and finally led to a deep shaft with a spiral path cut in its sides; wide enough for only one person.

At this point, they encountered something in the dark. Shining their lights at it gave them a glimpse of a group of scurrying animals. Grasping for a "particularly repellent rodent scavenger" I said they looked like slimy inside-out rats. The several "ughs!" I got from the players showed that I was on the right track. They continued, now more slowly.

The spiral ended as the shaft ended. A passage took them through the shaft wall and into the top of a large (I said two or three kilometer diameter) cavern with a central spike leading to the ceiling; they were at the top of that spike, with a spiral path leading down its face. The cavern itself was aglow with a pale green light, and its floor was covered with a mass of humans. The place was obviously overcrowded. No one below seemed to notice the arrival of the group, and in any case, the adventurers were quite secure with their weapons and the one-person-wide path.

Working their way down, they finally attracted the attention of a few people who met them near the cavern floor. James and Sonny stepped forward and tried to communicate with them; the local language seemed to be an archaic dialect, and it took some work, but they did manage to get talking. After several minutes, three stooped, tubercular-looking locals with bad coughs came forward, and after a bit of tension, they were allowed to pass. The local spokesman explained that they were air gatherers. They went outside and gathered the air snow, carrying it back to sublime and enhance the atmosphere. From this information, the adventurers conjectured that similarly, parts of the atmosphere that did escape from this cavern system could well condense in the shadow outside, in effect forming a crude recycling system. Although the two sides were getting along well, the travellers still clung to their path, but

kept the conversation going. They discovered that several chambers off the main one grew fungus, and that volcanic vents brought hot water and some plant nutrients to this dismal place. The light, however, continued to be unexplained: it looked artificial.

The conversation turned to ages, and it was revealed that the spokesman was at least 400 years old. The adventurers used private communications channels to discuss this new piece of information while Sonny kept up the outside conversation. Their consensus was that the strange green light made the locals age so slowly.

About this time, the locals (numbering several thousand) got quite excited and fidgety. Simultaneously, the lights of the cavern got brighter; it almost hurt the eyes, and helmet visors polarized to cut the glare. Suddenly, a cascade of inside-out rats poured down the path from above. It forced everyone to leap out of the way for sheer self-preservation. Fortunately, the locals were making no moves against the travellers; they were too busy grabbing the rats and eating them raw and live. Ugh!

Once this meal was over, everyone returned to talking. The spokesman did finally wipe off his mouth (there was still blood running down his chin from his disgusting meal), and asked, "So, you are air-gatherers, too, I presume." He acted like he was comfortable with the thought of other caverns with air-gatherers going outside much like was done here.

The adventurers first tried to sidestep the question, but agreed that they did gather air and that they came from far away. The leader moved the conversation on, and after more small talk, offered some obviously pure water (it tested as such) as refreshment. Cindy stepped forward in friendliness and accepted. She had to remove her helmet to drink, and that caused a great deal of excitement among everyone who could see. At first, they thought it was because of her long blonde hair; but that thought was soon dispelled. The spokesman had had a suspicion, and now it was confirmed; in this cavern, only the sick and the old went out to gather air, and the locals had assumed that the travellers were similarly sick or infirm. Now, everyone realized that the group was a healthy, fleshy, potential meal.

By this time, the group was no longer on its well-protected perch, but instead in the midst of a pack of locals. They started closing in and it proved impossible to keep them back. Finally, Marilyn opened fire with her shotgun and felled three of them. Now they stepped back, and when James asked, he found out that the bodies

of the slain had disappeared, dragged away by the front ranks. Several locals could be seen fighting over the flesh in the background.

At this point, the travellers tried to strike a deal, but the spokesman's offer to eat only one of them was unacceptable, especially because they had expressed a preference for Valerie. She very emphatically pointed out that she still had the keys to the pinnacle, and wasn't about to turn them over to anyone else. Instead, they fought their way out, which proved quite easy, since the locals soon fell to fighting over the dead rather than obstructing the group's exit.

On the route out, Marilyn conjectured aloud that perhaps the inside-out rats might have anagathic properties. The others allowed as how that might be true, and they all looked hard for some rats along the way. The few they did see proved hard to catch, and in fact, only Marilyn succeeded in snaring one. That posed the next problem, as I pointed out that it was vacuum outside, and they had no container for such a sample. Marilyn was forced to stick the slimy thing into a sample bag and poke it down the front of her vacc suit. Rolls for the rat's resistance (and attempts to chew out of the bag) kept Marilyn speeding for the pinnacle,

only to arrive there and find that Valene, with the keys, was taking her time.

Once aboard the ship, they all filed their reports, turned the rat over to the lab (where it did indeed have high readings on anagathic properties) and began preparations for their next world survey.

Check this narration against the world description of Vior. The airlocks are tech level 1, taken from an old science-fiction story I read long ago.\* The cavern is certainly a troglodytic setting, and there is some evidence of overcrowding. There is also evidence of cannibalism. It was not initially clear to the locals that the players were healthy specimens, but once evidence of their good health became clear, the locals saw the potential meal that the group presented. The anagathic properties of the rodents became the focus of the entire adventure.

What did I leave out? The mineral deposits, left for the more detailed survey that will follow when the world is investigated in depth. And that leaves me only ten more worlds to elaborate upon and ten more adventures for the crew of the *Leviathan*.

\* Editor's Note: Marc presumably is referring to "A Pail of Air" by Fritz Leiber.

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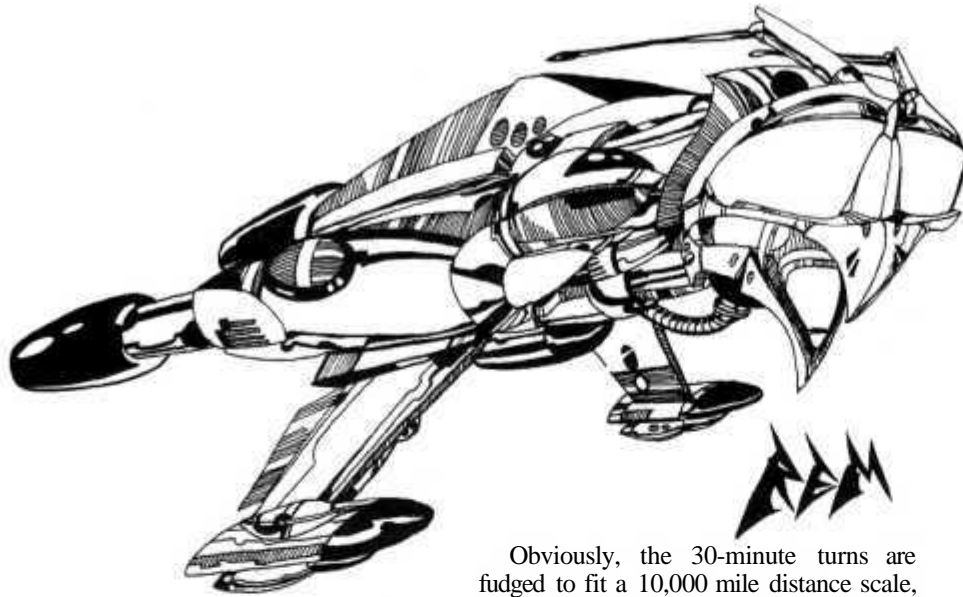
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# TRAVELLER:



## New Space Combat System

by Steve Winter

The space combat system in GDW's *Traveller*, Book 2, drawing on the classic *Triplanetary*, has one of the best vector movement systems in use. It is both realistic and surprisingly simple. Unfortunately, the rules tend to be a bit sketchy in places. The following module was designed to make *Traveller* space combat both more playable and more enjoyable.

### Basic Parameters

Using the scale given (1 inch = 1,000 miles) means many battles will cover the entire floor of a good-sized room. While this is visually exciting, it is often impractical and always unhandy. A smaller scale can make encounters at extreme range much more manageable.

If the distance scale is reduced, however, the time scale must be expanded. The relationship is given by the equation

$$D = T^2$$

where D is the distance represented by one inch expressed in thousand-mile segments and T is the length of the turn in ten-minute segments. In a standard *Traveller* space combat turn, both D and T equal 1.

The most useful scales are shown below.

D	T
1 (1,000 miles)	1 (10 minutes)
4 (4,000 miles)	2 (20 minutes)
10 (10,000 miles)	3 (30 minutes)
25 (25,000 miles)	5 (50 minutes)
100 (100,000 miles)	10 (100 minutes)

Obviously, the 30-minute turns are fudged to fit a 10,000 mile distance scale, but the discrepancy isn't too much for game purposes.

These scales allow ships maneuvering at the edge of sensor range to be kept within four feet of each other, which is within the confines of most gamers' table tops.

There is nothing wrong with changing scales in the middle of a battle. If ships get too close using a 10/3 scale, switch to 4/2 or 1/1. If they get too far apart, switch to 25/5 or 100/10.

### Turn Sequence

The "A moves, A fires, B moves, B fires" turn sequence isn't a good one where running battles are concerned. Too often it results in the range changing between the Intruder's fire phase and the Native's fire phase, with the Intruder getting to shoot at closer range than the Native.

To correct this, the sequence should be changed to:

- I. Movement Segment
  - A. Intruder Movement
  - B. Native Movement
- II. Shipboard Action Segment
  - A. Intruder Laser Fire
  - B. Native Laser Return Fire
  - C. Intruder Ordnance Launch
  - D. Intruder Damage Control
  - E. Native Laser Fire
  - F. Intruder Return Laser Fire
  - G. Native Ordnance Launch
  - H. Native Damage Control
  - I. Intruder and Native Computer Re-programming

This sequence doesn't take the initiative away from the Intruder, but it does make the turn more fluid.

It's important to remember that a tactical turn is 10 minutes long. Each ship gets to fire energy weapons, launch ordnance (or vehicles), attempt repairs and reprogram its computer once every 10 minutes. If a battle is being fought in a scale other than 1/1, the turn is more than 10 minutes long and all laser fire, laser return fire, ordnance launch, damage control and computer reprogramming phases will be repeated several times per turn; i.e., if the scale is 10/3 each turn will consist of one Movement Segment and three Shipboard Action Segments.

### Movement

Movement can be simplified by using a hex grid; just substitute hexes for inches. *Mayday* or *Triplanetary* would furnish an excellent play aid for hexagonal play.

### Damage

The weakest part of *Traveller's* starship combat system is the Ship Damage Table. A starship has a lot more parts than those listed on the table. The expanded tables below cover starship systems in much greater detail.

## EXPANDED STARSHIP DAMAGE TABLES

### Hit Distribution Table (2d6)

- 2 Engineering
- 3 Engineering
- 4 Engineering
- 5 Control
- 6 Main Section
- 7 Main Section
- 8 Main Section
- 9 Fuel tankage
- 10 Weaponry
- 11 Weaponry
- 12 Weaponry

### Weaponry Section (2d6)

- 2 Fire control
- 3 Fire control
- 4 Turret
- 5 Turret
- 6 Bay/turret
- 7 Bay/turret
- 8 Bay/turret
- 9 Screen generator
- 10 Magazine
- 11 Fire control
- 12 Critical damage

### Engineering Section (2d6)

- 2 Machine shop/electronics shop/armory
- 3 Gravitics
- 4 M-Drive
- 5 Power Plant
- 6 M-Drive
- 7 J-Drive
- 8 J-Drive
- 9 Life support
- 10 Screen generator
- 11 Fuel purification
- 12 Critical damage

### Weaponry Section Critical Damage (1d6)

- 1 Turret destroyed
- 2 All turrets lock
- 3 Screen generator destroyed
- 4 Magazine explodes
- 5 Fire control crippled
- 6 Bay crippled

### Engineering Critical Damage (1d6)

- 1 Power plant crippled
- 2 M-Drive crippled
- 3 M-Drive crippled
- 4 J-Drive crippled
- 5 Life support equipment destroyed
- 6 Gravitics destroyed

### Main Section (3d6)

- 3 Aux. bridge
- 4 Aux. bridge
- 5 Bridge
- 6 Galley/lounge
- 7 Bridge
- 8 Launch tube
- 9 Boat/hangar deck
- 10 Cargo hold
- 11 Cargo hold
- 12 Cargo hold
- 13 Stateroom/ship's locker
- 14 Life support equipment
- 15 Sick bay
- 16 Cold sleep berth
- 17 Lab/air lock
- 18 Critical damage

### Control Section (2d6)

- 2 Computer -1
- 3 Servos
- 4 Sensors
- 5 Computer -1
- 6 Computer -1
- 7 Computer -1
- 8 Computer -1
- 9 Communications
- 10 Communications
- 11 Computer -1
- 12 Critical Damage

### Main Section Critical Damage (1d6)

- 1 Boat/hangar deck crippled
- 2 Cargo destroyed
- 3 Cargo destroyed
- 4 Streamlining shattered
- 5 Frozen watch destroyed
- 6 Helm disabled

### Control Section Critical Damage (1d6)

- 1 Computer -10
- 2 Computer -6
- 3 Running programs wiped
- 4 Commo disabled
- 5 Sensors destroyed
- 6 Fire control destroyed

### Bridge Table (1d6)

- 1 Computer -3
- 2 Sensors
- 3 M-Drive controls
- 4 J-Drive controls
- 5 No effect
- 6 No effect

The Hit Distribution Table is used to determine which section of a ship has been hit. Roll separately for each hit. The individual section tables are used to determine the specific damage caused by each hit.

If a table indicates a system is hit which doesn't exist on the target ship, the hit is instead taken in the next listed system toward the center of the table. EXAMPLE: A 3 is rolled on the Hit Distribution Table, indicating a hit to the engineering section. Two dice are rolled on the Engineering Section Table, resulting in a 10, "Screen generator." If the ship does not have a screen generator, the hit would be taken in the next listed system toward the center of the table, which in this case is "Life support."

The hit does not shift to another system unless the system rolled does not exist on the ship. A destroyed system can be hit, but the hits won't have any extra effect.

If a hit causes critical damage, roll again on the appropriate critical damage table.

In the damage definitions which follow, a system described as disabled will not function, but may be repaired in space. A crippled system will not function and can be repaired only at a starport, not on-board. A destroyed system will not function and cannot be repaired. It must be replaced at a starport.

Some damage descriptions are self-explanatory. Others follow:

**Fuel tankage:** Each fuel hit releases 6d-1 tons of fuel.

**Machine shop/electronics shop/armory:** Machine shop, electronics shop, or armory hit. (If more than one, determine randomly.) GM determines extent of damage.

**Gravitics:** Floor-mounted gravity plates and inertial compensators disabled. If M-Drive is used, anyone not strapped into an acceleration couch or in a cold sleep berth will take damage equal to (g's accelerated)d6.

**M-Drive:** As per *Traveller* Book 2, p. 33.  
**Power Plant:** As per *Traveller* Book 2, p. 33.

**J-Drive:** As per *Traveller* Book 2, p. 33.

**Life support:** Recycling and purification system disabled, must be repaired within 24 hours or ship's air supply will be exhausted. See *Traveller* Book 2, p. 17.

**Screen generator:** One screen generator (nuclear damper, meson screen, repulsor, black globe) takes one hit.

**Fuel purification:** Fuel purification plant disabled.

**Computer:** As per *Traveller* Book 2, p. 33.

**Servos:** One automated servo system (repair, medical, etc.) disabled.

**Sensors:** Sensors disabled, ship must operate blind until repaired. All maneuvers must be plotted one turn ahead. No weapons may be fired (except manned turrets repelling boarders).

**Communications:** Each hit imposes DM -1 to establish radio communication with base or ship. (A roll of 3+ will establish communications under normal conditions.)

**Computer:** Computer takes indicated number of hits.

**Running programs wiped:** All programs currently running in the computer's central processing unit are erased and lost from the computer.

**Sensors destroyed:** Ship must operate blind until sensors replaced at starport.

**Fire control:** Each hit imposes DM -1 to hit with ship's weaponry.

**Fire control destroyed:** Targeting mechanisms destroyed, no weaponry may be fired. Guided and controlled missiles are lost.

**Turret:** As per *Traveller* Book 2, p. 33.

**Bay/turret:** One weapon bay disabled. If no bays on ship treat as turret hit.

**Magazine:** One bay or turret magazine hit, missiles inside rendered useless.

**All turrets lock:** Turrets lock in position, will not respond to remote targeting orders. Only turrets with gunners in-



side may fire.

**Magazine explodes:** One bay or turret magazine explodes, ship takes six hits from each of 1-6 exploding missiles.

**Aux. bridge:** Auxiliary bridge hit, roll on bridge table.

**Bridge:** Bridge hit, roll on bridge table.

**Galley/lounge:** Ship's galley or lounge (determine randomly) hit. GM determines extent of damage.

**Launch tube:** One launch tube disabled.

**Boat/hangar deck:** Ship's boat or other vehicle damaged. Roll once on Small Craft Table (*Traveller* Book 2, p. 34) to determine damage.

**Cargo hold:** Cargo bay penetrated, GM

determines extent of damage to cargo. **Stateroom/ship's locker:** One stateroom or ship's locker hit. (Determine randomly; if there are 5 staterooms and 1 locker, the chance of hitting the locker is 1-in-6.) GM determines extent of damage.

**Sick bay:** Medical equipment damaged, GM determines extent.

**Cold sleep berth:** One low passage berth disabled, occupant (if any) is killed.

**Lab/air lock:** Lab penetrated, extent of damage determined by GM. If there is no lab, the air lock is crippled; a second hit causes explosive decompression, if possible.

**Boat/hangar deck crippled:** All craft on boat/hangar deck may be damaged by exploding equipment. Roll 1d-2 times on Small Craft Table for each craft on deck. No craft may be launched or docked.

**Cargo destroyed:** All cargo carried in one hold destroyed.

**Streamlining shattered:** Ship may not maneuver in atmosphere.

**Frozen watch destroyed:** Monitoring equipment crippled, all low passengers in one section killed.

**Helm disabled:** Ship may not maneuver or jump.

**M-Drive controls disabled:** Ship may not use maneuver drives unless it has aux. bridge or engineer present in engineering section. No defensive pilot DMs allowed if ship operated from engineering section, and maneuvers must be plotted one turn ahead.

**J-Drive controls disabled:** Ship may not jump unless it has aux. bridge or engineer present in engineering section. Jump must be plotted one turn ahead.

If characters are present in a section when it is hit, there is a chance they will be injured. For each character in the section, roll 2d-7. If the result is greater than 0 it is doubled and the character suffers that number of dice damage. Characters also can be killed by explosive decompression - see *Traveller* Book 2, p. 34.

The section tables can be changed easily to reflect different ship structures. Scout ships, for example, have more tonnage devoted to control equipment and living quarters than to cargo space, so one or two of the main section cargo hold hits should be treated as bridge or stateroom hits. For non-starships, J-Drive hits should be treated as M-Drive or power plant hits.

These tables were designed for small ships (5,000 tons and less). If larger ships are involved, players should consider using *High Guard* or some comparable set of rules.

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# Nonhuman Races

The contest challenge to "create a non-human race" was easily our most successful one to date. We could literally have filled an entire issue of TSG with the *good* submissions we received.

Therefore, we've chosen *two* first-place winners — the two entries that were truly outstanding among a whole stack of good ideas — and *eight* second-place winners. Obviously, we don't have room for them all in this issue. We are running the first-place winners in this issue; the second-place winners will appear in the next few issues as a continuing feature.

The first-place winners are Ernest Heramia (East Providence, RI) and Daniel Maxfield (Manhattan, KS). Both receive **12-issue** subscriptions to TSG. The second-place winners, winning six-issue subscriptions, are Randy Chafe (Bramalea, Ont.); Gavin Gossett (Nashville, TN); Trevor Graver (London, England); Stefan Jones (Locust Valley, NY); James H. Kelley (Winslow, AR); Alan Pool (Memphis, TN); Ron Shigeta (Salem, OR); and John Vogel (Marlboro, MD).

## The Mittsuashi

The Mittsuashi are a race of trilateral-ly symmetrical, **tri-sexual** beings that rule the islands of Midoritaka. The bodies of the Mittsuashi resemble barrels, triangular in cross section, supported by three long muscular legs, and topped by three arms and a long graceful neck supporting a vaguely tear-drop shaped head. The head is made up of three small maxillae, each holding its own brain, ear, nostril, and pair of vertically set eyes. The mouth opens vertically; a **Mittsuashi's** head would resemble a **three-petaled** flower if it yawned. This arrangement of the mouth best suits the Mittsuashi's eating habit of picking and swallowing whole fresh fruit right off the tree.

As said before, the Mittsuashi have three brains, (one in each maxilla); one serves solely as memory, one provides special instincts according to the sex of the creature, and the third brain holds the reasoning abilities.

The sexes of the Mittsuashi are: **Te**, **Atama**, and **Kokoro**. The **Te** are the largest of the three, (3 meters tall), and almost always are warriors. Their attributes according to *The Fantasy Trip* are **ST 20; DX 14; IQ 10; MA 30**.

The reproductive system for **Te**, (and



the other sexes), is located under the arm on the same side as the special instinct brain. When forced to stand and fight (engaged), they will stand so that this side of their bodies is away from the foe.

Mentally, **Te** tend to be choleric. Their color is red, and they dress in short skirts and ponchos of that hue, adorned with martial jewelry.

The **Atama** are  $2\frac{1}{2}$  meters tall, and brunette-furred. They tend to be the scholars of Mittsuashi society, and fill most non-military positions in the government. They can be fighters or magickers, and on occasion (10%) one is both. Their attributes are **ST 15; DX 12; IQ 15; MA 30**.

They tend to be pensive most of the time. Their favorite colors are "cool" and "earthen," and they like to dress in long flowing robes (fighters often dress like **Te**).

The **Kokoro** are 2 meters tall, and fair-furred. They are the creative element in Mittsuashi society; artists, writers, and rearers of children. It is also believed that the **Kokoro's** sanguine nature keeps the **Te** and **Atama** from killing themselves. (Statistics show that one out of every three **Kokoro-less** marriages end in violence). **Kokoro** are peace-loving and can never bring themselves to do any hurt to anything, even in self-defense. This is not to say that they are helpless in a fight; they have the ability to make all creatures within three megahexes (no saving roll) **empathic** to the pain they inflict on another. (For game purposes, any one that scores a hit in three Megahexes of a **Kokoro** must automatically take the same damage as the creature he hit.) Their attributes are **ST 10; DX 20; IQ 10; MA 25**.

Their favorite colors are yellows and whites; they prefer to go about clad only

in floral garlands, but for modesty's sake will wear a gauzy skirt and poncho in the city or around aliens.

**Mittsuashi** move by rolling from one flat triangular foot to another as they spin; this can vary from the dignified shuffling pirouette of the Well-born, to the wild cartwheeling-like run of charging **Te** and frolicking **Kokoro**. They are able to reach great speeds moving in this manner. The record at present is held by the late Genji Bunsho Tenki at 274 k.p.h. (Any missile or thrown attack on a **Mittsuashi** that has moved more than 12 hexes across the path of the attacker will be at -3 adjDX.)

Fighters will charge attack most of the time, using one of the following two techniques: **Slashing** — the fighter will spin past his foe, making **FOUR separate** attacks (or three attacks and one defend), and if not engaged by a second foe, can move two hexes more. The effect of this attack is as if the foe was hit by a giant buzz saw blade; **Throw while running** — the fighter moves up to half his **MA**; on every third hex of that move he may throw one weapon at plus 4 adjDX and 4 extra hits of damage, but only if the target is in the path of the charging fighter.

Because of the **Mittsuashi** sense of balance, and tripod physique, they make all saving rolls to avoid falling with one less die than called for. Also, they will automatically notice any incline.

The arrangement of the six eyes around the head gives full 360 degree stereoscopic vision horizontally, and nearly the same vertically. Because of this, all hexes are considered **FRONT**.

The **Mittsuashi** don't like fighting hand-to-hand, and will never initiate it. Should he be forced into it, he will try two or three times to disengage then go berserk automatically on the next turn, biting 3 times a turn, with 2 dice damage each.

When engaged, a **Mittsuashi** will stand so that the special instinct side is away from the foe. If he is attacked in any way on this side while engaged, he will seek to disengage and flee to a safer position. (The bottom or rear of the one-hex counter represents this special side. For a figure, place a mark on that side on the base.) While engaged he will use only two of his arms, but with the skill of the "two weapons" talent, regardless of **IQ** and **DX**.

Because of the centrifugal force they develop when they spin, and a general dislike for bearing burdens, a **Mittsuashi** will carry only his weapons and personal items totaling no more than 6 kilograms evenly distributed over his three sides. Any extra equipment and supplies will be carried by a pack animal or slave trained to follow its master.

"Atamataka" refers to the form of archery used by the Atama sex (The Te respect archery, but consider it "An Atama thing."). The bow is the same as a horse bow, and is carried in a holster. Archers depend completely on their marksmanship in battle, and will carry no other weapon. Archers are trained to enter a trance-like state when they nock an arrow. While in this trance, they get a +3 DX adjustment and one extra hit of damage on the foe, and have their MA reduced to 10. To "snap out" of the trance requires a 3 dice saving roll against their IQ.

The Mittsuashi have a low regard for the weapons of human-kind such as the battle ax; they view them as crude and excessively violent. They will always prefer a one-handed weapon over a two-handed weapon, and never use a weapon heavier than 2 kg.

As mentioned, the Mittsuashi are tri-sexual, and can only reproduce with the co-operation of all three sexes. Each parent will choose a child of his sex to raise: the extra ones are put up for adoption by triads whose triad of offspring is incomplete because of death or misconception.

For the first two months of life, each parent will care for its own child; at the end of that period the child becomes sapient, is weaned, and entrusted to the care of the Kokoro, while the Te and Atama are at work.

When the children reach the age of 27, they and their parents will go to a seaside temple for the Passage Ritual. The Passage Ritual is a combination birthday and funeral; during it the parents bid farewell to the community, and acknowledge the offspring as heir to all their possessions. The children are then welcomed into the adult community. If a child is judged unfit for adulthood by its parent, the parent will give his possessions (including his last name) to someone else of his sex. A person without a last name will usually go off to a foreign land to "make a name for himself," and only then return to Midoritaka to join a triad and mate. **Well-borns** are those with very old last names. Most Mittsuashi met outside of Midoritaka will be status seekers.

Mittsuashi government is a democracy, with each sex electing its own officer for each government position, and then these officers join into triads to administer the offices. (So instead of having a Prime Minister, they have a Prime Ministering Triad that must form a unanimous decision on each issue.) Well-borns are elected most often because they would never do anything to bring shame upon their last name.

The Mittsuashi believe that once they lived with their god, Watakushi Mittsu Desu, but were seduced by the humans to

leave their home with him and go to Cidri. It was humans too, who taught them about religions. They rejected all but Christianity, **Shintoism**, and Hinduism, since they were the only faiths that fit their triangular way of thinking. Usually, Christianity is the religion of the Kokoro, Shintoism the religion of the Atama, Hinduism the religion of the Te, and Enok is worshipped by status seekers.

The Mittsuashi look on humans as a race of cripples at best, and the offspring of disfigured demons at worst, and seldom feel at ease around them. (The exception is the Kokoro. They tend to trust and want to be friends with everything.) In a party of adventurers, a Mittsuashi will stay in the background and let the others make the decisions. (The exception here is the Atama, who will want to lead, and will always have an "I-told-you-so" ready if his ever-present advice is not followed.)

All Mittsuashi hate evil, but the Te are fanatical about it. They will go out of their way to hunt down the smallest evil being, and will single-mindedly seek to destroy it. When fighting an evil being a Te will go berserk automatically, (when the last evil being is killed, the Te will start mutilating it, instead of attacking his friends, until he makes the 3 dice saving roll to snap out of it.) Te have been known to join parties of evil beings for the sole purpose of destroying them. (To do this they must make a 3 dice saving roll against their IQ every hour of game time to keep from blowing their cover, and they must use some kind of magical disguise, such as *Glamour* spells, to give them the same appearance as their intended victims.)

The Mittsuashi do not use any form of transportation other than their feet (and ships when sailing), because forward motion without centrifugal force pulling on them makes them dizzy. So a Mittsuashi will never ride a horse, chariot, or anything else that goes forward without spinning; and any Mittsuashi that doesn't have the *Swimming* talent will suffer from seasickness while sailing. (Because of their shape they can't drown, but must learn to swim to overcome their unique form of motion-sickness.)

Mittsuashi make interesting non-player characters, and their cities are colorful settings that challenge the GM to think in triads instead of the "Yin and Yang" of humankind. Te make great monsters; the sight of even a small group of Te rolling down a hillside, weapons flashing hypnotically in the sun, is enough to give an **orc** nightmares. As a player character, the Atama is best, (and the Kokoro if you want to live peaceably in a violent world). Unless you are a Well-born on some noble

mission, you will most likely be a status seeker with no family name. When your Mittsuashi is rich enough to return home with a ship full of valuables, he may make up his own last name. This name must have three or more **syllables**, and be registered with the government. (**Well-born** names have one or two **syllables**).

So why not roll up one of my three-legged friends, and take him for a "spin?"

— Ernest Heramia



**The Men With Heads Beneath Their Shoulders**

*First mentioned in an explorer's journal in 1599, the men with heads beneath their shoulders reportedly inhabited "the fastness of the Upper Orinoco."*

Thousands of years ago, an obscure Indian tribe of Venezuela called the "Xactapap" stumbled onto a valley that was before unknown. There they found the legendary "tree of life," nurtured by the **equally** famous "fountain of youth." The water itself was poisonous, but the tree filtered out the toxin and bore revitalizing fruit. The spring had outlets all over the valley, and trees abounded. However, the trees had one drawback. Although the fruit stopped the aging process for one hour, and ended any need for food, drink, urination, or sex, it caused sterility and a deterioration of the body. In fact, after 50 years of eating the fruit, the tribesmen were mere shrunken skeletons, and led rather sedentary lives.

The tribe did have a huge advantage, however, as they worshipped a deity that happened to exist. Copollonx, god of life and water, was a powerful god indeed. He had been born somewhere out in space, had journeyed to earth for no particular reason, and he liked very much the tribe's practice of sacrificing dinosaurs to him. (There *were* dinosaurs in the valley, little, tiny, shriveled ones, but dinosaurs, nonetheless.)

Copollonx invented the system of spells

and incantations we know today as "voodoo." The tribesmen would take zombies, (other tribes were directed by the god to the valley), cut off their heads, hollow out their chests, and ride inside. This gave them the "heads beneath their shoulders" appearance recorded by Hulsius. The tribesmen in the valley were all wiped out by smallpox by 1842, although many in Jamaica and Barataria survived to continue their religion after fleeing their disease-ridden country.

In the days of my *Skull & Crossbones/Legacy* campaign, however, their numbers had been reduced to 75 sickly tribesmen riding in 75 very powerful zombies, and they did *not* like white men.

For *Legacy*, treat them as normal men with no constitution subvalue over 2. For intelligence and charisma roll normally, but keep in mind that these people have been alive for thousands of years and have had a chance to accumulate information that could make them appear to be superintelligent. When riding their zombies (99.99999% of the time), they take on the physical abilities of their corpse, i.e., as a normal man gone up two levels of physical efficiency.

The weapon they mainly use is the curare dart, for which no one in the tribe has a skill level less than 25.

The poison of these darts is not made from normal plants, but from plants affected by the fountain of youth, so instead of the normal effect (death), the victim immediately goes into a coma and must check vs. disease resistance or lose a strength point permanently.

Rumors have sprung up during the millennia, many of which may lure the players up the Orinoco River:

1. The men with heads beneath their shoulders have the Fountain of Youth that can rejuvenate the aged. (False)
2. They are ruled by Prester John. (False)
3. They can bring people back to life. (True, but only their heads and torso. Combined with a zombie, this can work just as well, but intelligence is down a level plus an additional level for each month the subject has been dead.)
4. They hate Spaniards. (True. They hate *everybody*.)
5. The head of one nailed to a bowsprit will cause bad luck to enemy ships. (False, but it might cause it to *your* ship if you killed the man in a temple or if he was a priest.)
6. They can turn lead into gold. (False)
7. They have fruit that prevents aging. (True)
8. They live in the seven cities of gold. (So False, you wouldn't believe it!)
9. They are in the pay of King Phillip

of Spain. (Interesting one, considering no. 4.)

10. They worship Satan. (They will be very angry if you accuse them of this.)

All fruit affected by the water will rot two hours after picking. Eating one stops the aging process for an hour, but for every ten fruits eaten, each constitution subvalue is reduced one without warning, except physical effect. This process will stop after reaching 1 or 2, depending on a purely random die roll.

For *Skull & Crossbones*, treat them as being skilled in every weapon and Pirate King in every class (includes gunnery); luck, strength, and agility will range from 20 to 24.

They are very sly and treacherous, and are likely to play stupid when met by white men, in order to observe their intentions. They will kill anyone attempting to leave the valley, and anyone else who is useless to them. They are fanatically against knowledge of the valley getting out, and only 4 or 5 primitives have ever escaped them in 6,000 years.

Elsewhere, the Baratarian (South Louisiana) and Jamaican colonies are protected to a minor degree by Copollonx, and are occasionally visited by Men-with-Heads-Beneath-Their-Shoulders. They may prove helpful in finding the valley, and provide adventure opportunities themselves. The

colonies have no such fruit as the valley, but *are* guarded by zombies.

- Daniel Maxfield

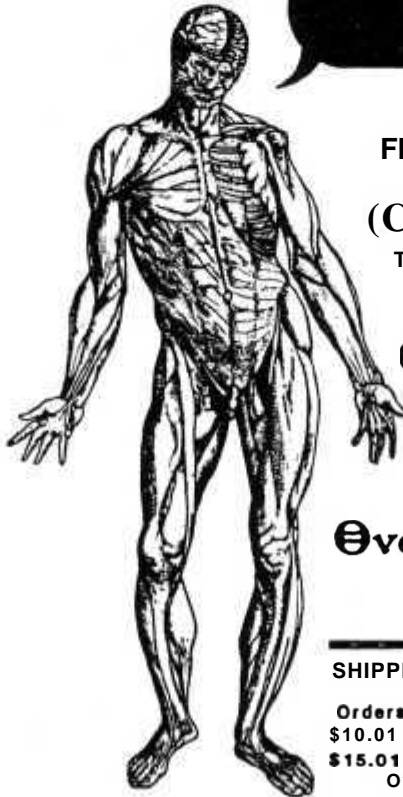
## CONTEST

This month we have another *Traveller*-related contest. Take up to three heroes (or villains) of science fiction literature and cast them in *Traveller* terms. Include all important characteristics, **abilities**, and special behavior notes that a referee would need to play him/her as an NPC. Suggestions for a specific adventure, perhaps tying in with something already published for *Traveller*, would also be appropriate.

Each entry may include up to three different persons. Please limit the length of each individual description to one typewritten page (if only the character is described) or two typewritten pages (if a description of henchmen, special equipment, or a spaceship is also needed).

Winners will be chosen on the basis of playability, originality, and accuracy of adaptation. All entries become the property of TSG. First place will win a 12-issue subscription; second place will win a 6-issue subscription. Some runners-up may also be printed if space allows. We reserve the right to award fewer prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than June 30, 1981.

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# Adventures on TSCHAI

by Steve Winter and Forrest Johnson

*In the years 1968-70 Jack Vance wrote four books - City of the Chasch, Servants of the Wankh, The Dirdir, and The Pnume. These are two-fisted adventure stories set on the planet Tschai. They are full of aliens and exotica, larded with violence and well-nigh choked with detail . . . in short, perfect for Traveller.*

Tschai is 212 light years from Earth. It was, amazingly enough, discovered during the initial period of Solomani exploration. Even more amazingly, one expedition member, Adam Reith, survived and returned to Earth. A second expedition was planned, but the First Interstellar War intervened and the precise location of Tschai, with many other records, was lost during the hostilities. It is generally presumed to lie somewhere rimward of Earth.

Tschai's profile is 967670. It orbits a K2 star, and has two small moons, called Az and Braz by the natives. There are a number of starports on Tschai — Hei and Ao Hidis must be reckoned as Class A - but none are open to strangers. In fact, it is not even safe to orbit the planet. For each day in orbit, roll two dice; on 8+ someone has fired 1-6 nuclear missiles at the ship, a token of Tschai hospitality.

Tschai is the home world (and presumably the only world) of the Pnume, who still live in secret cities beneath its surface. About 7 million years ago, it was conquered by the Shivvan, followed by the Gjee, the Fesa, the Hsi, and so on. Nothing remains of these races but ruins. The oldest invading race still on Tschai is the Old Chasch, which has been there for a mere 100,000 years. There also exist colonies of Blue Chasch, Dirdir and Wankh. An uneasy peace prevails.

About 50,000 years ago, the Dirdir brought some Humaniti slaves, probably of Solomani origin, to the planet. These have multiplied into a hundred diverse races, scattered over the entire globe.

All intelligent creatures of Tschai, except the Phung, Green Chasch and Wankh speak a common language. Some have other languages as well.

## Economics

Off-world currency is worthless on Tschai. The basic monetary unit is the sequin, a hexagonal disc one inch across. Sequins are obtained from chrysophine,

a crystal which grows only in the uranium-rich soil of the Carabas. A full nodule yields 282 sequins.

A sequin's value is determined by its color. Immature crystals are clear, and progress through the colors of the spectrum as the node matures. Once harvested, sequins do not change in color. Clears, therefore, are the basic value sequin. Values of the other colors are:

1 Milk	=	5 clears
1 Sard (light blue)	=	10 clears
1 Blue	=	20 clears
1 Emerald	=	25 clears
1 Scarlet	=	50 clears
1 Purple	=	100 clears
1 Bice	=	Fragment, 1/6 of a clear

The economy is not controlled in any way. Anyone may enter the Carabas, or Black Zone, and harvest chrysophine nodules if they can (a) locate the nodules among the gullies and rocky hummocks of the Carabas and (b) escape or evade the Dirdir hunting parties from the camp at Khusz. An average day in the zone nets a group about 400 sequins.

Prices on Tschai are variable. If a buyer looks wealthy, the price goes up. The following is offered as a general guide:

Decent meal: 1 sequin.

Frugal lodging: 5 sequins/day.

Simple durable clothing: 10 sequins.

Sailing ship passage: 4 sequins/day.

Caravan passage: 1 sequin/3 km.

Unskilled labor: 4-6 sequins/day.

Devices of tech level 7 or higher will be of alien manufacture, expensive when available at all. Obvious off-world technology will arouse wonder and suspicion.

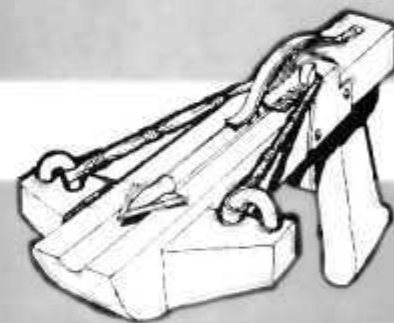
## Weapons

Gunpowder is rare on Tschai. Aliens are often armed with laser pistols. Humans have a fairly standard assortment of

swords, spears, and so on. In addition, there are at least two weapons peculiar to Tschai:

**Hand Catapults.** These are basically upgraded slingshots, firing feathered bolts. Treat a catapult as a sporting cross-bow.

**Sand Blasts.** A sand blast accelerates electrostatically-charged grains of sand to near-light speeds. Treat as a light machine gun, but weight is double.



## Scenarios

Many, many adventures are possible on Tschai. Referees should have no trouble expanding on these ideas:

**Exploration.** Tschai is carpeted with improbably ancient ruins. Investigation could prove fruitful.

**Rescue.** A distressingly handy scenario. Characters will need frequent rescues from slavers, from the Dirdir, from the Old Chasch, from. . .

**Prospecting.** The Carabas is always a likely scene for an adventure.

**Underground.** A really ambitious party might try raiding Foreverness. In this case, *Traveller* would take on some of the aspects of D&D.

**Leaving.** As Adam Reith discovered, Tschai is not a good place to park a starship. Spare parts are hard to come by. The natives are not friendly. A safe landing can be difficult; a safe take-off may require heroism.

# Events

Parties travelling on Tschai should check the following tables daily:

## Steppe

1. Settlement
  2. Nomads
  3. Air/Raft
  4. Animal Encounter
  5. Storm
  6. Ruins
  7. Green Chasch
  8. Green Chasch
- DMs: Dead **Steppe +2**

## Jungle

1. Heat
  2. Animal Encounter
  3. Marshmen
  4. Ruins
  5. Settlement
  6. River
  7. Swamp
- DMs: **Seacoast +1**

## Desert

0. Settlement
1. Ruins
2. Chasms
3. Air/Raft
4. Storm
5. Animal Encounter

6. Gullies
  7. **Dirdir** Hunting Party
  8. **Dirdir** Hunting Party
  9. Prospectors
- DMs: Seacoast: -1  
Carabas +3

## Mountains

1. Animal Encounter
  2. Settlement
  3. Ruins
  4. Gullies
- DMs: +1 if north of **Jalkh** or south of Hei

## Ocean

1. Nothing
  2. Nothing
  3. Nothing
  4. Air/Raft
- DMs: Seacoast+1  
**Kachan/Rakh/Vord** Seacoast +2

## City

1. Slavers
  2. Thieves
  3. Police
  4. Patron
- DMs: Alien **City +2**

5. Pirates
6. Storm
7. Settlement
8. Wankh

## Explanation

*Air/Raft.* An air/raft is flying in view. It will investigate a spacecraft on 5+, otherwise passing by on 4+. Check for occupants:

1. Blue Chasch
2. Blue Chasch
3. Dirdir
4. Dirdir
5. Dirdir
6. Humans
7. Humans

8. Wankh
  9. Humans
- DMs: **Kislovan +1**  
Kachan/Rakh/Vord +2  
Charchan +3

There will be 1-6 passengers. If the race is alien, on 7+ there will also be 1-6 passengers of a servant race.

*Aliens.* 1-6 Pnume, Chasch, Dirdir or Wankh. If the party is trespassing, they will attempt to detain on 5+, otherwise ignoring on 4+.

*Chasms.* This terrain is completely impassable to ground travel. It will take all day to go around.

*Dirdir Hunting Party.* 3-5 **Dirdir**, attack on 4+.

*Green Chasch.* The party encounters a tribe of Green Chasch. Roll for reaction at -2.

*Gullies.* This terrain is highly eroded. Halve travel distance today.

*Heat.* The jungle is even more sweltering than usual today. Each character must roll endurance or less on two dice or become prostrate. DMs: Medic, Survival.

*Marshmen.* 10-60 marshmen lie in wait with their spears and clubs.

*Nomads.* The party encounters a nomadic tribe. Roll for reaction.

*Patron.* Someone attempts to hire the party. Check Book 3, p. 22, or 76 *Patrons*.

*Pirates.* A galley with 10-60 crew attempts to overtake the vessel. It will attack on 11+ if the potential victim is obviously well-armed, otherwise on 5+.

*Police.* 1-6 local police, armed with catapults and swords, attempt to interrogate the party. Roll for reaction.

*Prospectors.* The party encounters 1-3 humans who are looking for **sequins**. Roll for reaction.

*River.* A river obstructs ground travel. Roll 8+ hourly to **find** a ford.

*Ruins.* The party finds a ruined city. Roll for origin:

- |            |                |
|------------|----------------|
| -1. Wankh  | 7. Old Chasch  |
| 0. Wankh   | 8. Old Chasch  |
| 1. Humans  | 9. Blue Chasch |
| 2. Unknown | 10. Dirdir     |
| 3. Pnume   | 11. Dirdir     |
| 4. Humans  | 12. Humans     |
| 5. Unknown | 13. Unknown    |
| 6. Pnume   | 14. Pnume      |

DMs: Kachan/Rakh/Vord -2  
Kotan +3  
Kislovan +8

A solitary Phung will be present on 8+; an animal encounter will occur on 11+.

*Servant Race.* 1-6 **Pnumekin, Chaschmen, Dirdirmen** or **Wankhmen**. If the party is trespassing, they will attempt to detain on 6+, otherwise ignoring on 4+.

*Settlement.* Here is a town of 100-600 souls. Alien on 10+.

*Slavers.* A gang of 2-12 slavers eyes the party as potential merchandise.

*Snow.* Heavy snow delays ground travel. Halve travel distance for today.

*Storm.* Swirling winds buffet the party for 1 die x 8 hours. Ground and air travel are impossible. At sea, the captain must roll 6+ to avoid damage to his vessel. If he misses by 2 or more, there is a shipwreck. DMs: Water Craft.

*Swamp.* The ground here is very marshy. Halve travel distance today.

*Thieves.* 1-6 thieves attempt to rob or swindle the party.

*Wankh.* A Wankh is observed swimming below the surface with water jets. He will ignore the party in 3+.

# Animal Encounters

## Steppe

	Animal	Weight	Hits	Wounds	Weapons	Armor	Reaction
1.1	<b>Intimidator</b>	400	21/10	11	claws	none	A7F9S2
2.20	Grazers	200	15/ 9	6	hooves	none	F6A10S1
3.1	Hunter	50	19/ 5	1/3	<b>hooves/teeth</b>	cloth	A8F5S2
4.10	Pouncers	25	13/ 8	4/3	<b>claws/teeth</b>	none	A4F6S3
5.12	<b>Nighthounds</b>	100	17/12	5/4	<b>hands/teeth</b>	mesh	A8F7S2
6.1	Killer	100	22/ 6	8/8	claws/teeth	mesh	A3F9S2

## Jungle

1.12	Gatherers	6	6/10	3	as body pistol	none	A6F7S3
2.5	Grazers	25	11/10	5	teeth	none	F7A6S1
3.1	Filter	1	<b>1/ o</b>	1	teeth	cloth	A9F9S1
4.1	Trapper	12	6/10	6	as blade	none	A5F7S2
5.8	Nighthounds	100	17/12	5/4	<b>hands/teeth</b>	mesh	A8F7S2
6.3	Amphibious hunters	100	18/ 9	5	teeth	none	A8F4S1

## Desert

1.1	Trapper	12	10/ 7	8	teeth	none	A4F2S1
2.10	Flying sirens	3	<b>6/ 1</b>	2	as dagger	none	A5F2S1
3.13	<b>Intimidators</b>	6	5/12	3/1	teeth/hooves	none	A8F6S3
4.4	Hunters	25	10/12	7	stinger	none	A7F9S2
5.10	Nighthounds	100	17/12	5/4	<b>hands/teeth</b>	mesh	A8F7S2
6.8	Eaters	3	5/ 3	4	stinger	none	<b>A6F10S1</b>

## Mountain

1.1	Grazer	1600	29/ <b>5</b>	17/12	<b>hooves/teeth</b>	none	F9A11S1
2.22	Grazers	6	6/ 5	1	hooves	none	F6A12S2
3.5	Hunters	50	18/ 7	2	teeth	none	A9F9S1
4.9	Chasers	50	16/ 7	3/1	<b>claws/teeth</b>	none	A5F8S3
5.10	Nighthounds	100	17/12	5/4	<b>hands/teeth</b>	mesh	A8F7S2
6.2	Intermittants	100	17/ 6	7	stinger	jack	A7F3S2

(Note: Nighthounds can occur in any terrain. They are nocturnal, wolf-like creatures closely related to the Pnume. Nighthounds can be recognized by their characteristic wailing.)

Here are the races of Tschai . . . the Pnume, Phung, Old Chasch, Blue Chasch, Green Chasch, Dirdir, and Wankh. A UPP is given for each. The UPP may be used directly if it is necessary to generate a character in a hurry; otherwise it may be used to obtain die modifiers for character generation. For example, the Pnume have an average strength of A, so give a generated Pnume character a +3 modifier for strength. ( $A = 10$ .  $10 - 7 = 3$ .) If this process results in a characteristic less than 1, raise it to 1.

The given tech level is the level each race maintains on Tschai; home planet tech levels are higher. Tech levels vary a good deal because of trade. The tech level of the Pnume is unknown because the Pnume are a mysterious race, and it is hard to tell the full extent of their resources.

The listed skills are those a typical individual might have -- the civilized species have a considerable variety of skills available.

Note that some of the listed aliens -- particularly the Phung and Green Chasch -- are not suitable for player characters. Also, no Pnume, Chasch, Dirdir, or Wankh is likely to deal with humans as as equal unless he is himself an outcast or fugitive. Aliens will appear more often

# Peoples of Tschai

as patrons or as enemies.

Some of the aliens have servant races of humans, inbred over the millenia to resemble their masters. There are many other races of men on Tschai. The major ones include:

**Nomads.** Tech 1. Their tribes ride endlessly across the steppes. Some are cannibals; all practice banditry. Tribes include Xiss, Emblem Men, Yellow-Blacks, Mad Axes, and Kite Fighters.

**Marshmen.** Tech 0. A dwarfish, yellow people who live among the reeds. They always attack if surprise is possible, and the enemy is not too numerous.

**Grays.** Tech 3. A widespread, stocky, yellow-gray race. Grays tend to be tolerant, commercially-minded and rather fatalistic.

**Yaos.** Tech 6. The most technically advanced humans of Tschai. Yaos are the predominant race of Cath. They are obsessed with elaborate etiquette and punctilio. It is dreadfully easy to offend a Yao.

**Hoch Hars.** Tech 1. A primitive people who live east of Cath and hate all Yaos, ostensibly for having destroyed the ancient Hoch Har empire.

**Lokhars.** Tech 4. People of central Kachan. The men dye their skin black and their hair white, the women the opposite. Many are employed by the Wankh as technicians.

**Dugbos.** Tech 1. A ragged, gypsy-like people said to have psychic powers.

**Khors.** Tech 3. A strange, slender, mustard-yellow people living in north Kislovan. Khors wear black gowns and tall hats. They follow rigid customs and taboos. In combat, they throw iron darts.

**Thangs.** Tech 4. An avaricious people of northwest Kislovan. They consider cheating and deception normal business practices. Their greatest town is Urmank.

**Kabs.** Tech 5. A slender, alert people of southern Charchan. They have brown hair, wide cheekbones, and black eyes. Their thieves are deft; their marital customs, bizarre and dangerous.



## The Pnume

GPP: A78688

Population: 150-160,000

Tech Level: Unknown

Skills: Recon -2, Leader -1, Admin. -1

Special: Bare hands treated as club, skin as mesh. Because of their decentralized nervous system, Pnume cannot be knocked unconscious, only killed.

The Pnume are natives of Tschai. They are about two meters tall and slightly built, though quite heavy (100 kg). Their white, expressionless faces are the cast and color of a horse's skull, with complicated rasping and chewing parts beneath. A Pnume's legs are jointed the reverse of a human's. Traditionally, Pnume dress is a black cloak and floppy black broad-brimmed hat. The Pnume are closely related to nighthounds (see Animal Encounters) and to Phung (see below). The three creatures appear to be physically similar and mutually tolerant, but the exact relationship is unclear.

The Pnume live in a network of underground tunnels and subterranean rivers crisscrossing the entire subsurface of Tschai. Within these dimly-lit corridors,

concealed passages and immense chambers is a society complete with industry and trade. Pnume society is secretive and stratified; an individual's knowledge depends on his social standing. The Pnume rarely carry (or need) weapons.

The Pnume are obsessed with history. They observe everything, frequently seizing "exhibits" for their museum, Foreverness, which details seven million years of Tschai history. Restraint and unobtrusiveness are primary Pnume virtues. They have one-track minds, and no amount of reasoning or pleading will sway a Pnume from its purpose. Captive enemies are dropped into deep pits, if they are not needed as crystallized exhibits in Foreverness.

Pnumekin, humans living among the Pnume (UPP: 687744), have evolved psychologically toward the Pnume. They are introverted, timid, fearful of open spaces, fatalistic and naive. Diko, a hormone suppressant which prevents the onset of puberty, is a regular part of their diet. They scrupulously avoid "boisterous activity," which includes physical contact, noise, sudden movements and being seen without a hat.



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# Travel on Tschai

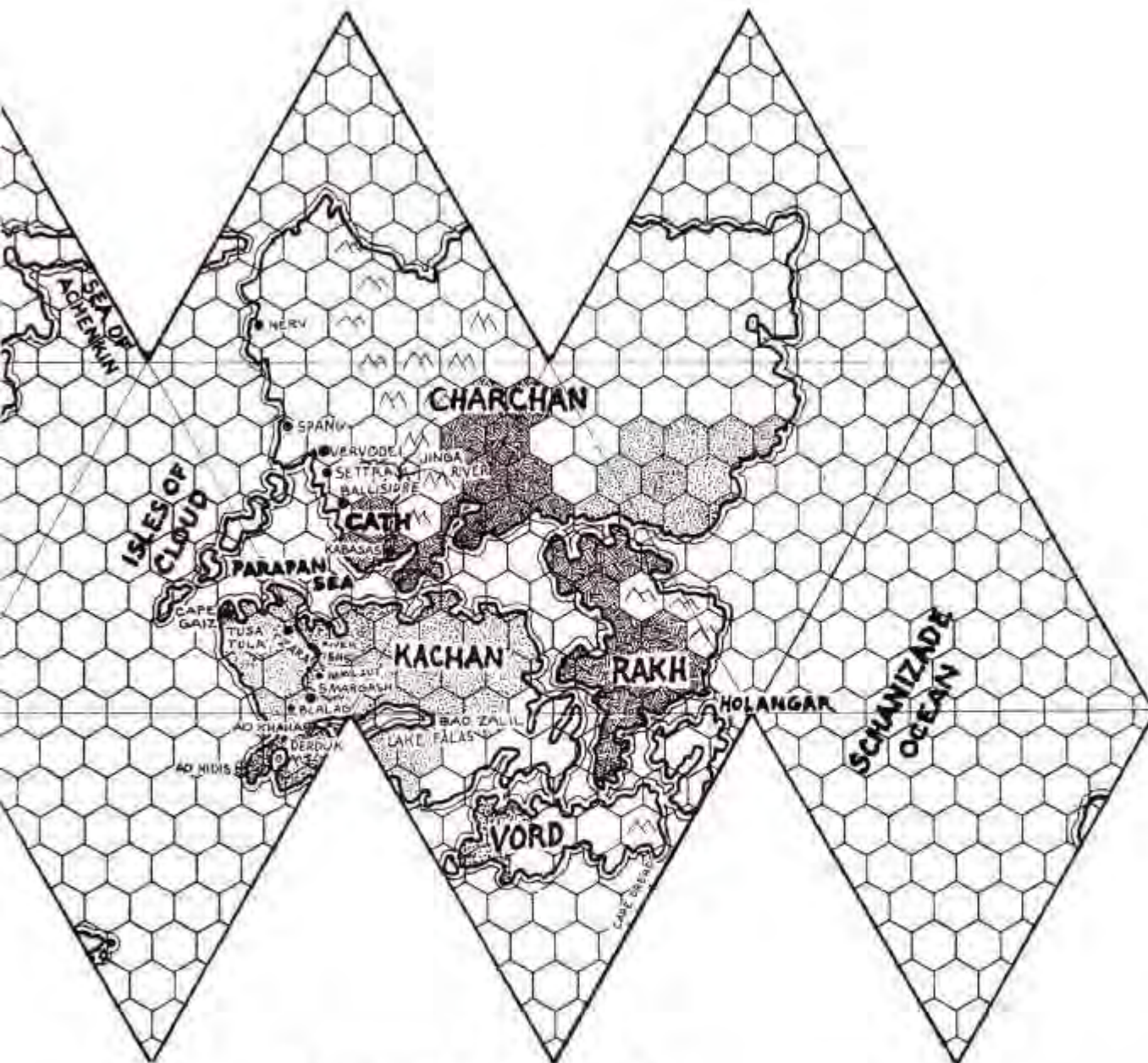
The chief overland mode of travel is the caravan — consisting of 10-60 motor drays, of which at least 1/6 mount sand blasts. Motor cars and trains are common in certain limited areas. Air/rafts are always scarce, at least among the human

population.

The standard riding animal is the leap-horse, a cantankerous creature which jumps around on its oversized hind legs. To control one of these beasts, it is sometimes necessary to thrust a control bit

through a hole drilled in the skull. A leap-horse is a gatherer, about 200k, with horns and armor as jack.

Sailing ships are standard for ocean travel. Sometimes motor ships are available.



## Travel Times (hours per hex)

	Steppe	Mountain	Desert	Jungle	Ocean
Walking	190	300	220	250	—
Leap Horse	150	250	200	220	—
Caravan / ATV	20	35	20	75	—
Air/Raft	10	14	10	10	10
Sailing Ship	—	—	—	—	100
Motor Ship	—	—	—	—	30





# The Phung

UPP: EBC542

Population: 4-5,000

Tech Level: 0

Skills: Recon -2, Brawling -2, Survival -2

Special: Bare hands treated as cudgel, skin as mesh. Phung share the decentralized nervous system of the Pnume. They cannot be knocked unconscious, only killed.

Like the Pnume, Phung are native to Tschai. They resemble the Pnume in build and dress, having a similar, half-human, half-insect appearance, and wearing the usual black cloak and hat. However, they are larger than the Pnume, standing over two meters tall, and they wear high boots. Their appearance suggests a grasshopper in an assassin's cloak.

Phung are solitary, living in caves and ruins. It is not known how they reproduce. They appear to be intelligent beings, but never communicate with other creatures and display no rationality or logic. The most widely accepted explanation

for their behavior is that all Phung are totally insane. They usually are seen dancing in and out of shadows, but are just as likely to leap into a whirling, thrashing attack as they are to stand motionless while they are chopped apart.

A Phung may pick up a weapon, if its use is both obvious and imminent. However, it does not regularly carry weapons, preferring to crush its enemies or tear them apart. They can throw rocks at short or medium range for 4 dice damage. A Phung is adept at dodging; it is -2 versus any missile weapon.

A Phung which encounters a Chasch, Dirdir, Wankh or human will give some thought to killing the prospective victim with as much artistry as possible. It will then confront, terrify and slaughter its foe, not always in that order. It appears to take more pleasure in its victims' fear than in their pain, and does not care at all for its own safety.

There is no human subspecies associated with the Phung.

# Old Chasch

UPP: 585778

Population: 2-3,000

Tech Level: 8

Skills: Liason -2, Carousing -2

Special: None

Tschai fell under the heel of numerous off-world invaders before the arrival of the Old Chasch 100,000 local years ago. But the Old Chasch have the longest residency of all the alien races currently occupying the planet. They spent much of that time feuding with their cousins, the Blue Chasch, and later with the Dirdir, but they have been no threat to anyone for 20,000 years.

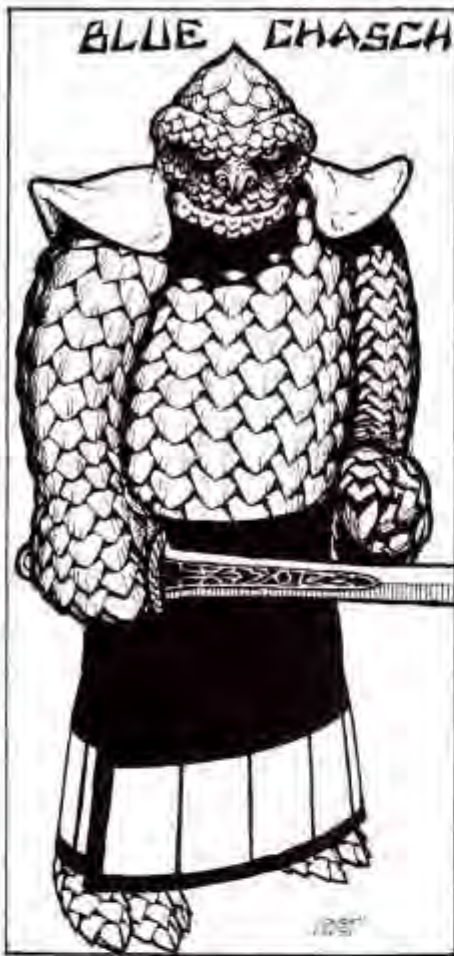
Old Chasch resemble large silverfish with arms and legs. Their skin is like minutely-scaled ivory satin. They have fragile bodies and eyes like small silver pellets that move independently.

Once a grand race, the Old Chasch retain only a shred of their former magnificence. They manufacture drugs and cloth, trading them for perfumes and scents. They love to play pranks on humans. Sometimes they are cruel, sometimes only mischievous. Stories are told of unwary travelers with new features grafted on their faces and new memories implanted in their minds. Anyone valuing his sanity is advised to stay out of the low white domes and parks of the Old Chasch.

Old Chaschmen (UPP: 758633) are slight and stooped with gray wrinkled faces, bulging foreheads, puckered mouths and no chins. They wear false scalps which jut over their brows and rise to a point, simulating the shape of an Old Chasch cranium. Their skills are the minimum necessary to serve their Old Chasch masters as porters, freight handlers and technicians. They may be the butt of Old Chasch jokes, when other victims are unavailable.

The Old Chasch live in West Kotan. Their only known city is Golsse.





# Blue Chasch

UPP: 758778

Population: 300400,000

Tech Level: 10

Skills: Streetwise -2, Laser Pistol -1, ATV -1

Special: Skin treated as jack

Blue Chasch have short heavy legs, a powerful wedge-shaped torso and chitinous shoulder-plates curving into a dorsal carapace. Their skull rises to a bony point, with a heavy brow over glittering metallic eyes and a complicated nasal orifice.

The Blue Chasch invaded Tschai 90,000 local years ago, fighting their racial kin, the Old Chasch. Since then, their technology has declined, and they have lost all zest for space travel. However, they do

still maintain missile pits to threaten their old enemies, the Dirdir.

Blue Chasch have a highly developed sense of smell. With it they can identify men and their possessions and can follow a trail if it is less than one day old and doesn't cross water. They use artificial amplifiers to detect fainter traces.

The Blue Chasch are at once whimsical, harsh and devious. They love to bargain, but prefer to cheat. They hate boredom. They entertain themselves by, for example, putting an enemy in a glass maze with a tormented Phung.

Blue Chaschmen (UPP: 768743) are short and stocky with bowed legs and blunt, chinless faces. They wear Chasch-like skullcaps which rise to a point and overhang the brow, and believe themselves to be the first stage in the Blue Chasch life cycle.

Blue Chasch cities consist of spacious gardens, with low white domes.

# Green Chasch

UPP: C7A522

Population: 80-100,000

Tech Level: 1

Skills: Survival -2, Hunting -1, Broadsword -1, Catapult -1, Recon -1, Tactics -1

Special: Skin as jack

Green Chasch are seven to eight feet tall, massive and thick-limbed, with clearly defined glistening green scales. They have the characteristic jutting brow and pointed scalp of all Chasch.

Green Chasch are the barbaric descendants of hybrid warriors brought to Tschai by the Blue Chasch to serve as shock troops against the Old Chasch. Harboring a fierce hatred for the Blue Chasch, they roam Kotan in bands of 50 to 1,000, raiding caravans and human settlements. They fight from the backs of their giant leap-horses with broadswords, picks, crossbows and the Tschai hand-catapult. A

Green Chasch broadsword is too heavy for a human to wield.

The life of a Green Chasch is nasty, brutish and short. A tribe of Green Chasch will accept terrible losses in combat, retreating only when there is no longer any prospect of success. Even when the enemy is fleeing, the Chasch will continue to attack out of sheer ferocity. To replace their losses, Green Chasch pilgrimage to a breeding area northwest of Jalkh; during this period, they are relatively peaceful. Except for that, Green Chasch seem to take no pleasure in anything but slaughter.

Green Chasch are telepathic among their own kind, giving them superb battle-field coordination. They use colored banners to communicate with outsiders, various combinations signifying such things as willingness to trade, bloodlust or the desire to pass through quietly. They have no language. Green Chasch become lethargic at night, but will defend themselves if attacked.

There is no human subspecies associated with the Green Chasch.





# The Dirdir

UPP: 787769

Population: 250-350,000

Tech Level: 11

Skills: Hunting -2, **Brawling** -2, Survival -1,  
Laser Pistol -1, Air/Raft -1

Special: Claws; skin as jack

Dirdir average two meters tall, are slight and wiry and move "like lizards on a hot day." Their hard skin has the appearance of polished bone. They have deep-set eyes in vaguely human faces, and their heads are topped by antennae which glow when they are excited. (These antennae are removed if a Dirdir becomes an outcast.)

The Dirdir came to Tschai 60,000 years ago, during a period of aggressive expansion. They fight occasional skirmishes with Chasch and Wankh patrols, but take more pleasure from searching out hidden Pnume tunnels and flooding them with poison gas.

Dirdir are descended from carnivore chaser-killers. Their savage heritage is evident in their ritual hunts. When hunting, Dirdir become animals; reason is subordinated to instinct and aggression. Prey is

eaten. The victims, often human, are kept alive until needed for food. They are controlled with electronic pain inducers.

In their hunting parks and preserves, Dirdir hunt unarmed and on foot. Away from their preserves, Dirdir hunt from air/rafts with laser pistols, swords and infrared and electronic sniffers. They carry shields which give the same protection as cloth armor.

The principal Dirdir city is Hei, which is connected to the (human) island city Sivilshe by a causeway. At the center of Hei is a glass-enclosed park eight km long, five km wide and 300 meters high. It is surrounded by spires which house the numerous Dirdir clans and castes and remind them of the hollow-tree dwellings of their home planet **Sibol**. The park is a hunting preserve built to simulate Sibol's cool desert environment. Inside, human criminals are hunted in ritual fashion before spectators.

**Dirdimen** (UPP: 777767) are tall, pale and completely hairless. They believe men and Dirdir are two branches of the same evolutionary stock, and revere Dirdir as the higher form.



# The Wankh

UPP: 967778

Population: 4-5,000

Tech Level: 12

Skills: Pilot -2, Navigation -1, Communi-  
cations -1, ATV -1

Special: Amphibious

Slightly larger than a man, a Wankh has a heavy dark torso, squat head, short legs and splayed-web feet. In place of eyes they are equipped with two black lenses which emit pulses every half-second. They wear no clothing.

The Wankh arrived on Tschai 10,000 years ago (13,000 Earth years) during a war against the Dirdir, and built forts on Kachan, Rakh and Vord. They remain on Tschai to keep watch on the Dirdir but they have little interest in the affairs of men. They are rarely seen outside their stern, black-glass towers.

Wankh architecture is stark and labyrinthine, based on concepts incomprehensible to humans. The Wankh language is likewise incomprehensible, pictograms conveyed by single chime-like sounds. The written language is a series of shaded

rectangles, each corresponding to a chime. Humans can learn Wankh only with long and difficult study. No Wankh understands any human language at all.

In general, the Wankh are so alien that the Pnume, Chasch and Dirdir seem almost neighborly by comparison. However, the Wankh are far from being as furtive as the Pnume, brutal as the Chasch or rapacious as the Dirdir. They come and go openly, not seeming to care if humans stare at them. They prefer understanding their enemies to killing them out of hand. (However, the **Wankhmen** are noticeably more quick on the trigger.) Captives are sent to work in the mines; stubborn cases may be subjected to the mysterious "black boxes."

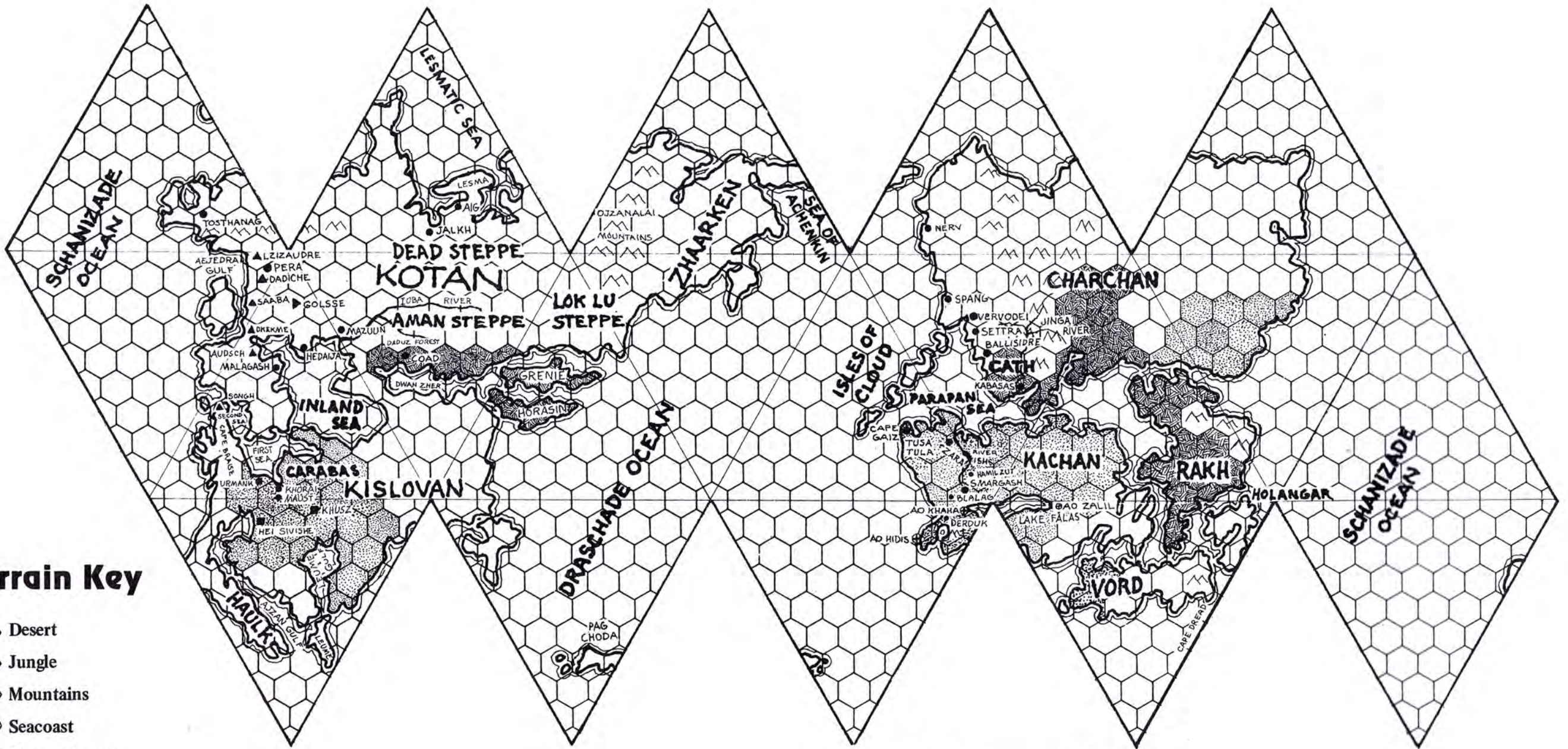
Wankhmen (UPP: 777777) are self-centered and ruthless, serving as spies and lackies for the Wankh. They hire Lokhars to perform menial and technical work. Wankhmen serve their own interests first, and those of Wankh second. They are the only humans that can speak Wankh, and they use this ability ruthlessly, translating and mistranslating as seems expedient.



# TSCHAI: The Map

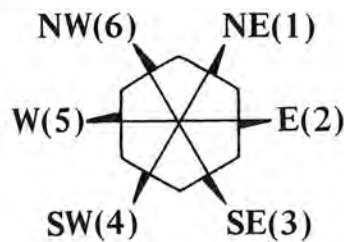
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The scale is approximately 1,000 km/hex.



## Terrain Key

- Desert
- Jungle
- Mountains
- Seacoast
- Steppe/Ocean
- Old Chasch City
- Blue Chasch City
- Human City
- Dirdir City
- Wankh City



# Travel on Tschai

The chief overland mode of travel is the caravan – consisting of 10-60 motor drays, of which at least 1/6 mount sand blasts. Motor cars and trains are common in certain limited areas. Air/rafts are always scarce, at least among the human

population.

The standard riding animal is the leap-horse, a cantankerous creature which jumps around on its oversized hind legs. To control one of these beasts, it is sometimes necessary to thrust a control bit

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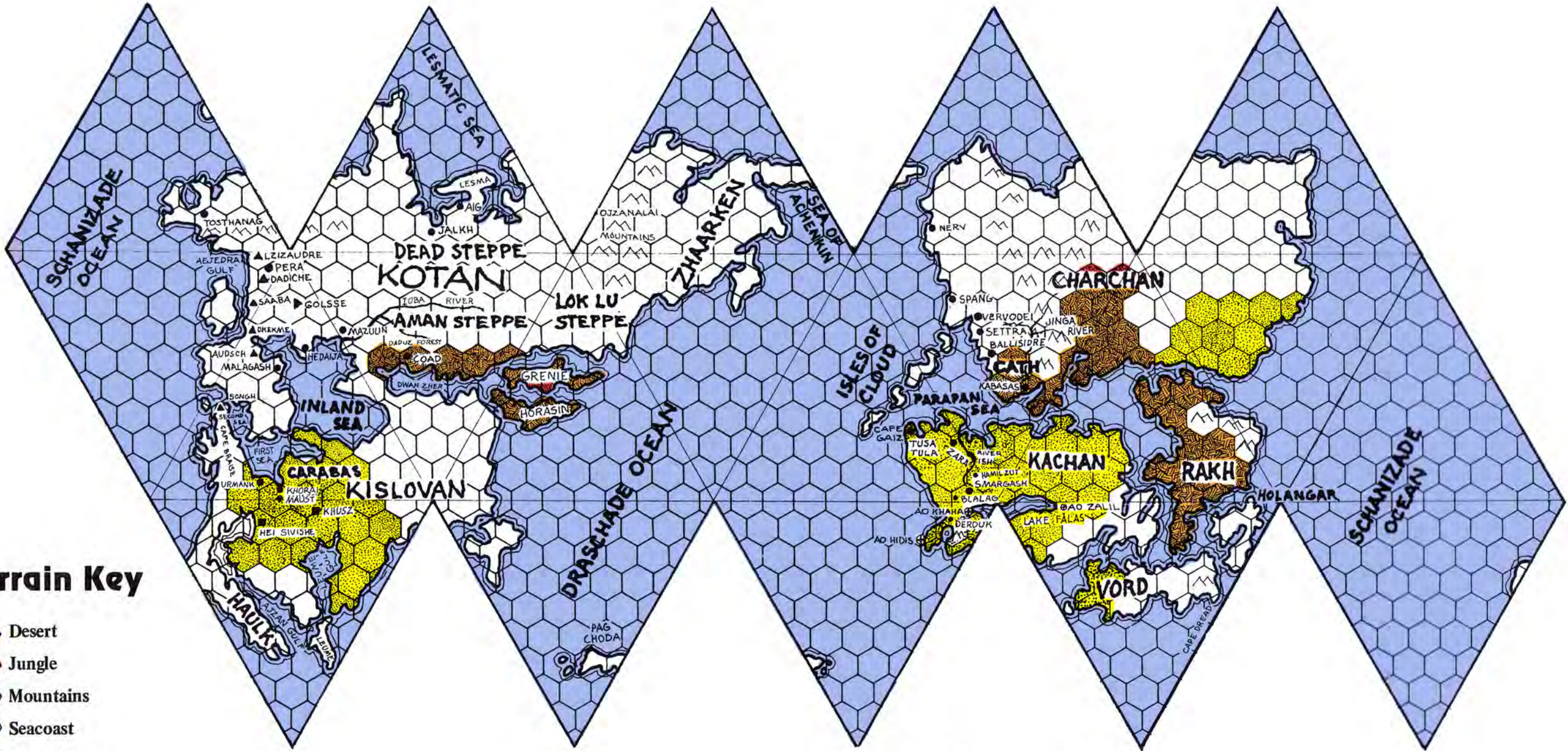
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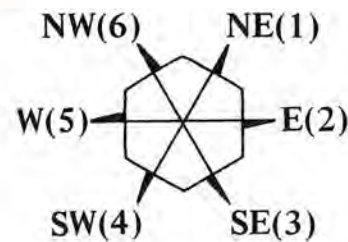
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# SF Character Contest Results

Our June contest invited readers to submit *Traveller* statistics and data up to three heroes or villains of science fiction literature. As usual when the contest is *Traveller-related*, there were less than thirty entries, but almost all of them were good.

The winner was Richard Bartucci. He picked three good characters from lesser-known (but still solid) backgrounds, and wrote them up in standard *Citizens of the Imperium* format:

*Captain Bob Schuster*

99AB87

Age: 46

8 Terms

Credits 65,000

*Space Mining and Maritime Troubleshooter.*

*Leader-3, Vacc-1, Navigation-4, Pilot-1, Bribe-2, Admin-3, Jack of All Trades-3, Streetwise-3.*

As long as colonies are planted on worlds with oceans, there will be a need for skilled mariners, and as long as new star systems' asteroid belts are exploited for the raw materials to build them, specialists in zero-G mining and manufacturing will be required.

This hard-bitten saltwater sailorman is unique in having experience in both areas. Employed by a large supranational shipping and mining combine as troubleshooter and *triggerman*, his outspokenly critical way with government meddling and his penchant for antagonizing his own corporate hierarchy keep him shifting about on various unpleasant assignments. His skill in handling subordinates and his uncanny knack for finding solutions to the knottiest problems, however, make him too valuable to fire — if only because the competition would snap him up in an instant.

Pragmatic and sometimes abrasive with incompetence, he can be sociable if encountered en route from one system to another, and he can sometimes be found commanding a cargo ship (the nautical kind) on a colony world. Most of the time, however, he will be engaged in the tough task of shaking down a problem-plagued asteroid mining operation.

(From *Captain Empirical* by Sam Nicholson, 1979.)

*A s-A -Shade-Of-Purple-Grey*

355DE9

Age: 66

6 Terms

Credits 83,500

*Scout-Explorer, Writer, and Inadvertent Magician.*

*Pilot-1, Electronics-5, Navigation-1, Computer-4, Medic-2, Liaison-minus-2\*.*

Single-minded in his pursuit of information on new worlds, this well-meaning but sometimes bumbling Scout seems to have an unfortunate propensity for antagonizing the inhabitants of the primitive planets he visits.

Trained as a biochemist and skilled as a writer of popular fiction and science for the non-scientist, he returns from his (usually-solitary) missions only to attend book promotions and major conventions of the Travellers' Aid Society.

\*If a company of adventurers including Purple should encounter a group of low-tech sophonts, it is likely that his "negative skill" in Liaison will, in spite of his best intentions, almost invariably cause him to insult and infuriate the natives; it is left to the referee's discretion to determine the results of this unfortunate characteristic.

(From *The Flying Sorcerors* by David Gerrold & Larry Niven, 1971.)

*Jack Holloway*

988A88

Age: ? (Old, but going *strong* . . .)

*Gemstone Miner*

*Air/Raft-3, Liaison-3, Jack of All Trades-4, Survival-3, Gun Combat (Rifle)-5, Gun Combat (Pistol)-5.*

Self-sufficient and experienced in opening up dozens of new colony worlds, this tough character is currently working a solo mining claim deep in the wilderlands of a planet in the Spinward Marches.

Adept at contact with extraterrestrials, he has a family of small (ca. 30cm. tall) autochthons living with him at his base camp. These little furry bipeds are tool-using forest-dwellers, intelligent but *very* low-tech (paleolithic-equivalent), amiable and outgoing. While timid in their natural habitat, "Pappy Jack's" friends are familiar with humans, sometimes to the point of getting into things too delicate or too dangerous to permit their tinkering. The average characteristics of an adult are **187411** (on human scale). Roll **1D+3** for number.

If threatened, the bipeds will fight as a co-ordinated team using metal weapons made for them by their Terrohuman

friend, consisting of a steel shaft with a knobkerrie on one end and a blade at the other. The latter can be used for stabbing or slashing.

Holloway is *extremely* touchy when one of his charges is endangered or when he is threatened himself. Quick on the draw and deadly with projectile firearms, he is not one to cross lightly ("Last time anybody pulled a gun on (him), they called it suicide.").

At any time, Holloway may carry on his person up to 80,000 Credits in uncut gemstones (roll 1D+2 and multiply the result by 10,000 Credits).

(From *Little Fuzzy* and *Fuzzy Sapiens* by H. Beam Piper, 1962 and 1964.)

Any of these three characters is the sort that a *Traveller* ref would have no trouble working into a standard scenario, and any of them would be interesting game material.

Second place went to Gary E. Reilly, for his description of the two lead characters from *Hammer's Slammers*. Created by author David Drake, the Slammers are a crack armored force whose services are for sale to the highest bidder. As such, they could appear in a campaign — and they might well be involved in the Fifth Frontier War now in progress. If Gary had written up some stats on their heavy equipment, he would have come in first — but refs can supply that for themselves with a little work.

*Colonel Alois Hammer*

<i>Strength</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>Intelligence</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>Dexterity</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Endurance</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Social Standing</i>	<i>D</i>

*Traveller Rank 5*

*Skills: Pistol-3, Tactics-3, Leader-4, Administration-2, Streetwise-2, Heavy Weapons-2, Survival-3.*

Colonel Hammer is widely known as the commander of the highly successful mechanized mercenary force commonly known as Hammer's Slammers. On and off the battlefield, his tactical and strategic expertise has earned him a reputation as one of the best mercenary leaders in this section of the Imperium. Once he has accepted a contract, Hammer uses whatever means necessary to fulfill it, even though some of his tactics have been judged excessive by his critics. A man of great self-determination, Hammer is strongly dedicated to those who serve under him. In turn, loyalty by his troops



goes beyond all expectations (as seen by his high Social Standing).

Alois Hammer possesses a trim, hour-glass figure that has been toughened by his military experience. Except when absolutely required by protocol, his dress consists of simple, but functional battle-field dress. Hammer's personal weapon is the 1cm powerpistol (treat as small version of the **PGMP-14**, 8D damage).

*Joachim Steuben*

<i>Strength</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Intelligence</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>Dexterity</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Endurance</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>Social Standing</i>	<i>5</i>

*Skills: Pistol-6, Survival-4, Streetwise-3.*

Joachim Steuben is Alois Hammer's right-hand man and chief confidant. At first, his immaculate dress and boyish-slim figure may mislead people. Behind his nearly feminine features, Steuben maintains a fierce and fatal personality. His intense loyalty to Hammer verges on fanaticism. Anyone offering even the slightest perceived insult or danger to Hammer will become the target of Steuben's hatred.

Steuben's combination of speed (Dexterity E) and gun accuracy (Pistol-6) make him a fatal enemy. His preferred weapon is a superbly crafted 1cm powerpistol. He is said to obtain pin-point accuracy at extreme ranges (in excess of one kilometer) with this gun. Imperial psyche-profiles classify Steuben as extremely dangerous and to be handled with caution at all times.

Colonel Alois Hammer and his Slammers provide an excellent band of mercenaries for inclusion in any *Traveller* campaign. He may be willing to contract the Slammer's services to a player-character or may be actively seeking fresh recruits for his force. Unfortunate, indeed, is any player character who would come in direct conflict with the Slammers or their commander.

An honorable mention goes to Robert Weissinger for his tongue-in-cheek entry, based on Douglas Adams' *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. This material is probably too strange for many referees, and would require a good deal of interpolation before it could be used . . . but if you like Monty Python D&D adventures, you'll LOVE a "Hitchhiker" game of *Traveller*.

*Zaphod Beeblebrox*

*UPP 897442*

*Age: 200 years - physical: 30 years*

*Skills: Con-3\*, Forgery-2, Streetwise-2, Hypo-Gun-2, Gambling-2, Hitchhiker-1, Towel-1\*, Pilot-1/2.*

Beeblebrox, the ex-president of the Galaxy, is being searched for by the

Galaxy's Police for stealing the *Heart of Gold*, the Infinite Improbability Drive prototype ship. (More data later.) Therefore, any contact with another ship will cause Zaphod to turn tail and run on a roll of 5+. DM +3 if Imperial Navy Ship, -1 for every level of Streetwise and Hitchhiker any one character aboard has. His most outstanding features are his two heads and three arms. In his third hand, which he always keeps in his pocket, he carries a Hypo-Gun (see Paranoia Press' *Merchants and Merchandise*). He has a very large stash of anagathics, explaining his long lifespan. He also carries several doses of Combat Drug.

*Ford Prefect*

*UPP 777863*

*Age: 32*

*Skills: Hitchhiker-3\*, Towel-3\*, Streetwise-2, Pilot-1/2.*

Ford Prefect is a researcher for *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, who, along with his friend Arthur Dent, manages to escape from the Earth moments before it is demolished to make way for a Hyperspace bypass. In his possession is the Guidebook, an electronic device which gives information (sometimes wildly inaccurate) about the galaxy; a Sub-Ether Sens-o-Matic, a device used to signal ships to try and hitch a ride; and, most importantly, a towel.

*Arthur Dent*

*UPP 687552*

*Age: 30 years*

*Skills: Towel-1.*

Arthur is only a highly confused person trying to make some sense of a very confusing galaxy. He knows only the barest minimum knowledge needed to survive in the universe, and therefore he is constantly referring to the *Hitchhiker's Guide*.

*\*New Skills:*

*Con:* Basically, the ability to pull a fast one, i.e., selling the Brooklyn Bridge, selling used spaceships, etc. To see if a con scheme works, the referee rolls 2D vs. the mark's Intelligence - the Con level of the conner. If the roll is equal to or higher than this number, the con has worked, but on a 12, the con was discovered.

*Hitchhiker:* Basic knowledge in how to hitch a ride aboard spaceships. The base roll is determined by the referee for a chance of getting aboard, and is modified thusly: **DM+1** for each level of Hitchhiker, +2 if ride is intersystem, -5 if no Hitchhiking ability, -1 for every additional person taken. If the modified roll on 2D is the base or higher, you get on.

*Towel:* Knowledge of the proper utilization of that item which is most useful

to a hitchhiker - a towel. In combat, treat as a club for range and armor modifiers. A towel does 1D+1 damage, and each time the target is hit, he must make a saving throw (3D vs. Endurance). Failing causes unconsciousness for 2-12 (2D) minutes. For more uses of a towel, check *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.

*Gadgets, Ships, and Robots*

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

*Cost: Cr 50*

This is a very important item for galactic hitchhikers, because it helps them to make sense of a confusing universe. Its best selling points are its low cost, and the words "Don't Panic" imprinted on the cover. It is with this that the referee can give information to the player, though it won't always be right.

*Infinite Improbability Ship Heart of Gold*

*High Guard Statistics: YZ-K2∞ZZFI-000050-00000-0*

*Mass: 10,000 Tons*

*Cost: 1,000 GCr*

*Passengers: 4; Low: 0; Cargo: 200 Tons*

*Fuel: 300 Tons; Agility: Z*

Yes, that's right. This ship has infinite-jump and maneuver-Z. The jump drive, in this case, is the Infinite Improbability Drive, which basically allows a ship to jump between the stars almost instantaneously, but there is always the chance of mis-jumps (roll 11+, no DMs for each jump). The computer is designed to basically run the ship by itself. It has a happy, cheerful personality, and answers to the name of "Eddie." This ship is Tech Level 18.

*Marvin, the Paranoid Android*

*Cost: 5 MCr*

*Type IV chassis and leg propulsion units*

*Basic Sensor Package, Voder/Vocoder unit*

*Large robotic brain*

*Programming: Pilot-2, Navigator-2, Manic-Depressive / Paranoid personality, and a telepathic package allowing for Probe ability.*

This should be enough for most referees to start with. Share and enjoy!

The May contest invited readers to design Combine light units for *Ogre/G.E. V*. Reluctantly, we're going to have to invoke our "no winners" clause . . . the response was relatively small, and none of the designs we received seemed both workable and futuristic. We got some pretty good "Buck Rogers" ideas, and several reworked M-60s — but that wasn't really what we were after. So it goes.

# Expanded Combat for Traveller

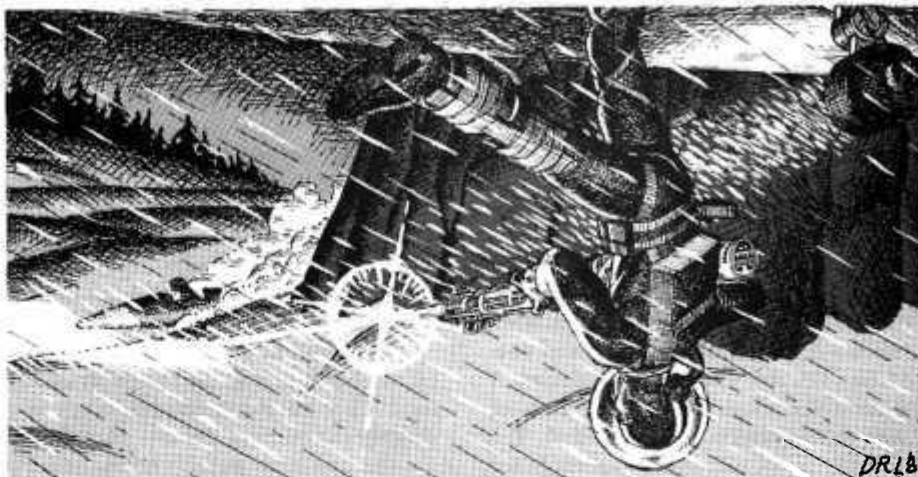
*What if my character is hanging upside down from a slow-moving air/raft in a heavy wind on a 2G planet with an exotic atmosphere panic-firing a tripod weapon without the tripod at a 2-foot-tall opponent evading at medium range in a fast-moving ATV at night in a snow storm after being wounded?*

The basic *Traveller* combat system was designed for use with the weaponry and characters of *Traveller* Book One. When confined to Book One characters and weapons, there are few conflicts. But since the advent of the basic *Traveller* system, several expansions have been released introducing new weaponry and more highly skilled characters. *Mercenary* is perhaps the worst offender in this regard. Using its weaponry, particularly gauss rifles and fusion guns, even an unskilled character literally cannot miss most shots — even when the target is in battledress! And skill levels of Combat Rifleman 5+ or High Energy Weapons 3+ are not uncommon among characters created with the *Mercenary* generation system.

In basic *Traveller* there are only a few negative die modifiers to your to-hit roll: mainly those for evading and for drawing and firing a weapon in the same round. A few more are added in *Snapshot and Azh-anti High Lightning*, but really not enough to match the almost unbeatable combination of *Mercenary* weaponry and high skill. To retain some semblance of challenge in *Traveller* fire fights, the referee may be hard pressed to devise negative modifiers on the spot to reflect the conditions peculiar to each combat situation.

The problem that often arises is this: Unless he's kept careful record of modifiers used in each particular situation, sooner or later the referee, being human, is going to use a different modifier from the one he's used before in the exact same situation. And of course there'll always be at least one player who will call him on it.

To avoid such conflicts in my *Traveller* campaign, I've worked out several sets of guidelines to cover the various situations that may crop up during the course of a *Traveller* session. With the advice and consent of my players, I've formulated a set of standardized combat modifiers to reflect a wide range of conditions under which combat may occur. I've also devised a system of automatic hits and misses,



by William A. Barton

a concept common to most role-playing games, but absent in *Traveller*. This guarantees that even the most skilled character with the most powerful weapon will miss on occasion — and gives everyone a slight chance at a lucky shot now and then. Adoption of such a set of combat rules should help smooth out just about any *Traveller* play session.

## Combat Die Modifiers

I've divided all my combat DMs — both negative and positive — into five basic areas: Modifiers of movement, of situation, of action, of environment, and of condition.

**Modifiers of Movement:** These are DMs applied to the roll to hit due to movement on the part of either the character who is firing or his target or, in some cases, both. These DMs are all cumulative, i.e., if the person firing and his target are both running, a total DM of -6 is applied to the roll to hit (-3 + -3 = -6). Likewise, if a target is evading in a slow-moving air/raft at medium range, the firer is in a slow-moving ATV, and both are closing range, the total DM is -5 (-2 for evading at medium range, -2 for target flying slowly, no maneuvers, -3 for firing from a slow-moving vehicle, +1 for firer closing range, and +1 for target closing range). This, of course, does not take in account additional modifiers for weapon's range, armor or skill in the weapon, all of which would be added when determining the final roll to hit.

**Modifiers of Situation:** These concern the actual physical condition of either the character firing or his target. These include any type of cover the target may be behind, the firer or target (or both) taking a prone position or being at different altitudes, the firer shooting from different positions or from uncertain footing, and firing from extremes of range, long and short. Many of these will be cumulative, but some will not, i.e., a target under cover may claim only one of the four states of cover, usually at the referee's discretion. Similarly, a character cannot fire at a target at extreme range and at point-blank range at the same time. One can fire at a target at a lower altitude (+1) under soft cover (-1) while prone (+1) during an earthquake (uncertain footing, -3) for a total DM of -2.

**Modifiers of Action:** These are caused by some action taken on the part of the character firing or by the target. Several of these are taken directly from GDW's own works, such as those for panic firing, snapshots or use of telescopic sights. Others include taking an aimed shot, moving to fire at a target to the rear or side, firing while performing various acrobatics or using psionics to aid targeting, etc. Few of these modifiers are cumulative with each other, most actions precluding any other, but most can be combined with DMs from the other sections (i.e., firing at a stationary target already hit in a previous round while lying prone on a slow-moving vehicle).



**Modifiers of Environment:** These are dependent on the physical surroundings of the person firing or his target. They include modifiers for firing in adverse weather conditions and in various gravity fields. Familiarity on the part of a character with any of the environmental situations described may negate certain modifiers, especially if the firer is in a *very* familiar environment, such as that of his home world or a similar planet.

**Modifiers of Condition:** These are based on conditions such as the lack of skill of a character in a weapon, the size of the target, the physical condition of the firer - wounded, fatigued, intoxicated — and how much a load the person firing is carrying. Whether a person is wearing a vacc suit or battledress or is involved in some type of combat fall into this category as well. Some of these DMs are cumulative; some are not. For example, losses of one-half ST, DX and END are cumulative. A character with less than half of each of these would suffer a total DM of -4. The 4 DM for  $\frac{3}{4}$  DX loss would supercede the

-2 for  $\frac{1}{2}$  DX loss. The character would receive an additional -1 DM for having been wounded the previous round. It's not easy to fire accurately when wounded!

For the exact modifiers used in each case, refer to the *Combat Modifiers Table*. As noted above, I've incorporated all the DMs from the various *Traveller* books and supplements into my tables for convenience. Those DMs are marked in the table with asterisks (\*).

### Automatic Hits

The roll of an unmodified 12 on two dice becomes an automatic hit regardless of the number actually required to hit. The to-hit number does, however, aid in determination of damage to the target, which may range from no hits (an insignificant flesh wound) to death, as follows:

If the number rolled on two dice needed to hit is 9 or less, the roll of an unmodified 12 is an automatic hit which does *double* the normal damage as rolled up for the particular weapon being used. For

example, a 12 is rolled when firing at a target with a laser carbine. Roll four dice damage as normal. If the roll is a 13, the target takes 26 hits. If the doubled roll itself does not kill the target, roll one die. On a roll of 1 or 2, a vital spot has been hit (heart, brain, etc.) and the target dies.

If the number needed to hit is from 10 to 14, an unmodified roll of 12 is an automatic hit which does the regular amount of damage for that weapon. If the damage done by that particular weapon is not enough to kill the target, roll one die. On a roll of 1, a vital spot has been hit and the target dies.

If the number needed to hit is from 15 to 21, the roll of a 12 equals an automatic hit which does only *half* damage. Roll damage normally and divide it by two, rounding fractions down. If the result is less than one, it is a scratch and the target takes no damage.

If the number needed to hit is 22+(not possible in most cases unless using the modifiers listed in this article), a roll of 12 is an automatic hit causing a maximum

Roll of 12			Modifiers of Situation	
To Hit	Result	Vital Hit	* Firing at extreme range	-4 (+ modifiers for very long range.)
9-	automatic hit, double damage	1,2	Target under cover, mostly exposed	-1
10-14	automatic hit, regular damage	1	Target under cover, partially exposed	-2
15-21	automatic hit, half damage	NA	* Target under cover, mostly unexposed	-3
22+	automatic hit, 1-3=1 pt. damage, 4-6=0 damage	NA	Target under cover, totally unexposed	Can't hit unless damage rating of cover is surpassed.
Roll of 2			Uncertain footing	-3 (May require DX throw to retain footing.)
To Hit	Result	Jams	Firing at point-blank range	+5 (Must be within 1' of target.)
1-	automatic miss, may jam	1-3	Target prone	-3
2-7	automatic miss, may jam	14	Firer prone (and aiming)	+3 (See aimed shot.)
8-12	automatic miss, automatic jam	NA	Firer prone (not aiming)	+1
13+	automatic miss, automatic jam, may explode	NA	Target at higher altitude than firer	-1
Skill	Unjamming Procedure Result		Target at lower altitude than firer	+1
No skill	Cannot unjam		Target under soft cover (bushes, smoke, etc.)	-1
Level 1	Will take 2D6 rounds to unjam weapon, twice that if evading		Firing gun from rest, comfortable position (in foxhole, sitting, etc.)	+3
Level 2	Will take 1D6 rounds to unjam weapon, twice that if evading		Firing gun from rest, awkward position (kneeling, scrunched up, etc.)	+2
Level 3+	Will take one round to unjam weapon, two rounds if evading		Firing while upside down	-1
TRAVELLER COMBAT MODIFIERS				
Modifiers of Movement				
* Target evading — close, short range	-1		Modifiers of Action	
medium range	-2		* Draw and fire weapon in same round	-3
long range	-3		* Fire shotgun against flying target	+2
Firer evading	Same modifiers for target evading		* Panic Fire	-2
* Target sneaking (moving cautiously, making use of cover, etc.)	-3		* Snapshot	-2
Target or firer walking	-1 (Cumulative; i.e., -2 if both walking.)		* Cover fire	-1
Target or firer trotting or jogging	-2 (Cumulative)		Turning or swinging to fire at target at side	-2 (Counts as snapshot.)
Target or firer running	-3 (Cumulative)		Turning or swinging to fire at target at rear	-4
Target flying slowly (wings, air/raft, grav belt, etc.)	-2		Firing while dropping from one level to the next	-4 (Must throw DX or less, otherwise lose footing and can't fire.)
Firer flying slowly, no maneuvers (as above)	-2 (Cumulative)		Firing shoulder weapon one-handed	-3 (Unless DX 13+, then only -1.)
Target or firer flying fast, no maneuvers (as above)	-4 (Cumulative)		Filing hand weapon with wrong hand	-2 (Unless ambidextrous.)
Firing from slow-moving vehicle	-3		Aimed shot	+2 (Must have spent one round aiming.)
Target in slow-moving vehicle	-2		Filing at stationary target, already hit in previous round	+2
Firing from fast-moving vehicle	-5			
Target in fast-moving vehicle	-4			
Target or firer opening range	-1			
Target or firer closing range	+1			

of *one* point damage. Roll one die. On a roll of 1-3, the target takes 1 hit. On a 4-6 the target receives only a scratch, no damage.

Note that the roll to hit a vital spot causing the death of the target only applies to *living* beings. If the target is a robot, a vehicle or anything else that is not alive, the roll for death is not made. Similarly, if the damage roll has resulted in the target receiving only a scratch (i.e., less than one point of damage), the roll for a vital hit is not made either. Example: A target is hit with a body pistol which does 3D-8 damage. The number needed to hit was a 6. The roll was a 12 — double damage. A four is rolled on three dice. Even doubling the roll results in only 8 points. The target therefore receives no damage, so the roll for a vital hit is not made.

### Automatic Misses

The roll of an unmodified 2 on two dice becomes an automatic miss regardless of the number needed to hit. The to-hit

number does, however, determine what the consequences, if any, are to the weapon and/or the character firing it, as follows:

If the number needed to hit on two dice is 1 or less, the roll of an unmodified 2 is an automatic miss. Roll one die. On a roll of 1-3, the weapon has jammed and may not be fired again until unjammed. On a roll of 4-6, the weapon may be fired normally next round.

If the number needed to hit is from 2 to 7, an unmodified roll of 2 is an automatic miss. On a further roll of 14 on one die, the weapon jams. Any other result allows the weapon to fire normally next round.

If the number needed to hit is from 8 to 12, a roll of 2 unmodified is an automatic miss and the weapon *always* jams. It may not be fired again during the present combat sequence until unjammed.

If the number needed to hit is 13+ (i.e., an unmodified roll of 12 is necessary so as to achieve an automatic hit), the roll of a 2 is an automatic miss and the weapon

is jammed to such an extent it cannot be unjammed at all during the present combat sequence. It will require a person with either electronic or mechanical skill (depending on the weapon) 1D6 hours (minus skill level) to repair the weapon. Furthermore, a second roll must be made immediately upon rolling the 2 on the to-hit roll. This is a one die roll. If a 6 is rolled, rather than jamming, the weapon explodes doing *one-half* its regular damage to the holder. The weapon cannot be repaired and is useless.

The procedure for unjamming a weapon during the combat sequence is as follows: If the character has no skill in the weapon which has jammed, he cannot unjam it at all within the combat sequence. A character with a skill level of 1 in a weapon which has jammed may unjam it in 2D6 combat rounds. A character with a skill level of 2 in the weapon may unjam it in 1D6 combat rounds. If evading, the number of rounds required to unjam the weapon is doubled for skill levels 1 and 2. If a character has a skill level of 3+ in the

Fire at specific body part (i.e., heart, head)	-4	Firing in familiar environment (planetary stats of diameter, atmosphere same or within 1 factor of home world or world where trained)	+1 (May also negate certain negative modifiers above.)
* Using telescopic sight	+4 (At long and very long ranges only.)		
* Firing weapon with folding shoulder stock, folded	-1		
* Firing pistol weapon with attached shoulder stock - close and short range	-1		
medium and long range	+1		
Firing while dropping to prone, etc.	-3		
Firing while performing acrobatics	-3		
* Throw grenade more than 15 meters	-1/each additional 15 meters		
Firing bipod weapon (LMG, etc.) without bipod	-1 (Autorifles excepted.)		
Firing tripod weapon without tripod	-3 (Check for encumbrance also.)		
Using psionics to help target weapon	+2 (Depends on the situation.)		
Firing same round as teleported	-2 (Additional -4 if disoriented.)		
		<b>Modifiers of Condition</b>	
		* No skill in weapon (NPCs and certain character types only)	-5
		Target ½ human size or smaller	-2
		Target twice human size or larger	+2
		Target vehicle size or larger	+4
		Firer under heavy fire	-2
		Firer involved in melee, hand-to-hand	-3
		* Firing while in vacc suit, no skill	-2
		Firing while fatigued (More than 18 hours without sleep; must sleep at least 6 hours undisturbed to eliminate initial -DM)	-3 (Additional -1 each extra hour without sleep, rest or stimulants.)
		Firing while under stimulants	-1
		Firing while under heavy medication, drugs	-3 (-5 if drug a hallucinogen.)
		Firing while mildly intoxicated	-2 (EN of 13+, -1.)
		Firing while heavily intoxicated	-4 (EN of 14+, -2.)
		Firing while seriously ill	-4
		Lost more than ½ DX	-2 (Cumulative)
		Lost more than ½ ST	-1 (Cumulative)
		Lost more than ½ EN	-1 (Cumulative)
		Lost more than ¼ DX	-4 (Cumulative)
		Lost more than ¼ ST	-2 (Cumulative)
		Lost more than ¼ EN	-2 (Cumulative)
		Carrying maximum load (within 14 kg)	-1
		Encumbered up to ½ encumbrance	-2
		Encumbered from Vi to full encumbrance	-3
		Carrying more than twice maximum load	-4 (Military personnel only — anyone else cannot fire.)
		Wounded last round	-1 (The effects of shock.)
		Hand (or arm) firing with wound	-2 (If using specific hit locations.)
		Wearing powered <b>battledress</b>	+2 (Not applicable to systems for which battledress is required.)
<b>Modifiers of Environment</b>			
Firing in darkness without IR or light intensifier goggles, etc.	-4 (*If target at close range, -1.)		
Firing in dim or twilight (without aids)	-2 (No modifier if target at close range.)		
Firing in rain, snow, etc.	-2		
Firing in heavy rain, snow, etc.	-3		
Firing in medium winds	-1		
Firing in strong winds	-2		
Firing in storm winds	-4		
Firing in hurricane, tornado, etc.	-5		
<b>Firing</b> in zero-G, no skill	-2		
* Firing in zero-G using handhold	-1 (+ appropriate DM if two-handed weapon.)		
Firing under water (firer or target)	-3 (If <i>both</i> under water, only -1.)		
Firing in dense, exotic or worse atmosphere	-1 (+ modifier for weather conditions.)		
Firing in gravities 2Gs or higher	-2		
* Firing in vacuum	Use DM for short or medium range, whichever is more favorable.		



weapon jammed, it will only take him one round to unjam it, two if evading.

Note: The concept of automatic misses may be applied to blade and brawling weapons as well. Simply count a jam, should it occur, as a broken weapon. If the weapon is a bow, the string has broken. Unfortunately, a broken cutlass cannot be unjammed. Such a weapon may be used only as a club; a second broken result renders the weapon totally useless.

### Firearms in Contact with Target

The final question which this article will address is: "What if I have my shotgun stuck right in his gut and pull the trigger?" According to any strict interpretation of the *Traveller* combat system, this would count as a shot at close range and in the case of most long firearms (non-pistols) would probably result in a miss.

Unrealistic? Of course. And players have every right to complain about a strict adherence to such an interpretation. To somewhat alleviate such situations, I've added the point-blank range modifier to my DM tables. But for the even closer "gun-to-gut" encounters, I use the following procedure:

If a character's weapon is in contact with its target, the target having been stationary when the weapon was placed into contact, the result of a shot is an automatic hit which will do one *extra* die of damage to the target than the weapon normally inflicts. However, unless the target was taken *completely* by surprise (from behind, while asleep, unconscious or tied up) when fired upon, he may attempt to roll one-half his current DX or less on 2D6. If he succeeds, the shot is resolved as if at point-blank range, target evading. Damage is rolled normally if a hit occurs.

Thus are my additions to the *Traveller* combat system. May they help your sessions as they have mine. It should be noted again, especially concerning the combat modifiers, that these rules were devised with *Mercenary-type* characters and weaponry in mind. While the automatic hits and misses and other rules may work well even with Book One situations, it would probably be best to limit most of the DMs listed for those good of *Mercenary* free for *alls*, or those situations where Book One characters have gotten hold of such heavy weaponry. And while I've tried to cover nearly every situation I could imagine under which combat could occur in the most appropriate manner I could, I'm sure some will want to alter some of my DMs and will manage to think up others I've overlooked. Feel free. Half the fun in any role-playing game is adding your own twists.

## TSG BACK ISSUES

- No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and their Weapons; computer gaming.
- No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in *Melee*); 1977 game survey results - and a LOT of reviews.
- No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for *Imperium*, *Melee*, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; *WarpWar* fiction.
- No. 18. *IceWar* designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted *Melee*; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).
- No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining *Imperium* and *WarpWar*; *Battlefleet* Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, *Runquest*, and *Raumkrieg*; *MicroGame* design article.
- No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in *Melee*; designer's optional rules for *Ice War*; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (*wargaming* frauds).
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# Nonhuman Races

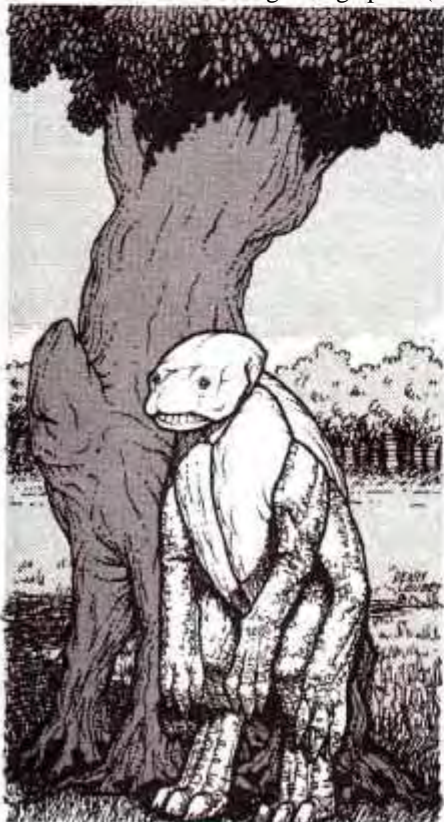
## The Krenn

The planet Combe is primarily noteworthy because of the unique phylum, *Cloromorphus*, which originated there. These are large (80 to 150 meters at full growth) tree-like plants that propagate by "seeds" which are not only mobile, but intelligent.

The adult plant shows no signs of intelligence, but at maturity produces "seeds" which, depending on the genus, have from 4 to 8 appendages and are self directed. The seeds normally remain mobile for periods ranging from 2 to 35 standard years, with some individuals remaining mobile for over 50 standard years.

Three species have developed at least the rudiments of language, the Krenn being the most proficient in language and tool use. Krenn have 6 limbs, 2 used for locomotion only, 2 digitated at the end and used solely for fine motor skills, and the remaining two (in the center on the trunk) are used for gross motor manipulation and occasionally for locomotion.

The Krenn society exists to protect the Krenni trees and their growing space (as



well as several symbiotic species). They educate the newly released seeds (Kren-dor) in tool use, language, and duty to the forest.

In times of poor growth many of the Krenn will migrate to other areas. This pressure for new growing areas has led to the spread of the Krenni forests to the three neighboring planetary systems.

The psychology of the Krenn has attracted some discussion among human scientists. Krenn do not die at the end of their life cycle; they grow into Krenni trees. This seems in some ways equivalent to a "death wish," since by all accounts the Krenni trees are not self-aware! The search for an appropriate location is very high in Krenn motivation. The only more powerful motivation yet discovered is the tenacious defense of the Krenni forests by the Krenn.

This extreme territorial nature was discovered by the first contact group, the crew of the *Visula*. One of the Krenni trees was set afire by the landing boat, and the crew suddenly found themselves facing an organized, disciplined attack.

Krenn colonization teams have been reported recently outside of their normal cluster and some military and scientific sources suggest that they plan to establish Krenni forests on less developed planets, eventually displacing the currently dominant life forms.

— John L. Vogel

## The Crell

Designed specifically for *Space Opera*, the Crell are the major power found in both the Libra and Virgo constellations. The empire is over 400,000 light years from end to end, and contains 2,195 known systems to date.

The Crell are most feared for their large roving fleets of battleplanets and starhunters. The battleplanets are similar in design to the Death Star of *Star Wars* fame. The number of battleplanets encountered will not be less than two, and not less than four if an invasion fleet is encountered. Starhunters are up-gunned cruisers designed for long range fleet action and are often encountered in small fleets of one to six. A fleet will also have one to six agroships per battleplanet, besides one to twenty starhunters.



The Crell are a race of ursinoids originating from three Class G solar systems located in the Votre II sector in the Libra constellation. The race is Tech 10 and is as old as the last remnants of the forerunners. Despite the military city-state appearance, the Crell are a semi-democratic open-structured society. Their social morals are similar to Terrans, leaning towards a more destructive mentality. Despite this the Crell are slightly conditioned to believe that the empire's interests come first. As would be expected, at least 80% of the population has to have at least four tours of military service (eight years), including females. Due to such a large number of the populace being in the military, robots and conditioned slaves are necessary to perform some, if not all, of the hard labor tasks.

The economy is based on legal tender called a platinum "lupal," with gold being the most valuable metal. The economy of the four home worlds is that of a rich industrial planet with populations running around 25,000,000,000. It is due to this that conquering of other worlds is necessary to obtain natural resources and pro-



vide colonies to "keep the wheels turning." The colonies are most important as the Crell reproduce like rabbits.

Socially, the male • is the dominant member, although the female is expected to perform certain tasks normally related to the males. The ursinoids themselves appear as heavily proportioned humanoids with hair. They still retain the claws of their ancestors and the brown, black, or white fur also. Males range from 180 cm to 225 cm in height and mass of 100 kg to 220 kg. Females are somewhat smaller than the males, but are still large in proportion to human males. Vision and hearing are similar to human norms. Smell on the other hand is very acute, almost approaching that of a canine. Ursinoids are vegetarians, consuming meat on occasion. They have iron-based metabolisms and life expectancy is about 100 years.

#### *Standard Crell Trooper*

*Uniform:* CBA with jet black appearance and golden helmet with silver eagle and large tinted visor. Rank is given in a series of red and green strips on helmet backs. Back packs and belts also black.

*Armor:* CBA/5E with helmet and belt screen (sealed).

*Armament:* AMG 10 with type G over/under grenade pistol, targetscope and bayonet, force blade, blast pistol. If in vacuum conditions, substitute blast rifle for

#### AMG 10.

*Other Gear:* backpack  
two weeks field rations  
sleeping bag  
water dispenser  
three weeks emergency concentrated rations  
PC/5 side communicator  
300 10mm rounds  
personal medipack  
polarized visors  
two magnesium flares  
electric torch  
40 water proof matches  
2 photon grenade torpedoes  
4 fragmentation grenade torpedoes  
2 incendiary grenade torpedoes  
2 frag demo grenades  
*Squad:* 4 troopers, 1 cap troopers.

*Section:* 2 squads.

*Platoon:* 3 sections + 3 corporals + 1 sergeant.

Special patrols or troops participating in large scale combat will probably have contra grav harness or jump pack.

#### *Support Weapons*

*Squad:* blast LMG and lanze.

*Section:* gauss rifle and 2 apro carbines.

*Platoon:* 2 dally guns and 2 tangle rifles

This will be the standard gear of troopers involved in small scale action. If involved in large scale battle or invasion force 80% will be in vehicles or PAPA armor

but with same weapons. The other 20% will be unnecessary personnel, techs, and men in rear area positions (artillery).

*Attributes:* all 11 + 1d6

As the Crell are a Tech 10 civilization, the majority of the industry production is devoted towards the manufacturing of more powerful weapons.

The Crell will accept certain canines and felines into their ranks only if they are loyal to the cause. Such races often make up their own divisions and are often used in semi-suicidal and suicidal missions. Sometimes, the Crell conquer such races and make them into puppet city-states of the empire for as long as the Crell need them. Human or demi-human races will either be controlled or enslaved. Any saurian or other lizard races will be immediately put to death by whatever means feasible, as reptiles are extremely disliked.

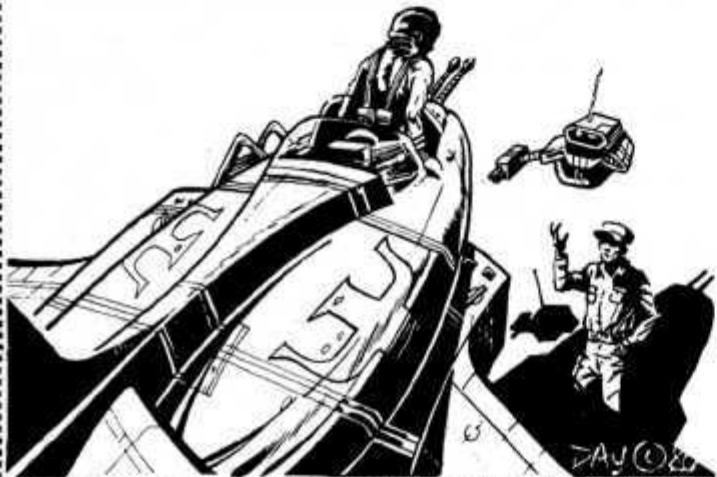
The Crell will make military alliances with Mertuns and Bug races of high tech levels, only for the purpose of furthering military advances.

Sports and the arts are much appreciated by the Crell people even though the military goals come first. The dark side of the force is practiced in the empire, along with telekinesis, and thus psionics are not uncommon among some officers of high rank.

- Randy Chafe

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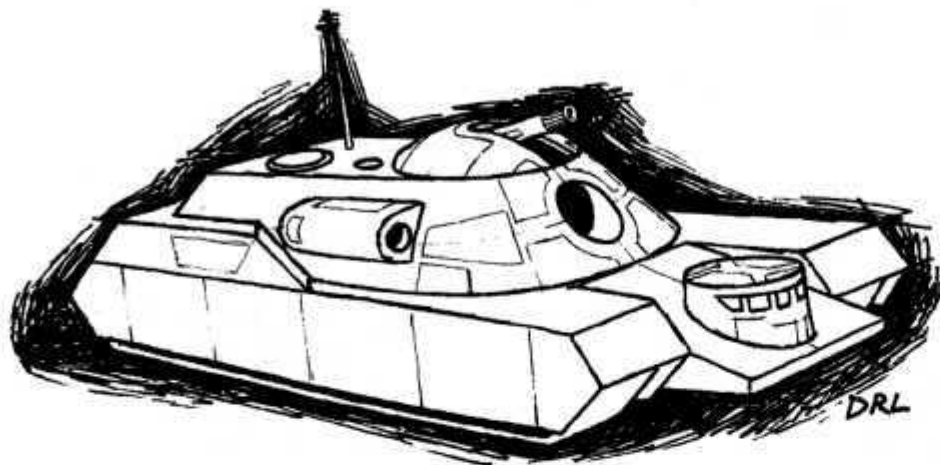
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# ARMORED FIGHTING VEHICLES IN TRAVELLER



by Donald Gallagher  
and William Barton

Rules for **designing, purchasing, and using tanks, hovercraft,**  
and other armored fighting vehicles in the universe of Traveller

*Sources of miniature tanks, robots, and other futuristic vehicles suitable for use with these rules include:*

*Citadel (Box 12352, Cincinnati, OH 45212)*

*Grenadier (Box 305, Springfield, PA 19064)*

*Johansen Miniatures (56 Snow Crystal Rd., Naugatuck, CT 06770)*

*Martian Metals (Box 778, Cedar Park, TX 78613)*

*Superior Models (Box 99, Claymont, DE 19703)*

*T-Rex (3618 Dexter, Ft. Worth, TX 76107)*

*A good source of modern and historical armor miniatures suitable for conversion as science fiction vehicles:*

*GHQ (2634 Bryant Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55408)*

*Check at your local hobby shop, or write to the manufacturers for more information.*

Armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) are the backbone of most high-tech ground forces. AFVs can range in sophistication from the early TL-6 tracklayers through the TL-9 air-cushion hovertank, up to the **TL-15** suborbital gunships. Prices will rise sharply as sophistication increases. Since no standard designs currently exist, AFVs must be designed using a procedure similar to that used to design a starship.

#### DESIGN CHECKLIST.

1. Determine mission for which AFV is intended.
2. Determine following characteristics:
  - A. Vehicle size category;
  - B. Suspension/propulsion system;
  - C. Main weapon;
  - D. Secondary weapon(s);
  - E. Armor and/or protective gear;
  - F. Fire control computer;
  - G. Size of power plant;
  - H. Sensors, communications gear and any special modifications;
  - I. Crew;
  - J. Vehicle movement rate (based on size, suspension, and terrain).
3. Determine final weight and cost of all components; revise as needed.
4. Record final specifications and cost of vehicle.

Charts presented later will contain the specific data needed to work through this checklist.

#### CHART I: SIZE CATEGORY.

These size categories serve to give a general indication of the **AFV's** intended **role** in combat, as well as to help determine the vehicle's speed with various types of suspension and propulsion systems in different terrain. All AFVs must fit into one of the size categories given. All weights are given in metric tons.

Light (5-20 tons) Hull cost = 1000 CR/ton

Light Medium (21-40 tons)

Heavy Medium (41-60 tons)

Heavy (61-100 tons)

Very Heavy (101-150 tons)

Super Heavy (151-200 tons)

#### CHART II: SUSPENSION/PROPULSION SYSTEMS.

The types of suspension listed here are those used for AFVs at various TLs from 6 to 15. Under each system is listed its TL of introduction, cost per ton, percentage of AFV weight required to utilize the system, and any **restrictions** on the use of the system. In addition to the tonnage needed for the system itself, an appropriate sized power plant must be provided (see chart VII).

Wheels (TL 6+): requires tonnage equal to 15% of total weight. No vehicles of category Heavy or larger may use wheels. Cost = 1000 CR/ton.

Tracks (TL 6+): requires tonnage equal to 20% of total weight. No vehicles of category Very Heavy or larger may use tracks. Cost = 1500 CR/ton.

Air Cushion (TL 9+): requires tonnage equal to 30% of total weight. Cost = 2000 CR/ton.

**Anti-Gravity** (TL 10+): requires tonnage equal to 10% of total weight. Cost = 2500 CR/ton.



## MAIN WEAPONS CHART

Weapon	TL	Weight	ROF	Cost	Ammo Wt.	Ammo Cost
Light Turret Gun	6+	1	8	5000	6	50
Medium Turret Gun	6+	2	6	10000	15	75
Heavy Turret Gun	6+	2.5	4	20000	20	100
HVAP Smoothbore	7+	3	4	30000	20	150
Gun/Missile Launcher	7+	3	-	35000	-	-
Missile Launcher	7+	1	1	10000	20	1000
* Anti-Armor Chain Gun	8+	.5	2	12000	100	1500
Mass Driver Gun	12+	10	10	20000	15	35
* Laser/Autocannon	9+	2	1	1MCR	25	250
* Plasma A Gun	10+	4/2/.5	2/2/5	1MCR	-	-
* Plasma B Gun	11+	4/2/.5	2/2/5	1.5MCR	-	-
* Plasma C Gun	12+	4/2/4	2/2/5	2MCR	-	-
* Fusion X Gun	12+	4/2/.5	2/2/5	3MCR	-	-
* Fusion Y Gun	13+	4/2/.5	2/2/5	5MCR	-	-
* Fusion Z Gun	14+	4/2	2/2	10MCR	-	-

Notes: Gun/Missile Launcher may be used either as a missile launcher or a heavy turret gun at the firer's option.

**Laser/Autocannon** are mounted coaxially. If autocannon achieves a hit and laser hits same target in that round, ignore 1 layer of target's ablative armor (if any).

Multiple numbers under the high energy weapons represent their weight and ROF (respectively) at the TL of introduction, 1 TL above it, and 2 TLs above it, in that order.

Most weapons require 2-man crews; starred weapons require only one man. Weapon weights are given in metric tons; ammo weight, **mkg**. Costs are in credits.

A chain gun is an evolution of the autocannon. Instead of a number of rotating barrels, the chain gun uses a number of fixed barrels with the action being driven by a chain. This increases the rate of fire and the size of the projectiles thrown. Chain guns are used today on AH-1S antitank helicopters (30mm), A-10A attack planes (also 30mm), and on the M-2 infantry fighting vehicles (25mm). The weapons fire depleted uranium rounds that give these small-caliber weapons very great lethality against armored vehicles. The major drawback is their high consumption of ammunition (which the weapons chart reflects).

## CHART III: MAIN WEAPONS.

This chart will list the weapons available for use as the vehicle's major source of firepower. Only one main weapon may be mounted; it is assumed that this weapon is carried in a fully rotating turret unless the AFV is constructed using nonturreted configuration (see chart VIII).

## CHART IV: SECONDARY ARMAMENT.

**Option 1:** Up to 2 of the following, in any combination, may be mounted on the AFV's turret, assuming that adequate crewmen are provided: Light Machinegun, RAM Auto-Grenade Launcher (pintle-mounted), **PGMP-14** or **FGMP-15**.

**Option 2:** Up to 2 of the following, in any combination, may be placed in a secondary turret (weighing 1 ton per weapon installed and requiring 1 crewman; power plant tonnage must also be provided): Autocannon, VRF Gauss Gun, RAM **Auto-Grenade** Launcher.

**Option 3:** Vehicles mounting either a Laser/Autocannon or an Anti-Armor Chain Gun as main armament may carry up to 2 fixed-round tac missiles (ie., one missile *only* in each; weight and price as the standard missile launcher) in lieu of any secondary weapons.

Notes: Vehicles of categories Very Heavy and Super Heavy may take both Options 1 and 2, if desired, due to their immense size. Weapons taken under Option 1 can be specified as internally-operated; this will increase the cost by 1000 CR per weapon so specified. They may still be fired while unbuttoned, but the gunner will receive no armor protection while doing so.

See *Mercenary* for cost and weight of secondary weapons.

## CHART V: ARMOR AND PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.

This chart is divided into two sections (as the heading implies). Protective gear is explained item by item. To armor a vehicle, the designer will decide how many layers of armor will be fitted. Each layer of armor is rated for the amount of armor points it is worth and the percentage of the AFV's total weight that one layer will take up. The AFV's total armor factor is obtained by adding up the points of armor that each layer provides.

In the case of armor sloping, these options represent more advanced slope designs that effectively increase the AFV's resistance to damage. Effective weight represents the amount of interior space lost due to the armor layout; cost is calculated from the base cost of the armor installed. The effect of sloping is to add a set number of points to the armor value of each layer of armor carried. True armor thickness is a representation of the real thickness of armor at various points on the vehicle (the total value represents the value of armor on the most heavily protected parts of the AFV - its front plate and turret front; the table for true value will show the real thickness of armor at other points on the vehicle).

The maximum number of layers of armor an AFV may carry is equal to its TL.

TL Available	Points Per Layer	% of Total Weight Per Layer	Cost Per Ton
6,7	6	10	10000 CR
8,9	8	8	12000 CR
10,11	10	5	12000 CR
12,13	12	4	8000 CR
14,15	12	3	5000 CR

Advanced Armor Sloping (TL 7+): Adds 2 points to the armor factor of each layer installed (excepting ablative armor). Effective weight = 5% of total vehicle weight (regardless of number of layers of armor); cost = 25% of cost of armor installed.

Very Advanced Armor Sloping (TL 8+): Adds 3 points to the armor factor of each layer installed (excepting ablative armor). Effective weight = 10% of total vehicle weight (regardless of number of layers of armor); cost = 50% of cost of armor installed.

**True Armor Thickness:** Once the total armor value has been determined, use the table below to find the true armor value at each aspect of the AFV. Round down in all cases.

Target Aspect	Effective % of Total Armor Value
Front	100
Oblique	75
Side	50
Rear/Overhead	25

**Protective Equipment:**

Ablative Armor (TL 9+; cost and weight as standard armor at given TL). Ablative armor will give an armor value equal to twice the given TL's standard armor against laser fire unless "scrubbed off" by autocannon fire (see chart III notes for details). Against all other weapons, each layer is worth 1 point. When recording armor values, parenthesize ablative armor points to avoid confusion with standard armor points.

Anti-Laser Aerosol Ejectors (TL 6+; monochromatic spray available at TL 9+, prismatic spray at TL 10+; cost = 2500 CR + 10 per spray round). If monochromatic spray is used, no TL 8 lasers may designate, TL 9 lasers lose 50% of their penetration value, and TL 10+ lasers are unaffected. If prismatic spray is used, all lasers are ineffective. One spray round will protect the vehicle for 4 full turns if stationary or 1 turn if moving. Weight = 50 Kg. At TLs 6-8, this item is used as a smoke discharger (cost = same; weight 1 Kg. per round carried, to a maximum of 10). Smoke rounds are affixed to the AFV and fired via wires leading into the hull. They are simple fixed-round cannisters, and thus don't need a launching device.

Anti-Laser Reflective Paint (TL 12+; cost = 1500 CR per ton of AFV so painted). Lasers are ineffective against a vehicle so painted.

Directional Mine Strips (TL 12+; each strip installed will weigh 1% of total AFV weight; cost = 2000 CR per ton installed, 500 CR to reload 1 strip. Fire control computer MK. 4 or better required for use). All projectiles fired at the vehicle excepting those fired by chain guns or autocannon, or infantry small arms) receive a negative DM of [number of strips fired + (computer **factor-4**)] when rolling to hit. Hostile infantry coming within 500 meters of a vehicle so equipped will be attacked with the equivalent of a RAM HE grenade (per man, up to a maximum of 1 squad per strip fired) for each strip fired. The vehicle commander must keep track of strips expended; they may only be fired once each.

**CHART VI: FIRE CONTROL COMPUTERS.**

Vehicles of TLs 6-7 may not incorporate FC computers. It is not required to incorporate a FC computer (unless otherwise noted), but it is highly advisable to do so.

Computer Model	TL	Weight	Price
MK. 1	8+	1 ton	<b>.2 MCR</b>
MK. 2	8+	1 ton	<b>.9 MCR</b>
MK. 3	9+	2 tons	<b>1.8 MCR</b>
MK. 4	10+	2 tons	<b>3 MCR</b>
MK.5	<b>11+</b>	3 tons	<b>4.5 MCR</b>
MK. 6	12+	4 tons	<b>5.5 MCR</b>
MK. 7	<b>13+</b>	5 tons	<b>8 MCR</b>
MK. 8	14+	6 tons	<b>11MCR</b>
MK. 9	15	7 tons	<b>20MCR</b>

**CHART VII: VEHICLE POWER PLANTS.**

To determine the required power plant tonnage, add together the amounts shown below to find the percentage of the AFV's total weight that must be allocated to the power plant. In the case of the plant tonnage needed to run the suspension/propulsion, the tonnage may be doubled to allow movement at the speed of the next lighter category. This may only be done once; in no case can less than the minimum tonnage be fitted.

System	% of Total Weight for Power Plant
Wheels	6
Tracks	8
Air-Cushion	10
<b>Anti-Gravity</b>	12
Laser/AutoCannon	2
Plasma Gun	3
Fusion Gun	4
Mass Driver Gun	4
Main Turret, Computer, <b>Commo</b> Gear, Sensors (all)	1
Secondary Turret	1

Power plant cost = 100000 CR/ton

**CHART VIII: ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT AND MODIFICATIONS.**

As shown, Sensors are essentially of two types - surveillance and **weapons-direction** - although certain sensors may be used for both purposes. Modifications are fully described on the chart.

*Sensors:*

- Passive **IR** (TL 6+, 2000 CR, 10 Kg)
- Active IR (TL 7+, 3000 CR, 15 Kg -includes Passive IR functions.)
- Light Intensification Viewer (TL 8+, 2000 **CR, 10 Kg**)
- Laser **Designator/Rangefinder** (TL 8+, 5000 CR, 20 Kg)
- Tactical Ladar (TL 10+, 8000 CR, 15 Kg)
- Doppler Radar (TL 8+, 5000 CR, 50 Kg)
- Tactical Radar (TL 9+, 10000 CR, 20 Kg)
- Tactical Magnetoscope (TL 12+, **10000 CR, 20 Kg**)
- Echo Sounder (TL 10+, 12000 CR, 40 Kg)
- Extensor Pod (TL **10+**, 50 Kg. Pod can hold up to 150 Kg of sensor gear, and can be elevated to allow sensing while vehicle is in full defilade. Cost = 10000 CR + 100 CR per ton of sensor gear installed.)

*Communications:*

- Short-Range Radio (TL 6+, 100 CR, 1 Kg-**multiband** version, 200 CR)
- Medium-Range Radio (TL 6+, 200 CR, 2 **Kg-multiband** version, 400 CR)
- Long-Range Radio (TL 7+, 500 CR, 4 Kg-multiband version, 1000 CR)
- Counter-ECM Unit (TL 7+, 3000 CR, 2 Kg)
- Laser-com** Unit (TL 9+, 150000 CR, 50 Kg)

*Modifications:*

Atmospheric Streamlining (TL 9+, grav vehicles only; cost 100 CR per ton of vehicle. Required for suborbital flight.)

Pressurized Hull (TL 9+, grav vehicles only; 1 ton for life-support system, cost = 50000 CR. Required for suborbital flight; will serve as NBC protection.)

**\*NBC Shields/Overpressure System** (TL 7+, cost = 20000 CR. When used in combination with NBC suits, provides protection against nuclear fallout/radiation, biological and chemical agents. Will not allow suborbital flight.)

Battle Display Unit (TL 9+; consists of a special battle computer interfaced with a map box: cost = 102500 CR, 25 Kg.)

Infantry Firing Ports (TL 7+, cost = 1000 CR per port; 5000 CR per port is in combination with NBC shields or a pressurized hull. Ports may be provided at 1 per Vi ton of crew compartment. They allow small-arms fire from within the vehicles, thus affording armor protection to the firers. If used, they will breach the pressure integrity of the vehicle.)

Non-Turreted Configuration: Normally, AFVs carry their main weapon in a fully rotating turret. At the designer's option, an AFV may be designed in a nonturreted configuration. The effects are as follows: the AFV is assumed to employ Advanced Armor Sloping at no cost or weight. Note that, in this case only, additional armor sloping may be added to this intrinsic sloping and this vehicle will receive the cumulative bonus. The main weapon is severely restricted in its arc of fire (see the combat rules for details), and such vehicles may never assume hull defilade. In all other respects, they are identical to other AFVs.

Open-Topped Vehicles: With this modification, all noncrew members may use small arms from within the vehicle without recourse to firing ports. The vehicle receives no armor value for top, and modifications involving a sealed hull may not be performed.

AA Vehicles: Aircraft or grav vehicles engaging in flight at any altitude other than NOE may only be engaged by secondary weapons fire (due to their height, the main weapon of an AFV cannot be elevated sufficiently to fire at

them), unless the firing vehicle has been built as and designated an AA vehicle. Such vehicles must meet the **following** criteria: weight category must be Light or Light Medium, no more than 1 layer of armor (either standard or ablative) may be carried, and all secondary armament is sacrificed. In exchange, up to 4 of one of the following weapons may be carried on high-angle mountings (weight, power and TL allowing): Chain Gun, Autocannon, Laser/Autocannon, VRF Gauss Gun, Light Machine Gun, Missile Launcher, Plasma or Fusion Guns.

\* This is simply a set of gas-tight gaskets for all hatches and other openings into the crew spaces. When the AFV is sealed for operations in an NBC environment, the interior pressure is slightly raised to keep gas or fallout from getting in by use of the engine compressor. Thus, there is no weight for this system, and it is useless for maintaining internal pressure against a lack of external pressure.

**CHART IX: CREW.**

One-half ton of space must be provided for each of the following:

- Tank commander
- Driver
- One or two gunners for main weapon (see chart **III**)
- One gunner for secondary weapons
- Each passenger

**CHART X: MOVEMENT RATES IN KPH.**

To find the speed at which a vehicle travels, find the suspension system on the left; find the AFV's size category within that general heading, and cross-index this with the terrain type through which the AFV is to travel. The resulting number is the speed (in KPH) at which this type of terrain can be traversed. In the case of grav vehicles, terrain is not a factor; rather, the altitude at which the vehicle is flying is the determining factor. Note that for the purposes of the combat rules, only two altitudes are usable - NOE and Cruising (higher altitudes are only used when well out of the battle area due to air defense weapons).

**MOVEMENT RATES IN KPH**

		Road	Cross-Country	Rough	Mountain
Wheels:	Light	120	50	20	10
	All Medium	100	30	10	-
	Heavy	70	50	40	30
Tracks:	Light	70	50	40	30
	All Medium	50	30	30	20
	Heavy	40	20	20	10
Air Cushion:	Light	.150	120	100	-
	All Medium	120	100	80	-
	Heavy	100	80	60	-
	Very/Super Heavy	100	80	60	-
Anti-Gravity:		NOE	Cruising	Top Speed	Sprint*
	Light	150	300	500	700
	All Medium	120	250	400	600
	Heavy	100	200	350	500
	Very/Super Heavy	100	200	300	400

*Terrain Equivalents:*

- Cross-Country:** Clear, Desert, Plains, Beach, Shore.
- Rough:** Hills, Foothills, Woods, Forest, Jungle, Rain Forest, Marsh, Swamp.
- (Terrain types are explained **further** in *Traveller*.)

\* For every turn in which a grav vehicle sprints, it must make a roll on the malfunction table in the Logistics and Maintenance Section. For each time that the AFV fails to make the roll, it loses 10 KPH from both top speed and sprint speed. This simulates the fact that sprinting is pushing the power plant into and beyond the "never exceed" zones, and is likely to impair its performance before too long.



## DESIGN EXAMPLES.

The AFVs that are described in the following pages are presented as examples of how the system works and how the data on a particular vehicle is to be recorded. With this accomplished, one can proceed to the individual combat system (immediately following this section).

**M-1 ABRAMS: TL 8**

**WEIGHT AND CATEGORY:** 53 tons, Heavy Medium (53000 CR).

**SUSPENSION AND MOVEMENT CATEGORY:** Tracks; Light (10.6 tons, 15900 CR).

**ARMOR:**

**NUMBER OF LAYERS:** 5 TL 8 (21.2 tons, 254400 CR).

**ARMOR SLOPING:** Very Advanced (5.3 tons, 127200 CR).

**TRUE ARMOR THICKNESSES:**

FRONT: 55

OBLIQUE: 41

SIDE: 27

TOP/REAR: 13

**PROTECTIVE GEAR:** Smoke Dischargers (10 Kg., 2500 CR; 10 rounds, 100 CR).

**F.C. COMPUTERS:** MK. 2 (1 ton, .9MCR).

**WEAPONS:**

**MAIN:** HVAP Smoothbore (3 tons, 30000 CR).

**AMMO CARRIED:** 40 rounds (.8 ton, 6000 CR).

**SECONDARY:** 2 LMG (1 on main turret; 1 internally operated. 10.5 Kg., 3500 CR).

**AMMO CARRIED:** 400 rounds each (20 Kg., 480 CR).

**SENSORS:** Laser Designator, Active IR, Light Intensification Viewer (Total: 45 Kg., 10000 CR).

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Medium-Range Radio (multiband), Counter-ECM Unit (4 Kg., 3400 CR).

**POWER PLANT:** 17% (1% for main turret, computer and sensors; 16% for suspension/propulsion - x2 power; vehicle moves at Light Tracks rate. 9.01 tons, 901000 CR).

**MODIFICATIONS:** NBC Shields (20000 CR).

**CREW:** 4 (T.C., Gunner, Loader, Driver); 2 tons crew compartment.

**TOTAL COST (BEFORE PRODUCTION):** 2,426,480 CR.

**NOTES:** Earlier version carries Heavy Turret Gun (2.5 tons, 20000 CR) and 65 rounds (1.3 tons, 6500 CR) in lieu of HVAP Smoothbore.

**"KIYOSHI" Imperial Grav APC: TL 15**

**WEIGHT AND CATEGORY:** 12 tons; Light (12000 CR).

**SUSPENSION AND MOVEMENT CATEGORY:** Anti-Gravity; Light (1.2 tons, 3000 CR).

**ARMOR:**

**NUMBER OF LAYERS:** 1 TL 15 (.36 tons, 1200 CR).

**ARMOR SLOPING:** None.

**TRUE ARMOR THICKNESSES:**

FRONT: 12.

OBLIQUE: 9.

SIDE: 6.

TOP/REAR: 3.

**PROTECTIVE GEAR:** Anti-Laser Reflective Paint (18000 CR).

**F.C. COMPUTER:** MK. 2 (1 ton, .9 MCR).

**WEAPONS:**

**MAIN:** Fusion Y Gun (.5 ton, 5MCR).

**AMMO CARRIED:** N.A.

**SECONDARY:** None.

**SENSORS:** Tac Ladar, Active IR, Light Intensification Viewer (40 Kg., 13000 CR).

**COMMUNICATIONS:** Long-Range Radio,

Counter-ECM Unit (6 Kg., 4000 CR).

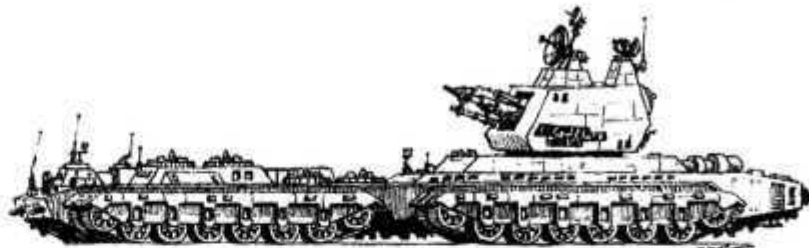
**POWER PLANT:** 17% (1% for main turret, computer and sensors; 12% for suspension/propulsion; 4% for Fusion Gun. 2.04 tons, 204000 CR).

**MODIFICATIONS:** Atmospheric Streamlining, Pressurized Hull, 10 Infantry firing ports

[Total: 1 ton (life support unit), 101200 CR].

**TOTAL COST (BEFORE PRODUCTION):** 6,357,600 CR.

**NOTES:** Very light APC carried aboard Imperial battlecruisers; not intended for use under actual battle conditions.



## BASIC SMALL-UNIT COMBAT RULES

**SEQUENCE OF PLAY.**

Play proceeds in sequential game turns. Each turn consists of a number of phases, in which one, the other, or both of the opposing forces are conducting some activity. Additionally, two interphases occur before and after the action. A detailed explanation of each phase and interphase will be given later.

**SEQUENCE OUTLINE.**

- 1: Sighting and Morale Recovery Phase.
- 2: Side A Movement Phase.
- 3: Side B Fire Phase.
- 4: Side B Movement Phase.
- 5: Side A Fire Phase.
- 6: Side A Artillery Phase.
- 7: Side B Artillery Phase.

**EXPLANATION OF SEQUENCE.**

**PRE-BATTLE INTERPHASE:** Whenever a battle is to be fought, a number of factors must be determined before the battle begins. These are:

1: Size and composition of opposing forces. This can be done by using the Abstract Battle System or through player interaction on a map.

2: Efficiency Ratings (ERs) of the troops involved. This is determined for units of platoon size or less by using the morale determinant procedure on pg. 29 of *Mercenary*. For larger units, total the manpower (or number of vehicles in a mechanized unit), and add a headquarters section equal to 10% of the number of AFVs in a mech unit, or 5% of the manpower in an infantry unit. The ER for this new higher-echelon unit is equal to the average ER of the

subunits (rounding up) plus 2 points. As long as the unit is together on the same battlefield (within 10 moves or 5km of each other, whichever is less, and in radio contact) and the HQ section remains intact, the new ER is used.

3: Terrain. This will have to be laid out by the judge (if any), using the terrain-type descriptions given in *Traveller* as a guide.

4: Situation. If the players are maneuvering on a map, the judge will determine the situation at contact. If the A.B.S. is used to generate the action, the opposing forces will deploy as follows: If "Own Attacking," "Own" player (note that which force is "Own" must be determined before all else) will move on-board while "Enemy" force sets up on board. If "Enemy Attacking," reverse the deployments. If "Firefight," both sides will move on-board at the same time; and, if "Surprised," the surprised side must move to within effective range of the other side's on-board position and receive a full round of unopposed fire before beginning the regular turn sequence.

5: Side determination. The Turn Sequence makes reference to Sides A and B when showing whose phase is being conducted at a given time. Side A is the attacking force in any set-piece action, with Side B defending. In a firefight action, the unit(s) having the higher ERs may choose which side it will be.

Once all this has been determined, the battle may begin. Each game turn consists of the following phases, in this order:

1: **SIGHTING AND MORALE-RECOVERY PHASE:** Both sides attempt to sight enemy units within their arcs of search (either visually,

electronically, or both). Any units of either side that failed their morale checks in either fire phase must now attempt to recover.

2: **SIDE A MOVEMENT PHASE:** All units of Side A able and willing to do so move now. All vehicle turret traversement is done now as well.

Side A Movement Phase (at end): If Side B has sighted Side A, units may "track" Side A by moving their turrets only at this time, paying the appropriate movement cost. If either side failed to sight the other in that phase, another attempt may be made at this time unless Side A did *not* move. If Side A's Target Sighting Category Key has changed due to movement and Side B had sighted Side A in the Sighting Phase, a new attempt must be made to retain sighting. If Side B loses sight of the enemy due to movement, it loses the bonus to ER for first-fire determination in its fire phase (see below). If Side B gains first-fire anyway, all Side B units must fire with a -2 to hit on first fire, -1 on second fire (after Side A has returned fire) and no further negative DMs to remaining fire (due to lost sighting) in the phase.

3: **SIDE B FIRE PHASE:** AU units of Side B that sighted their targets and are able and willing to **fire** now designate their targets. First-fire is determined for each pair of engaging units by comparing ERs; since this is Side B's fire phase, all of their units receive a bonus +2 to their ERs for the purpose of first-fire determination in this phase. First-fire is automatically gained by the Side B unit if their target had not sighted them prior to their firing.

Once first-fire has been determined, calculate the ROF ratio between the firing vehicles (see the charts for a further explanation), and resolve each shot. Resolution of fires is as follows: find the weapon firing, and read across to find the range bracket that the target is presently in for that weapon. This will give the basic number that must be equaled or exceeded on 2D6 to hit the target, as well as the weapon's penetration factor at that **range**. The basic to-hit number may be modified by a number of factors (found on a separate chart). If a hit is achieved, subtract the armor factor of whatever aspect of the target was struck from the weapon's penetration factor; with the resulting number as a modifier, roll 2D6 on the effects chart. This will give the result, if any, of the hit on the target. If the target is not disabled or destroyed by the first-fire shot(s), it may reply at the rate calculated in the ROF ratio. This exchange will continue until one or the other of the contenders has been destroyed or disabled, or until both have fired a number of shots equal to their ROF, in which case there is no effect and play proceeds to the next phase. Note that the **full** ROF of a vehicle's weapon(s) may be employed, ammunition allowing, in both fire phases. Any casualties on either side may necessitate morale checks (see the charts for a further explanation).

4: **SIDE B MOVEMENT PHASE:** As Phase 2, but for Side B.

Side B Movement Phase (at end): Side A may "track" with turrets as above - if units have sufficient **mps** left. Sighting procedure as above with sides reversed.

5: **SIDE A FIRE PHASE:** As Phase 3, but for Side A.

6: **SIDE A ARTILLERY PHASE:** AU calling, adjusting and firing-for-effect by Side A's artillery is done now; all anti-artillery fire by Side B is done now as **well** (see the charts for a further explanation).

7: **SIDE B ARTILLERY PHASE:** As Phase 6, but for Side B. Side A's anti-artillery fire takes place now.

**POST-BATTLE INTERPHASE:** Once the battle has ended, for whatever reason, both sides must account for the following:

- 1—**Ammunition** expended;
- 2—**Casualties**, bodily and/or vehicular;
- 3—**Final** morale status of all units involved.

# ADVANCED COMBAT RULES

## USE OF THESE RULES.

These rules are intended for use with miniatures on a terrain board. If desired, however, a square grid may be used to regulate movement. In the event that this is done, 1 square = 1 cm for scale. When moving or firing side-to-side across a square, cost is 1 **mp**, range is 50 m; when moving/firing diagonally into or across a square, cost is  $\frac{1}{2}$  **mp**, range is 75 m.

## CHART I-GAME SCALE.

- 1 turn = 30 seconds
- 1 cm = 50 m
- 5 kph/speed = 1 movement point (**mp**)
- [50 kph = 10 mps]
- 1 mp = 50 m/turn

## CHART II-MOVEMENT.

**BASIC RATE:** 1 mp = 1 cm/turn; terrain effects on movement are listed in Part 1.

### TURNING:

- Up to 45 degrees = No cost
- 46-90 degrees = -1 **mp**
- 91-135 degrees = -2 **mp**
- 136-180 degrees = -3 **mp**

### FOR GRAV VEHICLES:

- x2 cost if at 51-100 kph, x3 cost if at 101-150 kph, x4 cost if at 151+ kph.

### REVERSE MOVEMENT:

- A speed after halting (lose an additional V\* speed on turn after halting).

### POP-UP (Grav and air-cushion vehicles only):

- $\frac{1}{4}$  of total **mp** to lift or drop. Vehicle may only fire  $\frac{1}{2}$  ROF if lifting and dropping in same round. Lifting is done in enemy's fire phase, dropping is done in immediately following movement phase after all firing is completed. If vehicle does not drop, it must move at least 1 mp in its movement phase.

**SIDE-VECTERING** (Grav and air-cushion vehicles only):

After halting, vehicle may side-vector at V\* speed. Front of vehicle remains in direction that it held when maneuver was begun.

## CHART III-SIGHTING.

Sighting can be of two types: visual and electronic. Visual arc of search is 45 degrees to either side of the turret centerline (turret can be traversed up to 90 degrees per movement phase, assuming it is not damaged; turret centerline must be on a facing which is an exact multiple of 45 degrees, with the front center of the hull considered 0/360 degrees). Electronic gear searches the same arc unless it is pod-mounted, in which case pod facing must be specified similarly to turret facing. The only exception to this is the echo sounder; this device will automatically detect any tunnels, underground works or the like within 100 m of the vehicle in all directions.

## SIGHTING PROCEDURE:

Find the target's sighting category **below**; cross-index on the chart with the range to the area being surveyed to give the number that must be equaled or exceeded on 2D6 to sight the target. DMs to the roll are listed below:

**TARGET SIGHTING CATEGORY KEY:**  
INFANTRY, NONVEHICLE-MOUNTED  
SUPPORT WEAPONS:

- Stationary in cover = 1
- Stationary in open = 3
- Moving in cover = 3
- Moving in open = 4

AFVs, VEHICLE-MOUNTED SUPPORT WEAPONS, ARTILLERY:

- Stationary in cover = 2
- Stationary in open = 4
- Moving in cover/grav vehicle flying NOE in rough terrain • 4
- Moving in open grav vehicle flying NOE in open = 5

Grav/air-cushion vehicle executing pop-up in last fire phase = 2

**NOTE:** All target sighting categories are lowered by one at night, in smoke or in poor weather conditions. Therefore, a target in category 3 is category 2 at night.

## SIGHTING ROLLS DMs:

### DAYLIGHT/CLEAR WEATHER:

- Target fired energy weapon or TL7 Tac Missile last round = +4
- Target fired last round = +2
- Within 2cm of at least 2 more targets = +2
- Target vehicles Very Heavy or Super Heavy = +1
- Alerted to presence of enemy by friendly units that have sighted = +1
- Sighting AFV unbuttoned or open-topped = 0
- Buttoned-up AFV observing to front = -2

## SIGHTING CHART

Sighting category of target	0-5	6-10	11-30	31-60	61+	(Range in CM)
1	6+	8+	10+	12+	-	
2	4+	6+	8+	10+	12+	
3	2+	4+	6+	8+	10+	
4	A	2+	4+	6+	8+	
5	A	A	2+	4+	6+	



Buttoned-up AFV observing to flank or rear = -4

#### ELECTRONIC SIGHTING (AT NIGHT, THROUGH SMOKE OR WEATHER CONDITIONS):

Using Active IR = +2 at night, +1 smoke/weather.

Using Passive IR (or Active IR in passive mode) = +1 at night or smoke/weather; +4 if enemy using Active IR.

Using Light Intensification Viewer = +2 smoke/weather; +1 at night (clear sky).

Using Tactical Magnetoscope = +4 if target is AFV or artillery; +2 if target is infantry equipped with Combat or Battle Armor; +1 for all other targets of TL 6 or above.

#### CHART IV-DIRECT FIRE.

##### SHOT RATIO:

Once first-firer has been determined, a ROF ratio must be calculated between all firing vehicles. This represents the relative speed at which shots are exchanged in a firing phase. The slower ROF is used as the divisor of the faster ROF; all fractional amounts must be moved to a later impulse. Sequential fire and return fire at the calculated rate will continue until one or the other of the contenders is destroyed or disabled, or both have fired a number of shots equal to their ROF. If the former, the victor will cease fire at the moment of target destruction/disablement unless specifically ordered

otherwise - if the latter, both sides are unaffected and play proceeds to the next phase. Some examples of the shot ratio procedure follow:

A = ROF 3 (first fire)  
B = ROF 5  
RATIO = **A1, B1; A1, B2; A1, B2.**

A = **ROF 10** (first fire)  
B = ROF 4  
RATIO = A2, B1; A3, B1; A2, B1; A3, B1.

A = ROF 1 (first fire)  
B = ROF 4  
RATIO = **A1, B4.**

A = ROF 4 (first fire)  
B = ROF 1  
RATIO = **A2, B1; A2, B0.**

##### TARGET ENGAGEMENT:

At TL 8+, vehicles may engage a number of **targets** equal to their main weapon's ROF or their F.C. computer's factor, whichever is less. Doctrine advises against it, but if multiple engagement is undertaken, the procedure is as follows: the first-firing vehicle (only!) designates its targets and the number of shots to be fired at each. The ROF ratios are calculated on the basis of this new number versus the target's full ROF. The engagement must be finished between the first-firing vehicle and each of its targets before firing at the next; any shots that were to be fired at a vehicle that is knocked out

before they are fired are lost. If the first-firing vehicle itself is knocked out, any targets yet unengaged are unaffected. An example of this procedure follows:

A = ROF 10 (first fire); MK. 4, F.C. Computer

**B1, B2, B3, B4 = all ROF 4**

A fires 2 shots each at B1 through B3, and shots at B4 (total 4 targets)

##### RATIOS:

A-1, B1-2; A-1, B1-2

A-1, B2-2; A-1, B2-2

A-1, B3-2; A-1, B3-2

**A-1, B4-1; A-1, B4-1; A-1, B4-1; A-1, B4-1.**

##### DMs TO HIT:

Speed Differential between Firer and Target:

0-50 kph = 0

51-100 kph = -1

101-150 kph = -2

**151+ kph = -3**

F.C. Computer in use = + computer factor; if engaging in **multitarget** fire, divide factor by number of targets engaged (rounding down, to a minimum of +1).

Battle Display Unit in use = +2

Weapons-Direction Sensors in use:

Tac Ladar = +3 (0 if target aerosol-obscured or antilaser painted).

Laser Designator = +1 (same restrictions as above).

Tac Radar = +3 (0 if target is grounded).

Doppler Radar = +2 (same restrictions as above).

Directional Mines in use • -[number of strips fired + (computer factor-4)] against Tac Missile and direct cannon fire; useless against energy fire, "scrubbing" autocannon and chain gun fire, indirect or small arms fire.

Target Jamming (Must have ECM unit) = -3 (against Tac Missiles of TL 7-9); -2 (against Tac Missiles of TL **10-12**); -1 (against Tac Missiles of TL 13-15).

Target flying NOE = -1

Target in **hull** defilade = -2

Target executing popup • -2

Target executing popup and dropdown = -3

Every 100m of target movement spent in LOS of firer = +1 (ignore if target is flying NOE).

#### DIRECT FIRE WEAPONS DATA CHART

PROCEDURE: Read down to find weapon in use; read across to the range in kilometers, and read up to find the range/accuracy number and penetration factor of the weapon at a given range.

Weapon	Effective (5+)	Long (8+)	Extreme (10+)
Light Turret Gun	.5 km (20)	<b>1 km</b> (15)	<b>2 km</b> (10)
<b>Medium</b> Turret Gun	1 km (30)	<b>1.5 km</b> (25)	3 km (20)
Heavy Turret Gun	1 km (40)	2 km (35)	4 km (30)
HVAP Smoothbore	1.5 km (45)	2.5 km (40)	5 km (35)
TL7 Tac Missile	3 km (40)	-	-
TL8 Tac Missile	3 km (45)	-	-
TL9 Tac Missile	3 km (50)	-	-
TL10 Tac Missile	<b>4 km</b> (55)	-	-
<b>TL11</b> Tac Missile	4 km (60)	-	-
<b>TL12</b> Tac Missile	6 km (65)	-	-
<b>TL13</b> Tac Missile	8 km (70)	-	-
<b>TL14</b> Tac Missile	<b>10 km</b> (75)	-	-
<b>TL15</b> Tac Missile	<b>12 km</b> (80)	-	-
Anti-Armor Chain Gun	1 km (40)	<b>1.5 km</b> (35)	3 km (30)
Mass Driver Gun	3 km ( <b>50</b> )	5 km (45)	<b>10 km</b> (40)
Laser/Autocannon	1 km (60)	2 km (50)	3 km (40)
Plasma A Gun	2 km (45)	3 km (35)	5 km (25)
Plasma B Gun	3 km (50)	5 km (45)	8 km (40)
Plasma C Gun	5 km (55)	8 km (50)	<b>12 km</b> (45)
Fusion X Gun	8 km (70)	12 km (65)	18 km (60)
Fusion Y Gun	10 km (75)	15 km (70)	21 <b>km</b> (65)
Fusion Z Gun	15 km (80)	22 km (75)	31 <b>km</b> (70)
40 mm RAM HEAP Grenade	.2 km (22)	.4 km (22)	.5 km (22)

Penetration values and ranges for infantry heavy weapons may be found in *Azhanti High Lightning*. Some of those which may be used as secondary weapons are repeated here for convenience. (Note: Most of these weapons are anti-personnel and not designed to penetrate AFV armor. However, see special note on scrubbing ablative armor with autocannons.)

Weapon	Effective (5+)	Long (8+)	Extreme (10+)
AutoCannon (DS)	2250 <b>m</b> (10) +4	4500 <b>m</b> (8) +3	<b>6000 m</b> (4)+1
VRF Gauss Gun	1500 <b>m</b> (8) +9	3000 <b>m</b> (6) +6	4500 <b>m</b> (4) +3
LMG	600 <b>m</b> (3) +4	1200 <b>m</b> (2)+3	<b>1800 m</b> (1)+2
<b>PGMP-12</b>	300 <b>m</b> (10)	600 <b>m</b> (8)	975 <b>m</b> (4)
<b>PGMP-13/14</b>	450 <b>m</b> (12)	900 <b>m</b> (8)	1500 <b>m</b> (4)
<b>FGMP-14/15</b>	450 <b>m</b> (14)	900 <b>m</b> (10)	1500 <b>m</b> (6)

(DM following penetration is DM to hit when weapon firing full automatic.)

Ranges are in meters.

##### EFFECTS CHARTS:

If a hit is achieved on a target, subtract the armor value of the target aspect struck from the penetration value of the firing weapon at the range of engagement. Apply this number as a DM when rolling 1D6 on the chart below. How to determine what aspect of the target has been struck is done as follows:

FRONT is struck when the vehicle's bow is seen to be longer than any other aspect of the vehicle from the firer's position.

OBLIQUE is struck when the vehicle's front and side seem to be of the same length from the firer's position.

SIDE is struck when the vehicle's side is seen to be longer than any other aspect of the vehicle from the firer's position.

REAR is struck when the vehicle's stern is seen to be as long as or longer than the vehicle's side.

TOP is struck only by certain types of artillery ammunition (explained later), or by any weapon fired from above the vehicle by aircraft carrying out plunging attacks (up to the judge to determine availability and type of such aircraft).

**HIT RESULT CHART:**

- 3 or less • No Effect.  
 4-7 = Light Damage (roll again on Light Damage Table for specific effect).  
 8-11 = Heavy Damage (roll again on Heavy Damage Table for specific effect).  
 12 or more = **Destroyed**.

**LIGHT DAMAGE TABLE:**

- 1,2 = Secondary Weapon Hit (1 secondary weapon of firer's choice is destroyed; if turreted or manned at time of hit, 1 crewman killed and vehicle must take a morale check.)  
 3 = Exterior System Hit (1 exterior system of firer's choice destroyed - either **Laser-Corn** Unit, 1 round/aerosol or smoke, or 1 directional mine strip.)  
 4 = Sensor Hit (1 sensor of firer's choice destroyed; if carried in an extensor pod, the entire pod is destroyed.)  
 5 = Main Turret Damaged (turret traversal speed halved.)  
 6 = Suspension Damaged (if tracked or wheeled vehicle, immobilized for 1D6 hours of repair time; if air-cushion or grav vehicle, speed halved.)

**HEAVY DAMAGE CHART:**

- 1,2 = Main Turret Destroyed (main weapon and all nonturreted secondary weapons lost, all turret crew killed. Survivors must bail out.)  
 3, 4 = Severe Suspension Damage (vehicle immobilized for 12D6 hours of repair time once recovered. If grav vehicle in flight receives hit, roll 7+ on 2D6 for a controlled landing; DM -2 if flying above NOE altitude at moment of hit. If unsuccessful, vehicle is destroyed.)  
 5 = Fighting Compartment Hit (roll below armor factor of aspect hit divided by 10 on 2D6 per crewman or passenger to survive; DM +2 if plasma or fusion gun inflicted hit. Survivors will bail out.)  
 6 = Power Plant Hit (all power lost. If grav vehicle in flight receives hit, roll for controlled landing as in 3, 4 above. Crew will bail out.)

**CHART V-INDIRECT FIRE.**

Indirect fire weapons use an entirely different procedure to hit than other weapons, **which** varies according to the TL of the firing weapon. These weapons are mortars, howitzers, and MRLs; energy weapons, being **line-of-sight** only, are useless as indirect fire weapons. The battlefield meson gun, although similarly restricted, is covered here as well since it is used as an artillery weapon upon introduction.

Note that all artillery weapons except MRLs and mortars may fire directly if need be; however, they do so with a DM of -3 to hit. All artillery weapons listed in *Mercenary* are immobile and are either man-portable or are provided with prime movers. If a weapon is to be made self-propelled, a carrier must be built around it using the rules for AA Vehicles but incorporating only 1 weapon.

**ARTILLERY CALLING AND ADJUSTMENT:**

At Tls 6-8:

All calling and adjustment of fires must be performed by an F.O. assigned to a field unit by the battery he is to direct. The sequence of events is as follows: In a given friendly artillery phase, the F.O. sights a target and calls for a ranging round. The round

will hit the target on **11+** on 2D6; DM +2 if the target is within any zone that has been **preregistered**. For every point below **11** that was rolled, the round will fall 50m away from the target in a randomly determined direction (roll 1D6; 1-2 = long, 3 = left, 4 = right, 5-6 = short). In the next friendly artillery phase, the F.O. can adjust the round in any direction up to 50m per point of F.O. skill he possesses, assuming he could sight the round's initial impact point. In the next friendly artillery phase, the F.O. may continue to adjust the round or may call for **fire-for-effect** on the final target point. If the latter is done, the guns will drop their rounds in a straight line, the direction and length of which is up to the F.O. The fire mission may be aborted at any time voluntarily, and is automatically aborted if the initial ranging round ever drops out of sight of the F.O. At TL 8, two special rounds become available: the CLGM (Cannon-Launched Guided Missile) and the Anti-Tank Cluster Bomb. Both are described later under ammunition types, but use a fire-adjustment procedure identical to that at Tls 9-10 when first introduced.

At Tls 9-10:

F.O.s are still used to direct fire, but now use laser designators to "paint" their intended victims for incoming shells. The procedure for this is as follows: The F.O. sights and designates his target in a given friendly artillery phase, and calls for whatever type of fire mission he deems necessary. The rounds will drop in the next friendly artillery phase, and will automatically hit their targets if the F.O. is still designating the target (unless he has been killed or disabled); if not, each round will deviate [(1D6 divided by 2) x 50m] in a randomly determined direction as described above.  
 At Tls 11-12:

F.O.s are still in use, but now use man-portable fire control computers to both call and direct fire. The procedure is as follows: The F.O. sights his target visually, selects that target on his **computer** display with a cursor (thus giving the exact coordinates, verified by surveillance satellite data, to the guns), and calls for whatever fire mission he deems necessary. The rounds will drop in the next friendly artillery phase; whether or not they will hit their targets depends on target movement and round type. At this TL, counter-battery fire may be fired "on the map" using satellite data to aim; no visual contact is necessary.

At Tls 13-15:

At these Tls, all artillery may fire "on the map" with no need of F.O.s or visual contact with the target. If desired, however, vehicles equipped with Laser-Corn Units and F.C. computers of at least MK. 4 may be assigned dedicated batteries to be directed by them using a procedure identical to the above.

**AMMUNITION TYPES.**

Unless noted below, all prices and weights of ammo is as listed in *Mercenary*, pg. 49.

High Explosive (TL6+): Penetration factor = 4, unguided.

Flechette (TL7+): Penetration factor = 2, unguided; x2 normal blast radius of an HE round of equivalent size. Price = as equivalent HE round.

ICM/Cluster Bomblet (TL7+): Penetration factor = 4, unguided; x4 normal blast

radius of an HE round of equivalent size. Price = x2 of equivalent HE round.

White Phosphorus (TL6+): All troops not inside armored vehicles (with closed tops), under top cover or in full pressurized armor are killed if inside blast radius (as equivalent HE round). A fire is started in the blasted area (which will produce smoke for 6D6 turns), and all troops not killed but within the blast area must vacate it immediately, if possible, and take a morale check. Unguided. Price = x2 of equivalent HE round.

Smoke (TL6+): Produces smoke for 3 full turns; unguided. Price = as equivalent HE round.

CLGM (TL8+): Penetration factor = Tac Missile at given TL. Guidance system: at Tls 8-10, laser-designation of target is necessary on turn of arrival to insure a hit; at TL 11+, round will automatically guide on a given target. All hits are against a target's TOP armor (unless fired directly) - useless against infantry. Only howitzers and mass driver guns of categories Heavy and Medium may fire CLGM. Weight = 40 Kg., cost = 2000 CR/round.

Anti-Tank Cluster Bomblet (TL8+): Penetration factor = 22. Guidance system: up to 10 vehicular targets within a 90 degree arc of the round's "front" and within **1km** of the shell's bursting point will be hit. All hits are against target's TOP armor; round may NOT be fired directly. Round is useless against infantry. Usage restrictions are as for the CLGM. Weight = 40 Kg., cost = 1000 CR/round.

Rocket Shells (TL10+): Usable only if firing weapon is a howitzer that is designed and designated as a rocket howitzer (+10 to weight, +50% to cost; may not fire standard shells, and receives a DM of -4 if firing directly). Rocket shells have a range equal to (6xTL) in kilometers, but perform identically to other shells of the same type in all other respects. Weight = 1.5x normal weight, x4 normal cost.

**COUNTER-BATTERY FIRE.**

The prerequisite for counter-battery fire is a system for locating the source of enemy fire; at Tls 6-10, this is done by sound/flash ranging, surveillance radar, or similar means. For each artillery company (9-15 guns), 2 such vehicles must be provided (category Light, no main weapons; if at Tls 6-7, must include 2 tons of ranging gear - if at TL 8+, must have most advanced radar and F.C. computer available aboard). At TL 11+, satellite data is used to locate the enemy guns (requiring that the battery command vehicle have a Laser-Corn Unit). If the enemy can be found (roll TL or less on 2D6 to locate enemy battery; +1 DM for each volley beyond the first fired by enemy battery) and is within range, counter-battery fire may begin. To put shells into the vicinity of the enemy, the firing battery must roll equal to or less than its TL on 2D6 for each round fired. For each shell that makes the roll, a subsequent roll of 11+ on 2D6 must be made to achieve precise hits; only precise hits will affect the enemy. Only HE, Flechette, **ICM** and WP shells may be used for counter-battery fire at Tls 6-10.

At TL 11+, precision weapons (CLGM and Anti-Tank Cluster Bomblets) may be used as well. At these Tls, counter-battery fire is done just like normal indirect fire, since satellite data obviates the problem of firing blind.

## ANTI-ARTILLERY FIRE.

This tactic involves using massed energy-weapons fire, directed by satellite data and central fire control computers, to sweep incoming shells from the sky. Only TL 11+ vehicles armed with Plasma or Fusion Guns as the main weapon, as well as being equipped with F.C. computers of at least MK. 4 and Laser-Com Units, may take part in such firing. In order to participate in such fire, the vehicle in question must be grounded and stationary and must have been so for the entire turn, as well as not having fired or been fired at with main weaponry in any of the turn's previous phases. Additionally, each company (10-17 AFVs) must have a director vehicle (category Light, no main weapons; must have a **Laser-Com** Unit and a F.C. computer at least equal to those of the AFVs); this vehicle does not need to accompany the AFVs since it is linked to them via the Laser-Com. Each battalion (2-6 companies) will need a higher-level director vehicle, and so on up the levels of command to the central fire director for a unit.

Procedure for antiartillery fire is as follows: calculate the number of incoming rounds (number of tubes firing x number of shells each fired). Calculate the amount of intercepting fire (number of weapons firing x maximum ROF per weapon), and divide by the previous number. The result (rounding down) is the number that must be equalled or rolled below on 2D6 to destroy the shell in flight. DMS = -1 on destruction roll for each level of AFV computer above 4. If desired, the firing player may state that he is concentrating on a given number of shells, thus allowing others to land unhindered.

A more effective, yet less versatile form of antiartillery fire involves the use of point-defense lasers. These are mounted on AA carriages, one to a carriage. In addition, 2 tons of **special** detection/tracking gear must be included as well. The point-defense laser weighs only 1 ton and uses the same amount of power as a regular laser. However, each turn it can **sweep** up to 12 artillery shells from the sky (roll 2D6 for number of shells hit) by firing 12 pulses of antiartillery fire. It also has some effectiveness against Tac Missiles. Two pulses must be allotted to the tac missile for a roll of 12 to hit. For every two additional pulses, add a +1 DM to hit. Impose a -1 DM to hit **Tech-12**, 13 missiles and a -2 DM to hit **Tech-14**, 15 missiles. Each **point-defense** laser may fire either in the fire phase or the artillery phase of a round, but not in both. Point-defense lasers are useless against AFVs due to their low penetration, but may be used against infantry or lightly armed vehicles (treat each pulse as one shot from a laser rifle). Point-defense lasers may be defeated by smoke or laser aerosol rounds.

## BATTLEFIELD MESON GUNS.

Strictly speaking, meson guns are direct fire weapons (Note: to mesons, such obstacles as hills, mountains, etc., do not exist. As long as the meson gunner is receiving information as to the location of his target via satellite data or F.O., he does not need to directly sight, i.e., have unobscured line of sight to his target.); however, their size and unwieldiness make them impractical for front-line use, and thus they are grouped with the artillery. They first appear at TL 15 with select Imperial armored units of at least brigade size in platoon-sized units. The principle behind these weapons is identical to their space-bound counterparts, and they make use of these properties to knock out otherwise invincible targets such as super heavy, massively

armored tanks. Due to the extremely long ranges possible with the meson gun - ranges that literally go over the horizon - the meson gun carrier can exploit its extreme lethality over a vast area, and with the pinpoint accuracy provided by its advanced computer system and surveillance satellite data, no target within range of a meson gun can count itself as safe. Specifications for a meson gun carrier follow:

NAME AND TL: Imperium Meson Gun Carrier; TL 15.  
 WEIGHT AND CATEGORY: 200 tons; Super Heavy (200000 CR).  
 SUSPENSION AND MOVEMENT CATEGORY: Anti-Gravity; Super Heavy (50000 CR).  
 ARMOR:  
 NUMBER OF LAYERS: 3 TL 15 (18 tons, 60000 CR).  
 ARMOR SLOPING: Advanced (Nonturated vehicle).  
 TRUE ARMOR THICKNESSES:  
 FRONT: 42  
 OBLIQUE: 31  
 SIDE: 21  
 TOP/REAR: 10  
 PROTECTIVE GEAR: Anti-Laser Reflective Paint, 1 strip Directional Mines (Total: 2 tons, 304000 CR).  
 F.C. COMPUTER: MK. 9 (7 tons, 20 MCR).  
 WEAPONS:  
 MAIN: Battlefield Meson Accelerator (50 tons, 60 MCR).  
 AMMO CARRIED: N. A.  
 SECONDARY: None.  
 AMMO CARRIED: None.  
 SENSORS: Active IR, Light Intensification Viewer, Tac Radar, Tac Ladar, Tac Magnetoscope, Echo Sounder (all in Extensor Pod) = 170 Kg., 56200 CR.  
 COMMUNICATIONS: Laser-Com Unit (50 Kg., 150000 CR).  
 POWER PLANT: 53% (1% for computer and sensors, 12 % for suspension/propulsion, and 40% for Meson Gun. 106 tons, 10.6 MCR).  
 MODIFICATIONS: NBC Shields, Non-Turated Vehicle (20000 CR).  
 CREW: 4 (T.C., Driver, Gunner, Assistant Gunner); 2 tons crew compartment.  
 TOTAL COST (BEFORE PRODUCTION): 91,440,200 CR.  
 NOTES: Refer to remainder of this section.

These vehicles may only fire directly, and must be grounded and stationary to fire. Range brackets are: EFFECTIVE = 0-20 km; LONG = 21-40 km; and EXTREME = 41-50 km. Rate of fire is 1. If a hit is achieved, the target and everything else within 50m of it is totally annihilated.

## ORBITAL BOMBARDMENT.

Although orbital bombardment is generally out of the scope of these rules, the following guidelines may be used. Assume that the power - and thus the penetrating force - of any starship weapon is many times that of the version included here. As a rough rule of thumb, the laser cannon in these rules uses approximately 1 megawatt of power, whereas the lasers aboard a starship use in excess of 200 megawatts. Therefore, any hit on an AFV by a ship's laser would destroy the vehicle, no matter how heavily armored. The same is true of ship's missiles compared to the Tac Missiles in these rules. If using starship weaponry to fire at AFVs on planet, use the basic roll to hit for

weapons as given in either Book 2 or *High Guard*, depending on which set of rules you are using. To reflect the difficulty lasers and energy weapons may have penetrating the atmosphere of a planet, treat their fire as through sand (-3 for lasers to hit, -2 for energy weapons if using Book 2; factor 6 sand if using HG). Depending on weather condition, etc., a F.O. may be required for orbital bombardment of vehicles. The referee may impose other DMs for various kinds of atmospheres, electronic jamming, etc.

## CHART VI-MORALE.

As explained in the Sequence Explanation on direct fire, morale checks are necessitated by casualties, incurred during either of the direct fire phases or during the enemy artillery phase. These checks are made whenever a platoon of vehicles loses at least one vehicle, or an infantry platoon loses at least 10% of its strength. When a morale check is taken, the affected unit must roll equal or below its ER on 2D6 to pass the check. If the check is passed, nothing happens to the unit; if not, what the unit is doing will affect its action when its men panic. If the unit is advancing or attacking, it will seek the nearest cover (if any) and remain there until or unless it subsequently rolls equal to or below its ER in the morale recovery phase. A DM of +1 is added for each turn that the unit still does not regain its morale. If the number of DMs reaches a point where it is impossible for the unit to regain its morale, roll again every turn; if the roll is equal to or less than the ER, the unit will hold its position - if not, the unit will immediately withdraw by the most direct route. In the case that there is no shelter within 1 turn's movement of the unit at the time that its morale failed, it will begin to move away using reverse movement until or unless it recovers its morale. In the case of units holding a defensive position, they will abandon it and move towards the next most suitable cover to the rear if they fail their morale checks. They will act in the same way as attacking units if their morale becomes unrecoverable.

In the case of units higher than platoons, the number of casualties required to cause a morale check is equal to one full subunit. For example, a company loses a platoon (either through casualties or through withdrawal due to failed morale); the remainder of the company, as a whole, now checks morale. The results of a failed morale check on a high-level unit (i.e., above platoon level) are identical to those at platoon level. Conceivably, an entire army could fall apart due to one vehicle being destroyed; however, this could only happen to an army with extreme morale problems!

In addition to the morale procedure shown above, all units of battalion size or larger have a preservation level - i.e., a level of casualties at which the unit is no longer combat-effective, and will withdraw or be withdrawn from combat at that point. The preservation level is found on the basis of the size of the highest-level unit committed in a given action; when that unit has lost 40% of its strength, it has reached its preservation level. For instance, four infantry battalions (each mustering 452 men) are involved in an action; the preservation level of each is 181 men. If, however, these four battalions are unified under the command of a brigade headquarters, the preservation level is equal to 40% of the brigade's total strength - in this case, preservation level would be approximately 725 men.

When preservation level is reached, the action that a unit will take depends on circumstances. If the unit is a mercenary **contingent**,



this level of casualties will (generally) force the unit proprietor to cancel his contract and activate the unit's repatriation bond. If the unit is an indigenous one, the judge will have to determine what happens; as a rule, however, units will capitulate only if there is no other alternative. If the situation of the unit's side is desperate enough, these depleted units are often kept in the field regardless of casualties; the unit's ER, however, will be reduced by 2 for each additional 10% casualties suffered after preservation level is reached, and the survivors will capitulate en masse once their ER reaches zero or less.

#### INFANTRY AND AFVs VERSUS SOFT-SKINNED VEHICLES.

When an AFV engages such a target, it is simply considered unarmored, which ensures that any hit achieved will destroy the target. The same applies to a hit with any infantry anti-tank weapon capable of destroying an AFV. When infantry uses small-arms fire to engage such a target, however, the procedure is rather different. The standard TO HIT procedure is used, but if a hit is achieved, penetration and damage are handled just as if firing at other infantry, since the effect of such fire is to kill the target's crew rather than to destroy the target directly. All such fires must penetrate the target's hull first and if successful may try to penetrate the armor of the occupants. The armor class of the target's hull is determined as follows: If designed to be pressurized for space-flight or for use in adverse conditions, treat as Battle Armor; if of fairly sturdy construction (such as a metal aircraft or a vehicle with crude splinterproof armor), treat as Cloth; otherwise, treat as Mesh. Penetration and protection values for infantry weapons and "armor" of soft-

skinned vehicles are as in *Azhanti High Lightning*.

#### PROCUREMENT.

AFVs are creatures of the highest technical complexity when compared to other vehicles of their TLs, and thus not many worlds are capable of manufacturing them. A world that can and will build AFVs must meet the following criteria:

- 1=The world must be classified as industrial and/or rich.
- 2=The world's TL must be at least 6 (note that the TL of a world determines the maximum TL of any AFV built there; if the vehicle is being built for the Imperial government, up to 2 TLs may be added for this purpose (if not exceeding 15 and if the world has an unmodified TL of 6 or better); if for a subsector government, up to 1 TL may be added with the same restrictions as above (unless no worlds of higher TL exist in the subsector).
- 3=The world must not be all-water, all-desert, an asteroid complex or an Imperial Way Station or the like.
- 4=The world's governmental type must not be 0, 7 or D.

Once a suitable world has been located and plans drawn up for the prototype vehicle, the customer must secure a contract to build with the local arms manufacturer. Since AFVs are weapons, pure and simple, and since such things aren't sold to just anyone, most arms manufacturers will only deal with the following types of clients:

- 1=Properly accredited representatives of planetary, subsector or Imperial governments that are friendly to the factory's homeland.

2=Properly accredited representatives or **multiplanetary** corporations, with the same **nonhostility** clause.

3=Any mercenary officer or unit proprietor under contract to any of the above.

If these conditions are met, construction may begin. The time involved will equal a once-only period of 1 month (for drawing up blueprints and procedures) + [(tonnage of vehicle divided by TL) x 1 week]. If the vehicles are ordered in lots of 10 or more, the remaining vehicles of the lot will be delivered at 1-day intervals after the completion of the first (whereas, if not ordered in lots of 10 or more, the next vehicle will not be started until its predecessor is completed). Payment terms vary, but as a rule, an initial 30% of the vehicle's total value must be paid as a down payment, with the rest being taken in installments using a system similar to that for starships. Additionally, mercenary unit proprietors may opt for taking set percentages from the pay their units receive at the conclusion of their missions under government supervision, and generally with a set date for end of payment time (with possible repossession if payment is not complete). **All** completed AFVs will be delivered at the factory.

#### THE MERCENARIES' BONDING AUTHORITY.

As was stated in *Mercenary*, pg. 17, mercenaries have become an accepted part of frontier life in the Imperium and in many of the nations it borders. This stems mainly from the stabilizing influence exerted by the Bonding Authority, which was created in the year 750 under the auspices of the Emperor Paulo I. After a number of unfortunate incidents involving corrupt, unreliable mercenaries, the Authority was formed to handle escrow accounts, insure correct fulfillment of contracts and keep the

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peace. Site Officers of the Authority will investigate any reports of wrongdoing or contract violation, and their writs have the force of Imperial decree when applied to mercenaries working through them. The major value of the Authority is that any mercenary officers chartered by them will be known to have the highest standards of reliability and honesty under contract, and **will** thus be better investments than unchartered mercenaries. Of course, only mercenary officers chartered by the Bonding Authority may be in **possession** of armored units.

### LOGISTICS AND MAINTENANCE.

Logistics for any mechanized unit centers mainly upon two things: fuel and ammunition. Up until TL 9+, the main power plant of all AFVs are either gas turbines or **internal-combustion** engines; at TL 9, the first small, portable fusion power plants become available for use in vehicles. The fusion power plant is effectively fuelless, only requiring a recharge after 5000 km of travel: however, all TL 6-8 power plants require 1 ton of gasoline or the **like** for every 1000 km of travel. Ammunition is only needed for AFV weapons that throw slugs, shells or missiles (obviously, since energy weapons only need a functioning power plant to fire), and will require resupply as expended. The prices and discounts for ammunition are listed in *Mercenary*, pgs. 43 and 48-9, except as otherwise noted in this article. Gasoline will cost 500 CR/ton, and is available on any world of TL 5+. Getting these supplies to the troops in adequate quantities is up to the unit commander.

Maintenance of AFVs, as with all machinery, is of two sorts: minor field repairs and major overhauls and rebuilds. Minor mishaps **are** quite trivial and usually can be handled by the vehicle crew; major problems, however, will require skilled mechanics to remedy. For each vehicle, roll once per month or once per week if in active service to see if such problems arise. The rolls, based on the vehicle's TL, are as follows:

6-7 = 5+ (number must be rolled or exceeded on 2D6 to avoid breakdown)

8-12 = 4+

13-15 = 3+

If a vehicle does break down, a further **roll** must be made to determine where the problem has occurred. Roll 1D6: 1-3 = suspension/propulsion, 4 = main weapon, 5 = power plant, 6 = F.C. computer/sensors. If the breakdown has affected the suspension/propulsion or the power plant, the vehicle is deadlined in place, **requiring** that it either be picked up by a recovery vehicle of sufficient size or that a maintenance crew come to it to make **repairs**. In all other cases, the affected may return on its power to a repair depot. The procedure for repairing malfunctioning AFVs is as follows: a two-man team of mechanics, each having a skill level of 1 in the area of problems (Mechanical skill if weapon, suspension/propulsion, or power plant is out; Electronic skill if F.C. computer/sensors are out) will take one week to repair the **vehicle**. Each skill point above 1 possessed by either of the mechanics will reduce the repair time by 1 day, with a minimum repair time of 1 day.

Destroyed vehicles may be scavenged for parts, or a number of wrecks may be cannibalized to rebuild one of them. This latter procedure is handled as follows:

Percent of wrecked vehicles that may be **recovered** = [(vehicle TL x 2) + (unit ER x 2) + (% of unit strength in mechanics x 2) • (TL of weapon that destroyed AFV x 2)].

Note that this formula is intended to reflect the increased durability of AFVs at higher TLs, the increased destructiveness of weapons at higher TLs that militates against successful recovery, and the advantage of having a large and well-trained recovery team.

### ARMORED UNITS IN THE ABSTRACT BATTLE SYSTEM.

A number of changes are needed in the **A.B.S.** to allow the use of armored units, as well as to clarify a number of points. These are:

**1=Unit Size Table:** The unit number values and titles are as follows -

0-2 = Platoon (3-5 AFVs)

**3-5** = Company (10-17 AFVs)

**6-8** = Battalion (31-60 AFVs)

**9** = Regiment/Brigade (**100-185** AFVs)

**2=Firing Matrix:** The standard Firing Matrix will be retained unaltered, but a number of DMs are listed (see charts for further explanation). These will allow the use of the Firing Matrix for all three kinds of combat - infantry vs. infantry, armor vs. armor, and infantry vs. armor.

### INFANTRY VS. INFANTRY - NEW DMs.

Prevalent Personal Armor (at least 60% of unit using said armor):

None, Jack, Mesh, Reflec = +2 for unit firing at this armor type.

Flak Jacket, Cloth, **Cloth/Reflec** = 0

Combat Armor, Battle Dress = -2 for unit firing at this armor type.

(If prevalent weapon fired is a laser and prevalent armor fired at is Reflec or Cloth/Reflec, use DMs for Combat Armor, Battle Dress; if prevalent armor fired at is **ablat**, use DMs for Flak Jacket, Cloth, Cloth/Reflec.

Differential in opposing **leaders'** Tactics skills = + or - differential

Differential in TLs = + or - differential

### INFANTRY VS. ARMOR - NEW DMs:

(Note: before combat begins, the size of any armored unit is increased by 2 levels for the purpose of resolving combat. For example, an armored platoon's size on the matrix would become that of a battalion, but casualties are awarded at the unit's true size.)

Infantry's prevalent personal armor:

None, Jack, Mesh, Ablat, Reflec = +2 for AFVs firing at this armor type.

**Flak Jacket, Cloth, Cloth/Reflec** = +1.

Combat Armor, Battle Dress = 0.

(See above note on lasers and armor.)

Level of infantry antitank weapons:

No specialized **IAT** = 0.

10% of unit so equipped = +1 on **attack/-1** against attacker.

15% of unit so equipped = +2/-2.

20% of unit so equipped = +3/-3.

25% of unit so equipped = +4/-4.

50% of unit so equipped = +5/-5.

More than 50% of unit so equipped = +6/-6.

(Note: weapons considered to be specialized IAT weapons are PGMP 12/13; FGMP 14/15; IAT Tac Missiles, early and late; RAM Grenade-Launcher. Penetration Ratings are as in *Azhanti High Lightning* for use with regular combat.)

Size of AFVs:

Light = +2 for **attacking/-2** for infantry when attacking AFVs.

Light Medium = +4/-4.

Heavy Medium = **+6/-6**.

Heavy = +8/-8.

Very Heavy = +10/-10.

Super **Heavy** = **+12/-12**.

Energy weapon (other than laser) prevalent AFV main armament = +2 on attack.

Differential in opposing leaders' Tactics skills = + or - differential.

Differential in TLs = + or - differential

Ablative armor/aerosol/reflective paint in general use = -8 against attacker using lasers as prevalent main armament.

### ARMOR VS. ARMOR - NEW DMs:

Size of AFVs:

Light = 0.

Light Medium = +2 when attacking/-2 to attacker when defending.

Heavy Medium = +4/-4.

Heavy = +6/-6.

Very Heavy = +8/-8.

Super Heavy = +10/-10.

Plasma or Fusion Gun prevalent main weapon (at least 60% of vehicles using these weapons) = +2 when attacking/-2 to attacker when defending.

Directional mines prevalently used = -6 to attacker if not using an energy weapon.

Ablat armor/aerosol/anti-laser paint prevalently used = -8 to attacker if using laser weapons.

Differential in prevalent F.C. Computer = + or - differential.

Differential in opposing leaders' Tactics skill = + or - differential.

Differential in TLs = + or - differential.

### MERCENARY ARMORED UNITS.

Since it requires a staggering amount of money to outfit and maintain an armored unit when compared with comparable infantry units, not many of any size are found outside the armed forces of the Imperium or the more wealthy **semiautonomous** states that it governs. A well-led and well-equipped armored unit can easily decide battles, however, even against much larger forces of infantry, and thus mercenary armored units command high prices when they are available.

Mercenary armor can be sent on any sort of mission that mercenary infantry could be sent on, although their most common use is on striker missions. Since their firepower, mobility and flexibility **is** not only dearly bought but potentially decisive in almost any clash, the going cost to hire an armored unit is at least 15 times that of an equivalent infantry unit for the same mission.

### A NOTE FOR JUDGES AND PLAYERS.

Due to considerations of space, these rules cannot be comprehensive in all things relating to the subject of armored combat. The most notable subjects that fall into this category are aircraft (fixed-wing and otherwise), field works and fortifications, mines, special equipment not having a direct impact on combat, and the intricacies of electronic warfare and warfare under NBC conditions. Some items having a bearing on a few of the subjects mentioned appear in the rules. It is up to the judge or the players themselves to come up with systems that work well for them to cover these problems, if necessary or desirable.

### CONCLUSION.

AFVs can now take their rightful place among the combat arms as the true masters of the battlefield. Players will find uses for them with little trouble, and wealthy mercenaries can easily break into a whole new line of work. Use them well - and so increase your enjoyment of *Mercenary* and *Traveller*.



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## Special *TRAVELLER* Issue



FLARE STAR — ADVENTURE  
APPROVED FOR TRAVELLER  
TERRORISM — NEW CAREER  
FOR TRAVELLERS  
FIFTH FRONTIER WAR  
KILLER LOOSE  
IN SCOTTSDALE  
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MORE "MURPHY'S RULES"  
AND 9 PAGES OF REVIEWS



# Featured Review:

# Fifth Frontier War

by William A. Barton

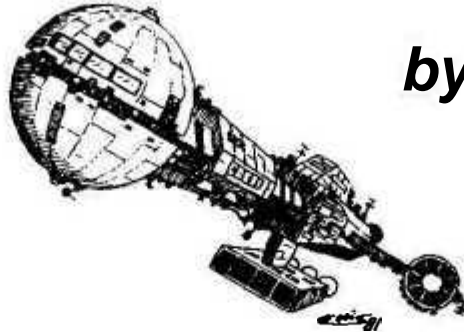
FIFTH FRONTIER WAR is apparently designed both as a *Traveller* tie-in and as an independent game system, though for obvious reasons it will appeal more to *Traveller* players. Similar in format to previous GDW games, FFW comes in the regulation flat box. The components reflect the usual GDW high standards—bright die-cut counters, separate chart sheets containing the CRTs and orders of battle, fleet composition charts, dice, and a beautifully executed map. FIFTH FRONTIER WAR appears to be—and is—a top-quality presentation. However, for reasons I'll make clear presently, SF board gamers who are not *Traveller* enthusiasts may want to stick to *Triplanetary* or *Double Star*, unless they are looking for a grand strategic challenge that makes *Imperium* seem simple by comparison.

## Components

First, a few words about the game's components. Three counter sheets cover the various fleet and land units of the four warring navies (the Imperium, the Zhodani and the Zho's Sword Worlds and Vargr allies). One entire sheet is devoted to casualty markers. The counters bear the same ship silhouettes and unit symbols you've seen on past GDW counters.

The map is exceptional, based on the Spinward Marches map included with *Deluxe Traveller*. It provides a hex map of most of the Regina, Lanth, Vilis and Jewell subsectors and parts of the Cronor, Querion, Sword Worlds, Aramis and Rhylanor subsectors (plus a small section of Vargr space coreward of Regina). Surrounding the maps is a series of world surface boxes, one for each planet on the hex map. These name each world, and by their color or printed symbols and values duplicate much of the information found on the hex map. All squadrons and fleets are moved on the stellar map; all troops, except when transported, are kept in the world boxes.

The rule book is printed in the standard large-sized rule format as was *Triplanetary* and other *non-Traveller* games, rather than in the *Traveller-sized* format, as with *Azhanti High Lightning*. Perhaps this is to emphasize that FIFTH FRONTIER WAR will not have the direct applications to *Traveller* play that AHL does. The



rules are quite clear and very complete, with a few minor lapses. Note, however, that the counter color code chart is located on the Imperial fleet composition chart and *not* on the chart set in the rule book; I searched for some time before locating it by accident. There are some typos, mainly in the examples of play, but nothing serious. The rules are, overall, quite clean. In fact, as was the case with *Triplanetary*, the biggest problems are in the separate chart sheets.

The order of battle charts are badly flawed. There are several discrepancies between the number of units available on the charts and what is actually provided in the counter mix. The Imperial chart, for example, states that among the initial forces available are "8 (all) huscarle units" and "9 (all) mercenary units." Yet, there are only six huscarle units in the counter mix and there are *ten* mercenary units. Two more battle squadrons and six more cruiser squadrons than exist in the mix are listed in the Imperial forces. The Sword Worlds have two more cruiser squadrons in the mix than the Order of Battle allows. There are some discrepancies in the Zhodani troop mixes as well.

Annoying as this is initially, it has little real effect on play of the game. The Imperial forces are so outnumbered in the initial stages, one or two units aren't going to make a lot of difference. The random nature of the Imperial reinforcements entry later in the game makes it quite possible that the war may be over before the question of the missing squadrons comes up.

## Complexity

Which brings us to the play of the game. How FIFTH FRONTIER WAR plays can best be summed up in one word: SLOWLY. Each turn is divided into four phases (reinforcement, movement, combat, and plotting) which together consist of 15 steps or substeps

(16 if the optional black globe rules are used). Tie this in with the fact that most movement must be plotted in advance and that each player is going to have to control a *lot* of units spread across dozens of parsecs and world boxes, and you've got a game that is not one you can knock off in an evening—unless both players agree to a *very* early armistice. Now, this isn't necessarily bad. If you like complex game situations that take quite a while to resolve, or if your interest in the *Traveller* universe is great enough that you can stick with it to a reasonable conclusion, FIFTH FRONTIER WAR can be quite a rewarding system. But if you're looking for a fast-moving game you can play in a couple of hours. . . don't say I didn't warn you.

The set-up for FFW is rather involved, too, and the initial placement of forces may have some definite effects on the outcome of the game. Except for some special Zhodani units (the *Ine* Givar Guerrillas and a "secret base"), all Imperial initial forces are placed on the map first, giving the Zhodani player, who is launching a surprise attack, the opportunity to place his forces to the greatest effect. Then the Zhodani player plots his initial moves and the game begins. The Imperial player isn't allowed to plot movement of his fleets until the plotting phase at the end of the first turn, reflecting the Imperium's being taken by surprise, so that only scout squadrons (which don't require plotting) and fleets led by admirals with a plotting factor of 0 may move on the Imperium's initial turn.

This gives the Zhodani (and their allies) a great advantage over the Imperium in the opening segments of the game. Add more imbalancing factors—Imperial fleets must be plotted five turns in advance and Zhodani only four, and the Zhodani's greater strength in initial forces—and in most games you're probably going to see the Imperium take quite a beating in the first few turns. Even with the Imperial reinforcements available on the second and sixth turns, the early part of the game is going to be no picnic for the Imperial player. His primary strategy is going to be one of holding on against the Zhodani steamroller, perhaps making a few thrusts at *back* areas with a frontier fleet, hoping

the system defenses will slow the Zhos down until reinforcements begin to arrive. Expect Jewell to fall early on, unless you wish to **lose** a lot of forces defending it. Frenzie should be an early Zhodani/Sword Worlds target. Regina may hold, depending on how badly each player wants it.

### Plotting

The preplotted movement of fleets may prove a pain for some players. However, the speed of communications in the *Traveller* universe is limited, and plotted movement provides a reasonable simulation. Still it's going to require a *lot* of paperwork, especially if the game reaches a stage where all 14 fleet counters of each side (plus two each for the Vargr and Sword Worlds) are in play. What lessens the problem somewhat is that, except for scouts, only squadrons organized into fleets may jump at all. While I tend to question the "realism" of **this rule**, it does make things easier by limiting movement. Another exception concerns fleets led by admirals with a 0 plotting factor. A fleet with an admiral does not have to plot its movement as many turns in advance as an **unled** one. Some admirals have a plotting factor of 0 (representing, I assume, a highly developed sense of intuition) and thus fleets they are with do not have to plot at all.

Plotted movement can direct a fleet to jump, hold in a hex to refuel, etc., or to detach squadrons, leaving them in certain systems. Jumps are conducted using the lowest jump number of any squadron in the fleet. Refueling in a system may be conducted in no time or over a number of turns depending on the fueling capabilities of each squadron and the facilities of the system. Squadrons which cannot "keep up" with the fleet must be plotted to detach. Plotted movement can be aborted when it no longer proves to be realistic (you've plotted a fleet of two cruiser squadrons to attack a system which has since gained a defense fleet of four battle squadrons), but the aborted turns must be spent on hold in a system until the new plotted turn starts. It can all get quite tricky attempting to outguess your opponent's plots.

### Combat

Combat is quite involved, too. You're going to see a lot of casualty markers **pile up** fast. Combat occurs first between squadrons, then between squadrons and system defense boats. If the SDBs are eliminated, squadrons may bombard ground forces and land their own troops. Then surface combat takes place between troops and static defense forces. Five different CRTs are used to resolve combat. All are fairly straightforward, but I do wonder why the bombardment

factor of a squadron is used against the SDBs rather than the attack factor. It works, but it seems unrealistic. One other thing worth pointing out is that squadrons may disengage from combat by jumping to another hex, provided they have enough **fuel**—apparently whether they are part of a fleet or not. So squadrons without fleets are not *completely* sitting ducks.

A lot of the game's flavor comes from the various types of special troop units and their abilities in combat. Some units are elite and count as double their current strength in combat. Armored units are doubled as well, quadrupled if they are elite. The Zhodani have psionic troops which receive automatic first fire in any combat. Their guerrilla units may operate in overt or covert modes; in the latter they may replace losses without expending the replacement points usually required to do so. Mercenary units only fire at half current strength once they've taken 50% losses (but the rules are unclear if elite or armored **merc** units fire at half the current printed strength or half the current *doubled* strength).



Play Balance

On the subject of game balance, in spite of the dire straits the Imperial player will find himself in early on, the game is fairly balanced. The Zhodani player has more units overall, but Imperial units are generally stronger. If the Imperium can **hold** on to enough systems and units in the initial Zhodani onslaught, once his reinforcements and replacement points finally begin to accumulate, he stands a good chance of turning near-defeat to victory. The longer the game lasts, the better his chance.

But make no mistake about it: The Imperium's lot in the opening segments of the game will not be a pleasant one. The addition of three fleet counters

and admirals on turn two and the colonial reinforcements on turn 6 will avert a complete Zhodani **sweep**—and the system defenses will slow down the Zho's almost overwhelming forces. However, it won't be until some time after the random reinforcements become available on turn **10** that the Imperium can really start making a comeback. Until then, it's mainly defend and fall back, perhaps with a few hit-and-run raids, for the Imperium.

In most games, unless he's handled it badly, it'll probably be worth it to the Zhodani player to declare a unilateral armistice as soon as possible after that option becomes available, before the Imperium can take back too many worlds and their victory points (and gain some of its own). The Imperial player should never agree to an armistice that early unless the Zho have really botched things or he's just too tired to continue.

I do have some other questions about certain concepts in the game: Why senior admirals do not have the option to defer command to more capable "**junior**" admirals, why the independent worlds have to be conquered and controlled for either side to use their fueling facilities, why it costs no more to rebuild or replace a battle squadron than a scout squadron, and how, say, a desert world with a type E starport can support 500 system defense boats. Still, these anomalies do not really detract from the overall enjoyment of the game. And FIFTH FRONTIER WAR *can* be an enjoyable **game**—if, as mentioned earlier, you are interested in the outcome of events in the *Traveller* universe or you like a game that takes a lot of thought and a lot of playing time.

For SF gamers who fall into those two categories, I can heartily recommend FIFTH FRONTIER WAR.

*FIFTH FRONTIER WAR* is published by GDW and designed by Marc W. Miller. It retails for \$14.98 and includes a 20-page rulebook, map, three counter sheets, four reference sheets, and two dice, boxed. Published 1981.

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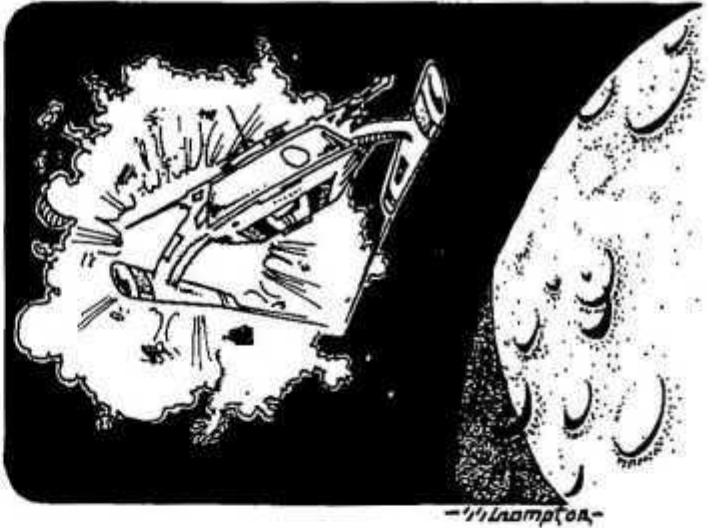
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# Terrorists in TRAVELLER

by **Kenneth Burke**  
and **William A. Barton**



In a far-reaching star empire such as the Imperium, worlds and groups of varying political philosophies have found themselves suppressed by the sprawling octopus of Imperial **rule**. It is inevitable that some of these groups decide to fight back. Such resistance may take many forms: open rebellion, economic **slow-downs**, or even the formation of groups of armed specialists. The methods of operation of these specialist groups include hit and run raids, assassination, kidnapping, sabotage, and the fomentation of fear among the "conquerors." This is the work of professional terrorists.

Terrorist organizations may be found throughout the Imperium and its fringes, ranging in size and scope from local planetary strike forces to massive interstellar armies. An example is the feared **Black Lightning** terrorists which plague the coreward-trailing reaches of the Imperium. Others include **the** Solomani Liberation Front (SLF). To spinward, several groups have allied to form a massive, **ultrapowerful** terrorist organization known, simply enough, as The Organization.

Originally thought to be merely another short-lived terrorist alliance when it began to operate in the Spinward Marches and **Outrim** Void sectors some 25 years prior to the Fourth Frontier War, The Organization has remained remarkably cohesive. During the war, it proved a constant thorn in the side of the Imperium, causing needed forces to be diverted from the Zhodani front to counter its activities. During the closing days of that war, Imperial intelligence operatives learned the reason for The Organization's success. It was trained and armed by Zhodani advisors, most likely agents of SORAG, the dreaded Zhodani intelligence agency.

With its Zhodani backing, The Organization continues to be a force to be reckoned with in the spinward areas of the Imperium and its client states. It was

specifically to combat The Organization that the Ministry of Justice Special Branch created its secret IBIS commando strike forces. Success against the group has been minimal, however, due to the lack of concrete information on the location of The Organization's main bases and staging areas. Thought to be hidden somewhere in the Darkling region of The Beyond or the sparsely surveyed spinward sections of the Outrim Void, The Organization's nerve centers continue to elude Imperial attempts at discovery. With the onset of the Fifth Frontier War, The Organization's continued **existence** is more a threat to Imperial security than ever, and renewed efforts to eradicate it will undoubtedly be made as part of the Imperial strategy for countering the Zhodani offensive.

*Traveller* players may wish to create characters who have served or are currently serving as terrorists. Characters may join the terrorist service at age **18** or they may be drawn from characters who have mustered out or retired from other services — except, obviously, IBIS or the Ministry of Justice Special Branch. Characters who have served with the League of Assassins will not be able to serve as terrorists. (Since terrorist groups use their own personnel in assassination jobs rather than contracting with the Assassins Guild, there is a great deal of animosity between these organizations.) Other individuals may have trouble being accepted by terrorist groups, depending on past service, citizenship, or social standing.

The following tables are to be used to determine the terrorist's yearly assignments, skills and abilities, in the same manner as those of *Traveller* Books One and Four. Except where changed by this article, regular *Mercenary* rules remain in effect.

*Enlistment.* Following the generation of a character's stats and prior to his attempt to enlist in the terrorist service, his nationality must be determined, as it will affect his enlistment chances with certain positive or negative DMs. If the roll is unsuccessful, the character may attempt to enlist in some other service, trying again to join the terrorists after mustering out.

Once a character has successfully enlisted as a terrorist, a second roll must be made if he wishes to serve with The Organization rather than another terrorist group. A roll of 8+ indicates the character has been accepted directly into The Organization. If he fails the roll, he must serve an apprenticeship with another terrorist group before The Organization will consider him for membership. He may attempt the roll to join The Organization again at the end of his first 4-year term with the terrorists and, if that is unsuccessful, a final time at the end of his second 4-year term. If both these rolls are missed, The Organization will never again consider him as a recruit and he must serve his time as a member of the group he joined.

Reenlistment is achieved on an unmodified roll of 3+. A character who misses an attempted reenlistment roll has committed some offense against the terrorist group - failed an assignment, angered a superior, etc. On a roll of 9+, he has been condemned to death by the terrorists. On 7-, he has escaped the group's wrath, but will never be trusted or allowed to serve the cause again. On an 8 exactly, he has escaped but will permanently lose **1D** Dexterity points (unless this would bring DX lower than 1, in which case it becomes 1). His arms and legs have been broken by the terrorists as an object lesson to others. (Nobody ever said being a terrorist was easy!)

**Psionics.** A benefit of enlistment in The Organization is that, thanks to its Zhodani advisors, the character may have the opportunity to be trained in psionics. Roll 3D for any character accepted into The Organization at the time of his acceptance. If they come up triples (3 numbers the same), the character has been chosen for psionic training; if the character has a social standing of B+, any doubles on the 3D roll will be enough to qualify for training. Determine psionic potential and talents as in Book 3. Note that a character accepted into The Organization at age 18 will have no -DM at all on the roll for psionic potential.

Psionic training will take up the character's entire first year assignment in The Organization. Use the time beyond that required for testing and training for monthly rolls to increase the character's psionic ability. If the character has not previously served as a terrorist, the following year's assignment will be basic training; otherwise, determine assignments normally.

The above procedure is the *only* method by which terrorist may obtain psionics while in the terrorist service. Terrorist groups other than The Organization will only have a psionic member if the character has been trained prior to terrorist service. The Psionics Institute, despite its "outlaw" status with the Imperium, will not train individuals who have been terrorists.

**The Terrorist Career.** Terrorists may serve up to 15 terms voluntarily, after which retirement becomes mandatory. Any character wishing to leave the Terrorist service prior to the end of his fifth term must roll 9+ on the reenlistment roll to successfully muster out; on a roll of 3-8, his terrorist superiors feel he knows too much to be allowed to leave, and he must remain in service until he rolls 9+ at the end of a term. After five terms with the terrorists, it is assumed the character is too incriminated himself to betray his former colleagues. After the fifth term, only a roll of 12 *requires* continued service.

Even terrorist characters who have left the services are not entirely free (unless reenlistment has been rejected by a roll of 2), and the character may be called upon at any time to perform a service for his old terrorist organization. (Once a terrorist, always a terrorist . . .)

**Basic Training.** During their first year of service with the terrorists, characters receive an automatic Combat Rifleman-1 skill and roll twice on the training table to determine the skills they learn in that

period. This is considered their basic training and counts as the first assignment of their first 4-year term (unless the first year was devoted to psionic training).

**Assignments.** Each 4-year term consists of four 1-year assignments. To determine what each character's yearly assignment is, roll 1D on the General Assignment table for a result of Support, Action or Special Training. Support or Action assignments mean that the terrorist is participating in a possibly hazardous assignment, either as part of a main force or

on a solitary mission, or as part of a back-up support team. Consult the Action table for specific assignment. A result of Special means the terrorist has been chosen for special training. Consult the Special Training table.

**Special Training.** There are six kinds of special training:

Starship Operations Training — Roll 1D to determine the starship skill received by the character: 1. Pilot; 2. Computer; 3. Navigation; 4. Ship's Boat; 5. Engineering; 6. Gunnery (choose *one*

Terrorist Enlistment				General Assignment			
<b>Enlistment</b>	4+*			1. Support	3. Action	5. Action	
<b>DMs:</b>				2. Support	4. Action	6. Special Training	
-2	If Imperial citizen**						
-3	If ex-Imperial military**						
+2	If ex-Pirate						
+1	If ex-Criminal (Rogue, etc.)						
+2	If Military Dishonorable Discharge						
+3	If served a Prison term						
+2	If Social Standing -5						
-2	If Social Standing 9-B						
+1	If Social Standing C+* **						
+1	If of Solomani descent (+2DM if wishing to enlist in the SLF)						
				Terrorist Action			
				2. Attack	8. Harassment		
				3. Hijacking	9. Robbery		
				4. Assassination	10. Assassination		
				5. Kidnapping	11. Hijacking		
				6. Sabotage	12. Attack		
				Assignment Resolution			
					<i>Survival</i>	<i>Promotion</i>	<i>Skills</i>
				Training	3+	NA	8+
				Harassment	5+	12+	7+
				Sabotage	6+	11+	7+
				Robbery/Kidnapping	6+	10+	6+
				Assassination	7+	10+	6+
				Hijacking	7+	9+	5+
				Attack	8+	8+	4+
				DMs: For Survival - DM+ Jack-O-Trades skill level.			
				For Promotion - DM+ Leader skill level.			
				Special Training			
				1. Starship Operations	4. Infiltration		
				2. Commando	5. Assassination		
				3. Intelligence	6. Shipboard Assault		
				Terrorist Training			
				1. Gun Cbt	3. Brawling	5. Survival	
				2. Blade Cbt	4. Demo	6. Vehicle	
				Terrorist Skills			
<b>Roll</b>	<b>Terrorist Life</b>	<b>Terrorist Soldier</b>	<b>Terrorist Support</b>	<b>Combat Operations</b>	<b>Covert Operations</b>	<b>Terrorist Officer</b>	
1	+1 ST	Blade Cbt	Medic	Battledress	Special Weapons	Interrogation	
2	Gambling	Forgery	Vehicle	Heavy Weapons	Demo	Fwd Observer	
3	+1 DX	Bribery	Mechanical	Gun Cbt	Unarmed Cbt	Tactics	
4	Carousing	Gun Cbt	Electronics	Zero-G Cbt	Disguise	Liaison	
5	+1 EN	Jack-O-Trades	Gravitics	Cbt Engineering	Escape & Evasion	Admin	
6	Jack-O-Trades	Streetwise	Commo	Recon	Stealth	Leader	
				Terrorist Rank			
				Mustering Out Tables			
				<i>Cash</i>	<i>Material Benefits</i>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Rank</b>	1. CR 2000	1. Middle Passage		
1. White Pawn	1	7. White Rook	3	2. CR 4000	2. +1 Intelligence		
2. Black Pawn	1	8. Black Rook	3	3. CR 8000	3. +1 Endurance		
3. White Knight	1	9. White Queen	4	4. CR 16000	4. Blade		
4. Black Knight	2	10. Black Queen	4	5. CR 32000	5. Gun		
5. White Bishop	2	11. White King	5	6. CR 64000	6. High Passage		
6. Black Bishop	2	12. Black King	6	7. CR 128000	7. Starship		



type of Gunnery skill, as described in *High Guard*). Skill level received is determined by rolling 1D: 1-4 - the character receives a skill level of 1 in that skill; 5-6 — a skill level of 2 is received.

**Commando Training** — Up to eight skills are available. Roll 5+ for each skill: Survival, Recon, Gun Combat, Blade Combat, Demo, Heavy Weapons, Unarmed Combat, **Battledress**.

**Intelligence Training** - Up to six skills are available. Roll 4+ for each skill: Interrogation, Torture, Computer, Linguistics, Streetwise, Bribery.

**Infiltration Training** - Up to six skills are available. Roll 4+ for each skill: Disguise, Escape & Evasion, Vehicle, Counterfeiting, Forgery, Security.

**Assassination Training** — Up to six skills are available. Roll 4+ for each skill: Special Weapons, Gun Combat, Blade Combat, Bow Combat, Unarmed Combat, **Poisons/Antidotes**.

**Shipboard Assault Training** — Up to four skills are available. Roll 3+ for each skill: Vacc Suit, Zero-G Combat, Gun Combat\*, Vacc Suit Maintenance.

(\*If character is skilled in Zero-G Combat, Zero-G Weaponry must be taken. Otherwise Laser Weapons must be chosen as this Gun Combat skill.)

Characters with any skill level above 3 in any skill taught will be assigned as an instructor and will learn 1 level of Instruction skill instead.

**Skills.** Any terrorist character may roll from the Terrorist Life or the Terrorist Soldier tables. Only officer rank 1 and higher may roll on the Terrorist Officer table. A character whose assignment is Training may roll from the Terrorist Training table. A character whose Action Assignment is Sabotage, Robbery, Kidnapping or Assassination may roll on the Covert Operations table; a character whose assignment is Hijacking or Attack may roll on the Combat Operations table; a character whose assignment is Harassment may roll on either the Covert or Combat Operations table. If the character's general assignment was Support, he may not roll on the Covert or Combat Operations tables, but may roll on the Support table.

**Rank.** Terrorists do not go through any sort of OCS to become officers. They are simply summoned before a superior and issued a chesspiece denoting their rank. Terrorist groups do not have non-com ranks. A terrorist who is promoted becomes a White Pawn; promoted a second time, a Black Pawn; and so on. (Note that a Black Pawn is senior to a White Pawn, but still "rank 1.")

**Mustering Out.** Characters are entitled to a number of die rolls on the tables



equal to the number of terms they served as a terrorist. Characters of rank 1 or 2 are allowed one extra roll; characters of rank 3 or higher are allowed two extra rolls. Those with gambling ability may apply a +1DM to their die roll on the Cash table. Those with rank 6 may apply a +1DM to their rolls on the Material Benefits table. Terrorists may take their rolls from either table, but may not consult the Cash table more than three times.

Characters receiving the Gun benefit must choose a weapon with which he is skilled. After the initial receipt of a gun benefit, further rolls may be taken in additional guns or in additional skill levels on a gun received as a benefit; the same is true of the Blade benefit.

The starship benefit indicates that the character has received a 1,000-ton starship which he may design to his own specifications according to either *Traveller* Book 2 or *High Guard*. All accessories will be provided for the ship — auxiliary craft, computer programs, supplies - up to CR 100,000,000 worth of credit. Any money left over reverts to the terrorist group. The starship benefit may only be received once. Subsequent rolls are considered lost.

There is no retirement pay for terrorists. It is assumed that they will find methods of fending for themselves financially if the need arises.

#### Miscellaneous

**Equipment.** Generally, any equipment found in any of the *Traveller* books and supplements, including *Mercenary*, will be available to ex-terrorists due to their

black market ties — even in areas where the law level, etc., might normally prohibit such equipment. Naturally, the prices will be somewhat higher for such equipment — usually 50% to 100% more than list price. The exact availability of any specific item is up to the referee.

**Failed Survival Rolls.** Since the life of a terrorist is a hazardous one, it is quite possible that a character may not even survive his initial term of service. If a character misses a survival check, roll two dice. On 6 or less he is dead. On 7+ he is wounded and discharged; 1D points are immediately subtracted from ST, DX or EN (choose which randomly) and he is mustered out at once, receiving no mustering out benefit for the term in which he is wounded. Alternately, the "Death" table in Paranoia Press *SORAG* may be used in such a situation.

#### Skills

All skills available to terrorists may be found in *Traveller*, *Mercenary*, or *High Guard*, or in the **approved-for-Traveller** supplements by Paranoia Press - *Scouts & Assassins*, *Merchants & Merchandise* or *SORAG*. Any additions or restrictions are listed below. For the convenience of those players who may not have the Paranoia products, a brief description of those skills is given below so that the referee may improvise (though it is recommended those supplements be obtained for the fullest enjoyment and optimum use of those skills).

**Counterfeiting** - Skill in making and passing **funny-money**. Found in *SORAG*.

**Disguise** - Skill in changing appearance temporarily. Found in *S&A*.

**Escape & Evasion** - Skill in avoiding traps, opening locks, evading searches or pursuers. Found in *S&A*.

**Gun Combat** - Choose a weapon from *Mercenary*.

**Heavy Weapons** - Choose any weapon listed under Support Weapons in *Mercenary*.

**Linguistics** - Skill in languages, especially recognition and translation. Found in *S&A*. Higher levels give better chance of accurate understanding of more languages.

**Poisons & Antidotes** - Skill in handling, detecting, planting and neutralizing poisons. Found in *S&A*.

**Security** - Opening and detecting electronic locks, planting bugging devices, etc. Found in *M&M*.

**Special Weapons** - Characters may choose skill in either Garrote, Grenade Pistol, Quick-draw Holster, Hypo Gun, Throwing Knife or Taser. The skill and weapons are described in *SORAG*, except Hypo Gun and Taser from *M&M*.

**Stealth** - Skill in hiding in shadows, darkness. Found in *S&A*.

**Torture** - Skill in eliciting information through the use of pain. Found in *SORAG*.

**Unarmed Combat** - Use of hands and feet as "blades," elbows and knees as "daggers" or head as "club" in hand-to-hand combat. Found in *S&A*.

**Vehicle** - Choose from the vehicle list in *High Guard*.

**Vacc Suit Maintenance** - Skill in repair and upkeep of vacc suits. Found in *M&M*.

# Expanding TRAVELLER

by William A. Barton

Here follows a special section of reviews of Traveller-related products.

ASLAN, DROYNE, K'KREE (Martian Metals); \$2.95/pack. 15mm Traveller figures. 12 figures (3 K'kree) in a bubble pack. Released 1981.

Martian Metals has at last turned its attention to the major alien races of the Traveller universe. There are 12 figures each in the Asian and Droyne packs and three of the larger Centaurid K'kree in that set. The Asians are Tech Level 9-12 figures, showing vacc suited/combat armored figures, and unarmored figures. The three K'kree are Tech 12 figures, wearing light armor and carrying weaponry. The Droyne figures represent the various Droyne castes, primarily warriors, sports and leaders, as pictured in Traveller adventure 3, *Twilight's Peak*. The sport figures even carry the "racket" pictured in that adventure.

The figures are nicely detailed, as usual with MM figures, and relatively free of flaws or flash. The Asian carry recognizable gauss rifles, a welcome relief from some of the obviously non-Traveller weaponry of earlier figures.

The main problems with these alien figures are minor, but still notable: The Droyne figures are really too large for 15mm scale compared with other MM figures - they are as tall as the Asian figures. In the Traveller reality, they would be about the right height to use with 25mm human figures. Of course, to have made them smaller would have eliminated most of the detail on the figures, so this was, I suppose, unavoidable. The K'kree seem a bit large, too, but this is less noticeable. All of the Asian and Droyne figures are cast spread-eagle, requiring the arms to be bent for different positions. Another annoying, but unavoidable, feature is that the wings of the Droyne must be glued on.

Along with the earlier pack of Vargrs, the addition of Asian, Droyne and K'kree almost completes the roster of the major races in MM Traveller figures. Only the Hive is still absent (hint, hint). Even a new set of Zhodani is in the works. Good job, MM! Keep it up.

- William A. Barton



CRUCIS MARGIN (Judges Guild); \$5.98. Designed by Dave Sering. Approved for use with Traveller. 32-page guidebook, 22" x 34" sector map backprinted with 8 planetary maps. Published 1981.

CRUCIS MARGIN is Judges Guild's third star sector for Traveller, forming (along with Ley Sector, the Glimmerdrift Reaches and a still unreleased fourth sector) the Gateway

Quadrant of near-Imperial space. CRUCIS MARGIN is set up in the same format as the earlier JG sectors, with an overall sector map with individual planetary maps of some of the sector's worlds printed on back, and a guidebook showing the individual subsectors, providing a history and examination of the political units of the area and offering encounter and rumor tables for the referee's use when running characters through the systems of the sector. The Crucis Margin is even more of a frontier region than JG's previous releases; like Paranoia Press' Beyond and Vanguard Reaches, it is completely outside the Imperium. The only Imperial presence at all is in its sole client state in the sector, the Sphere Felix. There is even a client state of the Hive in this sector, giving Traveller players their first real contact with that empire. Other states in the Margin are quite varied, including Chhung Kuo, originally settled by Solomani Orientals, and the Mandarin Co-Dominion, first introduced in *Glimmerdrift Reaches*. The sector takes its name from the major political entity in the area, the Union Crucis, a state torn by strife as four factors war within its borders for independence.

As with the earlier JG sectors, several intriguing situations are set up, many within the rumors and encounter charts. Whole adventures can be derived from any one of these, though the referee will have to do a lot of work—and probably much improvisation - to make the most of these. The table of space encounters, including such exotic hazards as comets, ion clouds and nebulae, should provide some interesting interstellar travel if used sparingly and to full effect. The presence of several states, not all friendly to one another, and a number of independent worlds ripe for exploitation can make for exciting situations, as can the possibility of interaction with traders of the Hive and the K'kree (Centaurs).

Most of the problems with CRUCIS MARGIN are the same as were found in the two earlier sector supplements. The large map doesn't show the individual subsectors within the Margin, making it a bit difficult to tell exactly which subsector a group is in while traveling through the area. The fact that the Margin is all non-Imperial space and is mostly small states, the borders of which are outlined on the map, makes this less a problem than it could have been. The planetary maps printed on the back are difficult to use on such a large sheet and JG should consider printing them inside the guidebook in future releases.

CRUCIS MARGIN will undoubtedly open up new areas of adventure on the trailing edge of the Imperium for those adventurers looking to escape the ravages of the Fifth Frontier War to spinward. Unless the dollar price hike over the earlier sectors is too much for you, this supplement should join them in your Traveller library.

- William A. Barton



DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR (Judges Guild); 11.98. Designed by Dave Sering with Dan Hauffe and Joe Swinnen. Approved for use with Traveller. One 8½" x 11" 64-page rulebook, seven 22" x 35" sheets of deck plans, backprinted. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR is Judges Guild's most ambitious Traveller adventure to date. It features several scenarios centered around the 36,117-ton Brilliant Gem class armed luxury liners and their 13,363-ton module ships. Complete deck plans are provided for the liners and module ships, which run routes throughout JG's Glimmerdrift Reaches sector. The rule/scenario book provides descriptions of the various decks of the ships, a review of the nation-states in the Reaches, general stats on the ships, a list of stats and descriptions of crewmembers and passengers for use as NPCs and 10 scenarios, along with a map and description of Resort World, where three of the scenarios take place.

The various scenarios of DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR are quite diverse - from the almost obligatory piracy and dangerous-beast-loose-aboard scenarios to a raid on a military camp holding the crew and passengers of the *Singing Star* and a submarine/surface ship clash on Resort World. The latter is perhaps the most interesting scenario in the lot, being the only wet naval battle yet published in the Traveller universe. And it gives useful guidelines on such sea battles so that players can adapt the concept to other sea-going situations. The inclusion of an overall sector map of Glimmerdrift is helpful, too, especially for those who lack that supplement. The deck plans do show more detail — chairs, consoles, tables, etc. — than in previous JG plans, though not nearly as much as in the FASA ship plans.

In fact, the main disappointment of DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR lies in the deck plans. For one thing, they are printed on paper that, though not quite as thin as tissue paper, could be considered the next best thing. It's nearly impossible to move the plans around or even to try to flatten them enough to use miniatures without tearing them. They are so thin that the decks backprinted on the sheets show right through. The backprinting itself makes it unfeasible to have action on certain decks at the same time, since some may be printed on the back of others you wish to use - and at \$11.98, the set is too expensive to purchase two of for that purpose. Some of the plans are smudged, too, apparently from being folded together while the ink was still wet. The rule/scenario book has several typos evident - including a reference to a nonexistent rumor table.



While there are several good points about **DOOM OF THE SINGING STAR**, the lack of planning behind the deck plans coupled with the high price of the package make a recommendation difficult. If you don't mind flimsy plans, you may find much of use in this adventure. Otherwise - caveat emptor.

- William A. Barton

**FIGHTING SHIPS (GDW)**; \$3.98. Designed by Tim Brown. One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. Published 1981.

28 different ships in use by the Imperium are presented in these pages of **FIGHTING SHIPS**, complete with *High Guard* stats, component descriptions, a bit of background on each ship class, and illustrations by Paul Jaquays. Vessels range from the 20-ton gig to the 500,000-ton *Tigress*-class dreadnaughts. Some ship types have appeared in other *Traveller* supplements, but others are depicted here for the first time. Along with the ship descriptions is an introductory section explaining the functions of imperial naval bases, naval depots and way stations, including a listing of all such bases in the *Spinward Marches*.

With these ready-made ships, impromptu naval battles can be fought at the drop of a fighter without having to take the time to design vessels from scratch using *High Guard*. And the referee now has a whole new set of ships to use for starship encounters. The illustrations, which range from adequate to quite good, give one a more concrete idea of how some of the configurations appear, aiding in the designing of original ships as well. The heavy fighter will be a welcome addition to all those who have complained of the uselessness of the smaller *Traveller* fighters presented up to now.

A few problems are evident. Some of the illustrations don't quite match the ship descriptions. This is especially noticeable with the number of fighter tubes listed. The drawing of the 200-ton system defense boat appears too small. And the heavy fighter isn't pictured at all. Some of the ships which have appeared before display differed from their earlier versions, though these are mostly minor. And there are a few discrepancies and typos to be found in the text; for example, the strike carrier has a factor-J meson gun in the USP, but the text states it carries a factor-E gun. The final section on fleet auxiliaries mentioned in the introduction seems to have been omitted altogether.

Even with these omissions, none of which are major, **FIGHTING SHIPS** is well worth adding to your *Traveller* collection.

- William A. Barton

**FLIGHT OF THE STAG (Marischal Adventures)**; \$2.00. Designed by J. Andrew Keith. Approved for *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" 4-page folio. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

**FLIGHT OF THE STAG** is the first in a series of folio adventures published by the new Marischal Adventures company. Each deals with the exploits of the crew of the *Gazelle*-class close escort *Stag* during the Fifth Frontier War. **FLIGHT OF THE STAG** concerns the *Stag's* attempt to escape Zhodani forces and escort the pro-Imperium Prince of Thamber, an independent planet overrun by the Zhodani, to Imperial space. It is designed either as a stand-alone adventure, or as the first in a campaign series. The adventure includes a description of the basic situation (giving a brief history of the early days of the war near the Querion/Vilis/

Sword Worlds/Darrian borders), referee notes, a description of the *Stag*, a map of the area, encounter tables and encounter descriptions.

Though relatively brief, **FLIGHT OF THE STAG** is a remarkably complete and satisfying adventure. The situation is adequately presented so as to exclude any ambiguities or problems, yet is open enough to allow for referee additions and innovations. The map is a nice aid, allowing play even if a copy of *The Spinward Marches* isn't handy. And the illustrations, as is typical of Bill Keith's work, are excellent.

I find few problems with this adventure. A couple of minor typos have crept in, but no serious flaws there. Players will need *Traders & Gunboats* and *High Guard* to play the scenario fully, but most will already have these, so no problems should arise (and an alternate combat system can be used if HG isn't handy). Some may find the \$2.00 price a bit steep for a 4-page adventure, but **STAG** actually is a better adventure than some on sale at three times the price.

I highly recommend **FLIGHT OF THE STAG** as an excellent example of a brief, simple, yet highly playable adventure for *Traveller*.

- William A. Barton

**HYDRONAUTS (Group One)**; \$8.95. Designed by Group One. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" 50-page book, 2-page encounter chart, 22" x 17" full-color map, ziplock bag. Published 1981.

**HYDRONAUTS** is Group One's most ambitious *Traveller* adventure to date. Like most of their offerings, it is more a setting than an actual scenario and can be used for whatever situation the referee wishes. The idea behind **HYDRONAUTS** is almost unique-underwater adventures. The subject has been touched on briefly with the submersible in *Research Station Gamma* and in an Amber Zone in the *Journal*, but this is the first full-scale adventure dealing with adventures under the sea. The setting is the planet Dagan (Dagon?), presumably in Group One's Theta Borealis sector, though this isn't specified. Dagan is a "backwater" world, generally ignored by a local trade alliance known as the Protectorate until it is discovered that its aquatic humanoid inhabitants make use of a virtually indestructible alloy called ivo. The race to exploit the discovery is interrupted by the impact of an asteroid with the planet, melting its ice caps and submerging its land mass-apparently wiping out all land life with it. Now the competing groups within the Protectorate must search the depths to find the ivo production center, somewhere on the sea floor. Plans and stats for two submarines and their crews, encounter charts, several sea beasts and plans for the capital city of the world and the ivo plant aid the referee in administering the adventure. The map shows the planet as it was before the disaster in the event the referee wants to stage some action before the flooding of Dagan.

It appears that more research and effort has gone into **HYDRONAUTS** than previous Group One adventures. It's certainly more cost-effective than earlier releases - more than three times the material for only \$2.00 more. The subs and their crews are quite interesting and should provoke exciting incidents whether used as player-characters or NPCs. And the sea beasts presented are quite formidable and, knowing the diverse types of life forms in our own oceans, much more believable than earlier G1 beasties. (The coral suckers are especially fiendish.)

Unfortunately, the worst aspects of G1's releases are still to be found in **HYDRONAUTS**

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Above is a Zhodani System Defence Boat, from FASA's Adventure Class Ships.

as well. The grammar and spelling problems aren't as bad as in other adventures, but the sloppy-looking type-written text remains. And G1's annoying habit of leaving out important items manifests itself again here. Both subs are said to be armed with torpedo tubes — yet none are listed on the sub diagrams and no rules are provided for using torpedoes either. (See JG's *Doom of The Singing Star* for guidelines on those.) One sub carries carbines with special electrical and explosive bullets, but while some of the special weapons of the sea creatures are set in a new weapons table, these carbine bullets are omitted. There are problems with the planetary stats, too.

Still, if you don't mind fiddling around with some areas and making up your own data to cover what is missing, you might find the idea behind HYDRONAUTS worthy of your attention - especially if you're one of those refs who doesn't always have the time necessary to create your own adventures from scratch. If you haven't liked G1's past efforts, though, you probably won't like this one, either.

-William A. Barton

LIBRARY DATA (A-M) (GDW); \$3.98. Designed by Frank Chadwick, John Harshman, Marc W. Miller and Loren K. Wiseman. One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. Published 1981.

LIBRARY DATA (A-M) will provide you with most of the information on the *Traveller* universe without buying up the published adventures. It covers most of the important library entries from the adventures, such as entries on Imperial Research Stations and Chirpers from Adventure 2, Imperial Warrants from Adventure 1, the Droyne from Adventure 3, the essay on the Solomoni from *Argon Gambit*, the Asian from the *Journal* and the article on

the Imperium that appeared in *Different Worlds*. Other familiar items include the *Journal* article on the Emperors of the Third Imperium, the chronology of the *Traveller* universe and several other entries, including those on the Hive and the K'Krc (Centaur) which appeared in the *Aliens* handout distributed at *Traveller* seminars at this summer's conventions. Brand new items include an essay on the megacorporations of the Imperium, information on the Asian Border Wars of *Dark Nebula*, a history of the Vilani Imperium, the revelation of the Droyne homeworld, and other entries of interest to the dedicated traveller.

The entries in LIBRARY DATA (A-M) seem well chosen to further flesh out the bones of the *Traveller* universe in players' minds - without revealing anything that would spoil any of the published adventures for those who haven't yet played them. The illustrations of some of the items aid in this, too. Particularly welcome is the illustration of the battle tender, a ship class curiously omitted from *Fighting Ships*. The inclusion of the map of the Imperium is a nice bonus for those who don't yet have a copy.

I have no real complaints at all with LIBRARY DATA (A-M) - except that I wish it could have been possible to include the rest of the alphabet without dropping any of the present entries. I think you'll find it the best source of information on the *Traveller* universe anywhere.

- William A. Barton

MAROONED / MAROONED ALONE (GDW); \$4.98. Designed by Loren K. Weisman. Supplement for *Traveller*. One 6" x 9" 48-page booklet. 2-8 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

If you're a *Traveller* player who enjoys cross-planet treks, MAROONED / MAROONED ALONE. Double Adventure 4, will give you the opportunity to travel with a new twist - on foot. Yes, there's no comfy ATV or air-raft for this journey as a group of adventurers (or a lone one) attempts to "hoof it" across the wilds of the planet Pagliacci in the Solomani Rim, facing the dangers of harsh weather, dangerous country and relentless pursuit. The adventure includes new encounter tables for the various terrain types of Pagliacci, an extra-large planetary map, pregenerated characters, detailed information on the effects of hunger, exposure to extreme heat and cold, and other survival hazards - including jungle rot - and reprints the contents of the survival kit previously featured in the *Journal* - an item players will find most useful in this adventure.

The encounter tables and information sections of each environment are quite detailed, providing guidelines on animal, human, and special event encounters and on the varying conditions - temperature, food and water availability - from season to season. The desert and polar sections give accounts of how much heat and cold can be endured before damage occurs, keyed to protective measures, from none to wearing a shelter suit or vacc suit. A revised system is used for calculating wound effects and recovery time, more appropriate to the situation than the regular *Traveller* system. And MAROONED ALONE, though designed for a referee and one player, can be played solo with some minor difficulties - a nice bonus.

There are a number of problems in MAROONED/MAROONED ALONE. It isn't really a double adventure in the sense of two separate scenarios, as in previous doubles. Both scenarios cover essentially the same situation,

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one with a group of adventurers and one with a single character, and neither adventure is complete in itself - the encounter tables and information for the two are scattered through both halves. Except for the situation section in MAROONED ALONE, neither adventure directs you to the other for the rest of the information needed - a bad oversight, especially in ALONE, which is unplayable without the ref info in MAROONED. Other errors include one amusing typo that puts the group in the middle of a stampede of glueberry trees. I also find it hard to believe that the 23-kg survival kit would fit in the lone adventurer's vacc suit foamed ablative reentry kit!

Still, if your players haven't tired of planetary journeys after *Across the Bright Face/Mission on Mithril* and *Twilight's Peak*, they'll find a welcome challenge in MAROONED/MAROONED ALONE.

- William A. Barton

**ORDEAL BY ESHAAR (FASA); \$6.00.** Designed by J. Andrew Keith and William H. Keith, Jr. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 6" x 9" 44-page booklet. 3-8 players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

With **ORDEAL BY ESHAAR**, its first published *Traveller* adventure, FASA has propelled itself to the top of those companies producing approved-for-*Traveller* adventures. Designed by frequent contributors to the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* J. Andrew and William Keith, **ORDEAL BY ESHAAR** concerns diplomacy and intrigue on an alien planet mere parsecs away from the Zhodani Consulate soon after the start of the Fifth Frontier War. The player-characters have been hired to bolster the security force of the Imperial delegation to Eshaar and must act as guards for the Embassy

Enclave and for the Imperial survey missions searching for a silicon-based substance called Affas - a mineral that will have an effect not only on the war effort, but on the relationship with the natives, should it be found. The local Ashah, who look like one-eyed, tentacled centipedes, believe the very planet is alive and will show its favor by bestowing Affas on the outworlders who deserve its friendship. The situation is further complicated by the presence of a Zhodani delegation and a visiting group of Vargrs - all of whom must share the same embassy enclave with the Imperial delegation - also seeking favor with the natives. And the Zhodani seem to be doing better than the Imperium, losing far fewer personnel to the hostile environment of Eshaar, even when forced by circumstance to experience the Ordeal by Eshaar; a multi-kilometer trek across the planet on foot with only a vacc suit and air tanks to aid in survival. Somehow, the players have to help tip the diplomatic balance in favor of the Imperium - perhaps by surviving an Ordeal themselves...?

**ORDEAL BY ESHAAR** is complete with everything a referee needs to play out the situation: Event tables, rumors, situations, maps and plans of the embassy enclave and surrounding areas and stats for NPCs of the embassy personnel - including Zhodani and Vargr. The situation is unique in that the players need to think and plan out their actions so as not to disrupt the delicate diplomatic situation. This is definitely not a shoot-it-out adventure (although, depending on the players' actions, such could occur). The inclusion of the Argosy Traveller ATV and the G-Carrier stats and descriptions (the latter found only in the 2nd ed. *Traveller*) is an added bonus.

There are few problems in **ORDEAL BY**

**ESHAAR**. A couple of rooms on the deck plans for the enclave haven't been designated; a typo or two has slipped in. The week-by-week nature of the action might cause some players to feel a bit strait-jacketed at times, less free to act as they wish, but a competent referee can easily compensate for this.

**ORDEAL BY ESHAAR** is undoubtedly the best non-GDW *Traveller* adventure published by anyone so far - and it ranks high among GDW's own offerings. Recommended.

- William A. Barton

**STARSHIP LAY-OUT SHEETS (Games Workshop); \$5.50.** Approved for use with *Traveller*. One tablet of 50 8½" x 11¼" half-inch grid sheets. Published 1981.

Each 8½" x 11¼" tablet contains 50 sheets, each with a 8" x 11" grid and a section at the top displaying the various symbols for bulkheads, doors, hatches, etc., with room for the name of the ship being depicted and the deck each particular sheet shows. The slick cover displays how the sheets are to be used with ship designs from GW's *ISS Ship Files*.

The half-inch grid sheets are nice to have as this size is not easily found, most RP systems which use miniatures being designed for 25mm and inch-square grids. The half-inch size is perfect for use with the 15mm SF figures of Martian Metals and Raj Partha. Lacking these, the half-inch-square counters in *Snapshot* and *Azhanti High Lightning* will work well on this size grid. By cutting off the top section and taping several of the grid sheets together, a serviceable "battle board" may be made for use with *Traveller* ground actions.

The main failing of these grid sheets is that, of course, to portray any large ships, several sheets will have to be used. And with several large multi-decked ships, the sheets are going to go quickly. The price, too, is a bit high for a tablet of only 50 sheets, but this is a problem with all import items.

Still, the avid *Traveller* player or referee should be able to find many uses for these half-inch grid sheets in a campaign.

- William A. Barton

**TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON (GDW); \$4.98.** Designed by Marc Miller and John Harshman. Adventure for *Traveller*. 6" x 9" 47-page booklet. For two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

**TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON** is GDW's newest adventure for *Traveller*. Unlike previous adventures, TCS involves squadrons of starships in combat rather than individual characters adventuring on various worlds or aboard ships. Each player takes the part of a naval commander responsible for first designing a fleet within certain parameters, then commanding this fleet in combat with those of other players. The rules cover five separate concepts or scenarios: the Billion Credit Squadron, in which players are restricted to a mere billion credits with which to build their fleets; the Trillion Credit Squadron, in which the ante is upped considerably; the Trillion Credit Tournament, giving the guidelines for building squadrons to compete in GDW's official tournaments to be held over the next three years; the Campaign Game, instructing players on how to create and fund naval forces through the control of entire planetary budgets; and the Islands Campaign, in which two new subsectors are mapped out and explained, ready for players to choose up sides and begin building their fleets. **TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON** also includes a couple of rules inadvertently omitted from the second edition of *High Guard*.

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TCS proves to be a very interesting departure from the average *Traveller* adventure. The examples and clarifications in TCS will make some of the more ambiguous parts of both editions of *High Guard* more accessible to players (though the second edition is necessary to play TCS). The two new subsectors of the Islands Cluster, hidden deep within the Great Rift, will add new arenas for play, even to those who aren't interested in the squadron concept.

There are not many problems evident in TCS. There are a few typos in some of the ship examples and elsewhere, which may give a few bad moments until you figure them out. And the math involved sometimes seems overwhelming — this is one in which a calculator is not only suggested but required!

All in all, if you're looking for guidelines on fleet actions — whether you're into role-playing or not — TRILLION CREDIT SQUADRON is definitely worth buying.

— William A. Barton

WARBOR-PARN (Group One); \$6.95. *Traveller* supplement. One 8½" x 11" 18-page book, 17" x 22" full-color map, bagged. 2 or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1981.

WARBOR-PARN is yet another in Group One's series of adventure settings on alien worlds, this one a planet still wallowing in the age of dinosaurs, yet with intelligent life. Planetary terrain; descriptions of the various **saruian** species and of the two **reptile-derived** intelligent races, the brutish nomad trist, and the smaller, more-advanced bose; encounter tables; and maps and descriptions of three bose cities, the ruins of an ancient alien station and a mysterious monolith make up the gist of this adventure setting, along with a more subdued than usual geodesic planetary map.

The intriguing idea of adventure on a world

full of dinosaurs raises WARBOR-PARN above the level of most of the smaller adventure settings in G1's line. Some of the bigger of the saurians listed in the encounter tables could even withstand a few rounds of combat against the highest-tech *Traveller* weapons, though even these will be made short work of by a party armed with a couple of plasma or fusion weapons and several gauss rifles. Anyone who uses this adventure (or anywhere animal encounters are an integral feature) should in some way limit the players' weaponry. It was a welcome surprise to find rules for using the black powder cannons of the bose; too often new weapons in G1 adventures have been left for the referee to devise performance, to-hit rolls, etc.

Aside from the usual G1 adventure flaws, there are a couple of questionable concepts involved in the description of the planet's background. One puzzling item is the question of how the obviously reptilian **parnor** species evolved with from six to ten limbs while the other species, the **benifry** (read **tyrannosauri**) and the **culbertrot**, are all four-limbed. The conflicting locations of the bose villages on the map and in the text is a further problem.

You might find a few points of interest in WARBOR-PARN for some suitable — and with some alterations, even exciting — adventure situations.

— William A. Barton

ZISMV: VLEZHDATL (FASA); \$7.50. Designed by Jordan Weisman and L. Ross Babcock III. Approved for *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" booklet, nine 17" x 11" deckplan sheets, bagged. Published 1981.

The ZISMV (Zhodani Interstellar Military Vessel): VLEZHDATL is the latest of FASA's series of starship deckplans. The *Vlezhdatl* is a 2000-ton strike cruiser, sort of a Zhodani

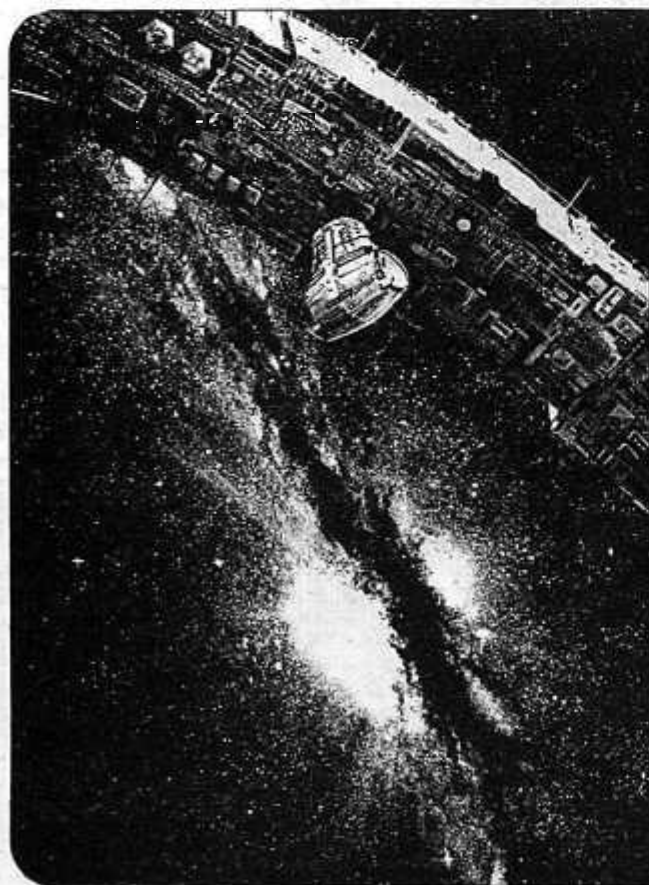
counterpart to the Imperium's *Kinunir*-class battlecruisers — but much more potent. Sporting a particle accelerator bay, missile launch tubes and fusion turrets, the *Vlezhdatl* would prove a match for most starships in an average *Traveller* campaign. The deckplans are laid out over 9 sheets, showing the various decks and levels of the ship, including the side-mounted missile pods. A profile view shows where each deck or level is located on the ship, plus providing the **key** to the various deck symbols used. The booklet, displaying a nice illustration of the ship by William Keith, supplies a background of the ship, detailed descriptions of the various decks, crew stations, stats for the *Vlezhdest* fighter carried aboard, and three mini-scenarios by J. Andrew Keith.

The VLEZHDATL is, of course, most notable for the fact that it's the only design yet published — with the exception of the patrol frigate in Games Workshop's *IISS Ship Files* — of a Zhodani ship. Specifically designed for use with the 15mm Martian Metals *Traveller* figures, the plans are perfect for use with boarding actions, the subject of one of the scenarios, in fact. The plans themselves are nicely detailed, as have been most of the FASA ships, even down to recognizable toilets and showerheads.

Most of the problems evident with ZISMV: VLEZHDATL are minor. Some of the console chairs are faded and difficult to see. The pages of the booklet are stapled in somewhat out of alignment. There are some spelling and proof-reading errors.

Overall, though, unless you're one who prefers to draw your own plans, you should find the ZISMV: VLEZHDATL of definite use in your campaigns, particularly those taking place against the backdrop of the Fifth Frontier War.

—William A. Barton



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# Flare Star

*This folio adventure is designed for characters with a variety of backgrounds serving aboard a Trade Pioneer merchant ship. The referee may draw characters from any source, including existing campaigns; some of the characters should have Vacc Suit skill*

*The merchant ship is the Far Trader **Scotian Huntress**. Details of her statistics, performance, and layout can be found in GDW's Supplement 7, **Traders and Gunboats**. Other Traveller books and supplements can be **incorporated** as desired.*

\*\*\*

**Background:** Undeveloped sectors along the edge of the Imperium — sectors like Reaver's Deep — are the hunting grounds for the Trade Pioneers. *Scotian Huntress* is one of these, a Type A2 Far Trader owned by the mercantile firm of Caledon Ventures. Manned by an experienced trade team, the ship has been probing along the rim of the Great Rift, searching out new markets, resources, and products that might put Caledon ahead of the competition.

Unexplored star systems always promise untold wealth. But the system the traders were exploring now — shrivelled chunks of rock and ice circling twin M5 dwarfs — had shown the other side of the balance sheet. There was nothing of value here.

Until they detected the **Other** . . .

The alien craft was unlike any seen before — huge, with enormous heat radiator wings, **falling** in an eccentric orbit around the red suns. Aboard the *Huntress*, excitement ran high. New-found races meant whole new worlds of trade opportunity, and a fat bonus from Caledon. In moments, the traders had matched course and speed with the newcomer. But, as they approached, they realized that there was no sign of life from the alien and only the faintest traces of power leakage or heat spill. Their prize was a dead ship.

But even a derelict must come from someplace. The Trade Pioneer's contact team suited up to have a closer look. An airlock was visible at the bow. Within might be the clues that would lead them to a new world, new people, and bonanza.

**Gaining Entrance:** A 3-meter wide panel at the derelict's bow is the only obvious entrance. No controls are visible,



**by William H. & J. Andrew Keith**

but a 5-centimeter square recessed niche will invite investigation. Nothing the adventurers do to this niche will have any effect. Characters who carefully examine the hull around the panel can, on a 2-die throw of their intelligence or less, discover a hidden manual release.

Operating the release will make the panel slide open very slowly. The outer door will close and the inner door open automatically once the adventurers enter the airlock. The inner door will operate in fits and jerks, freezing open, and a faint blue light on one bulkhead will flicker twice and die. The party will find that nothing they do, and nothing attempted by those still aboard *Huntress*, will make the airlock operate again. They are trapped, although there seems to be no immediate danger.

**Conditions Aboard:** There is no gravity or light and, except for the battery that spent its last power working the airlock, there are no operating power systems aboard. There is atmosphere present, but the interior temperature is -150 degrees C.

Of immediate interest will be the bodies floating everywhere, well preserved in the cold and all showing signs of violent death. They are of no species known to the adventurers. Each is 1.1 meters tall, with tubular bodies, two stalked eyes, eight grasping appendages and four heavier legs. None wears clothes; some carry lengths of metal tubing, broken equipment, or other improvised weapons.

**The Ship:** As the adventurers explore the ship, the referee should refer to this section to identify various compartments and describe them to the players.

All corridors are 3 meters wide and 2 high. Doorways are 3 meters wide and only 1 meter high; mechanical releases .5 meter off the deck will open all the doors

except two. These exceptions are the frozen inner airlock panel and a door leading aft to what may be engineering spaces; no mechanical releases are present, but 5-centimeter square recessed spaces are visible next to them. Debris floats everywhere — broken equipment, smashed instruments, and vandalized fixtures — and occasionally the party will encounter what seem to be tube-shaped, cartilaginous bones among the alien bodies.

The following areas are keyed to the alien ship deckplans.

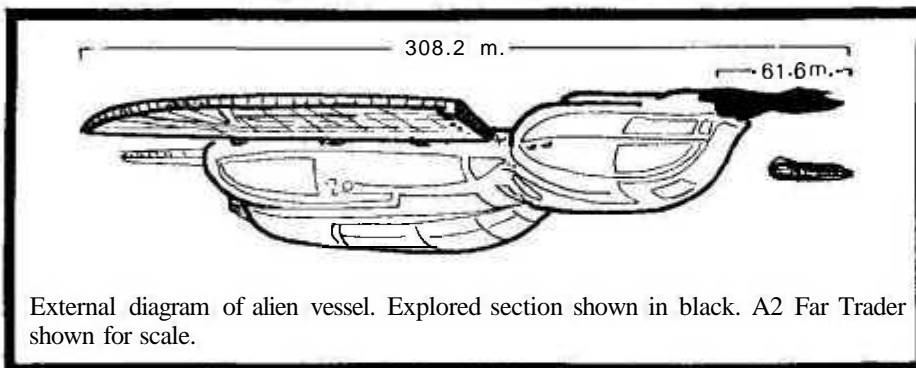
1. **Airlock.**

2. **Control Room:** Instrument panels are .5 meter tall, covered with switches, plungers, and other controls. Any character with computer skill will soon notice that there is nothing resembling a computer anywhere. "Furniture" seems to be shallow circular depressions, 1.5 meters across, .5 meter deep, lined with some flexible material and sunken into the deck. Considerable damage has been done to the instrument panels, though one, set off by itself and bearing only a violet plunger, appears unharmed. Any character who experiments with this will find that pulling the plunger out will restore gravity (.95 G) and light (extremely harsh, blue-white light from overhead panels) throughout the ship. When gravity is restored, each character must roll two dice against his dexterity to avoid 1D damage.

3. **Quarters:** Eight rooms, each with a single deck depression. The walls are covered by the remnants of intricately designed hangings of glass beads in shades of green, blue, and violet, interspersed with black. The door to one room (marked A) has been deliberately jammed shut from the outside by a piece of pipe in the release mechanism. Within are 10 alien bodies and a number of disjointed cartilaginous bones.

Including these 10 bodies, 60 alien corpses will be found aboard the ship; the referee should divide this number among the various compartments. Unnumbered compartments are of unknown purpose; the combination of alien design and wanton destruction leaves no clues to what they were for. Nearly every compartment has meter-high panels of silvery metal, many half-covered by alien inscriptions, along the walls. These notations can be wiped off easily.

*Artifacts:* Among the other junk, the party will notice what look like bracelets of some slick, silvery material, 4 centimeters in diameter and 5 centimeters wide. A 5 cm x 5 cm raised ornamental design on the band will on close inspection prove to be an intricate assembly of metal plates and electronic components. Six will be discovered, one in the cabin that was jammed shut. All will be found among or near scattered bones, and all will be broken to some degree.



*The Lifeboat:* On the port side forward the party will find a series of mechanically dogged hatches, the last jammed shut from the far side. It may be freed by applying 20 strength points to it, giving access to the ship's lifeboat.

Power is off within the boat. A violet plunger like the one in the control room is in the "on" position, but the boat's batteries have long since been drained. There is no way to restore light or gravity, or to cast off from the larger vessel.

Two bodies are aboard, much different from those found on the large ship. These are about 1.5 meters across, furry, and disc-shaped, with 12 appendages of various sizes arranged around a fleshy hub. There are no legs on the ventral surface; the creature may glide or undulate along the ground.

Each wears on one arm a bracelet identical to the broken ones outside. Strangely fashioned hand lasers float nearby; both aliens have burn wounds, and one appears to have shot itself.

*The Adventure:* Shortly after the party boards the derelict, crew members aboard *Huntress* will detect a massive cloud of hydrogen gas — part of the fire-fall between the two stars — falling toward the nearer sun. Computer predictions estimate that the cloud's impact on the photosphere will trigger a flare within 30 minutes.

Many red dwarfs are flare stars, subject to periodic upheavals that can increase their luminosity by a factor of 100 and flood nearby space with particulate radiation. The two ships are only 13 million kilometers from the double sun, close enough that each is just as bright as, and four times larger than, the sun seen from earth. The immediate increase in brightness will present no danger to characters within the ships. Personnel caught outside will be subject to 1D hits every 10 minutes, unless they are in the shadow of one of the ships.

Four hours after the light of the flare reaches the ship, particulate radiation will arrive. Screens aboard the *Huntress* will

of tinkering will open it.)

A number of conclusions can be drawn once exploration of the derelict is complete. The players should be encouraged to develop their own conclusions from the clues they discover. These include:

1. Two kinds of lifeforms were aboard the ship, which was designed for the disc-shaped beings. The ship probably carried a crew of eight.

2. No computers were found on board. The alien notations on the silvery boards may represent manual calculations. If this is true, an enormous potential market may be available once this race is discovered and contacted.

3. The ship, based on external inspection, is not jump capable. It has a sublight grav drive of primitive design.

4. The harsh, ultraviolet-loaded light of the alien's lighting panels suggest a home star of around spectral class A0. Querying the *Huntress's* navigational computer will reveal a A0 star two parsecs deeper into the Great Rift. Since such stars rarely have planets, it has never been visited. Caledon will pay a bonus of 250,000 CR for this information.

*Referee's Information:* The following material is for the referee only. It will form the basis for future adventures in this campaign.

Though A0 stars rarely have planets, there are always exceptions, and the disc-shaped aliens come from a Tech 9 civilization on one of these. Clues aboard the derelict suggest that they see blue and ultraviolet light. Their ship passed the twin stars too close at the wrong time and a flare similar to the one that threatened the adventurers disabled their heat radiators and crippled their ship.

The starship builders are extremely long-lived. Later studies will show that the ship (designed to carry 100,000 tons of fuel, with a 100:1 fuel/mass ratio) was capable of reaching .02 light. At that speed, the trip from the nearby A0 star took 325 years.

Computers were unknown among the starship builders. They rely instead on individuals with "lightning calculator" talent — somewhat more common among them than in humans — as organic computers. There will be a planet-sized market for electronic computers if the home planet can be discovered.

The presence of TWO alien species aboard the alien craft is the key to an important secret, one which will unfold in the months ahead as *The Space Gamer* carries additional adventures from this campaign.

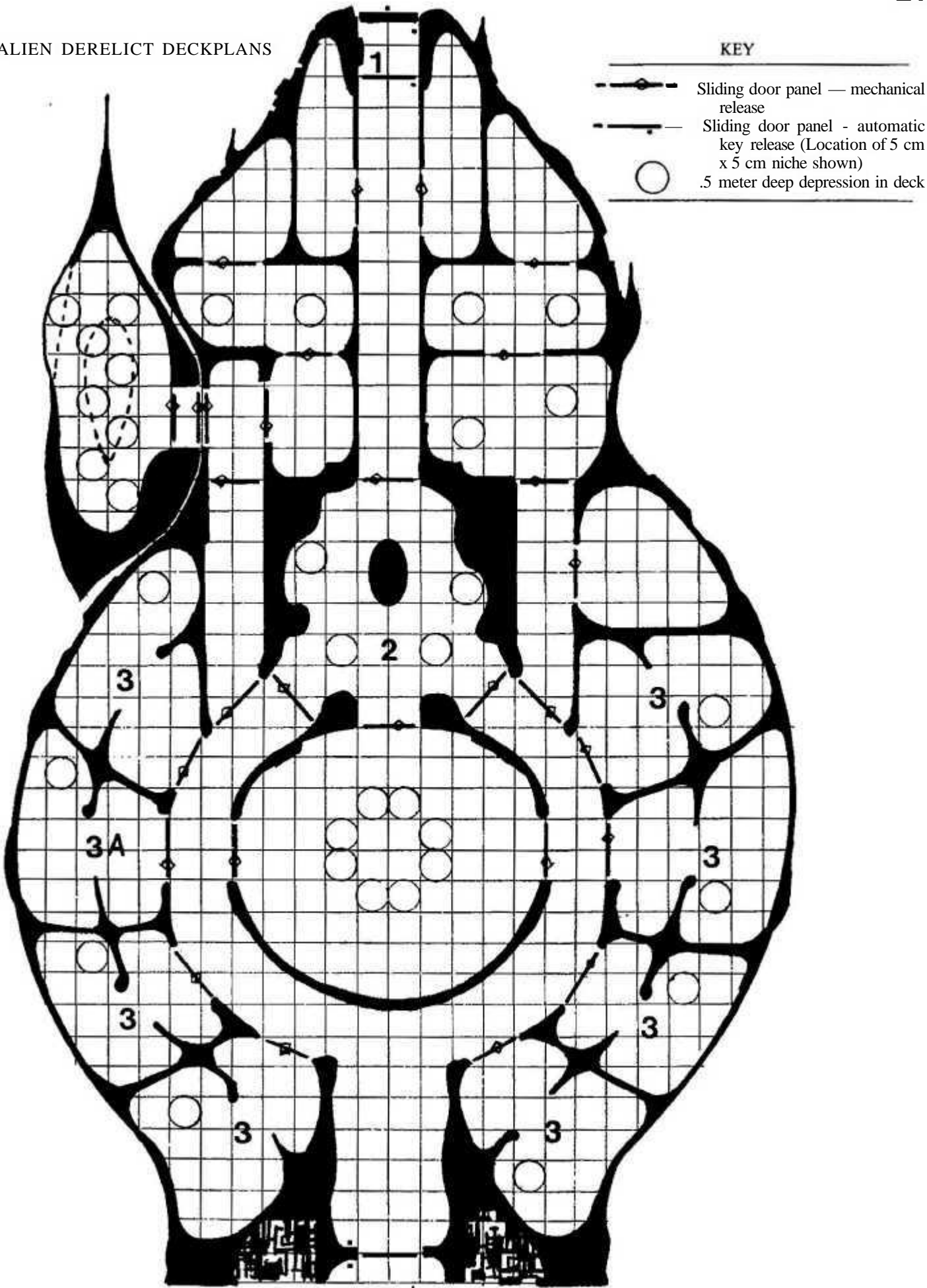
protect those aboard her, but the alien ship has no such protection. Adventurers aboard the derelict will suffer 2D hits every 10 minutes until they return to *Huntress*. Radio communication will be impossible, though the characters can talk by touching helmets. The flare will last for 20 hours.

The adventurers are trapped aboard the derelict with only a short time to make a thorough and rapid exploration of the alien vessel, discover a way out, and get back to the safety of *Huntress*. Along the way, they may gather clues concerning the identity and origin of the derelict's crew.

*The Puzzles:* A number of puzzles are presented to the adventurers. Most important, they must discover that the intact bracelets within the lifeboat will fit into and operate the 5-cm square niche by the airlock. If the ship's power is on, the airlock will function smoothly and the party can escape. (The mechanism of the rear hatch appears to be broken. No amount



ALIEN DERELICT DECKPLANS



# I'm a Doctor, Not a . . .

by J. Andrew Keith

It is a sad fact that doctors, for TRAVELLER, tend to be NPCs kept around for the inevitable moment when someone needs to be patched up after a gun battle. In between, they are vague and shadowy creations, **flitting** at the edge of existence, usable only for such things as supplying drugs, interrogating prisoners, or reviving low berth transportees. Few characters like playing doctors; they don't get to use guns often enough. They grope around desperately with the other skills at their disposal, praying that they can be accepted in a group as computer operators or encyclopedia salesmen or *something* of more permanent use than medics.

Yet there are some great SF stories that involve medics. Dr. McCoy, of course, is well-known. Senior Physician Conway, from James White's excellent "Sector General" series is another medical hero. These men had medical expertise, and *used* it on a regular basis.

Some exciting TRAVELLER adventures could be patterned after these stories. Think of a delicate operation under dangerous conditions . . . a desperate attempt to isolate a plague before it claims the lives of adventurers . . . an attempt to diagnose — and treat — some hitherto unknown alien beastie, a treatment that could make quite a difference in the outcome of a campaign. But TRAVELLER makes little provision for this kind of adventure. Medical skill is too generalized to allow a character to really take advantage of medical adventuring **possibilities**. And this is the root cause of the unpopularity of such player-characters in TRAVELLER.

## Earning Medical Skills

Medical skill is earned in TRAVELLER in a variety of ways. It appears as a result of rolls in the basic character creation charts of Book 1, and also in *Mercenary* and *High Guard*. *Citizens of the Imperium* includes a special "Doctor" career area. Returning to *High Guard*, we are briefed on medical school and how it works.

In order to cause *the* least damage to the TRAVELLER system while intro-

ducing these rules, we will make *no alterations* in the award of medical skill. All rules of whatever system you are already using will continue to apply.

Medical skill, however, changes in definition and application. The award of a level of Medical skill will now be treated much like the award of one of the more generalized skills, such as Gun Combat or Vehicle. When a level of Medical skill is obtained, it represents a general increase in the individual's knowledge of basic medicine, plus specific skill increases to be discussed below.

## Types of Medical Skill

For the all-encompassing "Medical skill," we substitute a number of narrower skills:

**First Aid:** The individual has a knowledge of the treatment of emergency cases in the field.

First Aid skill functions very much like Medical skill always has; it is applied as a DM in attempts to stop bleeding, halt the spread of poison, revive a victim of heart failure or drowning, and similar life-saving techniques. First Aid skill does not assist in curing an **ill** . . . rather, it involves temporary action that will keep a patient alive until more skilled assistance is available.

**Patient Care:** The individual is trained in seeing to the needs of injured, sick, or otherwise incapacitated patients.

This skill is used in two basic areas: First, it is used as a DM when dealing with the long-term recovery of a patient. It represents the comfort and care which is available. Secondly, high levels of this skill should allow a favorable DM when a character with Patient Care skill assists in surgery or other treatment. Exact DMs should be the realm of the referee.

**Pharmacy:** The individual is trained in dispensing drugs.

A character with skill in Pharmacy would be most likely to succeed in preparing pills or other remedies. This would be of particular use if some kind of antidote or pharmaceutical is required for a specific malady, and must be mixed from available compounds. Individuals with this skill would also have more ready access to **difficult-to-obtain** drugs.



**Cryology:** The individual is trained in the preparation and revival of persons in cryogenic suspension (low berth).

This skill level is used instead of Medical skill when considering the revival of low berth patients. The level of skill is used directly as a DM in such cases.

**Diagnosis:** The individual has an extensive knowledge of diseases, and is capable of rendering an accurate opinion of the cause of a particular illness.

Diagnostic skill represents the ability of a character to determine what is wrong with a patient - the single most important factor in successful medical treatment. The referee should set a die roll, based on the rarity of the disease, the kinds of symptoms involved, and other factors. Diagnosis is used as a favorable DM when the doctor character attempts to determine what is wrong. Successful diagnosis allows treatment to proceed . . . unsuccessful diagnosis can leave the doctor baffled, or lead him to a wrong treatment that could well be disastrous.

**Pathology:** The individual is skilled in the detection of disease organisms.

This skill permits a doctor to have greater effectiveness when faced with a bacterial or viral disease. Unlike diagnosis, which focuses on symptoms, pathology deals with causes of diseases. Diagnosis would be useless in detecting an unknown pathogenic organism. Where such an organism is involved, use Pathology as a favorable DM in detecting its presence, and in finding ways of dealing with it.

**Laboratory:** The individual is trained in general laboratory techniques.

Laboratory skill is brought into play when research is required. It represents a knowledge of what tests to make, and how to interpret the results. If individuals with Laboratory skill are available, this should be applied as a DM to diagnostic or pathological researches.

**Surgery:** The individual is trained in surgical techniques.

While high dexterity is still an important criterion for successfully undertaking delicate surgery, a knowledge of anatomy, physiology, and other subjects is vital to the success of an operation. Where surgery is required, the referee should set die rolls for success or failure — preferably a series of such rolls to represent the crisis points of the operation. Some operations (appendectomies, for example), will be easier than others (brain surgery!); the number and difficulty of the die rolls will determine how complicated a particular operation will be. Surgical skill will be the most important die modifier for these operations, aided, perhaps, by modifications for high or low dexterity, skill of assistants, and other factors.

**Exobiology:** The individual is skilled in the treatment of persons of other races.

Possession of this skill would modify the rules given in the second edition of Book 1, where treatment of other species is mentioned. A patient of an alien race will suffer a DM-5 if the doctor treating has no Exobiology skill. Each level of Exobiology skill modifies the unfavorable DM by one; an expertise of **Exobiology-5** would allow no unfavorable DM. These rules come into effect in all aspects of care — from first aid to surgery, and everything else covered in these rules.

**Specialty:** The individual is trained in some specialized form of medicine.

Specialty skills should be granted only at the discretion of the referee. Skill in a medical specialty would rarely find its way into the ordinary TRAVELLER game, but might occasionally be of use. Examples of specialties might include Neurology (study of nervous systems), Gerontology (study of aging), Endocrinology (study of glands and hormones), and a whole range of other ideas. They might prove useful as backgrounds to adventures (a player character who is carrying out research into aging might be interested in a hunt for an anagathic compound, for example). Patrons or NPCs might also possess specialty skills that could influence the course of the adventure.

### How to Receive Medical Skills

Persons of **Medical-1** expertise are unlikely to have skill in advanced medical techniques. Therefore, the earning of medical skill is limited as outlined below.

**Medical-1+:** First Aid, Patient Care, Pharmacy.

**Medical-2+:** Cryology, Laboratory, Pathology.

**Medical-3+:** Diagnosis, Surgery, Exobiology.

**Medical-4+:** Specialties.

**Procedure:** Each time a level of Medical skill is achieved, the character receives the chance to receive up to two specific medical skills. Skills are granted on the roll of 5+ on one die. The character (or the referee, if preferred) may choose what skill(s) to roll for; the same skill may be attempted twice.

#### Modifiers:

Characters with Intelligence 9+ may roll for three, rather than two, skills.

Characters with Education 9+ may add one to all die rolls.

Characters with a Dexterity of 10+ may add one when attempting to receive Surgery skill.

### Titles For Characters With Medical Expertise

Characters who have received Medical-3 or higher may be considered Doctors, though in strict form, only those with recognized degrees (medical school graduates) should be so titled. Other job descriptions and titles, and the skill levels

needed to earn them, are outlined below. Note that, in most cases, only one such title will be commonly used.

Paramedic: First Aid-3

Orderly, Medic: First Aid-2, Patient Care-1

Registered Nurse: First-Aid-1, Patient Care-3

Licensed Pharmacist: Pharmacy-3

Doctor: Medical-3 (any skills)

Surgeon: Medical-3, Surgery-1, Dexterity 8+

Characters with medical expertise are still highly specialized individuals, and many players will find them to be hard to play in contrast to the typical gun-happy Marine. But with the right referee, the right players, and some degree of separation for Medical skills and expertise, excitement and interest can be built in unusual areas, and adventures can be something more than before. Now the doctor who lacks experience in one area may suffer for that lack... a team of doctors together might be required to track down a baffling illness of plague... in all, more avenues for adventure are opened for everyone involved.

(And, if the doctor can gain Brick-laying-1, he can treat a Horta!)

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# Adventure Approved for TRAVELLER

# STORM



by William H.

&

J. Andrew Keith

*In "Flare Star" (December, 1981), adventurers discovered a derelict alien ship, crewed only by corpses of two radically different alien races. Lacking jump drive, the ship had apparently travelled below lightspeed to reach the unsettled double star system where it was found. The ship used advanced technology — fusion power and gravity drives - but had no computers or other microelectronics components on board.*

*A clue from the ship's lighting system pointed to a nearby blue-white sun as the home of the vessel's builders. Caledon Ventures, a mercantile firm, sensed profits in the chance of selling computer systems to the aliens. The adventurers, a trade pioneer team in Caledon's employ, have been sent to investigate the system and discover the feasibility of contacting - and selling to - the shipbuilders.*

*Referee's note: The star, a blue-white giant, is a young, hot star with a single planet — possibly captured — in an eccentric orbit. The planet has been named "Storm" as a result of the unusual number and violence of severe weather patterns observed from orbit. Planetary code for the world is currently E774800. Information on physical aspects of the UPP are available to players.*

This folio adventure is designed for characters of almost any background attached to a Trade Pioneer Team aboard the Type A2 Far Trader *Scotian Huntress*.

The referee may draw characters from any source desired, including existing campaigns. It is urged that characters have some skill in ground combat.

Two scientist non-player characters are required for play of this adventure. Character generation information may be found in GDW Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*. Details on the statistics, performance, and layout of the Far Trader are not necessary for this adventure, but can be found in Supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*. Almost any other *Traveler* book, supplement, game, or adventure may enhance the enjoyment of this adventure, as well.

*Background:* They'd named the planet Storm . . . and the name was well-deserved. During their descent from orbit, the crew of the *Scotian Huntress* had felt the buffeting winds and watched the raging lightning of one of the "smaller" storms. Then lightning hit the ship itself, not once, but several times, scrambling the electronics on board and causing dangerous power surges. The pilot fought the Far Trader down . . . and somehow, miraculously, they landed in one piece. But there was heavy damage to the ship, damage that would take hours to repair before the *Scotian Huntress* could lift once more.

While the crew began making repairs, the trade pioneer team set out to study the new world. The ship was down in a barren wilderness. Conditions outside were far from pleasant . . . temperatures at 35°C, with a high atmospheric ozone content that made respirator masks mandatory. But recordings made during final landing showed signs of civilization

beyond a ridge that rose some 30 km to the east. The team, including two expedition scientists, set out to investigate aboard the ship's air/raft, hoping to make contact with friendly natives.

*The ridge:* On the crest overlooking a wide, shallow valley, the adventurers discovered buildings surrounded by a low wall. The buildings commanded a view of the valley proper, and the alien city that stood there. A pall of black smoke rose from countless fires burning uncontrolled among the city buildings. Beyond, half-hidden by the smoke, they glimpsed a huge, squat shape looming on a cliff, a massive, brooding structure with the look of a fortress or mausoleum.

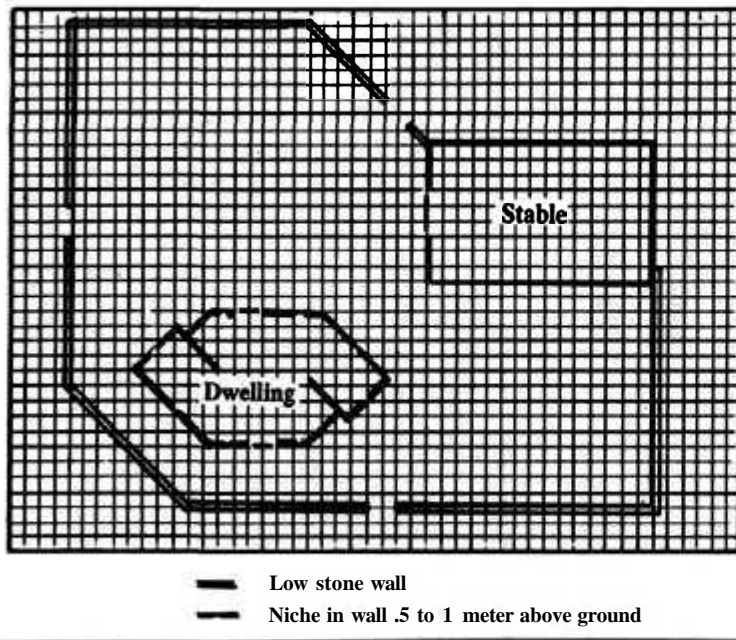
An urgent call from the ship interrupted speculation and discussion among the party. The air/raft was needed to move heavy equipment at the ship. But the expedition **xenologist** had discovered two domestic animals - the first species of native animal life found on Storm — in a "stable" among the cluster of buildings. Much could be learned here . . . so the team leader made a decision. The air/raft pilot **returned** to the ship, leaving the rest of the team to assist the scientists in investigating the buildings and the two animals. Later, the air/raft could return.

Before long, everyone in the party would regret that decision . . .

## Referee's Notes

*The buildings:* The floor plan shows the layout of the small complex of buildings on the ridge. The largest building contains various implements and furnishings that lead to the conclusion **that** it is a dwelling. Furniture — ½ meter tall

## The Alien "Farm"



tables and broad, shallow circular depressions — is reminiscent of that used in the alien probe that first led the adventurers to Storm, proof that they are on the right track. The interior of the building shows signs of violence, and one corner holds a small pile of dry cartilaginous bones from some alien creature.

Ceilings are 2 meters high and covered with fluorescent panels that give off a harsh, white light. Doors are only one meter tall (adventurers must crawl through). Windows are flat, narrow slits, once glassed over, but now broken, set  $\frac{1}{2}$  meter above the ground.

The area designated as "stable" is a windowless building constructed of silvery, reflective metal. The door was originally secured with a heavy, complicated lock (the xenologist shot this off with a laser to enter). Scratches and dents on the door show attempts to force it open — they were there when the buildings were first examined. Inside the stable it is a cool 20°C. Low troughs filled with vegetable matter and two eight-legged, slug-bodied animals are the only things found within.

*The alien attack:* Several hours after the departure of the air/raft, a large number of alien creatures are seen moving up the ridge towards the characters. Other bands of aliens are seen moving about in other directions, converging on the site they have called "the farm." Examination shows them to be tall, four-armed, four-legged tubular aliens, each nearly two meters tall. Except for size, they are identical to the small alien corpses found

aboard the derelict ship.

The aliens are a mob, without clear organization or leadership. They carry clubs, crude spears, rocks, and torches. Attempts to communicate with them will fail; they are interested in nothing but destruction and finding food — anything living. They will attack the party at the farm by rushing the buildings or by setting fire to them. Captured or killed adventurers will be dragged off and eaten.

Attacks are made in waves, consisting of 1d $\times$ 10 natives in each wave. Before each wave attacks, the referee rolls 1d $\times$ 5 to determine the number of casualties they will take before fleeing. Once they have fled, they will reorganize for another attack 1d hours later. During this period, players will be able to move around the farm area, but an attempt to escape cross-country will be met by renewed assaults. For game purposes, assume an unlimited supply of aliens (several hundred). These will continue to attack until they win, or the adventurers are rescued by the air/raft.

*The animals:* Within hours of being discovered (before the first native attack), the two animals found in the stable will

become sick, lying on their sides, panting, and licking at a number of basketball-sized swellings developing on their bodies. The expedition xenologist will venture the opinion that they are suffering from some parasitical disease, but can do nothing to help them. Eighteen hours after the sickness develops, they die within minutes of each other. The swellings, though, continue to grow. If one is opened, a slender, 8-legged animal will be discovered within, snake-thin, with a toothy mouth with which it is busy eating its way out of the larger creature.

Four hours after the animals die, ten swellings on each carcass burst, releasing a total of 20 animals (less any released previously). Each is  $\frac{1}{2}$  meter long and quite vicious, attacking the nearest available adventurer, and continuing to attack until it is dead.

After careful study of both life forms, the xenologist will conclude that the two are actually the same species, in adult and juvenile forms. An as-yet-unknown trigger causes the growth of the offspring as buds within an animal. The adult eventually dies, furnishing food for the young as they emerge. The two forms are different enough to suggest that some unknown stimulus eventually causes a metamorphosis from juvenile to adult.

*Conditions on Storm:* Breathing masks must be worn at all times. Other equipment may be selected from the ship's locker before the adventure begins. The referee should decide what gear can be carried, based on the needs of the adventure and the experience of the group.

Short, violent storms are the chief natural danger on Storm. They may appear at almost any time (at the referee's discretion) with about 5d minutes' notice. When a storm hits, visibility is reduced to medium range, persons outside have all stats reduced by half for the duration of the storm (or until they reach cover), and lightning becomes a severe danger. Each individual not under cover during a storm will be struck and killed by lightning on a roll of 12. Roll 2d6 every 5 minutes. Air/rafts will be hit on a roll of 9+; during a storm it is impossible for an air/raft to fly. The storm will last for 4d minutes, then disperse as quickly as it began.

*Animal encounter information* for creatures encountered in this adventure is as follows:

Animal Type	Weight	Hits	Armor	Wounds + Weapons
2 Intermittants	50 kg	17/6	Cloth	3 horns A9F9S2
20 Killers	.5 kg	2/2	None	4 teeth A0F053
- Hunters (Natives)	100 kg	20/9	None	Varies A0F052

*Ending the adventure:* The air/raft has been delayed by a severe, lingering storm around the ship, a storm which has also cut all communications. Massive, swirling thunderclouds over the landing site will be visible to the adventurers, but there will be no way of telling how long the condition will last. After 20 hours, the referee should indicate that they detect a gradual clearing over the ship. 2d hours later the air/raft will arrive. Gunfire from the air/raft will disperse any native attack long enough for the adventurers to get aboard. Once an escape has been made, the adventure is over.

*Continuing the campaign:* On returning to the ship, the adventurers will find that repairs have been made, and the ship jury-rigged enough to make limited maneuvers. The adventurers can choose to leave Storm, carrying the information they have gathered so far back to Caledon Ventures so that a better-equipped expedition can be sent later. In this case, they will be rewarded a commission of CR 500,000 apiece 3d months later.

If they prefer, however, the adventurers can choose to continue exploring Storm, hoping to complete their mission themselves. This allows further adventuring. Future issues of *The Space Gamer*

will carry additional material as the trade team seeks to solve the mysteries of Storm and find the civilization that brought them here.

*Final notes:* The discovery of the unusual life cycle of Storm's native life is a key to the overall campaign. Players must survive the native attacks to bring word of their discoveries to the ship.

The "fortress" sighted beyond the burning city should leave an impression of great size and technological prowess, and should suggest itself as a natural place to seek further information on the natives in later adventures.

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## TSG BACK ISSUES

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No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing CM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; BattlefleetMars variant; reviews of Swords A Sorcery, RuneQuest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

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No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a MicroGame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules, putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

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No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre"; variants for Chitin: I, The Creature that Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios; also - strategy in Rivets; benefit-cost analysis for Ice War; "Everyday Life in The Fantasy Trip."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; tactics in GEV; variations on Wizard; computers in wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot's designer's intro; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 1; 5 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 Game Survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus Ex Machina.

No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro; Painting Fantasy Miniatures; Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed; Game Design Part 3; more Deus Ex Machina; 7 pages of reviews.

No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Fighting Fantasy Miniatures Part II; Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators; 10 pages of reviews.

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No. 38. 1980 Game Survey Results; Designer Notes for The Lords of UnderEarth; Used ships for Traveller; Selling Your Game Article; Expert DAD and Time War reviewed; Combination Game Contest; The Complaints Department; and 7 pages of reviews.

No. 39. Computer issue: Designer's Notes on Akalabeth, Strategic Simulations Report, Strategy in the Warp Factor, Computers to Go, a TRS-80 Briefing, An update on the gaming world; also Rumor Reliability in Traveller; Scenario for Triplanetary; Magic contest results; Simple Traps; and 8 pages of reviews.

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No. 43. Origins Report; Expanded Combat for Traveller; Designer's Notes for Swordthrust; Diplomacy Variants; More Killer; "Sword's Man" by Timothy Zahn; Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 44. Special feature: AFVs in Traveller; Beware the Uranium Dragon; Fantasy Demography; another scenario for Killer; Featured review of Universe; Deus Ex Machina; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 45. Computer issue: Automated Simulations company report, Play-by-Phone computer gaming; also winning strategies for StarWeb; Designer's Notes for Grimtooth's Traps and Car Wars; reviews of Robot War and Nebula 19; Glossary contest results; Murphy's Rules; and 11 pages of reviews.

No. 46. Traveller issue: Terrorists in Traveller, Expanding Traveller, Traveller Supplement - Flare Star; also "The FBI Affair;" Constellation contest results; Featured Reviews of Wizardry and Fifth Frontier War; Deus Ex Machina, and 9 pages of reviews.

No. 47. DAD issue: Remedial Role-Playing, Kimberani's Tomb adventure for DAD; also, Designer's Notes for Barbarian Prince; Featured Review of Barbarian Prince; Physicians in Traveller; a Killer scenario, 1981 Game Survey; and 9 pages of reviews.

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Many of the flaws of the first edition of *High Guard* are corrected in HIGH GUARD 2. The combat system has been **overhauled** and considerably improved, though it is more complex now. Black globes are handled in a **more** realistic fashion. Weaponry is limited by the amount of energy consumed. **The use** of "batteries" of weapons makes it much simpler to calculate the overall weapons factors of each ship. Other changes and additions (such as ship agility, limits to the number of batteries that can bear in combat and the conversion of several tonnage-based components to percentage bases) either streamline the ship construction rules or add more realism to the combat system.

Of course, some items had to be condensed — or dropped altogether — in order to fit the new information into the

want to do any planetary bombardment, etc.)

There are other items that were rather important that seem to have been overlooked, too, in this edition - and not by design I would guess.

*High Guard 1* failed to tell how many pilots were needed aboard a starship to fly the vessel itself. The 2nd edition overlooks this point as well (though the new *Trillion Credit Squadron* enlightens the perplexed **fleet** commander on this). The 2nd edition also apparently assumes that no one is ever going to get sick aboard a starship, as the medical section of the **crew** no longer exists. An even more serious omission is the lack of information on the new coding system for fighters carried. In the breakdown of the **USP** on page 52, there is **the** notation that the

Another problem that the 2nd edition should have cleared up but didn't is the crew factor codes. The jumps between the numbers of crewmen from each code number to the next are far too great, especially considering that a crew hit drops the crew factor by 1. Thus if I have a crew of 99,999 (code 5) and take a crew hit, I've lost at least 90,000 crewmen in order for my factor to be dropped to a 4. A second hit will take the lives of 9,000 more crewmen, a third 900 and on down. Perhaps this is a realistic loss of life with such heavy weaponry, but then why would the same weapon hitting a ship with 9,999 crewmen only kill **9,000** men when it killed 90,000 on another ship?

One confusing change was that of the fuel purification plants. A plant cost a straight 200,000Cr and weighed 50 tons, cost and weight decreasing a set amount per tech level. Plants processed a ton of fuel per minute. In the new edition, a table shows **the** same decreases but, along with the text, says that the price is per **1000** tons of fuel. The text further states that ships with large tanks need more than one plant, presumably one per **1000** tons of fuel tank. How long **fuel** processing takes is not told in HG2. So, based on this, a ship with a 10,000-ton fuel tank that needed one plant which took approximately a week to refine its fuel (a long time admittedly; but a statement elsewhere in the book led one to believe **that** military ships could use unrefined fuel anyway) now would need **10** plants which do the job in an indeterminate amount of time. The problem is compounded by the percentage-based purification plant **table** in *Trillion Credit Squadron*, which is described as merely restating the table in HG2 in different terms, but which gives decidedly different values than the HIGH GUARD tables if both are followed exactly. The answer, provided by GDW's John **Harshman**, is that the TCS **table** is off by a factor of ten! A ship with a 50-ton plant designed with TCS actually needs a 500-ton plant!

There are some other questions I have with HIGH GUARD, 2nd Edition (why, for instance, the DM given the particle accelerator at short range was switched over to the meson gun, yet the particle accelerator still was listed as being most effective at close range in the text). But before anyone gets the wrong impression, let me go on to say that the *improvements* in the new edition far outweigh the faults.

The construction process has become much simpler and more realistic. One great improvement is the grouping of all the important tables (with the exception of some grouped on page 36) on the middle four pages of the book. Not only does this

## FEATURED REVIEW:



### *High Guard,*

### 2nd Edition

by William A. Barton

same amount of pages. Thus, in the introductory section, **the** weaponry descriptions are much briefer than in the 1st edition, and show some changes: Particle accelerators, for instance, have been removed from the anti-missile role here and elsewhere in the book (odd in light of current military thinking). Several options have been dropped from the combat section, including the two damage rolls for pulse lasers (though they do get a DM on the damage table), the use of fusion drives as weapons, high intensity missile fire and orbital combat rules. Some optional components for starships - **missile** magazines for planetary bombardment and jump governors for Book 2 ships - seem no longer to be available either. (Those of you who still have your 1st editions will probably want to make use of some of these rules in your individual play; for those with only the second edition, I suggest finding someone with the first if you

number of fighters is the number of fighter *squadrons* carried. There is no further information on this anywhere in the book, no tables for determining codes, no explanation of how many fighters make up a squadron. However, from the *Trillion Credit Squadron*, it can be deduced that the typical squadron consists of 10 fighters and **the** coding system figured from there (or from the old table if you have the 1st edition).

In edition 1 a starship could carry a wide variety of vehicles, including such exotics as fixed-wing aircraft, dirigibles, helicopters and submersibles. Now, vessels are limited to ground cars, **ATVs**, hovercraft and air/rafts. Of course, the missing items are not overly important in starship battles or in most campaigns, but their loss is another reason to hang onto your 1st editions, especially since skill in these vehicles is still available in the character generation system.





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## Equipment for *TRAVELLER*

*CALL OF CTHULHU*  
*TFT: TWO NEW CHARACTER TYPES*  
*STARLORD*  
*CAR WARS: KILLER WINNEBAGOS*  
*BEYOND THE STELLAR EMPIRE*  
*TRAVELLER AS SCIENCE FANTASY*  
*D&D WITHOUT MAGICIANS*



# TRAVELLER as Science Fantasy



by Greg Costikyan

As every TRAVELLER player knows, a ship has to carry *tons* of hydrogen to fuel its interstellar drive. Ships do not also carry tons of oxygen or some other oxidant, so it is clear that the energy needed to run the hyperdrive does not come from burning hydrogen. Presumably, it comes from fusion.

The fusion reaction that occurs in hydrogen bombs is the deuterium reaction. Deuterium is a rare isotope of hydrogen which has one proton and one neutron (regular hydrogen has only a single proton). Regular hydrogen can fuse also; this reaction is called the proton-proton reaction, and is responsible for most of the energy given off by the sun. However, the proton-proton reaction is much harder to initiate than the deuterium reaction. In the sun, a typical proton will last for hundreds of years before fusing with another — while deuterium will fuse in a matter of seconds. That's an indication of the degree of difficulty experienced in trying to get protons to fuse.

If a TRAVELLER power plant runs solely off deuterium, there is little need to carry around huge tanks of gas. Instead, one could simply separate the deuterium out of raw hydrogen, and carry it in a much smaller tank.

One question is whether TRAVELLER power plants use the deuterium reaction or the proton-proton reaction. If the deuterium reaction is used, raw hy-

drogen scooped from a gas giant or from an ocean can be refined, separating out the deuterium from the rest of the hydrogen. It is true that the TRAVELLER rules talk about refining fuel — but this clearly does *not* mean separation of the deuterium, since unrefined fuel can be used, and masses the same as refined fuel. About 1 out of every 7,000 hydrogen atoms is a deuterium atom; that means that refining hydrogen for the deuterium would reduce the mass of the fuel by 7,000 times. But in TRAVELLER, unrefined fuel masses the same as refined fuel, the only difference being the increased chance of a drive malfunction when using unrefined fuel. Clearly, when Marc Miller talks of refining he does not mean separation of deuterium. Further, if TRAVELLER power plants operated off deuterium it would presumably be highly efficient to separate out the deuterium rather than carrying such huge quantities of hydrogen; thus, we can presume that power plants in TRAVELLER operate off the proton-proton reaction.

## Adding Up Protons

If this is the case, we can calculate how much energy a typical TRAVELLER power plant can produce.

Hydrogen weighs 1.008 grams per mole, a mole being  $6.02 \times 10^{23}$  atoms. So in a ton of hydrogen there are  $5.97 \times 10^{29}$  atoms (assuming Miller is using metric tons, 1 ton = 1000 kg). With an A power plant, 20 tons of fuel are needed for one jump, and a jump takes a week to perform. In one jump,  $1.19 \times 10^{31}$  atoms are consumed.

In proton-proton fusion, four protons fuse to produce a helium atom, some stray neutrinos, gamma rays, and positrons, plus about 25 mev (million electron volts) of energy. Thus, in one jump, an A plant produces  $7.46 \times 10^{31}$  mev. *Million electron volts* is a cumbersome unit of energy; Americans are more familiar with the kilowatt-hour. That comes to  $3.32 \times 10^{12}$  kwh.

That's still pretty cumbersome. A better unit might be megawatt-years; a large nuclear power plant can produce about 1,000 megawatts, enough to supply power to a city the size of Portland, Oregon; so a large nuclear power plant produces 1,000 megawatt-years of energy in a year. The entire installed electrical generating capacity of the US is about 230,000 megawatts.

$3.32 \times 10^{12}$  kwh equals 379,000 mw-years.

In other words, in one week, an A power plant produces about one and a

half times as much energy as all the electrical plants in the United States in a year.

### Energy Cost

If we assume that all power is generated by A plants (and presumably there are cheaper ways to do it), we can estimate how much energy such a plant can produce in a year, and also how much owning and operating the plant costs.

An A plant costs 8 MCR; if we amortize the cost over 10 years, that's 800,000 CR per year. The TRAVELLER rules indicated that a ship had to be maintained after each jump, at a cost of 0.1% of its purchase price. Let us assume that the same applies to power plants, and that they must be maintained continuously at a cost of 10.4% per year — i.e., the maintenance cost is paid twice every week for 52 weeks. That's 832,000 CR. Finally, one engineer is needed to run the plant. (No other employee is required, since an engineer is all that's needed on a ship, presumably he's all that's needed on the ground.) According to Book 2, an engineer makes 4,000 CR per month, or 48,000 CR per year. So the total cost of operating the plant is 1.68 MCR per year.

An A plant produces 379,000 mw-years per week, so it produces about 19,700,000 mw-years per year. A single A plant could fulfill the electricity needs of 86 United States. The cost is 11.7 mw-years per credit, or a little more than 100 million kwh per credit. That compares to 5 cents per kwh, on average, in the United States at the moment.

### Heat

No power plant is 100% efficient. A lot of the energy produced by a power plant turns into waste heat. Let's be generous and assume that only 1% of the energy produced by an A plant winds up as waste heat (this is a generous assumption, because few processes are even 70% efficient). An A plant will produce  $1.98 \times 10^{11}$  joules of waste heat per second, or  $4.73 \times 10^{10}$  calories per second.

Let's assume that the plant is installed in a 200-ton free trader, which we will treat as a 200-ton chunk of iron. The specific heat of iron is .106, which means that .106 calories are needed to raise the temperature of one gram of iron by one degree Kelvin. The melting temperature of iron is about 1500 degrees K, so starting from absolute zero, we need  $3.18 \times 10^{10}$  calories to melt the ship.

So about .6 seconds after we turn on the jump drive, the waste heat generated by the power plant will turn the ship into

a lump of molten metal. No one ever said interstellar travel was safe.

### Planet Moving

An interesting question to address is: can the Imperium move planets?

The Earth moves in its orbit around the sun at a rate of 29.8 km/sec, and masses  $5.98 \times 10^{24}$  kg. The total kinetic energy of the earth is then  $2.66 \times 10^{33}$  joules — that is, that is how much energy would be needed to stop the earth in its tracks.

Energy costs  $3.6 \times 10^{11}$  joule per credit, so stopping the earth would cost  $7.4 \times 10^{21}$  credits.

Let's assume that the average Imperial citizen makes 10,000 credits a year (which seems likely given the wages listed in Book 2). Let's assume the population of the Imperium is 100 trillion (25,000 Earths). Further, let's assume that citizens pay 10% of their income in taxes. The Imperium takes in  $1 \times 10^{17}$  credits per year. If the Imperium devotes its entire yearly budget to stopping the Earth, it will take 74,000 years to do so.

So, alas, the Empire isn't in the business of shuffling planets, nor is it likely to build Dyson spheres.

### Standard of Living

What effect will the cheap cost of energy have on the standard of living? Historically, there has been a very high degree of correlation between energy use and standard of living. Both per capita energy use and per capita income (adjusted for inflation) in the US have historically grown by 3% per annum over the past 150 years, on average. A plot of per-capita energy use against per-capita income from the various nations of Terra today shows an almost linear relationship. There's some scatter, of course, but it's clear that there is practically a one-to-one correlation.

The average American makes, let's say, around \$10,000. At 5 cents per kilowatt-hour, if he spent all of his income on electricity, he could buy 200,000 kilowatt-hours.

From internal evidence in TRAVELLER, it seems like the average character makes about 10,000 CR per year. At 100 million kw-hours per credit, he can buy 1 trillion kw-hours, or about 5 million times as much as the modern American.

If we buy the assumption that there is a direct correlation between energy usage and standard of living, and between the cost of energy and usage, then it seems likely that the average Imperial citizen has a standard of living 5 million

times greater than the average American. What the hell this means is hard to figure; a standard of living twice as good as my present one I can easily imagine, but 5 million times is more difficult. What sort of apartment can I rent for \$5 billion a month? Still, I wouldn't refuse an income of \$100 billion a year. It's clear, though, that the costs of equipment in TRAVELLER do not reflect this incredibly higher standard of living. A shotgun costs 160 CR, 1.6% of the average yearly income. I could surely buy a shotgun for less than \$160, so the Imperial is no better off than I am. A shotgun is a manufactured good, and advances in technology, mechanization, and so forth, plus the fact that resources would be cheaper because the energy needed to extract them would be cheaper, would mean that shotguns should be much cheaper relative to income.

Consequently, we must assume that Miller was not aware of the implications of his energy system when determining the costs of equipment. If 1CR = 1\$ (which looks pretty close to most of the TRAVELLER costs), then either people should have incomes much higher than the average American income, or the costs of equipment should be much lower.

### Conclusion

A consideration of the energy produced by TRAVELLER power plants, the cost of such energy, and the implications for standards of living, show that there are a number of contradictions in the way TRAVELLER is organized. The massive amounts of waste heat produced by ships means that they must have intricate and complicated and bulky mechanisms for getting rid of waste heat — which implies that a 200 ton ship probably has several hundred square kilometers of radiating surface, something which isn't evident in the design of TRAVELLER ships. The low cost of energy has implications for the standard of living which are not reflected in the schedule of costs and wages.

In short, though TRAVELLER is the SFRPG which most projects the atmosphere of a hard-science fiction universe, it is science *fantasy*. However, I imagine no one (least of all me) will let that hinder his enjoyment of the game.

*Greg Costikyan is a student of (among other things) libertarian political/economic theory, planetology, and game design. In the latter field, his published titles include The Oeature that Ate Sheboygan, DeathMaze, and The Return of the Stainless Steel Rat. He is also a notorious player of Diplomacy.*

Traveller Book 3 and various other supplements list certain useful items of equipment for Traveller adventurers, while Book 1 and Mercenary cover the weapons characters will most often acquire. Yet all these books neglect the special, often concealed, usually illegal weaponry that is the stock and trade of those involved in covert operations - the spy, the assassin, the terrorist, etc. Paranoia Press' **SO RAG** supplement on the Zhodani secret intelligence service lists some items of this nature, though many of these are available only to the **Zhodani**. Following is a listing of other examples of covert equipment and weapons which could be available to some characters through black market contacts, espionage organizations, or the Assassins' Guild. Streetwise may be used as a DM in obtaining these items.

### Small Arms

*Needlers* are small pistols designed for silent assassination and lethal protection at close ranges. They are similar in size, appearance and performance to the body pistol; the only external differences are the pneumatic charge chamber at the rear in place of the hammer and the smaller hole in the barrel. The Needier is non-metallic and is able to avoid detection where metal detectors are used. A cursory examination will usually identify the Needier as a body pistol if the **examiner** is unfamiliar with the weapon. The Needier holds a clip of 20 2mm-diameter finned needles. The needles in themselves do little damage (**1D-1**) unless they strike a vital part of the body (an eye, heart, etc.) where they do 2D-2 damage. However, the needles may be coated with a powerful nerve poison. If any damage at all is taken from a needle, the poison will enter the target's body and, in most cases, will be fatal in seconds. See the section on Nerve Poison below for more details.

The Needier is a Tech 8 weapon. It



will be available on a roll of **10+**. If the gun is available, so will be the needles and the pneumatic charges. To locate the nerve poison or clips already treated, however, a roll of **11+** must be made.

Use combat modifiers for body pistol. A character's skill level in body pistol minus 1 may be applied. Terrorists may choose Needier as a Special Weapons skill; Assassins may choose it as a Gun Combat skill. Retired assassins of Traveller rank 4 or higher may easily locate and purchase Needlers at Assassins' Guild facilities; terrorists with skill in the weapon may take it as a mustering out benefit.

Weight: 275 gms plus 25 gms/clip  
Cost: CR750 plus CR50/clip plus CR50/pneumatic charge (fires 40 needles) plus poison cost.

razor-sharp edges, often coated with some form of poison.

Use *Snapshot* "thrown blade" rules. A throwing disk does **1D+1** damage when it hits. Disks will slice through small objects, such as ropes, and will stick in larger objects (walls, trees, people). They will be available anywhere the law level doesn't prohibit the possession of weapons. Note that on worlds where the wearing of brimmed hats is in vogue, larger throwing disks may be found disguised as hat brims, especially in bowlers. Such hat disk weigh 1 kg, cost CR 35, and do 2D+3 damage if they hit; a vital hit does 4D. ST required to throw this type beyond short range is 14+.

Weight: under 100 gms/star.  
Cost: CR 150/10 stars, plus poison cost.

# Tools for Terrorists

by William A. Barton

*Blackjacks* are small clublike weapons used by all types of criminal elements for close fighting. They consist of a small cloth pocket or glove sewn around a heavy clublike weight, often lead pellets, with enough material left to form a handle for gripping it so the weight swings loose. Count a blackjack as a **Club-1** to hit, doing 2D-1 damage.

The blackjack is a Tech 3 weapon, weighs 1 kg and costs approximately CR 35. It is easily available, except on law level 9 worlds.

*Brass Knuckles* consist of a series of **metai** rings, usually of brass, welded together, which slip over the fingers of one hand and rest over the knuckles. Count brass knuckles as Hand for purposes of hitting, with ST modifiers as for Hand. Damage is Hand+2. Brawling skill level counts as a DM to hit as does Unarmed Combat (but not both; use whichever is higher).

Brass knuckles are Tech 3 weapons. They are easily available, except on law level 9 worlds.

Weight: 200 gms.

Cost: CR75.

*Throwing disks* are similar to and used in the same manner as the ancient Terran throwing stars. Most varieties used by assassins are small, thin metal disks with

### Concealed Weapons

*Blade Boots* appear to be ordinary shoes or boots. However, when an internal switch is activated, either by pressure on a toe switch or by clicking the heels together, an 80mm blade springs from the toe of each shoe. Each blade locks into place and will not recede until a second activation of the switch. For purposes of a hit, the range DMs for **Hand+1** are used and the armor DMs for a bayonet are used. Each blade will do 2D damage if a hit is obtained. Either Brawling skill or Unarmed Combat may be used as a +DM to hit when kicking with Blade Boots. Use Hand DMs for ST. A character may only strike with one boot per round.

In addition to their inherent damage, the blades of a boot may be coated with any appropriate poison the characters can acquire. Poison must usually be re-applied after every three times a hit is obtained with a blade.

Blade Boots are available at Tech 5 and up. The roll to locate a pair is 9+, as they are popular with the criminal elements.

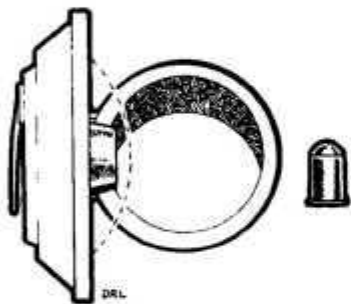
Weight: 1 kg (does not count against encumbrance when worn).

Cost: CR 250.



*Belt Buckle Guns* appear to be fancily designed heavy belt buckles, but actually are single-shot close-in emergency weapons. Some models may appear as an actual derringer, others will simply consist of a disguised barrel. When activated by pressure to the back of the buckle, exerted by pushing out the stomach muscles, the weapon section springs open and fires its single shot at any target directly in front of the wearer. A safety catch prevents the gun from firing by accident; it must be released before muscle pressure will trigger the gun. Treat as a body pistol.

Whenever the roll to hit is an unmodified 2, the spring mechanism fails to work. The spring will not work until repaired. When a 2 is rolled, a second 2D roll must be made to determine whether the gun actually does fire in the closed position; a 3- indicates it has and the buckle is ruined. It takes 2 rounds to reload a Belt Buckle Gun if it is being worn, 3 if evading (1 and 2 if it is not worn at the time).



The Belt Buckle Gun becomes available at Tech 6. The gun and ammo will be available in most places on a roll of 8+.

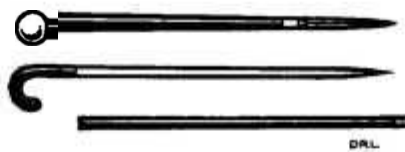
Weight: 300 gms, does not count toward encumbrance.

Cost: **CR 350**; **CR 1**/solid slug.

*Sword Sticks* appear to be ordinary walking sticks or canes, made of wood, plastic or a light metal such as aluminum. However, when the handle is turned, a blade snaps out of the end. Treat the Sword Stick as a bayonet for all purposes including range and armor DMs and damage at short range. At close range, however, treat it as a club, since only the stick part of the weapon can be brought to bear.

The Sword Stick is a Tech 3 weapon. It is approximately 1 meter in length, with another 200mm added when the blade is exposed.

A variant on the Sword Stick is the Sword Cane - a cane-like scabbard which conceals a foil-like blade. Treat this sort of weapon as a foil in every way, with the addition that the scabbard may be used to parry other blades. This gives



a -2DM to anyone trying to hit the wielder with a hand-held weapon. Foil skill only may be applied to this type of weapon. It will have the same availability as the Sword Stick.

Weight: both - 1 kg.

Cost: Sword Stick - CR 250, Sword Cane - CR 150.

*Camera Guns* are single-shot weapons concealed within a camera. Use combat modifiers as automatic pistol. One-half of any pistol skill (rounded up) can be used as a DM. Damage is 3D-3. The Camera Gun *cannot* take photos. It takes one round to reload the Camera Gun, 2 if the user is evading.

The Camera Gun can be concealed in any camera from the Tech 4 Daguerreotype to the Tech 10 Canolta **XA-1** (see *Merchants & Merchandise*) and beyond. Any camera can be converted to a Camera Gun by a character or NPC with Mechanical-3+ (and **Electronics-2** for TL 8+ cameras) and the proper tools. **Pre-manufactured** camera guns are tech 5+.

Weight: 200gm plus weight of camera shell.

Cost: CR 350 plus cost of camera.

*Poison Rings* come in two types. Type 1 has a tiny spring-controlled needle which extends when the jewel is pressed or turned in a certain way. The needle is coated with any number of various poisons and is attached to a poison sac within the ring. The victim is poisoned by laying the hand on an exposed part of the body after springing the needle, administering the poison through the needle's prick. This is often done by shaking hands. The needle is very delicate and will pierce no armor; even thick clothes may render it useless. The sac usually contains enough poison for five injections.

Type 2 has a hollow setting which is filled with poison; this is dumped into the victim's drink by turning the setting on its minute hinge, allowing the poison to fall. While the Type 1 ring is almost always undetectable at work, a careless person may be observed using the Type 2.

Poison rings are available from Tech 2 on up. They are freely available on law level 0 planets and can be obtained through the black market just about everywhere else (roll 5+).

Weight: negligible.

Cost: CR 150.

## Explosives

Explosives are stock in trade for terrorists, assassins, etc., depending on how messy a job they wish to do. As explosives can be concealed in almost anything, it is unnecessary to list such devices. The following are three special items of particular note. For a listing of various types of explosives, how they are handled, their costs and damage, see Paranoia Press' *Ryker's Catalog of Arms*. Remember that characters must make the explosives mishap roll as in *Mercenary*, with Demo skill as a DM, whenever using explosives.

*TDX Cases* appear to be — and can be used as — ordinary briefcases, weighing about 1200 gms. The difference is that, under the covering, the briefcase is fashioned entirely from a specially solidified variety of TDX, the gravity-oriented ground-plane explosive from *The Best of the Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society*. What appears to be a combination lock on the case is actually an electronic timer, which can be set to detonate anytime within 10 days. The case itself does the normal damage for 1 kg of TDX, about **12D** at "ground zero," with the effects halving every 3m from the 3m diameter central point of the explosion. For even greater effects, the case can be filled with more explosives, up to 3 kgs of TDX, plastic explosives or other types, which will be set off by the detonation of the case itself, doing appropriate damage.

The TDX Case first becomes available at Tech 11. It can be purchased for CR 2000 on most **TL-11**, law level 0 planets. On other worlds it will only be available on the black market (on a roll of 8+).

*Suicide Belts* are designed for terrorists, spies or assassins who can't afford to be taken alive on a mission and who wish for the opportunity to take someone with them. They consist of two layers of leather or material sandwiching a layer of either TDX or plastic explosive, depending on the tech level of its manufacture. A length of primer cord runs through the explosive. The buckle conceals a minute electric detonator, which can be activated by the wearer, setting off the primer cord which in turn sets off the



explosive. It can also be set for a delayed explosion, up to 1 hour.

The Suicide Belt weighs 500 to 750 gms, depending on the belt design and how much explosive it contains. It will do 6-9D damage, dispersing as the TDX Case effects above. It has the same availability rolls and restrictions as the TDX Case, except that it is first available at Tech 6. Base price is CR 500 to CR 1500, depending on the explosive (plastic is cheaper). It is available on 8+.

The *Demolitions Kit* is a standard accessory for those who work with explosives — not only criminals, but commandos, combat engineers, and others. The standard kit is available at Tech 7 and consists of 20 blasting caps (CR 5); 20 electric blasting caps (CR 8); 2 chemical timers (CR 5 each); 2 mechanical timers (CR 10 each); 2 electric timers (CR 15 each); 1 electronic timer (CR 20); 5m primercord (CR 1/m); special tools: knife, screwdriver, pliers, wire cutter, etc. (CR 30) - all in a special carrying case for CR 180 base price (higher where difficult to get). The make-up of the kit may vary somewhat depending on tech level and on the purpose for which it is to be used. Cases may be of the hard-case type (count as cloth armor) or soft shoulder bags. Most cases have room for up to 4 kgs of explosives. The basic Demolitions Kit itself weighs 2.5 kg; soft bags weigh only 2 kg.

Whenever a character wearing or carrying a Demolitions Kit takes a hit from an explosive round or an energy weapon from an angle that could hit the kit, roll 9+ for the kit to be hit and 5+ for the detonators to be set off if hit. Count each blasting cap (electric or not) as worth 1D damage and each meter of primer cord as worth 2D damage. All timers will be ruined if the kit explodes.

Demo Kits are generally available wherever explosives may be obtained (legally or otherwise).

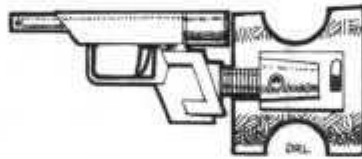
#### Accessories

The *Pen/Dart Thrower* appears to be an ordinary pen. It is actually a small dart thrower, holding one dart and a small pneumatic charge. A small switch, just below the cap, activates the charge. The dart is coated with a deadly poison, less often with a tranquilizer. The dart will hit a target at close range on a roll of 5+ and at short range on a roll of 8+. It is not designed to penetrate any armor more resilient than jack. However, if the to-hit roll at close range is 10+ or at short range a 12 and the target is not wearing a sealed suit of armor,

the dart will have hit an unarmored part of the target's body. The dart is good for only one use.

The Pen/Dart Thrower is a Tech 8 device. It is standard issue for espionage agents of the Ministry of Justice, SORAG and other such services. Fully loaded with dart and charge, the pen weighs 75 gms; this does not count against encumbrance. The Pen costs CR 500 base price, CR 25 for replacement charges, CR 5 for replacement darts. Poison prices and availability vary with the exact poison.

*Spring Holsters* are small, spring-powered holsters which are worn on the wrist, concealed under the sleeve. The spring mechanism is triggered by a quick flick of the wrist, propelling the gun into the hand of the wearer. The user of the Spring Holster must have had at least six weeks practice with the holster for proper operation, learning how to avoid triggering the spring mechanism unintentionally. Anyone who attempts to use the Spring Holster without the training period must roll 2D whenever he activates it. On a roll of 8 or less, he



drops the gun rather than catches it; on a roll of 2, he breaks a finger trying to catch the gun as it is propelled into his hand, then drops it. It takes one round to retrieve a dropped gun, two evading. A broken finger will make it impossible to fire a gun with that hand. Proper use of the Spring Holster eliminates the -3DM for drawing and firing a weapon in the same round.

The Spring Holster first becomes available for use at Tech 7. It costs CR 250 and weighs 500 gms minus the weapon. The holster is designed for small guns such as the derringer or the body pistol, and any such gun (including the Needier) can easily be attached to the holster mechanism. Spring Holsters may be worn completely concealed under most forms of clothing or armor. Characters may choose Spring Holster as a Special Weapon skill in lieu of Quick-draw Holster (or as a Gun Combat skill in other services if the referee so allows) in place of the six-week training period. Higher levels of skill than 1 give no further benefits. The Spring Holster is available on 7+.

The *Electronic Lock Opener* is a high-tech version of the lock pick kit. It consists of a small battery pack, often disguised as a cigarette lighter, pen or other common item, and two extension wires. The wires are placed in the keyhole of a lock, the device is activated by flicking the switch, and a surge of energy burns through the lock mechanism. The device is effective on any lock on a roll of 3 or more (a 2 fuses the lock shut). The device can be used 50 times before requiring a replacement battery. Its obvious disadvantages are that opening a lock cannot be concealed as the lock is ruined, and that the device can not be legally possessed by anyone who is not a member of a security or police force. In spite of this, it is usually available on law level 0 worlds and on the black market (roll 7+). It is a Tech 9 device and costs CR 600. Replacement batteries cost CR 150. Weight is negligible.

*Poison Detection Strips* come in handy to assassins and others who routinely deal with poisons and wish to avoid accidental self-poisoning. They resemble tiny strips of litmus paper and are coded to various types of metabolisms. The strips are color-coded by general race (green for humans, orange for Asian, blue for Droyne, brown for Vargrs, etc.) and come in packs of 50 for CR 25. Each strip is chemically treated to turn black when exposed to a substance harmful or fatal to the metabolism for which it is coded. The strips are used by placing them in contact with the substance to be tested. If the strip turns black, the substance is harmful to the metabolism for which the strip is coded. Care must be taken not to use a type designed for another metabolism than that of the user. Such errors can be fatal. Poison Detection Strips are generally available, especially on those worlds where poison is not prohibited by law and assassination by poison is a way of life. Tech level: 10. Weight is negligible.

*Nerve poison* is the lethal substance recommended for use with the Needier. A small amount will generally be fatal to any victim whose bloodstream it reaches. If a victim's EN is 12+, he has a 10+ chance of survival; if he survives the poison, he will be paralyzed for 2d weeks. Appropriate anti-toxins, such as the Universal Anti-Toxin from SORAG, will reduce the paralysis to 2D days if injected within 6 hours after the victim is poisoned. Once a victim recovers use of muscle function, he will be at half ST, DX and EN for 2D weeks.

20 doses of nerve poison cost CR 250. It first becomes available at Tech 6 and is highly illegal. Weight is negligible.



# Periastron

by **J. Andrew  
& William H. Keith, Jr.**

In "Storm" (February, 1982), adventurers were forced to crash-land when an electrical storm caused severe damage to their ship. They found themselves on a world they christened Storm (E774800), a planet with an eccentric orbit around a young, hot star... **and, as** a result, a planet with turbulent climactic conditions which were growing steadily worse. They had come in search of an alien race whose **slower-than-light** probe had been discovered in another system, a derelict; the lack of jump drive technology and a complete absence of computers and microelectronics offered a possibility of an enormous market for Caledon Ventures, the company which employed the venturers.

What they found, though, were implacably hostile natives, with a primitive technological development and a form unsuited to the design of the derelict probe. The locals were fierce, aggressive ... and very, very hungry.

Having survived their first rude contact with Storm's locals, the adventurers must **now** consider their next move. For though they thought they had their ship repaired, a new problem has arisen . . . **a** problem that makes contacting the natives more than a matter of profit. It's now a matter of **survival** . . .

Referee's Notes: Clues in past adventures in this series have introduced the unusual biology of the creatures inhabiting Storm. A reproductive cycle linked to the severe temperature fluctuations of Storm's eccentric orbit makes for a puzzling difference between life forms. Budding, triggered by rising temperatures, produces a number of offspring in each of the individuals exposed. The parent dies,

furnishing food for the young. As the comparatively short periastron period comes to an end, the offspring mature and ultimately metamorphose into the long-lived adult forms. Juvenile and adult are completely unlike in appearance, and also in temperament.

If this adventure is played as part of an ongoing campaign on Storm, this information should be kept secret until and unless players reason it out. The referee may prefer, however, to reveal the knowledge as a working hypothesis by NPC scientists in the party, especially in games played outside a campaign **framework**.

This folio adventure is designed for characters of almost any background attached to a Trade Pioneer Team aboard the Type A2 Far Trader *Scotian Huntress*. The referee may draw characters from any source desired, including existing campaigns. It is urged that characters have some skill in ground combat.

Two scientist non-player characters form a part of the expedition. Character generation information can be found in GDW Supplement 4, *Citizens of the Imperium*. Details on the statistics, performance, and layout of the Far Trader are not necessary for this adventure, but they can be found, if desired, in Supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*. Almost any other Traveller book, adventure, supplement, or game may enhance the enjoyment of this adventure, as well.

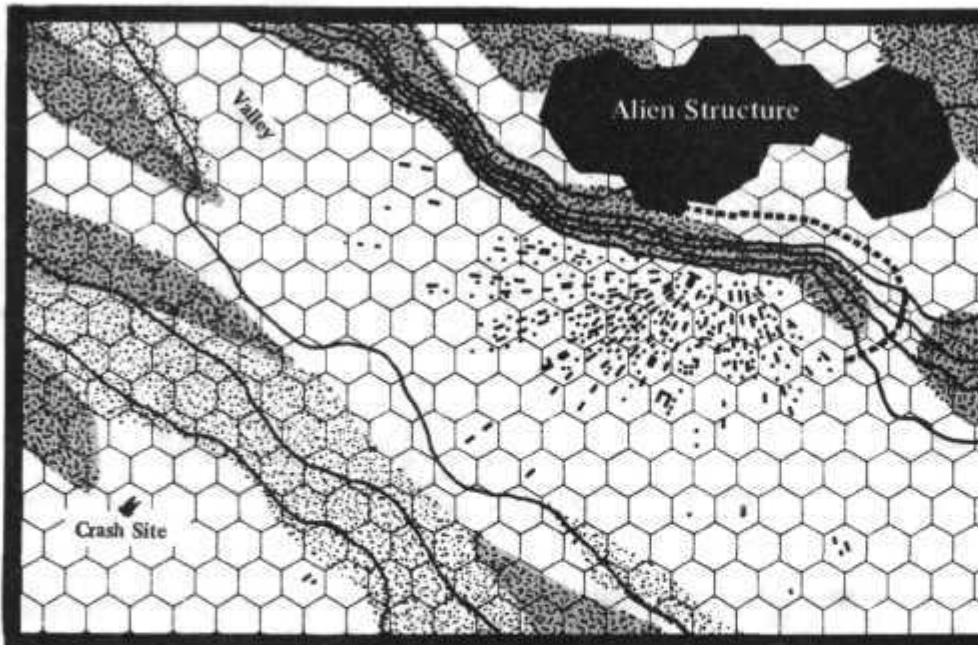
**Background:** Scotian Huntress carried a top-rated Chief Engineer, but even he hadn't been able to catch the problem in time. Lost among the rest of the damage caused during the crash-landing, the failure of several key components in the life support panels remained unnoticed, until a full-power test was run on the ship preparatory to lifting off. Then the sparks and short-circuiting of the critical panel announced the problem in no uncertain terms.

Inertial compensators and internal grav field components could be repaired, and it wasn't long before they were back in working order — at the expense of three of the grav modules from the air/raft. But the atmosphere and temperature regulators were harder to replace, both in terms of parts and time. And, with the damage as it was, time was suddenly a crucial **factor**.

Internal temperature control was no longer working. The outside temperature was up to 40°C, and still going up, as Storm swung towards periastron. The crew's equipment wasn't designed to support them continuously for more than a short **time**; as things stood, there was no way they could get the temperature control repairs made in time. Only a single, faint promise of hope existed, unearthed by the team's planetologist.

A little over 30 km away from the ship, on the other side of a ridge and a wide valley, a native city had once stood. Now ravaged by wandering bands of hos-





## MapKey

- Open terrain — 1 hex/hr.
- Rough terrain - 1 hex/2 hrs.
- Impassable
- Road - 2 hexes/hr.
- Ruined buildings

1 hex = 2 km.  
Each elevation line = 25 m. altitude.

tile natives (the juvenile form), the city no longer seemed important. But a structure towered above it, on the sides of a mountain; a brooding structure of uncertain purpose. Analysis made by a scouting party had shown this building to be a tremendous source of heat, and the computer projected a high probability that this structure was actually a large, refrigerated complex. **Inside**, the computer claimed, the temperature was actually well *under* what the humans thought of as normal - a chilly, but comfortable, 10°C.

It was imperative that the party find a place of refuge against the rising heat. Once that was done, it would be possible to keep vacc suits and other gear in better operating condition, to give the engineer and his helpers a chance to slowly work on the ship. It seemed the only chance for survival was a gambler's throw: visit the strange building, knock on the front door, and hope for a friendly welcome ...

### Referee's Notes

*Overland trek:* Use of the air/raft has been greatly curtailed by the use of grav modules to repair the ship. It will serve reliably to carry supplies and a pilot, but its capacity for both weight and speed has been reduced. Attempts to fly at more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  speed are subject to a roll for breakdown (7+ each combat round). Atmospheric turbulence can also be a source of danger to persons using the air/raft.

Travel is conducted at the rate of one hex each hour. Each hour, too, the referee should check for native encounters, equipment failures, and other events. See the map and event table.

*Supplies:* The referee may designate the contents of the ship's locker (this should, of course, remain consistent in an ongoing campaign). The adventurers may carry any equipment or supplies they feel they may need. An electronics tool set should be available for repairs to vacc suit

air conditioners that may occur during the adventure.

*Conditions:* Vacc suits must be worn, both because of the unpleasant temperature and because of the high ozone content of the atmosphere. Violent storms and other natural phenomena are also a cause of considerable hazard. During storms, forward progress is impossible for 1d hours (during which other events and encounters may take place). Other difficulties may be imposed by the referee by natural hazards as he sees fit.

*Natives:* Native encounters are governed by the event table. Natives are two meters tall, tubular, with four arms and four legs. Generally, they are armed with spears, clubs, torches, rocks, and other random, primitive weapons. They always attack. A total of 1dx10 will be encountered at any given time. They break off and retreat when half or more are killed. If they capture an adventurer, they will attempt to eat him on the spot.

*Equipment failure:* The air/raft is prone to failure at all times; if put under strain, failure is almost certain. Vacc suit air conditioning units are also under an enormous load, and may also fail. Check for air/raft failure every time a hex is entered. A roll of 10+ indicates the air/raft has malfunctioned, and is permanently out of action. In addition, check hourly for air conditioning failure. A roll of 8+ means one unit has failed. Air conditioner repairs take increments of  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, with one throw of 7+ allowed each time. Electronics and mechanical skill may be used as a DM. An electronics kit is necessary to make the repairs.

If the repair is not made within two hours, the character will have one characteristic reduced to 0. Each 15 minutes

## Event Table

### Roll two dice:

- 2 Lightning: Fierce flashes of lightning begin. A character must roll his dexterity or less to take cover, or suffer 8d damage.
- 3 Natives: See *Natives* rule.
- 4 No event
- 5 Storm: See *Conditions*.
- 6 Natives
- 7 Storm
- 8 Lightning hits air/raft: Pilot takes 4d damage immediately. Air/raft crashes on roll of 8+, or if pilot becomes unconscious.

- 9 Storm
- 10 No event
- 11 Natives
- 12 Natives
- 13 Natives
- 14 Natives
- 15 Natives
- 16 Natives

DM+4 if party is within three hexes of the Complex Building.

thereafter, another characteristic is reduced to zero. This will not happen if the party finds shelter in time.

*The doors:* Before starting the adventure, the referee should choose five hexes on the map which are designated as doors. These doors occur in building hexes, in low alcoves which appear to be reinforced, and far more sturdy than the remainder of the building. They are 1 meter high, and a small recess 5 cm square is set into each. The "bracelets" from "Flare Star" will fit the small recess, and can be used to open the doors. Additional bracelets may be found in the city; see below. The doors cannot be forced.

Characters will spot a door on 11+ if they pass through the hex, on 6+ if they search it. Additional doors may be located as "Interesting Artifacts;" see below. Every door is connected by a tunnel complex to the alien structure which is the object of the quest. Once a door has been found and opened, the adventure is, in effect, over.

*Searching the city:* One hour will suffice for one team of characters to search a city hex. The party may wish to divide into two or more teams in order to speed

## Useless Artifacts

*Characters who explore the ravaged city will find a large number of artifacts, most broken, some intact but useless. These are examples. The referee may devise others.*

A turquoise cube, 5 cm to a side, no apparent lid or opening. Something may be heard to rattle inside.

Metal rod, 9 cm long, 1 cm diameter. One end will glow bright blue if the rod is lifted to a vertical position.

Metal cylinder, .4 m tall, .5 m diameter. Bears alien inscription. Weighs 200 kg. Top may be removed easily. Contains a viscous, plastic substance.

Statuette of a disc-shaped alien, 3 cm in diameter, composed of a shiny ferric alloy. Appears to be holding a largish,

cigar-shaped artifact. Underside bears a trefoil-shaped symbol.

Gizmo, composed of dull, bluish metal, about 2 cm to a side. Bears yellow plunger. If the plunger is depressed, one end of the artifact will become red-hot in a few seconds, remaining hot until the plunger is depressed a second time.

Hollow, translucent sphere, .3 m in diameter. In one place there is a neat, circular hole.

White disk, 1.8 m in diameter, 6 cm high, firmly socketed in floor. A large number of colored plungers cover the radius in three tiers. Playing with the plungers will have no evident effect.

Oval plaque of yellow, plastic-like material, securely fastened to the wall of a ruined building. Bears alien inscription and arrow-like symbol pointing in a random direction.

## Interesting Artifacts

*Roll two dice:*

2. *A vehicle.* This is an alien ground car, apparently undamaged. It will hold up to four disc-shaped aliens (or a similar number of humans), and is capable of cross-country speeds of 20 km/hr (half in rough terrain). Needless to say, the controls are very strange. It will take at least an hour to figure the thing out and get it moving. Check for each attempt hourly; a roll of 10+ indicates success. Applicable modifiers include Mechanic and Wheeled Vehicle. The car has enough fuel for 2d6 hours; once fuel is gone the party will not be able to find more.

3. *Hand laser.* This weapon can be recognized from "Flare Star." On 6+, it is charged and operable.

4. *Map.* This is a detailed map of the city, annotated with alien text. Green symbols mark the positions of tunnel entrances. A green line indicates tunnels. Most green lines lead to the alien structure.

5. *Locker.* What the players see is a metal plate in the wall, about 1 m high and 2 m wide. Inspection will reveal the presence of hinges and a lock. The lock must be shot off to be removed. The interior space is about 4 m deep. Animal parts and pieces of vegetation are stacked neatly around the walls. The temperature is 5 degrees C. Throwing food will distract hungry natives for 2-12 rounds, allowing the characters to escape, if they think of trying it. In addition, the locker may be used as a refuge in the event of suit air conditioner failure.

6. *Bracelet.* This is a key, recognizable from "Flare Star." It may be used to open a tunnel door.

7. *Intact building.* The characters may barricade themselves here if attacked by natives. "Storm" furnishes an example of alien architecture. 10% of buildings contain lockers.

8. *Metal door.* This is an entrance to the tunnel complex. It

is described in more detail above.

9. *Ruined building.* This structure is of more than usual interest, since there are many pictures on the surviving walls. Small statues or models may be found among the rubble. This place was once a school or museum. After an hour's study, the characters would come to understand the aliens' life-cycle, and would learn that the alien structure is a place of sanctuary, probably inhabited.

10. *Box with plungers (1).* This "black box" is an alien recording machine. Playing with the plungers will, on 8+, produce a loud babble which will attract 2d6 hostile natives.

11. *Box with plungers (2).* This is an alien fuel cell, which depends on strict chemical balance for operation. Playing with the plungers will cause a yellow panel light to burn. Two minutes later, the yellow light will start flashing, and a loud, keening noise will start. In 30 seconds, it will explode, doing 5d damage to everyone within 5 meters, and 2d to everyone within 10 m.

12. *Box with plungers (3).* **Comm** unit. On first use, it will behave as Box 1, but with the addition of a bright, confusing visual program. Repeated use will, on 10+, open a channel to the alien structure. A disc-shaped alien will appear on the screen. The box will make babbling noises, perhaps additionally repeating statements made by the characters, but in a strange, distorted way. In 1d6 x 10 minutes, an air/raft of alien design will appear overhead and land as near as possible to the comm unit. A door will open. There is nothing inside but a number of disc-shaped seats. The controls are locked, and the whole thing is under remote control. If the characters enter, they will be taken to the alien structure. (End of adventure.) If they fire on the air/raft, the aliens will decide that they are hostile, and refuse them entrance under any circumstances.



their searching. However, this will make them more vulnerable to native attacks.

Every search will result in the uncovering of one "Interesting Artifact" and 1d3 "Useless Artifacts." Some of these will be helpful; some will be time wasters. Regardless of their immediate usefulness, they may prove valuable if brought back

to a human-occupied world. After the adventure, roll two dice for each artifact. A 2 or 3 means that it is essentially worthless. 4-10 means it will bring a 1d6K credit bonus from Caledon Ventures. On an 11 or 12, the artifact is worth 1d6 x 10K credits. A second identical artifact will bring no additional bonus.

*The adventure:* Characters who try to reach the alien structure directly will find it almost impossible. It is surrounded by a mob of natives who are attracted to it by instinct. Moreover, no entrance is obvious from the outside, and the walls are impervious to anything the characters might use. Only parties who find a door have much chance of surviving the adventure.

Within the complex, the adventurers will finally meet the aliens they have been seeking, the mature form of the tubular natives who have been so dangerous. These are disc-like beings, a meter and a half across, with a civilized and peaceful nature, and a technically sophisticated culture. They will be friendly; once communications are established and a common language worked out, they can not only help the adventurers survive, but prove a lucrative source of trade for Caledon Ventures, giving the party a fat bonus to look forward to on returning to civilization.

Referees may prefer to await the publication of the last of this series of adventures on Storm, which will show some of the practical difficulties of setting up relations with this race.

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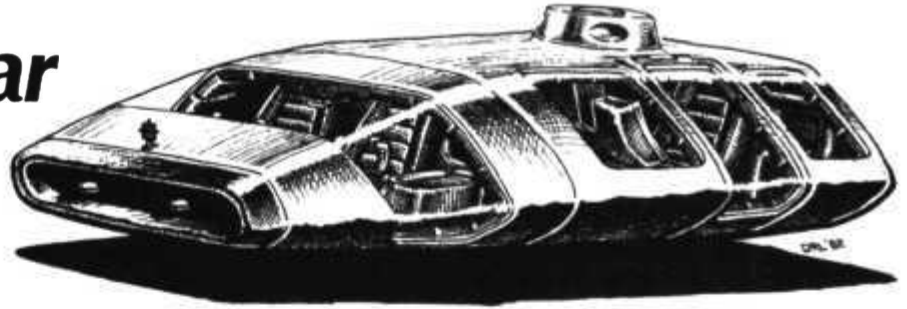
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# The Omni-Car

by William A.  
Barton



This article, originally written for the "Tools for Terrorists" article from TSG 49, involves spy-cars in *Traveller* terms. It was inspired by several James Bond movies and by *Car Wars*. Here we have the Omni-Car, a Tech-10 wheeled ground vehicle - with surprises.

It appears to be an ordinary ground car and comes in a number of models: sedan, sports car, etc. The Omni-Car is also capable of operation in the air and underwater. On land, the vehicle is treated as any other ground car, except that it can travel at speeds of up to 250 km an hour on good roads. An optional trunk rocket booster can help it achieve speeds of 500 km for two periods of 30 seconds each; a ground vehicle mishap roll must be made each time it's employed, +4DM if used on any terrain but good road. Range before refueling is the same as for the ATV. Ground vehicle skill is required for use in the land mode, though Jack-O-Trades may be substituted (and nearly everyone can drive it to *some* degree).

The car is also equipped with two anti-grav modules similar to those in the air/raft, which can lift the car and carry it through the air at speeds of up to 90 km an hour. Air/raft or Grav Vehicles skill is required to use the car in this mode, though Jack-O-Trades may be substituted here. Anyone may make short hops, but a roll of 8+ must be made to avoid damage to the vehicle when landing without any skill.

To enter the water mode, the Omni-Car must be driven or flown into a body of water. The interior of the car is airtight and pressurized for dives of up to 500m below the surface. Air is recycled and will last as long as the plant is operating. Once in the water, the wheels retract and all external compartments seal, and a stern propeller and rudders extend from below the trunk compartment. Underwater, speeds of 35 km/hour are obtainable; range is the same as for the land mode.

In addition to the normal controls, the Omni-Car contains a radar and sonar scope, a tracking scope for tracer devices and a multi-band long-range communicator/scrambler. Forward, the vehicle mounts a

pair of linked LMGs concealed behind the parking lights (2,500 rounds each) and two mini-missile/torpedoes in launchers disguised as bumper adornments (radar-controlled or heat-seeking, CR 1000 each, treat as tac missiles doing 8d damage). A length of chrome running down the center of the hood to the hood ornament is actually the tube for a laser; the hood ornament is the sight and a target scope is mounted in the dash above the steering wheel. Treat the laser as a laser rifle +5 to hit. It will operate as long as the power plant is undamaged and fueled, though each firing reduces the range of the vehicle by 10 km. Standard features rearward include a smoke generator which may be converted to a laser aerosol at CR 1000 extra, and which may also generate various forms of gas, an oil slick ejector (4 uses per fill), and a drop compartment, which may be filled with spikes (CR 1000 refill) or mines (CR 100 each, compartment holds five - treat as a Tech 9 hand grenade, exploding when run over). The hubcaps of the wheels are extendable blades capable of cutting through most tire materials, reaching to a range of one meter.

All windows, windshields, lights, etc., are made of bulletproof glass equivalent to battledress. The body of the car is armored to the equivalent of battledress-3 (three levels better protection than battledress). In addition, a special armored plate, equivalent to two layers of Tech 10 AFV armor, can be raised from a recess behind the rear windshield, giving extra protection to the occupants. Tires are self-sealing to avoid blow-outs and have an inner core of solid rubber. Treat as cloth-2.

Internal protection includes retractable glass partitions (bulletproof) which can be raised to isolate the back seat from the front and the driver from the passenger seat. Any of the partitioned areas can be flooded with knock-out gas by the driver. All seats in the Omni-Car are ejection seats which are independently controlled by the occupant or the driver, who has an override control. The driver's seat, when ejected, converts into an auto-gyro (see *Sorag* for details) for which Rotary-winged Aircraft skill or J-O-T is needed.

A special electronic key is needed to

unlock the doors and trunk of the Omni-Car, as well as to trigger the ignition. If the correct key is not inserted, or if a special code known only to the keyholder is not tapped in first, the person inserting the key will receive a shock similar to that delivered by the Taser. Forced entry into the locked car in an attempt to bypass the locks will send a charge through the entire body of the car (this charge can be activated by the driver from the inside, too). Locking up the car automatically sets up the shock-trap.

Options to the Omni-Car include the aforementioned rocket booster (CR 2000, CR 1000 per refill); a trunk flamethrower which may be installed if the rocket booster is omitted (CR 2000, good for ten shots CR 200 per reload); a taillight-mounted liquid ejector capable of shooting a pressurized stream of water, paint, or other liquid up to 30m for 10 seconds (CR 800, good for two shots); anti-personnel mine strips disguised as side chrome (five to a side, CR 200 each, treat as LAG flechette round for range purposes and RAM flechette round for armor DMs and damage; use the group hits for shotguns rule at all ranges except close); an active/passive IR system (CR 2500); and external sound system/speakers for creating sirens, other vehicle sounds, miscellaneous noises, and amplified vocals (CR 3000). A mini-computer may also be installed as an option, and the driver's compartment may be psionically shielded for five times the cost of a psionic shield helmet.

Base price for the Omni-Car (minus options) is CR 450,000. Average weight is 3 tons. The Omni-Car must be specifically ordered. It is manufactured by Ahab Transport, Ltd., which has branch offices on most subsector capitals throughout known space and manufacturing plants on many TL 10+ law level 1 worlds (8+ for a plant to be on any specific world). There is a six-month waiting period on any order, plus shipping time. Government agencies may be able to secure them quicker, and terrorists often obtain them by hijacking shipments. Omni-Cars are generally only used by groups or organizations whose scope of operations is restricted to one particular world.

# Expanding ASTEROID



by Steve Jackson

In my humble opinion, GDW's *Asteroid* is a moderately great game. Though its background is deliberately silly space-opera, the game system is fairly well-integrated, rewarding intelligent play and punishing impulsiveness. The components are attractive, the rules almost without ambiguity. I like it. But that's not to say I wouldn't make changes . . .

The first time I saw *Asteroid* played, I started making notes for alternate rules. Space-opera has so MANY clichés, after all . . . and this game comes nowhere close to covering them all. *Asteroid* is a great simulation of the bad sci-fi movies on the late show . . . as far as it goes . . . so let's see what else we can get in there.

**Rule clarifications.** There are two slightly ambiguous spots in the *Asteroid* rules, both concerning gunfire. When I have played it, it's been assumed that

(a) a wounded character can fire normally, though he cannot move;

(b) you may not attack an enemy in your square with a gun or disintegrator; you must make a melee attack.

**Counter changes.** For some reason, GDW did not mark "to hit" numbers or movement values on the character counters. I suggest you do so; referring to the table slows the game too much.

## New Characters

*Dr. Ferguson Liang* is in his late '80s, but remarkably well-preserved; the last two decades of his life have been spent in

space with Project Skymine and its predecessors. He is now the chief medic on Phobos. He is also a master of kung-fu. Dr. Liang's characteristics are 0 with guns (he hates the things); his KILL number is 4; his move is 4, and his melee value is 5. (It would be 6, but kung fu does not work as well on robots.) He has the special ability to give any wounded character first-aid (by means of his med-kit). He can also give himself first-aid. Each turn that Dr. Liang remains stationary in the square with a wounded figure, and they are not attacked, roll one die. On a roll of 1, that character's wounds vanish.

**"Whizkid" West** is a 12-year-old Science Fair winner; his prize was a field trip to Phobos. His special talent is robots — in fact, he's better at it than the Prof himself. Whizkid can fix a damaged robot as the Professor can. He can also attempt to repair an "erratic" robot on any turn when it is not being hostile. Proceed as if the robot were inoperable, rolling one die to determine the time needed to fix it. Continue to roll each turn for the robot's behavior. If it becomes hostile before it is fixed, it will NOT attack Whizkid - but it may attack other characters. The time he spent repairing the robot is lost.

Whizkid's statistics are 1 with guns at either close or far range (he's never used a gun before); 4 to kill, 2 to melee. He moves 4 squares per turn. Like Sasha, he is +1 to hit because of his size.

Neither the Professor nor Nicholle will leave the station without Whizkid. The other characters will gladly leave without him; he's something of a brat until you get to know him, and most people don't want to. (Exception: If Whizkid fixes and/or kills three or more robots, he will become the group mascot, and NOBODY will leave without him if he's still alive.) Whizkid will not leave if the Professor and/or Sasha are still in the station.

*Crazy Eddie Wadsworth* is a natural mimic. A research chemist from Phobos Station, he was acquainted with the mad Dr. McDonald, and can imitate his face, voice, and walk very well. A robot will not recognize Crazy Eddie as an enemy when it sees him unless (a) he attacks it, or (b) a 1 is rolled on one die. Only one die is rolled regardless of how many robots can see him. Once the robots attack Crazy Eddie, they will keep attacking him until he can get out of the sight of all robots. Then he can start over, confusing the robots all over again. But once he enters the room with the computer brain itself, he is recognized on a 1, 2, or 3 for the rest of the game.

All Crazy Eddie's statistics are the same as those for the Professor. He's not much of a fighter, but he makes a great scout.

## New Gadgets

Who ever heard of a mad scientist leaving only one or two inventions lying around? There's no telling WHAT Dr. McDonald might have been working on. Some possibilities:

**Anti-Gravity Belt.** Any character wearing this belt can move any number of squares per turn, as long as he/she moves in a straight line and does not pass through doors or walls. The belt is no good in ventilator shafts, either - not enough space to fly in. The A-G belt will not break down.

**Autodoc Belt.** Push the button on this



belt and it will diagnose the nature of your wounds and inject medicine to cure you. *Theoretically.*

Any character except the robots and Sasha can wear this belt and use it if he/she is wounded. On a 1, 2, or 3 the wound is cured. On a result of 4 the belt breaks. On a 5 the belt breaks and kills the patient. On a 6 the belt kills the wounded character but does not break. As long as the belt does not break, it may be passed between characters and used any number of times. Lucky, Whizkid, and the Prof can fix this belt as though it were a robot.

If you want to balance the game in favor of the humans, you may make up extra counters for these two belts and hide them on the station. To keep the game balance the same but add unpredictability, let the robot player make note of which type of belt — invisibility, A-G, or autodoc - the one belt counter represents. Whizkid and the Professor can tell them apart. Anyone else will have to put a belt on and try it to see what it does.

Any belt is destroyed if the character wearing it is killed by gunfire.

### Help for the Robots

With all these new characters and toys for the human side, the robot player needs some assistance. Possibilities:

*Jump-Doors.* The stairway markers between levels should be numbered in pairs, on the FRONT of each counter: two numbered 1, two numbered 2, two numbered 3, and two numbered 4, one each ascending and descending. Now these stairs represent jump-doors — teleporting devices. Number 1 up leads to number 1 down, and vice versa — but the counters may be placed anywhere in the station, as long as the UP counters are on the lower level and the DOWN counters are on the upper one. Now the humans will have a harder time finding their way around the station.

*Dummy Chits.* Take the "clone soldier" counters and let the robot player add them to the free placement group. These are dummy chits to confuse the human player. A dummy has no effect and is removed as soon as a human can "see" it. If Ms. Jones uses her powers on a dummy, the counter is NOT removed, even if she is told the truth about it.

*Robot Tradeoffs.* Point values are assigned to all robots as follows: Utility = 1. Mining = 3. Roamer = 5. Thus, the robots of the original setup are worth 57 points. The robot player may change the robots in his setup to any combination (counters will have to be improvised) that does not exceed 57 points' worth. Note that the setup rules remain the same; therefore, at

least 3 utility robots must be taken.

*Mobile Computer Brain.* The computer brain could have mounted itself on one of the mining robots. If you use this option, just remove one mining-robot counter from the setup, and let the computer move and fight like a mining robot. The advantage to the robot player is that the computer brain can "run away" from the fight - and it may do this at any time, even before it is "seen" by the humans. The disadvantage is that any roll which destroys the mining-robot body will turn off the computer automatically, initiating the self-destruct sequence and making it easier for the humans to win.

The computer player does not have to tell the humans whether the brain is mobile until he moves the brain or until it is seen.

### The Cyborg Double

Saving the best for last, here's a truly fiendish variant rule. Dr. McDonald, as part of his evil plan, prepared one very sophisticated robot . . . a cyborg double of one of the men at Phobos Station. He smuggled the robot to Phobos, where it did away with its human counterpart and replaced him. So now one of the human "heroes" is actually a robot! The Professor suspects, but has no proof . . .

If you use this variant, then you must (a) allow the player to start with a ship holding 14, instead of 12, or (b) allow the robot player only 45 points' worth of robots. At the game's beginning, the robot player looks at the human characters and chooses which one is the cyborg. It MUST be one of the adult characters from Phobos Station - and it CANNOT be Lucky, who is too lucky to have something like that happen to him. The robot player notes which character is the cyborg. Due to faulty programming, the cyborg does not sabotage the ship on the way in, or anything sensible. In fact, it does not reveal itself until the computer brain is first seen. At that time, it immediately changes sides. The robot player reveals the note showing who is the cyborg and takes command of that character. It moves and fights just as before - but for the other side.

Before the cyborg is revealed, it will, of course, be controlled by the human player. The robot player will have to avoid destroying his own cyborg - but if he can keep the human player from guessing who is the cyborg, the surprise will be even more deadly.

Ms. Jones can attempt to use her powers to find out who the robot is. She may "scan" any or all of the characters (only once per character, and only one

per turn). The robot player draws chits, as usual, to determine whether she lies or tells the truth. Thus, her determinations are not likely to be reliable.

One expedition member can attack another at any time the human player is sure he knows who the cyborg is. (The cyborg cannot start hostilities unless the computer brain has been found, and *must* start hostilities at that point.) If a "human" character is killed, the robot player must say either "Looks human," or "There are wires inside" - whether the character died as a result of a robot attack or a human attack. The only way to know who the cyborg is — until the computer brain is found — is to kill it.

For true fear and uncertainty, set up the scenario so the human player does not even know whether there's a cyborg at all — let alone who it is. Use dummy chits (as described above) and the robot point system. The robot player takes EITHER 57 points of robots OR 45 points plus a cyborg - and does not tell the human player which option he has taken, unless and until the cyborg is revealed . . . if there is one.

*Asteroid* is a lot of fun. These variants will make it even more unpredictable and "camp." Watch out for the cyborg, and good hunting.

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# THE NEWCOMERS

by J. Andrew  
Keith



In "Periastron" (April, 1982), the team of trade pioneers aboard the *Far Trader Scotian Huntress* was forced by events to seek help from the enigmatic natives of the planet Storm, a dangerous, inhospitable world on which the *Huntress* had crashed. Fighting the elements and bands of hostile savages, the adventurers ultimately took refuge in an underground complex built by the civilization they sought.

Outside, *Storm's* violent summer continues unabated. But though it is now over 50°C outside, inside the complex the temperature remains at a cool 10° or less. Thus the adventurers no longer need worry about straining their overworked environmental gear in the grueling heat of the planet's periastron passage. Repairs to the *Scotian Huntress* have been delayed by the conditions outside, but can be resumed at leisure. In the meantime, the trade team has settled down to the job it came to do in the first place - opening up full commercial relations with the natives.

After several days of intensive effort with computer language translators and similar learning aids, communications with *Storm's* inhabitants began to open up. They are flat, disc-like beings .5 meters tall but nearly 1.5 meters in diameter. They have achieved a fairly sophisticated

Tech Level 8 civilization . . . though it is radically unlike those of the mainstream cultures the *Scotian Huntress* crew is familiar with. Computers and other micro-electronics systems are unknown; even communications technology is far below par, a result of high interference generated by the active star the world circles. But all in all, there are many points of contact between the two cultures, and it is plain to all that the H'Oskhikhil (as they call themselves) seem quite likely to be excellent partners for the team's employers, Caledon Ventures, in future mercantile relations.

The scientists with the team have taken the opportunity to learn a great deal about the life cycle of *Storm's* inhabitants. With a hot, young star and a wildly eccentric orbit, *Storm* spends a period of over five hundred years in the cold phase of its long journey in orbit. Conditions are reasonably stable, but bitterly cold; only an unusual amount of vulcanism and internal heat keep the temperature warm enough to sustain water-based life, and that only for forms which can adapt readily to underground life for the period of apiastron. At the end of this period, though, comes the short but incredibly violent "summer," when the world passes close to the star and suffers from the massive environmental upheavals of peri-

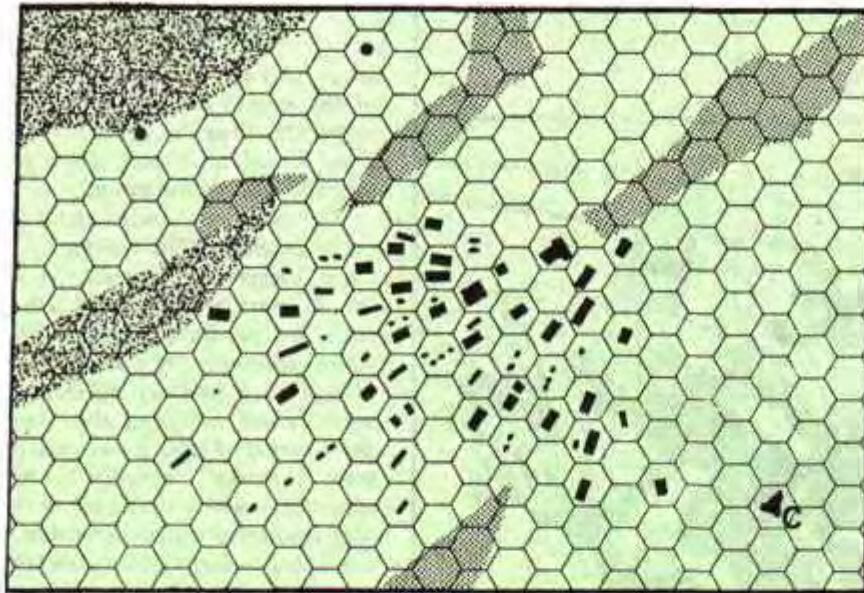
astron. No life can adapt to both phases of the world's orbit without massive adjustments. Thus the life forms on *Storm* were forced to change drastically each time the cycle rolled around.






The cycle has brought about an interesting adaption. The coming of the hot phase triggers the reproductive mechanism in most of the world's life. Several buds are produced in each life form, which consume the parent animal and emerge as a radically different juvenile stage. These offspring then undergo a short period of rapid growth and development - marked primarily by voracious appetites - which ends only as the dropping temperature after periastron triggers a metabolic change. After a metamorphosis period, the adult form is ready to emerge into the cooling world. This life cycle gives rise to great longevity, one of the main attributes of *Storm's* varied animal life.

Conditions on *Storm* hampered the development of civilization there, but several factors overcame the influences against it. First, the long lifespans of the H'Oskhikhil and their generally superior intelligence have made each generation capable of quick development and growth. More importantly, though, was the race's discovery of its own cyclic nature. A few individuals could survive periastron by living in cool polar caves, for example, though survival was a hit or miss affair. Eventually, it became possible to transmit knowledge accumulated by one generation to the emerging population of the next one. Gradually, the H'Oskhikhil learned to build places of refuge that could survive from one generation to the next. A few of the most intelligent of the race, together with records of civilization and knowledge, could thus be guaranteed the chance to help the next generation start ahead of the last one.

Long-lived, extremely intelligent, and dedicated to peace and learning, the inhabitants of *Storm* seem the ideal find for the trade team. But the coming of humans to *Storm* proves a mixed blessing; the natives are soon given reasons for regretting their hospitality. When this happens, the trade team finds that it stands to lose more than just a new market and a commission check . . .

# Carelline Landing Site



-  Impassable terrain
-  Rough terrain
-  Buildings
-  Tunnel exit
-  Carelline landing site

This folio adventure is designed for characters of almost any background attached to the Trade Pioneer Team aboard the Type A2 Far Trader *Scotian Huntress*. The referee may draw characters from any source desired, including existing campaigns. It is urged that characters have some skill in ground combat.

No specific *Traveller* books, adventures, or supplements are required to play this adventure; the basic *Traveller* set (books 1, 2, and 3) is sufficient. However, almost any of the additional materials available for use with *Traveller* can be of value in enhancing the enjoyment of this situation. For example, deck plans of several ships that appear in this adventure can be obtained from GDW's Supplement 7, *Traders and Gunboats*.

**Background:** For the trade team stranded on Storm, the passing of weeks has gone almost unnoticed, lost in the intense excitement and hard work of cementing relations with the natives within the enormous refrigerated complex known to the travellers as "the Citadel." The H'Oskhikhil have been thoroughly introduced to the concepts of computer technology, and are most interested. Blessed with an innate ability to do very rapid mental calculations, the race has never been pressed to develop the basic

computer technology usually needed for a civilization like theirs; "organic computers" were the rule instead. Now, however, the *Scotian Huntress* party has been able to show the many advantages of using computers - not only in their functions as sophisticated calculators, but as devices which can regulate equipment, store information, and otherwise improve the basic abilities of the H'Oskhikhil calculators. Dealings had, in fact, progressed to the point where trade — computer components and software exchanged for the radioactive elements so common on Storm - was ready to begin in earnest.

Then came a crisis.

A new market can't be concealed forever. Though knowledge of Storm had been carefully shrouded before the beginning of the voyage of the *Scotian Huntress*, the facts were bound to leak out eventually. And representatives of other firms were bound to turn up sooner or later, to challenge the Caledon monopoly.

Unfortunately, the firm that came to Storm after the *Scotian Huntress* consisted of employees of Carillines, Ltd. Carillines was ruthless, aggressive, and well-known for its determination to turn a profit, no matter what it cost others. Sometimes little better than legalized pirates, the Carillines thrived in the loose

political structure of Reavers Deep. And they found Storm, arriving while the Caledon team was still engaged in negotiations.

Linked by land-line communications, the population at the Citadel received reports from other refugees near other cities on Storm. When the Carillines ship landed near a city 200 km northwest of the Citadel, new reports began to come in on the activities of the newcomers. The new arrivals spread out to explore the ruins of the city; they plainly became convinced that conditions were ripe, in the wake of a catastrophe, to pick up loot and plunder indiscriminately. Their ruthlessness made the deprivations of the juvenile H'Oskhikhil look harmless by comparison. When juveniles appeared, they were slaughtered without mercy, and pursued when driven off. It seemed that the leader of the Carillines expedition believed that no civilization remained to trade with. So no efforts were made to study the world, the artifacts which were found, or the native life. Instead, looting and destruction seemed the main task of the entire group of Carillines crewmen.

For a time, the actions of the newcomers could be looked upon as unfortunate, but not really harmful. But when the decided to investigate the local refuge, the



plunderers went too far. No entrance was obvious; therefore, they made their own with lasers mounted aboard a launch. The result was a disaster. Many adult H'Oskhikhil perished in the initial invasion, while the rest were doomed by the destruction of the refrigeration units that kept them from suffering the reproduction cycle. Through it all, the humans acted without thought, without apparent understanding of the situation. When the refuge was attacked, the transmissions quit. But everyone in the Citadel knew well enough what had happened. And many couldn't help but become suspicious of the humans they had welcomed into their own midst.

Opinion was split within the Citadel. Many H'Oskhikhil were convinced that the humans from the *Scotian Huntress* were friends. These individuals gave the team a warning of what could come of the crisis . . . and a way to avert it. It was quite possible that the humans would be expelled, or worse, killed out of hand - as a safeguard, or in reprisal - unless dramatic proof were offered of the humans' good intentions and their lack of connection with the newcomers. If, for instance, the Carillines crew were subdued . . .

So, thanks to the thoughtlessness of other humans, the *Scotian Huntress* trade team was caught in an unusual dilemma. Without proof of their goodwill — proof that could only come from an attack on the larger, better-armed party from Carillines - they were in great danger. They could lose the friendship of a freshly contacted race . . . the new market opened after such hardship and difficulty . . . and, indeed, their very lives.

### Referee's Notes

*Resources:* The referee may designate the contents of the ship's locker from the *Scotian Huntress* on hand at the Citadel (in an ongoing campaign, this may already be known). Equipment and weaponry should be limited somewhat, and depend largely on the referee's judgement of the best balance to strike between the difficulty of the situation and the size and abilities of the group. All characters should be armed, though the quality of weapons or the quantity of ammunition may be curtailed somewhat to keep the group from indulging in indiscriminate attacks.

Transport to the area in which the Carillines ship has landed is limited. The *Scotian Huntress* can fly, but has limited endurance due to breakdowns (still under repair) in the life support systems. The ship's air/raft has been cannibalized for parts; if it is still flying at all, it is very

much restricted. The H'Oskhikhil have remote-controlled air/rafts (see "Perias-tron"), but these are limited in range by the poor quality of radio signals in the presence of the energetic star . . . and by the fierce storms that can ground or destroy grav vehicles during the summer season. The same storms make it impractical to handle native air/rafts directly, though a character with grav vehicle-4 can pilot such an alien vehicle as if his skill were grav vehicle-1.

The best means of transportation available is an underground transportation system which connects the refuges with one another. A ground car can carry the party to a point near the destroyed refuge, where a break in the tunnel (made during the attack) disrupts further movement. Either of the two tunnel exits shown on the map may be used by the party upon their arrival at the new city.

*The Carillines Party:* The opposition is divided into two groups, the smaller of these is on board the main Carillines ship, a 400 ton "far trader" (the subsidized merchant vessels is described in *Traveller* Book 2). This party consists of four individuals, who will be found either aboard or in the immediate vicinity of the ship. If an alarm is given as a result of the player-character actions or attacks, the ship party will withdraw to the defense of its vessel. It is very unlikely that the adventurers will be able to gain access to the ship with weapons normally available, once the alarm is given. The ship is armed, carrying two dual laser turrets plus sandcasters. The site of the merchant ship is marked on the map; if the ship lifts off, the referee should keep track of any movements it may make.

The larger party crews the launch, an armed auxiliary equipped with a beam laser. The party contains eight people, who may be on board or operating on the ground nearby. The referee may secretly choose a location for the launch at the

### Event Table

Roll two dice once each half-hour:

2 *Lightning:* Fierce flashes of lightning begin. A character caught in the open must roll his dexterity or less to take cover. Failure to make the throw results in 8d damage. No ships may fly during a lightning storm.

3 *Natives:* See *Natives* rule.

4 *No event*

5 *Storm:* Visibility drops to medium range. All stats of individuals caught in the open are reduced to one-half original values. They remain this way as long as the character is in the open. Lightning will hit exposed individuals on a roll of 10+, made once per five minutes. Effects are as in 2, above. The storm lasts for 5d minutes.

6 *Natives*

7 *Storm*

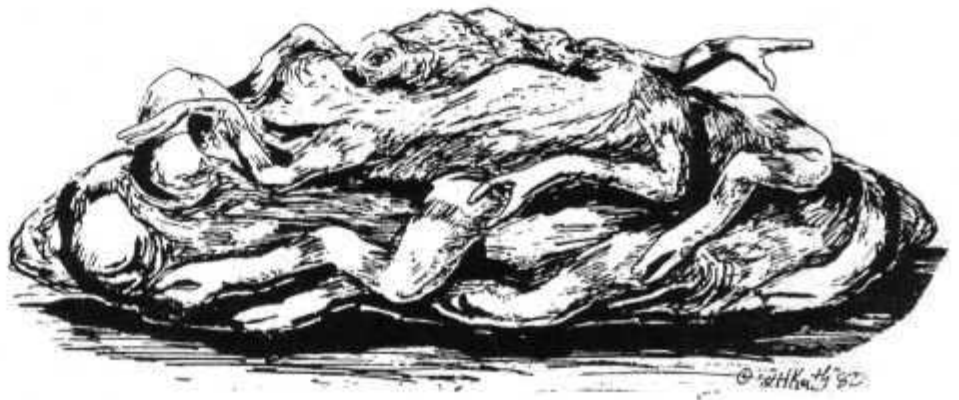
8 *No event*

9 *Natives*

10 *Natives*

11 *Natives*

12 *Carillines launch:* The armed launch appears overhead, hovering above the location of one or more player characters. It remains overhead for 2d minutes, before flying off to a destination of the referee's (secret) choice. During the time it is overhead, characters will be spotted any time they move, or on a roll of 10+ made once per minute. The Carillines people, who have been troubled by juveniles, will tend to sweep areas where they spot intruders with laser fire. A hit by laser fire is made on a roll of 9+, and is treated as lightning (see 2, above) if it is made.





adventure's start; it may, however, move from this location as a result of event table directions.

Both groups should be armed and equipped as the referee sees fit; on the whole, they will be better outfitted than the Caledon team. Exact equipment should be selected by the referee for maximum balance and playability.

**Conditions:** The unpleasantly high temperatures and the ozone content of Storm's summertime atmosphere make vacc suits an absolute necessity for humans travelling outside. Violent storms and other natural hazards will be a great danger for adventurers and their opponents; the event table regulates the occurrence of these. The referee should feel free, however, to add further dangers to overcome. On Storm, the elements are the single worst danger to unwary adventurers.

**Natives:** Native encounters are governed by the event table. Natives are hot-phase juveniles, tall, tubular, with four arms, four legs, and large appetites. They generally carry torches, clubs, spears, and other makeshift, primitive weapons and tools. A total of 1d x 10 may be encountered at any one time. They always attack when encountered, and make to distinction between one side or another. A native

attack breaks off when half or more are killed from the ranks of any given group. If a human is captured or killed, he will be eaten as soon as possible. Stats for the natives, for those who have not been following this sequence of adventures are: Weight - 100 kg. Hits - 20/9. Armor - none. Wounds & weapons - by weapon type (club, crude spear, or rock). A0F052.

**The Adventure:** The players must attempt to overcome both groups of Carillines crewmen. The exact course of their attack will, of course, depend on the strategy and tactics they choose to adopt. In general, taking the 400-ton trader ensures that none can escape . . . but the trader may prove almost impossible to take without capturing the laser mounted on board the launch.

By and large, the best possible result from the players' point of view is one which ends in the capture of the senior Carillines people, rather than in outright slaughter of all involved. If the enemy leaders are captured, they can be brought before the H'Oskhikhil in demonstration of the team's support for its new friends. Also, if all the opposition is killed or merely driven off, the H'Oskhikhil may not believe they were enemies of Caledon's people at all, but may suspect collusion of some sort.

**Resolution:** Final negotiations depend upon the skill of the adventurers, the success of the attack, and similar factors. The referee should roll on the Reaction Table (Book 3). The following DMs apply: If Carillines people were taken captive, DM+3. If the Carillines ship escapes, DM-2. Appropriate skills can also favorably modify the result.

A result of 10+ indicates an overwhelmingly successful voyage, and will result in the award of a special bonus (discussed below) to the group. Results of 8-10 are successful, and provide standard commissions for the team. A result of 5-7 results in a breakdown of negotiations, with no bonus becoming available to the party despite its efforts. A result of less than 5 causes a complete rejection of the humans; referees who so desire may choose to set further adventures around attempts to escape from this disaster.

For successful completion of the mission, the party receives a commission, amounting to Cr500,000 for each member. If a special bonus is awarded as discussed above, the commission is raised to Cr750,000 apiece. The referee should feel free to increase or decrease these amounts as appropriate to his campaign.

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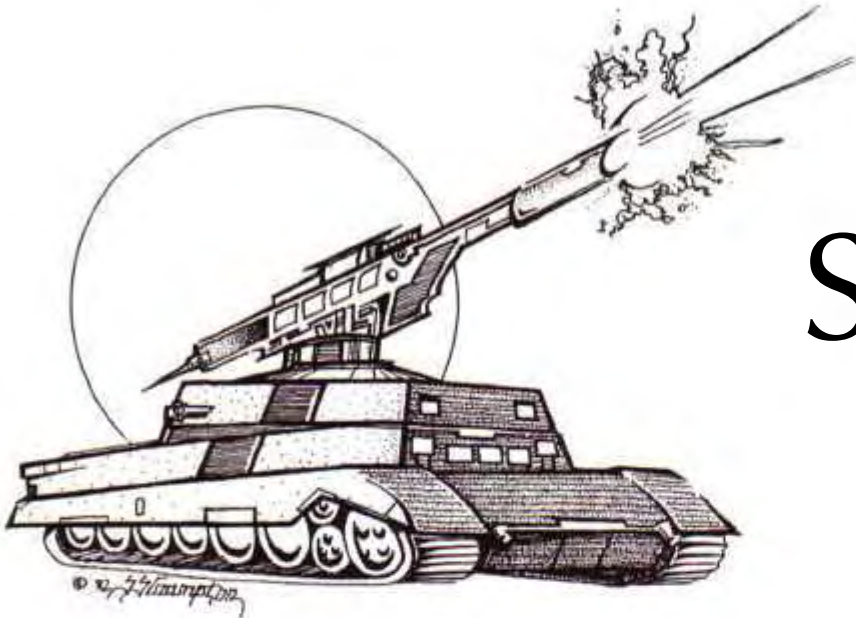
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# Featured Review:



# STRIKER

by William A. Barton

*Striker*, GDW's system for 15mm miniatures conflict in the *Traveller* universe, is here. For role-players, miniature aficionados, and *Traveller* fans, the event would appear to be a happy one.

*Striker* comes packaged in the format *Traveller* appeared in originally, with the same sort of box containing three 6" by 9" rules booklets, each 48 pages long. But *Striker* also includes a 16-page booklet of design sequence tables, two sheets of charts and tables, two dice, and a beautiful cover painting by William H. Keith. The rule booklets themselves are divided into basic rules, advanced rules, and equipment. A first glance at the box and contents leaves a highly favorable impression, as is usually the case with GDW products. Upon closer examination, this impression is reinforced, page by page and rule by rule ...

*Striker* is an impressive piece of work. It covers just about every aspect of small-scale warfare one can imagine, from tech levels 5 (World War I) to 15 (*Traveller's* Imperium, some 3,500 years in the future), with only minor omissions. There are more rules crammed into that little box than in any set of SF miniature rules with which I'm familiar. And *Striker* provides what is probably a closer simulation of real-life combat situations than *any* miniature rules set currently on the market,

SF or otherwise.

That last statement might irritate miniatures enthusiasts who already have a favorite set of rules. I'll give what I consider the reason for *Striker's* superiority: The game's most innovative rules are derived more from role-playing systems than from miniatures conventions. Unlike most miniatures rules sets, *Striker* does not allow a player to move any and all of his forces in whatever manner he likes. In addition to their morale ratings, troops have initiative ratings which determine how much and how many types of action they may take beyond direct orders. This rates from low for recruits to average for regulars and veterans and high for elites. Recruits may do nothing but follow orders exactly as given - and even then not unless they are under the leadership of a higher-initiative NCO or officer. On the other end of the scale, elites may improvise fairly extensively outside their orders if the situation warrants it. Translated into role-playing terms, the elites and (to some extent) the veterans represent player-characters, while the regulars and recruits become similar to NPCs who do not always behave exactly as the player-characters might wish.

To further place the player in the "role" of the commander of a small unit of troops, *Striker* utilizes highly innovative rules for command and communications.

Once they've received their operating orders prior to start of play, most troops will continue to follow those orders until they accomplish their objective, receive new orders, or contact the enemy and are fired on. Low-initiative troops must be led by a high-initiative officer or NCO (or at least an average-initiative NCO) to follow **orders** at all. The amount of time it takes to give orders once the game has started is four 30-second turns; **this** is for troops in direct contact (stands touching) with the officer or NCO giving commands. The time is doubled for troops in communication by radio and may be greater in other instances (though possession of a battle computer will reduce the time and a map box will halve it). What this means is this: Should an isolated squad get into trouble, instead of a player immediately being able to move other forces to assist, the entire skirmish could be over before communications could be established with another unit and orders given to send assistance to the besieged unit. This might seem disconcerting to the miniatures player who is accustomed to the "omniscient I" approach. Yet it is much more realistic than most systems, giving the player a greater appreciation of the problems a unit leader must face in combat. Role-players, used to the inconsistent actions of obstinate NPCs, should have less trouble adjusting to the concept.



Some will note similarities between the leadership systems of *Striker* and those of certain boardgames such as *Squad Leader*. Indeed, there are some parallels. However, the overall scope of *Striker* is much greater than in most such games. Historical gamers who tend toward miniatures should find much of interest in *Striker*, provided they'll look beyond the *Traveller* "SF" label; nearly any non-naval historical action from WWI through modern times may be simulated using the game's systems. (*Striker* could be a good ploy to introduce your historical gamer friends to SF — and vice versa.) The influence of GDW's own *TacForce* modern miniature rules can be seen in *Striker*, too.

In fact, to give justice to the plethora of material contained in *Striker* would take much more space than is available for this review. To summarize: Book 1, *Basic Rules*, covers in three sections the bare necessities needed to play. "Preliminaries" outlines the game scale (1mm = 1m) and Terran environment of the basic rules, tells the role of the referee, and covers force composition and organization, morale, and initiative, and how to create unit cards. "Playing the Game" provides the turn sequence, the command, communication, and morale effect rules, and movement, visibility, and spotting rules. "Fire Combat" covers the mechanics of direct and indirect fire for infantry units, vehicles, and artillery, including special rules for grenades, tac missiles, and lasers, and notes how to determine and administer wounds, vehicle, weapon, and structure damage, and the effects of combustion and smoke.

Book 2, *Advanced Rules*, breaks down into four sections: "Advanced Rules," "Optional Rules," "Campaign Rules," and "Integration with *Traveller*." The first section adds such exotica as meson accelerators, MRLs, point defense, drones, nukes, electronic detection, ammo use, encumbrance, weather effects, night and non-Terran planetary environments, engineering rules, and rules for explosives and other important factors. Optional rules cover melee, chemical warfare, and the use of aircraft (either in ground support or dogfighting), while the campaign rules allow continuing conflicts with guidelines for treating the wounded, combat repairs, experience, and budgets. The final section of Book 2 explains how to integrate *Striker's* combat systems with *Traveller's* role-playing and its universe. It covers the initiative and morale differences of the major races of *Traveller*, including info on Zhodani psionics and K'kree claustrophobia, how to determine military budgets for the worlds of the Imperium, conversions from *Striker* armor and weapons to

*High Guard* for orbital bombardment by starships, and the philosophy behind the Imperial Rules of War for those wishing to stage conflicts within the Imperium.

Book 3, *Equipment*, is just that — lists and lists and lists of weapons and equipment, along with design sequences for vehicles, weapons, aircraft, and helicopters. Four sample vehicles help the novice wade through the mounds of material on design.

Aside from the massive amount of material contained therein and the realism of command and communications rules, what else about *Striker* makes it worth purchasing? Again, there just isn't room to list all of the game's good points. One that deserves mention is the combat system. Rather than the regular *Traveller/Mercenary* system, *Striker* utilizes the cleaner, more realistic *Azhanti High Lightning* combat, extended to cover blade and melee weapons, heavy support and artillery weapons, explosives, and all the other aspects of combat. Players who have been annoyed by the armor-as-a-DM-to-hit syndrome of *Traveller* can breathe a sigh of relief: Here, armor makes no difference on whether you get hit or not; it may keep the hit from penetrating, or at least will reduce its effects. Armor and weapons have been further broken down into tech level differences; battledress and combat armor of higher TLs give more protection than those of lower TLs; lasers become more powerful at TL 13+, etc.

The less-than-satisfying melee system of AHL has been replaced with one using all the blade, brawling, and natural weapons of *Traveller*, plus a few more. New weapons have been added, from WWI bolt-action rifles to magnum revolvers to laser and gauss pistols, though the off-the-shelf *Traveller* autocannon is missing, replaced by rules for designing autocannons. Information on how many dice damage each category of wound is also included.

Other high points include integrating coherent rules for vehicles into *Traveller*, a boon to every ref who's ever had to improvise such information on the spur of the moment. The explosives rules include details on the nature and use of TDX.

The vehicle and explosives rules alone should save referees enough time to make the purchase of *Striker* worthwhile.

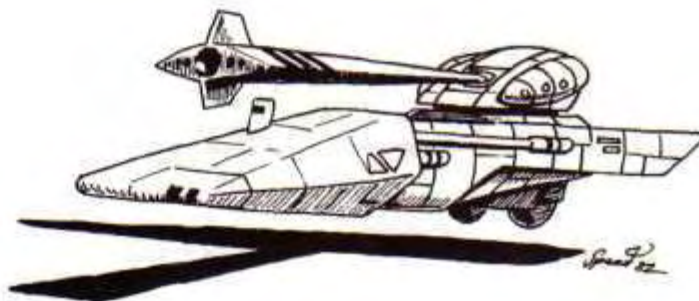
Another selling point is the vast variety of vehicles and weapons that can be designed. Some examples of vehicles have already appeared in FASA's *Uragyad'n of the Seven Pillars* and GDW's *Broadsword*. Virtually any tank, truck, car, jeep, weapons carrier, APC, etc., can be designed with these rules.

While *Striker* is a major addition to both the *Traveller* and miniatures markets, there are some problems. Some are due to printing and typesetting errors, some to omissions, and a few to problems inherent in the system (though there are far fewer of these than in most comparable works). The major flaws, as I see them, are few enough to list. In doing so, I hope to emphasize how good the overall system is and to note a few things that may need addressing in future editions.

So what is wrong with *Striker*? For one thing, the vehicle and weapon design rules are incredibly complex and require constant leafing back and forth between Book 3 and the design sequence booklet — and occasionally the other books for complete understanding. It doesn't take quite as long to design a tank as it does a *High Guard* starship, but it can come close. Unless you're a mathematical whiz, you'll want to make sure you have your pocket calculator handy at all times. Some designs don't work out well or are extremely tricky to figure out; you have to be careful when putting energy weapons on vehicles with energy-draining propulsion systems, for instance. The design system just isn't as simple as some might like.

I'm not totally satisfied with the helicopter design rules; while other vehicles and craft can be designed almost from scratch, these must be taken from a single table, leaving little variety. The aircraft rules are a bit sketchy, too, when compared to the other rules; they seem to have been added as optional rules, mainly for completeness, and may not play a great part in most *Striker-related* actions.

The game scale is another problem, one common to miniatures games. The





1:1000 scale seems grossly off for 15mm figures, especially if miniature buildings are to be used. This is difficult to prevent without having a playing area too big for most rooms. Using 1/285 miniatures at the scale for the 15s here would produce a greater picture of reality (and more vehicles are available in this scale than 15mm), but that would lose some of the flavor the *Traveller* 15s provide. Another possible problem with the scale, pointed out to me by Don Gallagher, is that it is set up mainly for infantry; vehicles (especially grav vehicles and aircraft) can travel far too swiftly in this scale, making their use difficult at times. Also, to simulate close combat, it will be necessary to use AHL, as *Striker* can't really handle such close action.

Another problem with the system is the rule for combined armor values. If a soldier wearing battledress is hiding behind a brick wall and is hit, the armor values of the wall and armor are not added together, as might be expected. Additional armor has a negative-gain effect, so that less than the total protection of each is provided when they're added together. This may actually happen in some cases, but it seems that a bullet, after penetrating several cms of brick, would be less, not more, capable of penetrating battledress. Also, note that if a character is hit



in an area not protected by such cover, ignoring armor for the moment, the wound is considered more severe than indicated on the damage tables for vital spots. This is an area that could use some expansion.

Another concept I have some questions about concerns the continued existence of the four-man fire team at higher tech levels. It seems that as weapons become more deadly, units would become more dispersed to avoid higher casualties caused by high-radius burst weapons, until the basic unit would become the single infantry soldier. When one battledress-protected, FGMP-15-wielding soldier with a grav belt can pack as much fire power as a modern squad, why bother with fire teams — unless you want to provide the enemy with more targets?

There are some omissions — though not many — of items I had expected to be included from advance notices and seminars on the game. For instance, flame

throwers and flame weapons in general are not covered at all, except for the smoke effects of incendiary rounds. But these and others are probably items that had to be edited out of the final draft in favor of more important items and rules. Hopefully, they will appear in future supplements.

As a brief note to those who have the first printing of *Striker* and noted, among a few other points, the missing Laser Penetration Table, an errata sheet appears in *Journal 12* which includes this table and a revised Grav Vehicle Speed Table among other corrections that are to appear in the second printing.

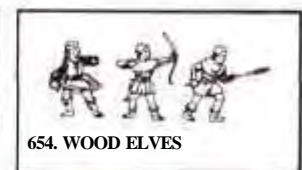
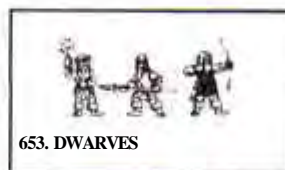
In the light of the overall value and usefulness of the system, it seems pointless to nitpick. Despite such problems as I mentioned above, *Striker* is probably the most thorough, well-conceived and worthwhile set of miniature rules yet published for SF or any post-19th century conflict. I heartily recommend it to *Traveller* players and miniature enthusiasts and look forward to future expansions.

*Striker* is designed by Frank Chadwick and published by Game Designers' Workshop. It retails for \$12.00 and contains three rulebooks, design sequence table booklet, two sheets of tables, and two dice, boxed.

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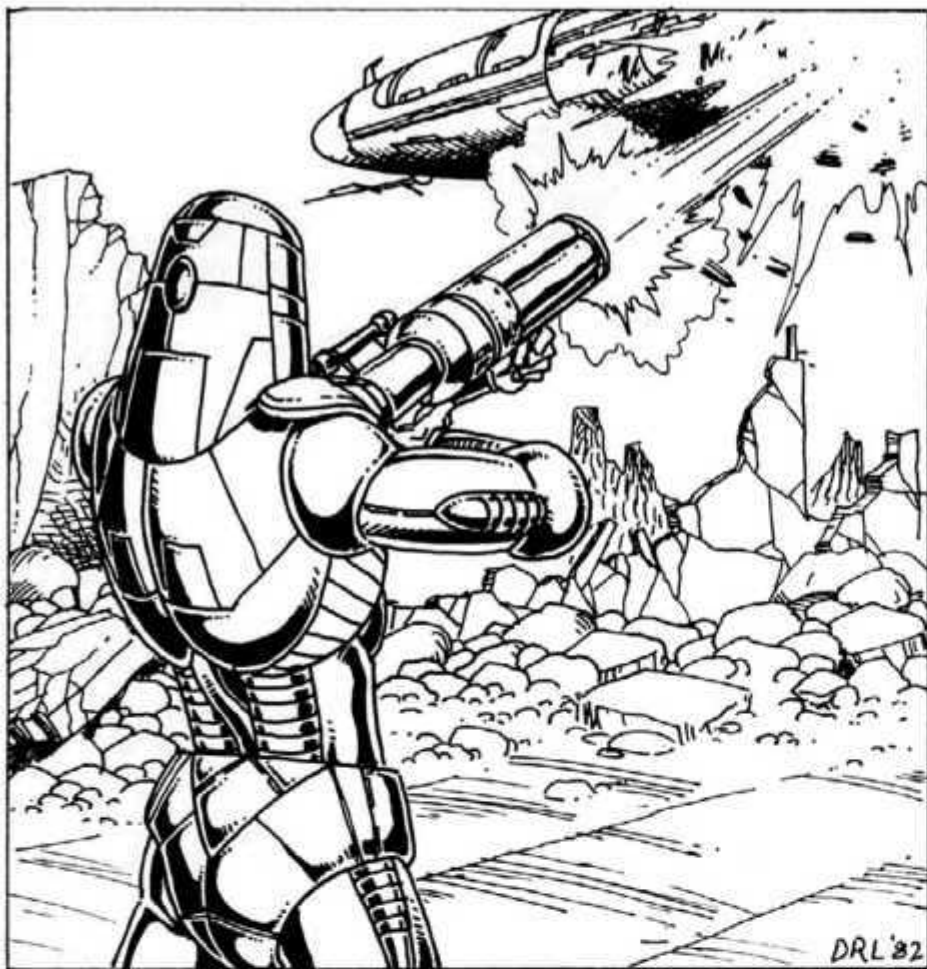
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# The Splat Gun

by William A. Barton

The Explosive Scatter Gun is one of the favorite heavy weapons of covert operations teams, due primarily to the extensive amount of damage a single burst from the weapon can do. It is ideal for hit-and-run raids in which the goal is to inflict as much damage in as short a time as possible. Originally developed by the Asian, and later copied and adapted for human use by unscrupulous arms manufacturers on the fringes of Imperial space, the weapon is more commonly known as the "Splat Gun" (any target hit goes "splat") or the "Can Opener."

The Splat Gun is highly illegal anywhere in the Imperium and Imperial-controlled space. In fact the weapon is outlawed on *all* worlds in known space except those with a law level of 0 - and it is strictly controlled on most of these,

depending on government type. Note that the Asian military version is exempt from this outlaw status and can be found in use by military units in the Hierarc and by Asian mercenary units outside the Imperium; the Asian version, however, is unusable by all but the most powerful of humans.

Anyone found in possession of a Splat Gun in Imperial space is subject to a 20-year jail term in a planetary or an Imperial prison (though liberal bribes can possibly cause authorities to overlook mere possession). Use of a Splat Gun in the commission of a crime, particularly one which causes damage to property or loss of life, however, carries by Imperial regulation a mandatory death penalty (bribes to avoid this must be enormous — more than most characters will be able to afford). Paradoxically, a number of restric-

tive governments on the fringes of the Imperium and in the Beyond outfit their own armed forces with these weapons; they are excellent for stopping rioters.

The weapon was originally developed by the Asian at about Tech Levels 10-11 to replace the RAM Grenade Launcher as an anti-armor, anti-battledress weapon for use against higher-tech-level troops. It proved highly suitable for that role; its 10-shell burst was capable of opening up a suit of battledress or a lightly-armed ATV or APC. It also proved capable of inflicting damage on more heavily armored AFVs, thanks to the mixture of HEAP/HE shells in its single-burst magazine and its phased firing nature (this triggers some of the shells in the burst microseconds before others, setting up a "drilling" action when the shells hit the target).

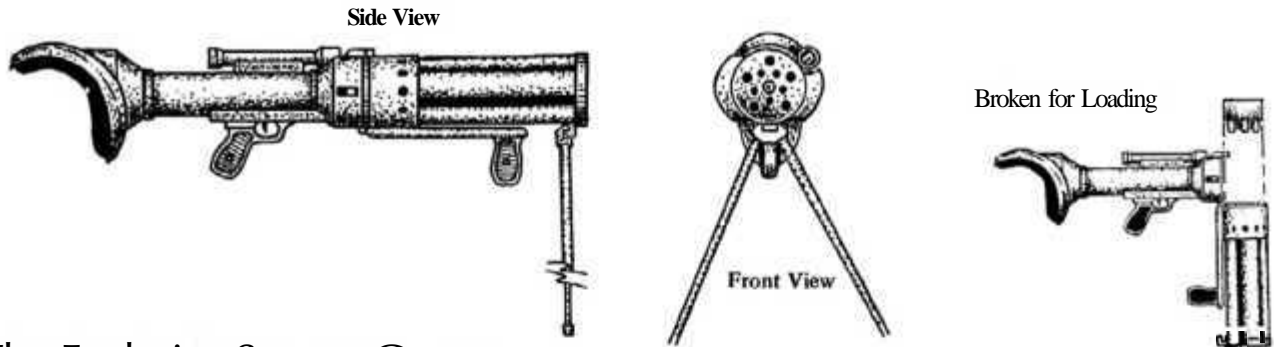
The weapon is of a medium-length tubular design, resembling a short, thick bazooka 850 mm in length. A padded cut-away shoulder stock curves over and around the shoulder, supporting the weapon and absorbing *some* of its substantial recoil. In front of this is the pistol grip trigger and sighting scope. About halfway along is a small flash shield, forward of which is the chamber where the 10-round magazine is inserted. The remainder of its length is the barrel cluster.

A secondary hand grip is located near the *end* of the barrel cluster, just behind the receptacle for the optional telescoping bipod attachment. The gun breaks at the flash shield for loading. The magazine is inserted into the chamber and rotated 1 cm clockwise until a click is heard, signifying it has locked into place. A small catch unlocks the magazine, which is removed by rotating counterclockwise and lifting from the *chamber*. Though there will be slight variations on different models, most Splat Guns will conform this basic configuration. All models weigh about 5 kg.

The base price of the Splat Gun CR 3,500. The price of a single magazine is CR 250. Each magazine weighs 1 kg, mainly due to the sturdy construction required to prevent it from disintegrating upon firing. The optional bipod costs CR 150, weighs 500 gm and stands 1.5 meters high when fully extended. Prices on the black market, especially in areas where the gun is illegal, will be much higher.

The magazine holds ten shells, half **HEAP**, half **HE**. All ten shells in the magazine are fired simultaneously when the trigger is pulled, in a phased sequence, the **HEAP** slightly ahead of the **HE**; At medium range, the 10-round cluster can destroy or heavily damage anything up to





## The Explosive Scatter Gun

heavily-armored AFVs; even at long and very long range it can do a lot of damage. The shells travel in a tight pattern until they reach medium range, when they begin to spread out. An ATV- or air/raft-sized target will still take **all** ten shells at medium range, unless the aim is slightly off; a human-sized target at that range will take about four. By long range and very long range, the shells have spread into an even wider pattern, so that the "group hits for shotguns" rule may be used, with each of four adjacent human-sized targets taking two shells each and up to two adjacent ATV-sized targets splitting the burst between them. It is not recommended that targets at short range be fired at unless the firer is wearing battledress or similar protection, as he would be caught in the backlash of the explosion and may take one-quarter damage (on a roll of 7+, 10+ if in battledress). Firing a Splat Gun at a target at close range is a most effective (and messy) way to commit suicide.

Damage done by the gun is **4d per shell**. Range DMs are: Close = (-3); Short = (+1); Medium = +6; Long = 0; Very Long = -4. Armor DMs are: None = +5; Jack = +5; Mesh = +4; Cloth = +3; Reflect = +5; **Ablat** = +4; Battle = +1; each level of AFV armor = -2. The Required DX for the Splat Gun is 8, with a -3 DM for DX of 7-. Advantageous DX is **11** with a +1 DM for DX of **11+**. In addition, it takes a ST of 8+ to fire the Splat Gun effectively due to the tremendous recoil; if ST is less than 8 there will be an additional -2 DM to hit and the arm of the firer will be numbed for 1-6 rounds and may even be dislocated (roll 6- on 2d for **1d** damage due to dislocation).

Any character firing a Splat Gun, regardless of ST, must roll ST or less on 2d to avoid being knocked down by the recoil **unless** braced against something solid, wearing battledress, or using a tripod. It

will take a character who is knocked down one round to stand up or move to prone firing position, plus one round to position the gun. A character wearing battledress does not risk dislocation, but if his unadjusted ST (before doubling for battledress) is 3-, he still risks numbing his arm (roll 6- for 1-3 rounds numbness). No function (firing, loading, etc.) may be performed with a numb arm. Use of the optional bipod with the Splat Gun will add an additional **+1** DM to hit.

It takes two rounds to replace a spent magazine with a new one, three if the firer is treated as evading. If the bipod is being used, the reloading time is three rounds, four if evading.

Whenever the result of a to-hit roll is an unmodified 2, the weapon has **jammed** and does not fire. It will take 2d6 combat rounds to clear the gun, 3d6 if evading. If snub pistol ammo is used in the magazine (see below), an unmodified roll of 2 indicates that the gun has exploded (a saving roll of **11+** means it jams instead, as above). The firer and any characters within 3 meters must roll 10+ to avoid **1d6** damage if it explodes. If the roll is successful, characters take only **1d** damage (all the ammo didn't explode). Characters adjacent to firer need not roll if they are in battledress, but still take **1d** damage. The firer, even if in battledress, must still make a saving roll or take full damage. The gun is useless if it explodes.

Note: Halve all times listed for reloading and clearing jams if the character using the Explosive Scatter Gun has a specific skill in the weapon (ex-Terrorist or trained by one with the skill), due to familiarity.

If you are using the *Azhanti High Lightning* combat rules, or the *Traveller* AFV article in TSG 43, the stats for the Explosive Scatter Gun are as follows: Effective = 50m (25) +4; Long = 250m (20) +2; Very Long = 500m (15).

While it is capable of doing massive damage within its range limitations, the Splat Gun does have definite liabilities. In addition to the amount of time necessary to reload the weapon and its extreme illegality, there is the problem of availability, both of the gun and its ammunition. Even on the black market, the Explosive Scatter Gun is not readily available due to the penalties associated with its possession in Imperial space.

Whenever a character is attempting to locate a Splat Gun, a roll of 10+ will indicate that one is indeed available for purchase somewhere on the planet. **Where** and how a character finds it will be up to the referee. DMs that apply to availability: +1 if attempting to locate it on the black market; +1 if the population of the world is 9+; -2 if population is 3-; +1 if the law level is 0; -1 if the law level is 7+; -10 if tech level is 3-; -1 if searching within the borders of the Imperium; -2 if searching in a one-subsector radius of Core subsector; +1 if searching within the borders of the Asian Hierate or its colonies (but chances are a Splat Gun found there will be of the Asian variety, usable only by a character with a ST of **13+**). If a supplier is located, **he** will have **1d6/2** (minimum of 1) guns available. If the supplier is a black-market contact, the price of the gun will be 1d6 x base price (minimum **150%** cost if roll is a 1). Streetwisdom may help somewhat in getting a better price, as may the *Merchants & Merchandise* skill of Trade & Speculation, at the referee's discretion. A bipod will be available for each gun.

Just managing to locate a Splat Gun is no guarantee, however, that an ample supply of ammunition will be available. Splat Gun ammo is **not** sold **separately** outside of factory-sealed magazines, so the amount available is limited by the number of magazines a dealer has. Magazines *can* be reused at some risk by sub-

stituting snub pistol ammunition (either HE, HEAP, or both) for the regular shells. The fit is not exact and some problems may result from the use of snub ammo, but it is, at least, readily available. It takes one round to load the snub shells into a Splat Gun magazine, character considered evading. Explosive Scatter Gun magazines are somewhat easier to locate than the weapon itself. Roll 9+ for the magazines to be available, using the same DMs as for locating the gun, with an additional +1 if any Splat Guns are available on the planet.

There will be 1d6 magazines available per gun for sale or 2d6-4 magazines if the gun is not available (minimum of 1 magazine in either case). Black-market sources, however, may have up to 3d6 magazines available, but any number over the previously-noted rolls will be used magazines filled with snub ammo and sealed up as if new. Except under close inspection by a character familiar with the gun and its ammo, these will be indistinguishable from new magazines.

The price of a magazine from a black market source will be 2d6 x base price (halved if character discovers it to be a used magazine).

When snub pistol ammo is used in a Splat Gun magazine, the gun will gradually be damaged, and there is always a

chance that the magazine will explode, dependant on the number of times the magazine has been reused with snub shells. Roll 14+, with a +1 DM each time snub ammo is fired from a used magazine, for an explosion. In any event, a magazine may not be used more than eight times in this manner (or more than twice using actual Splat Gun shells) due to damage resulting from the slightly mismatched ammo. On the 9th time a magazine is used, it will always explode. An exploding magazine will do 4d x the number of shells it holds in damage to the firer and adjacent characters, and the gun will be destroyed.

A -3 DM to hit is imposed whenever snub shells are used due to the inexact fit of the shells in the magazine and chamber. Impose an additional -1 to hit if the target is in battledress or an armored vehicle unless half or more of the mix consists of HEAP shells, and a -1 DM if the same magazine is used more than four times. For every 25 times a Splat Gun is fired using snub shells, a cumulative -1 DM to hit is added to the gun *permanently* to reflect the damage caused to the barrel by the mismatched ammo. If improper ammo is used too often, the gun becomes worthless. Only an experienced gunsmith (Mechanical 4+ or Explosive Scatter Gun 2+ and Mechanical 2+) can determine the

extent of and repair such damage. The cost to repair the gun is 25% of its base price (50% if it has more than a -4 permanent DM).

Since black-market sources are not the most reliable, guns purchased in this manner may already be damaged due to use of snub ammo, just as magazines may be used ones filled with snub ammo. The referee should secretly roll 2d for each gun or magazine (other than the extras that will always be used) purchased. A roll of 3- indicates that the gun has been fired more than 25 times with snub shells; roll 1d6/2 for the permanent DM (minimum -1). A roll of 4 exactly indicates the gun has been fired 4d times with snub shells (4-24) and will develop the -1 DM on the 25th firing. A roll of 6- for a magazine indicates it is a used magazine with snub shells; roll 2d6-4 to determine the number of times it has been fired previously (minimum 1). (If you're not buying on the black market, roll 2 exactly on 2d for a magazine to be used and loaded with snub shells.) Weapons and ammo purchased in Asian space will never have been used with snub ammo, especially those that are strictly Asian design; there are strict laws against such practices in the Hierate, the Asian having too much respect for the weapon to tolerate misuse of it.

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DRL '82

# UNNIGHT

## *A Space Opera World-Setting*

by Stefan Jones

Special thanks to Jeff Jacobson,

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Map graphics by Elisabeth Zakes

*Unnight* is a prepared world-setting for *Space Opera*. Details of the world of Unnight, its peoples and societies, its creatures, its satellites, and suggestions for appropriate adventures are included. The Unnight system is located in the **Outworlds** sector; the FGU star-sector atlas of that name is helpful, but not necessary for play. With a little modification of planetary data and creature and character statistics, Unnight can be easily used as a setting for other role-playing games of a science-fiction or superhero nature.

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## I. Introduction

Unnight is the planet of a MO star in the Outworlds sector. It is one of the many worlds which were settled in the great wave of exploration and conquest begun in the first century interstellar. As with many of these early colonies, technical civilization fell, sending the inhabitants into a dark age. At present, Unnight is undergoing a rapid and rocky re-introduction to interstellar society. Great opportunity exists for those who seek power and wealth; people who have sworn to protect others from exploitation will find that they are needed here, also.

NPCs and situations provided will sometimes be given in vague form; this is to allow the SM to tailor the situation to his or her own play-style and the strength of the PCs.

## II. The Unnight/Orb Planetary System

Unnight is the larger member of a binary pair. The other world is Orb, an icy, quite low-density planet with a thin atmosphere and low gravity. The two orbit about a barycenter within Unnight; total distance between the two is about 1.055 light-seconds. The two worlds are face-locked, which prevents the nasty problem of huge tides sweeping across the globes. The "orbital" period



about the barycenter is 480 hours, about 20 Terran days. The two worlds' orbit about the sun (an MO class dwarf) takes only five days, or 2,400 hours.

Because of the face-locked attitude of Unnight, each hemisphere is lit by the sun for about 240 hours a "day." The planet's thick atmosphere and large oceans help to even out the drastic temperature changes that would normally result, but even so, one can expect snowfall at night and 30°C+ temperatures in the day. The reflected light from Orb provides a very adequate source of illumination (45 times the light provided by Terra's full moon) to the facing side of Unnight.

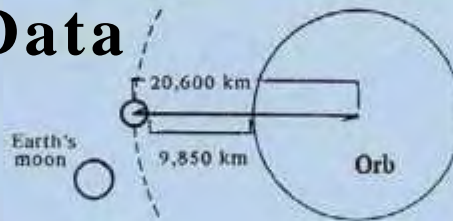
Overall climate on Unnight is on the chilly side. The ice caps are large; they extend, on an average, to the fourth line of hexes from poles on the map. (When land masses are near the poles, they can extend out to the fifth and sixth hexes, but when large ocean masses front the poles, the ice caps only extend to the second or third hexes.) Only the temperate and equatorial zones are comfortable to humans.

The stability of the binary system is anomalously high. Some planetologists have suggested that Unnight was terraformed by an advanced civilization, or even that the world was placed into its current relationship with Orb for some unknown purpose. More information on Unnight's astronomical data and climate appear in the boxes on pages 19 and 22.

## Astronomic Data

The Unnight/Orb planetary system, within the Stuzak solar system, is peculiar and has caused some speculation among interested astronomers. The two planets revolve around one another, around a barycenter within the surface of Unnight, in a relationship similar to that of Earth to Earth's moon. In addition, a small moon (unfortunately named Orbette by an unduly schmaltzy original colonist) rotates around Orb. The diagram to the right suggests the view of Orb and Orbette as seen from Unnight; a diagram, to scale, of Earth's moon shows the difference in the size of the bodies as seen.

An aesthetic oddity of the system is that an advantageously positioned viewer on Unnight's surface at night would see Orb rise at disk in the phase of the new moon, wax steadily to full moon at "midnight," 120 hours later, and then wane back to new-moon status by dawn, another 120 hours later. (However, as the Unnight night is 240 hours long and temperatures drop into the profanely uncomfortable,



Unnight's young lovers don't tend to marvel at this.) In addition, Orbette, revolving around Orb in an orbit perpendicular to a center-to-center line from Unnight to Orb (and thus visible all hours of the night), mirrors Orb's phases during the course of the orbit. Orbette's orbital period is 240 hours; thus, once per night, Orbette travels around Orb as a mirror of the secondary planet's lunar phase.

Astronomers have computed the mass of Orb and Orbette and can conclude only that the system is the result of some powerful planetary engineers or the result of an extremely unlikely natural development. Orb and Orbette are likely to be hollow; if they are, they are composed of a very strong material (such as core iron); else they would have broken up ages ago. The planetary system is strangely stable, and Unnight/Orb orbits well within

the former diameter of the sun - the diameter before it collapsed into its current dwarf stage.

The face-locked attitude of the two worlds diminishes the effect of tidal forces, but their proximity to the sun means that there are still tides.

Data on the mass, diameter, and orbital periods of the three bodies appear at bottom.

Eclipses occur twice an Unnight "year," or once every 1200 hours (2½ "days"). Therefore, there will be one daytime eclipse and one nighttime eclipse per 5-day year.

More data appear on the planetary map information sheet on page 22.

### Planetary Bodies Data

	Unnight	Orb	Orbette
Mass (in kg)	6x10 <sup>24</sup>	6x10 <sup>22</sup>	6x10 <sup>20</sup>
Diameter (in km)	13,000	19,000	2,500
Orbital Period (in hrs)	2400	480	240
Surface	1G	2.24x10 <sup>-3</sup>	6.59x10 <sup>-5</sup>



# Meteorologic Data

**Unnight** is a chilly world compared to Earth; the only relatively **comfortable areas** are within the equatorial regions.

On the chart below, the zones mentioned work this way in relationship to the planetary maps: The polar zones are approximately two hexes wide, and cold temperate zones are two hexes wide, the warm temperate zones are three hexes wide, and the equatorial region is five hexes wide. The chart below gives the normal temperature range in terms of season, planetary region, and whether it's noon or midnight. Naturally, there will be a **gradual** heating trend from midnight to noon and a gradual cooling trend from noon to midnight, so the SM can improvise any temperature of the day from these parameters. These are only normal temperatures; the SM can provide for especially harsh or mild seasons as he pleases.

The oceans have a moderating effect on temperature extremes. Within 500 km of the ocean, average the temperature listed above with 12°.

As for rainfall or other precipitation: The base chance for precipitation during a

summer or winter day is 15%. Modifiers: Within 500 km of the coast, +5%. In a large forest area, +3%. In the mountains, +5%. At night, +5%. In the spring, +10%. In the fall, -5%. The unvarying chance, regardless of season, for precipitation in a desert or polar region is 1%.

Another phenomenon of note: A full solar eclipse occurs at high noon of every Unnight day. The overall eclipse (partial plus full) lasts 6.6 minutes; the full eclipse lasts 4.2 minutes. (These times are somewhat **shorter** the further away from the equator you are, and at the poles only partial eclipses occur.) A lunar eclipse of comparable length happens every Unnight night at midnight.

	Spring		Summer		Fall		Winter			
	day	ngt	day	ngt	day	ngt	day	ngt		
1: polar North	-25	40	-12	-20	+12	-16	-4	-26	-12	48
2: cold temper.	-12	-25	0	-11	+21	-1	+13	-6	+8	-18
3: warm temper.	+16	+1	+20	+6	+26	+7	+22	+5	+20	0
4: equatorial	+30	+15	+30	+15	+30	+15	+30	+15	+30	+15
5: warm temper.	+7	+22	+5	+20	0	+16	+1	+20	+6	+26
6: cold temper.	-1	+13	-6	+8	-18	-12	-25	0	-11	+21
7: polar South	-16	-4	-26	-12	-48	-25	-40	-12	-20	+12
	Fall		Winter		Spring		Summer			

### III. History of the Unnight Colony

Unnight was settled in the first century I.E. by a Terran colonization group from a cooperative of Third-World nations. The ships, leased from an early trading company, left the half-million settlers in two groups on the new world, then headed for home. In the confusion of these decades, no follow-up visits were made. At first, this did not bother the colonists; they had plenty of equipment and all the wonders of 22nd-century Terran technology to help them. The gene-tailored crops were planted and prefab cities grew like weeds. At the end of the first Unnight-year, everything looked rosy.

Then disaster struck. The colonists' buildings were constructed of a fiber grown from gene-tailored microbes, a material which was cheap, plentiful, and versatile. Unfortunately, it was of a chemical base similar to that of Unnight's life forms, and the local microbes literally ate the stuff. During a spectacular eclipse of Orb, the colonists' buildings began to fall apart.

Within hours, the first colonization group was in big trouble. Plumbing, houses, important installations and the warehouses turned into piles of goo. The second group was warned, but before it could find a way to stop the destruction, the power generation facilities were gone.

As if to add insult to injury, the planet had been treating the colonists to a harsh year of rains and wind. Within days, the crops were ruined. A few resourceful individuals headed for the hills to hunt; some stayed in the landing-spot settlements to scrape through the year.

In ten years, the surviving colonists had learned to live off the native wildlife and wide forests. Towns of stone and wood appeared as the widely-spread refugees of disaster settled down to farm or hunt.

In a hundred years, the settlers formed nations. As nations always do, they fought over property and prestige. Technology was then low tech-two: swords and spears and primitive bows. Metals were scarce, especially those denser than iron, which made mines another object of wars.

Three hundred years after the great crash, a new force came to light: a wandering class of merchant/scholars who called themselves "Wizards." Everybody else called them Wizards, too. After all, they could throw balls of fire, cure diseases, summon demons, and kill their enemies with invisible forces! The Wizards became an important tool for the leaders of the kingdoms of Unnight; with a few hired Wizards, a battle could be won against amazing odds.

When Unnight was rediscovered by a Midgard survey cruiser some 50 years ago,

the settled regions of Unnight were divided among eight kingdoms. The Wizards had set up permanent schools and were busily expanding their power at the expense of superstitious commoners and greedy nobles. Technology had advanced to level three, with gunpowder known only to the Wizards, who used it to throw fireballs and launch rockets.

The Ardecco province of Midgard was given the task of contacting the people of Unnight. The Ardeccans chose to use the Wizards as a tool to spread off-world knowledge. The **Wizards**, pragmatic opportunists all, gratefully accepted the job, and are now telling tales of how they convinced a race of off-world demons to serve them.

At the time of the PCs' adventures, the Ardeccans' plans are proceeding smoothly. The commoners are starting to receive education and the fields are being sown in more efficient ways. Politically, things are not as hopeful: The eight nations are taking advantage of off-world knowledge to make their wars more widespread and frequent. There are rumors that **other** Midgard provinces are trying to muscle in on the Ardeccans' monopoly on native artwork and cultural items. Mercenaries who agree to use low-tech weapons are allowed to work on Unnight, provided that they work for the Wizards' Guild or their allies.



#### IV. Maps and Notes

The planetary map (page 22) is on a 1,375 km = 1 hex. The crosses are towns of slightly less than 10,000 people. There are hundreds of much smaller towns scattered about in the settled regions; for purposes of clarity, these are not shown.

The political map (page 23) shows the approximate borders of the eight nations. There are no set boundaries; as the local nobles are continually fighting for new territory, the borders tend to change regularly.

#### V. Nations and Peoples of Unnight

*Xinguth* is on the western limb of the Crassant continent. The land is mountainous and not very arable, resulting in a hunting- and herding-based agricultural system. The storms caused by the falling temperatures during the **night** are particularly fierce in *Xinguth*, due to its location between two major oceans.

The government of *Xinguth* is an unpleasantly harsh council of clan heads. The government uses its large army to keep the lesser clans in line and to patrol the borders. The Wizards of *Xinguth* are particularly corrupt and worldly, but make an effort to avoid overly improper acts that might upset the Guild.

*Xinguth's* population is two million, too large for the poor land and small fishing fleet to properly feed. The capital is *Bazilnio*, a closed city with a major trading port and a very crude starport that

the *Xinguthites* hope will attract off-world trade.

*Xinguth* faces away from *Orb*.

*Iquazor* is a very loose confederation of villages held together by a common church bureaucracy. The "nobles" of *Iquazor* are all clergymen or women in a church descended from *Terra's* Roman Catholicism.

The land is very fertile here, providing the *Iquazor* with the source of trade income from *Xinguth*. There are numerous fishing villages along the *Far Ocean* coast, which provide another source of food and income.

*Iquazor* has a very small, mostly ceremonial army. The clergy is not interested in expanding its territory or even fighting one another. The Wizards are not an important force in *Iquazor*, as they consider the underpopulated nation too weak to bother with.

As with *Xinguth*, *Iquazor* commands no view of *Orb*.

*Irwindanch* lies on the southern shores of the *Dawn-to-Dark Ocean*, on a narrow strip of land between the sea and the *Ghatost* mountains. The major sources of income are fishing and hunting.

*Irwindanch* is ruled by the *Khamis* family and its noble followers. There is no capital city, or even regional capitals. The fall of civilization made the *Irwindancers* a wandering people, and the tradition lives on in the government. The rulers of a region ride about in large caravans, touring their territory and stopping at towns

to settle local disputes. Every five years, the caravans meet, and a grand council/fair is held to solve any pressing problems and to celebrate.

In time of war, the landowners arm themselves and are led by the forces of the "local" noble's caravan guard. *Irwindanch* fights occasional skirmishes with *Xinguth* over islands in the *Dawn-to-Dark Ocean* and the mountainous terrain between the two nations. The Wizards in *Irwindanch* are very Guild-loyal and help the nobles preserve the status-quo between the nations.

*Irwindanch* does command a view of *Orb* — the further east, the better.

*Byilikin* is on the little-explored continent of *Carkip*. Most of the population lives on the coast, where fishing provides the country's major source of food and trade. The outback country is sparsely settled, and the coastal people consider its folk backward and uncouth.

*Byilikin* is ruled by a king and a council of village mayor/nobles. **Inland** regions are occasionally ran by outcast coastal nobles or, more often, by petty military officers. The government is based from forts and enforced by royal troops.

There are about half a million people in *Byilikin*. The standard of living is among the highest on the planet and is improving due to the intervention of the Wizards, who maintain a strong presence in the country.

*Byilikin* is in the *Orb-force* horizon zone, and so affords a poor view of the sister planet.

*Gamotch* is a large, flat country on the western shore of the *Incold Ocean*. The land is fertile, and even the desert regions have proved fruitful.

The country is governed by warlords. The head warlord acts as king and commands the navy. The military rule is harsh, but is supported by the enthusiasm of the people. The Wizards act as a moderating influence, which is much needed, as the individual warlords still fight over territory and make raids on each other and on other nations.

The military is large and well-equipped. *Gamotch* is currently at war with *Loosyick* over the rich, well-watered lands between the two countries.

Visitors are advised to exercise caution when traveling in *Gamotch*; offworlders are held in deep suspicion or outright hatred, and kidnappings and lynchings are not unknown.

*Gamotch* faces *Orb*.

*Loosyick* is a harsh land north of *Gamotch*. Much of the territory is mountainous or cold desert. The stormy seas of the north **Incold** Ocean make fishing a marginal source of food.



Like Irwundanch, the nobles of Loosyick travel about the lands in caravans. Unlike the Irwundans, the Loosyick nobles do this to tax and otherwise oppress the peasantry. The head of the country is a hereditary monarch who lives in a mountaintop fortress/palace called "The Scarps."

Due to the poor land and little mineral wealth, Loosyick cannot afford a large army. The Wizards greatly supplement the forces that do exist, as a weak Loosyick would invite invasion by Gamotch.

Loosyick also faces Orb.

*Mensod* is located on the eastern shore of the Dawn-to-Dark Ocean. Its fertile land and abundant mineral wealth make Mensod one of the richest nations on Unnigh. A good portion of the country is forested.

Mensod is ruled by a monarch and feudal lords. Fortunately for the commoners, the king and nobles are enlightened rulers and are concerned with the welfare of their people. The army and navy are very small — too small, in fact, to effectively protect Mensod from raids and invasions. As in Loosyick, the Wizards have intervened to preserve the status-quo.

The king's palace is located in the bustling port city of Meddyfice. The primary starport of Unnigh is also located near Meddyfice, and the Wizards' Guild's nom-

inal headquarters is in the vicinity.

Mensod commands the best view of Orb of all the planet's nations.

*Kiroon* is located north of Mensod. The ocean currents make the weather warm but rainy, a boon for the farmers on the rich coastal regions. There are numerous ports on the ocean, and fishing and shipping have become major industries.

Kiroon is ruled by the Tyrant of Tyrnington, an absolute ruler chosen by force and contest from the army. The aristocracy in Kiroon consists of rich merchants and landowners who try to curry favor from the Tyrant. The commoners are generally poor and illiterate, but enthusiastic about their country and its wealth.

The country's army and navy are large, but the Wizards do not give any support to Kiroon, as they believe the country is not keeping up with their goals. Despite this, Kiroon is waging an economic cold war with Mensod.

Visitors are welcome in Kiroon, and the picturesque capital city of Tyrnington is an excellent trading center. Mercenaries are warned by the Wizards' Guild to seek employment elsewhere.

Kiroon is also illuminated by Orb at night.

*Races:* The settlers of Unnigh came from a wide variety of backgrounds on

Terra. Virtually all were from the "Third World" nations, particularly those in South America and Africa. **Because** there was little chance for the various colony groups to meet, trade, or intermix during the long period of chaos after the collapse, distinct racial types still appear. Xinguth and Iquazor are both populated by folk descended from Latin-American countries, and have cultures similar to those of that Terran region. Irwundanch was settled by people of Mongolian-Asian descent, while the remaining countries have peoples of African ancestry. Offworlders will be easily recognized as such, unless a specific offworlder if one of those racial stocks and has heavily studied Unnigh culture and dialect. Student of the appropriate Terran languages will be able to communicate with Unnigh natives, if somewhat clumsily.

Basic economic data is presented in the box on this page.

## VI. The Wizards

One of the most unique aspects of Unnigh's society is the existence of the Wizards. These scholar/scientist/showmen are not really sorcerers, of course, but they do their best to keep the common folk and greedy nobles convinced that they are.

Actually, the Wizards are the descend-

## Economic Data

Unnigh's peoples, existing as they do in a very feudalistic society, have not developed very sophisticated rates of exchange or economy mechanics.

In fact, the primary mode of exchange is (naturally enough) still the barter system. Regional lords take their tithes and taxes in livestock and goods. Major cities do have a monetary system; the dominant coin is the *plata*, a silver coin. The rough exchange rate of the *plata* is one such coin per fifteen credits; thus, especially to the Unnigh peasant, possession of such a coin would be a godsend. *Platitas* are worth a tenth of the major coin, and a

*cente* is one one-hundredth of a *platita*.

Coin money is not commonly found outside major cities, and actual credits are not used for exchange except in Meddyfice, location of the planet's starport. In addition, the Wizards' Guild carefully limits the amounts of exchange of monies, so that a bare minimum of Unnigh coinage ever makes its way off planet; stringent inspections at the starport also help regulate this. All trade is handled on a barter basis.

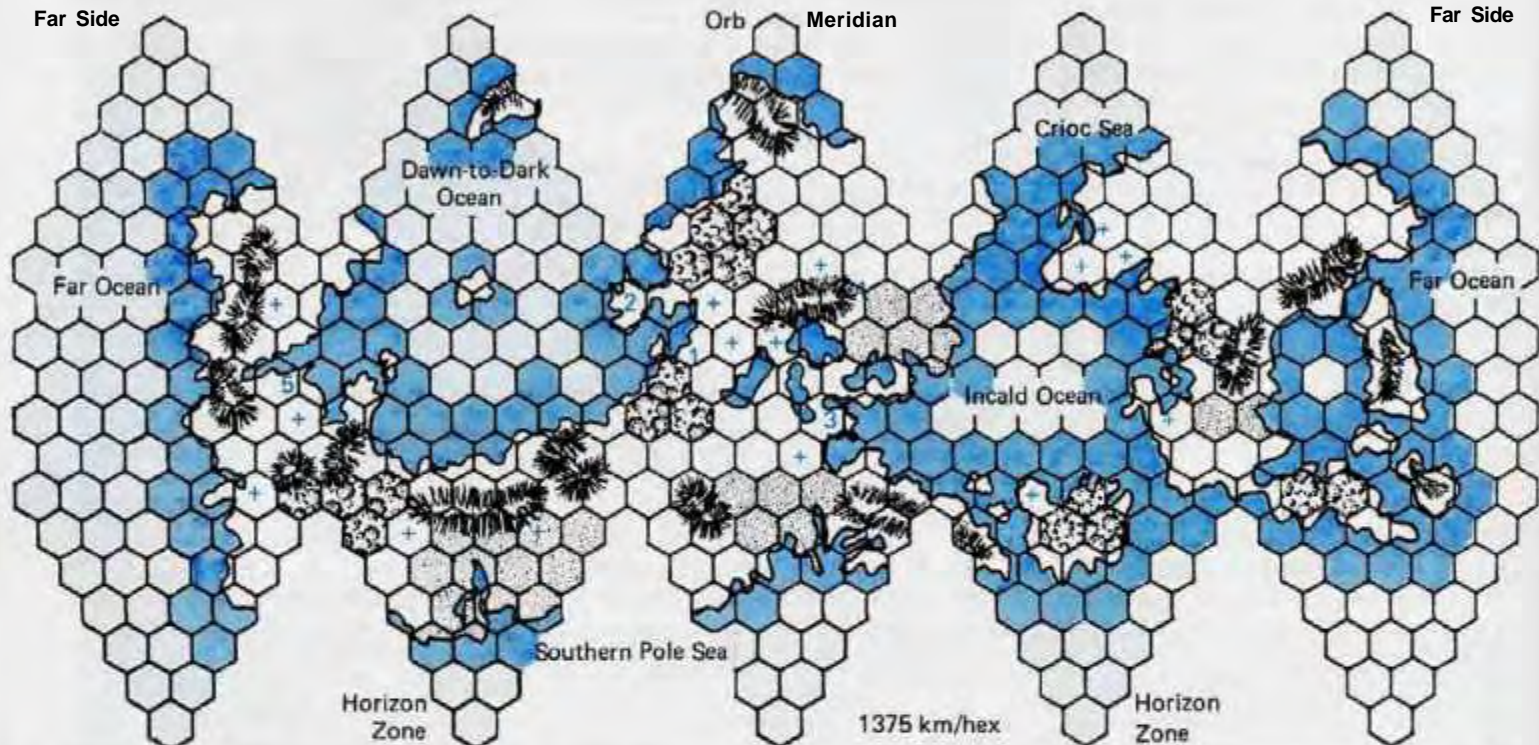
Other rates of exchange do occur in backwoods minor cities and among strange clans. The SM should feel free to create these as he pleases.

United Federation of Planets  
Department of Interstellar Survey

Survey Evaluation, Planet Unnight  
Star System Designation Suzak  
Stellar Primary Type MO (White Dwarf)  
Planets in Star System 5  
Bearing from Marker Star 258°  
Distance from Marker Star 56 ly  
Vertical Coordinate -32  
Planetary Type Terran

Orbital Distance 303 LS  
Length of Year Five "days"  
Length of day/month 480 hours  
Temperature Range -48 to +30°C  
Planetary Diameter 13,000 km  
Surface Gravity Field 1.0 G  
Hydrospheric Rating 60%  
Atmospheric Type Oxygen/Nitrogen  
Comments on Atmosphere: Moderately dense, has an anomalously high percentage of noble gasses. The density of the air tends to level temperatures.

Comments: Unnight is the heavier of two bodies in the planetary system. The other element, Orb, stays at a mean distance of 1.055 LS. Orbital period about the barycenter is 480 hours. Both worlds are face-locked, which makes the Unnight day 480 hours long, also. Orb's high albedo and angular diameter provides Unnight with 45 times the light of a moonlit night on Terra. The temperature changes are levelled in effect by the dense atmosphere.



MAP	Ocean	Desert	Mountains	Kingdom Borders
KEY	(Shallows)	Forest	Plain	Major Cities

United Federation of Planets  
Contacts Service

Sentient Race Report, Planet Unnight  
Technological Level 3  
Sentient Race Type Human Standard  
Population Level 12.5 million  
Population Density low-very low  
Social Organization Aristocratic  
Societal Strength 5  
Xeno Acceptance Index 6%

Major Cities	Population	Starport Facilities	Docking Charges
1 Meddyfice	20,000	D	50/10
2 Tyrnington	15,000		
3 Byreville	8,000		
4 The Scarps	11,000		
5 Bazilino	17,000	E	50/ 5

Government:  
Type of Government Multi-Government  
Bureaucracy Level Generally low  
Support index variable

Loyalty Index variable  
Repression Index @ 50%  
Corruption Index @ 15%  
Law Level 17  
Tax Rate @ 40%

Political Parties and Significant Policies:  
There are eight kingdoms on Unnight, all feudalistic. The commoners have some petition powers. The "Wizards" have considerable influence through fear and respect.

Current Political Situation:  
Party in Government Feudal Lords  
Stability 90%

Vote —  
Party/Parties Opposing Wizards' guilds / Freeman's guild

Vote —  
Current Foreign Alliances:  
Trade Alliances Contact service of Midgard's Ardecco province prevents import of high-tech goods. Outworld League junior partner.

Military Alliances *League Defense treaty.*  
SADAR and patrols maintained to protect the world from piracy or invasion.

Other Alliances None  
Planetary Trade and Commerce:  
Industrialization Index Primitive agricultural  
Average Income 300

Technology and Anomalies The "wizards" are skilled chemists and showmen who hold a monopoly on technological goods and learning. Efficient detection of "psionic" skills notable.

Major Imports Primitive arms, medicines, tools

Major Exports Foodstuffs, artwork  
Import/Export Restrictions and Duties  
The Ardecco contact edict permits trade in low-tech goods: Medicines and books must be sold to the "Wizards."

Trade Acceptance Index 30%



General Comments: The tensions between the kingdoms occasionally turns into open warfare, with the Wizards selling help to both sides, Mercenaries armed

with tech-3 weapons are welcome, if they fight for the nations of which Ardecco approves. Visitors are asked to report to Ardecco contact service HQ

at Meddyfice for instruction.

Two "Valkyrie" corvettes provide protection. 61% SADAR network with orbital monitor station.



United Federation of Planets  
Department of Interstellar Survey

Survey Evaluation, Planet Orb  
Star System Designation Stuzak  
Stellar Primary Type MO (White Dwarf)  
Planets in Star System 5  
Bearing from Marker Star 258°  
Distance from Marker Star 56 ly  
Vertical Coordinate -32

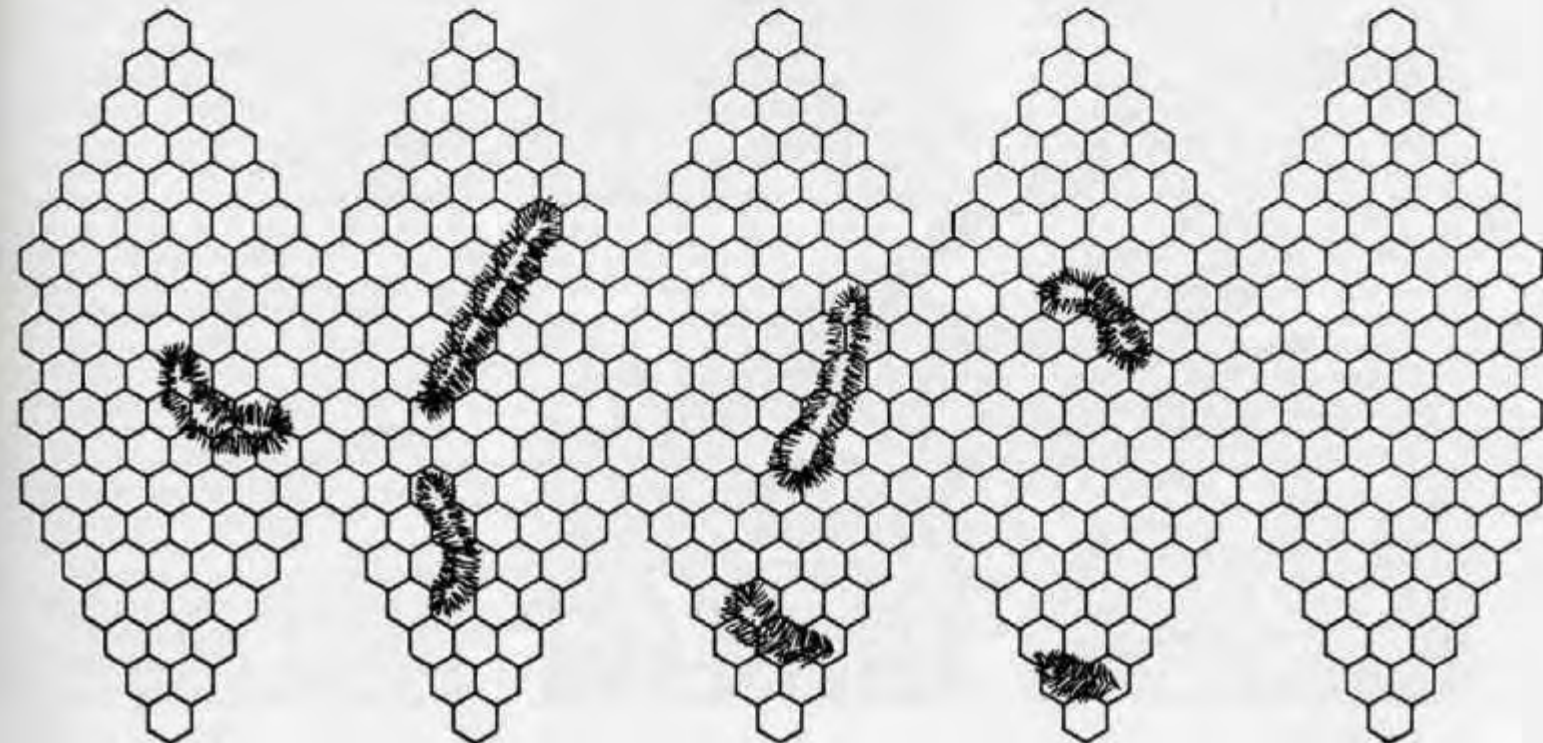
Planetary Type Low density, thin atmosphere / binary  
Orbital Distance  $303 \pm 1.055$  LS  
Length of Year Five "days"  
Length of Day 480 hours  
Temperature Range  $-150^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $+10^{\circ}\text{C}$   
Planetary Diameter 19,000 km  
Surface Gravity Field 0.00224 G  
Hydrospheric Rating 0%  
Atmospheric Type Nitrogen/Methane

Comments on Atmosphere: 80mm pressure

Comments: Moon: Orbette — 2500 km diameter, orbital period 240 hours.

Smaller element of a binary planet system. Orbits about Unnight; barycenter is within Unnight.

There are no life forms or installations on Orb. Low density indicates little chance of valuable minerals.





ants of a group of colonists who managed to preserve a modicum of technology while the rest of the inhabitants of the planet descended into near-barbarism. Some of their knowledge was preserved merely in books and records, but several technological items were saved by the group as well. Their secrets were guarded jealously at first, and no one else on Unnigh was aware of the knowledge possessed by these Wizards-to-be. Eventually, the guardians of technology decided it was time to reveal their presence and make use of what they'd kept — for reasons both noble and ignoble. Thus was born the Wizards' Guild.

The Wizards perform many tasks throughout the various Unnigh nations: They advise the peasants when to plant their crops, nobles how to tax and run their holdings, and generals how to fight battles. By coordinating their actions, the Wizards have become an important force in maintaining the nations' status-quo while advancing their own interests.

The Wizards recruit from the peasantry and merchants from all of the kingdoms. These apprentices are sent to fortress-schools to learn the trade and become indoctrinated in the Wizards' philosophy. Apprentices who rebel or turn out to be incompetent are sent to mines and herb-plantations to live out the rest of their lives. Adepts who survive are assigned to a village to serve (or prey upon), or are trained to be wandering showmen or mercenaries.

A Wizard's abilities are many. When a peasant child suffers from rickets (a common occurrence on Unnigh), the village Wizard can administer a potion of vitamin D. If a nasty animal has chosen to roost for the day in the town square, the Wizard can loose a gunpowder fireball to destroy or chase it away. If a noble needs to scare a town into paying its taxes, a troupe of showmen can summon a demon (actually a trained animal, shaved and painted to resemble a monstrous being) to rampage through the rebellious town's

fields and eat the livestock.

Using a tightly-organized net of informers, messengers and spies, the Wizards' Guild can learn of important events very quickly. Sneak attacks are virtually impossible without Guild approval. PCs who try to smuggle high-tech goods or provide skills to a nation the Guild doesn't like may find themselves in hot water.

Encountered Wizards will all be at least "above normal" NPCs. They will be knowledgeable in survival and scout skills, linguistics, herbal medicine and first aid, showmanship, primitive chemistry, animal handling, streetwisdom (very high), administration, and swimming. A typical Wizard will have throwing daggers, primitive grenades and pyrotechnics, bags of disguises, and a load of small scrolls and books in a cryptic language . . . messages for Wizards in towns through which he or she plans to travel. Some Wizards will have large (class L) animals to act as pets and guardians.

Wizards make up about 0.1% of the population. Virtually every town of more than 100 people will have one in residence, and large cities have many, sometimes living in a single fortified house, complete with secret rooms in which to hide valuables. Mercenaries occasionally hire Wizards to assist them in battle (though the Wizard in question may consider it the other way around), and national armies in favor with the Guild may have martial magicians in their employ.

## VII. Wildlife Encounters

On any untamed planet such as Unnigh, vast regions still exist where native animal and plant life dominate the environment. Because of the early scattering of the settlers, farming villages were usually separated by tracts of wilderness. In some regions, farming villages are patches of civilization in vast seas of wild country.

On each day (24-hour standard day, still in use by the settlers, who tell time by the revolution of Orb's asteroidal

moon, Orbette) of travel in the wilderness, there is a 10% chance of a "significant" animal encounter; it is assumed that there will be many sightings of common herbivores and small, unassuming carnivores throughout the day, but these encounters will lead to nothing unless the adventurers decide to hunt or attack. Creature types are described on page 25.

For the basic encounter type, a d100 is rolled and the chart below is consulted:

### Roll 1d100:

**1-50 Herbivore:** The PCs' party encounters one or more herbivores in such a manner as to constitute a nuisance or danger to the adventurers. Examples: A stampede of herd animals; a large, very curious creature starts feeding on the party's tents; or a swarm of locustlike insects chew up the party's rations. At night this encounter type will be quite different, as 90% of herbivores will be hibernating or hiding. Roll a second d100: On a roll of 1-50 there will be no encounter; on a roll of 51-90 the party will stumble on a herbivore or herd of herbivores in "night mode," (in shells, cocoons, or curled into little balls for protection). There is a 15% chance that a scavenger or carnivore will be trying to break open a shell to feed on the contents. On a roll of 91-00, the PCs will encounter a herbivore species adapted to night living. Such a species will eat anything that doesn't try to get away, such as carrion, garbage, shelled animals and plants, etc.

**51-80 Scavenger encounter:** The party encounters several dangerous scavenger-types. They will attack from hiding, or lurk after the party, waiting for them to run into trouble. The PCs will be in no danger if they spot these animals, which avoid attacking prey that can fight back. At night, scavengers will be more dangerous, and this class will include swarms of vermin (rodents and insects) that make mass attacks on anything not in a shell or hiding up a tree.

**81-95 True carnivores:** The party members will be attacked by a very large or numerous creature-type that attempts to kill them for food. The beasts will run away if seriously threatened, dragging away any prey they might have killed at that point.

At night, roll a d100: On a 1-50, the party will find an excapsulated carnivore. If the PCs pester the creature in this state, it may suddenly come to life, spray a noxious/poison liquid, or tunnel into the ground. On a roll of 51-75, a night carnivore is encountered — a totally fierce and berserk creature that will tear apart anything it can get its paws on with no regard to its own safety. Pack-hunting



# Unnight Animalac:

## Representative Samples of Unnight Fauna

Following are several examples of animal life indigenous to Unnight. These should be considered **medium-sized** examples of classes of animals; for each one presented below, there will be larger and smaller varieties, varieties adapted for specific environments, etc

**Sith:** (grazer) Class **K** animal; carrying capacity - 10%; natural weapon - **J**; movement — slow; armor — E.

The sith is a roughly **turtle-shaped** animal which is dark brown in color. It is a totally passive animal which will withdraw into its shell at the first sign of danger.

**Chint:** (carnivore) Class **J** animal; carrying capacity — 30%; natural weapon - see below; movement — average; armor — F.

The chint looks like a cross between an armadillo and a **centipede**. It sleeps during the day and hunts for sleeping animals during the night. Its retractible proboscis excretes a special acid which, in less than five **minutes**, will eat a small hole in any native animal's shell. The chint is prized for the acid it makes, which is of special interest to the **Wizards' Guild**.

**Spiker:** (**ambusher**) Class **L** animal; carrying capacity - 100%; natural weapon - E; movement - very fast; armor - **K**.

The spiker is a small animal with very long and thin legs. After finding a suitable shell (emptying it if necessary), it will crawl **inside**, lie on its back, and wait to be attacked. When it is attacked, its legs spring out of the natural shell openings with all of the spiker's amazing strength behind them. Note that the spiker has no shell of its own; it relies totally on evacuated shells for **protection**.

**Pebb:** (standard scavenger) Class **O** animal; carrying capacity - 20%; natural weapon — I; movement - **fast**; armor - E.

A pebb is a small **animal**, which builds its shell much **like** a caterpillar builds a cocoon. While inside its shell, its movement rate is very slow. It moves by shifting its weight, occasionally poking its head out to see where it's going. It can also move independently of its shell (fast), but it rarely does so. When stationary, it is often mistaken for a rock.

**Brok:** (aggressor) Class varies with age; carrying capacity - maximum for class; natural weapon - maximum for class; movement - very slow to fast (dependent on age); armor — starts at **J** and becomes **I** at animal class **I**, armor **II** at class **H**, and so on, until armor becomes **A** at animal class **A**.

The brok is a sea creature **which**, from the surface, appears as a large flat disk, the diameter of which varies with age (2 m when young, 6 m when fully mature, **12+m** when very old). The disk is actually the **brok's** shell. From underwater, its many tentacles may be seen. The brok is capable of reaching above the water with its tentacles. It is very aggressive when approached, but will not actively pursue prey.

(Note on all animals - damage factor, stamina factor, shock CR, and hand-to-hand must be rolled for **each** animal according to the chart in section 17.0 of *Space Opera: Volume 2*, "The Beasts.")

Of course, these are not the only types of animal life indigenous to the planet; the SM is free to create other appropriate **life-forms**. In addition, many varieties of standard Terran animals were brought to the world: **cats**, dogs, horses, cattle, some varieties of birds, llamas, and many others; several of the original colonists were conservationists who hoped to give the Terran species a new lease on life by bringing them here. Generally, though, these species are fully domesticated, needing man's protection from the elements during the planet's severe nights.

versions of this type are really trouble. On a roll of 76-00, a can-opener class creature will be found. This type lives solely on encapsulated or shelled creatures, avoiding any resisting prey. They often have natural **countermeasures** to protect themselves from the poisons some hibernating animals use for protection.

96-00: This is an unusual or plant encounter. **Plants** in the daytime are usually close to earth-normal. At night, things are very different. Plants either shrivel up, leaving spores or roots to carry on, or curl into shells and pods to guard against the cold. A final plant type is the colony tree. **In** the day, the colony trees live via photosynthesis. When the sun slips below the horizon and the cold enroaches, the tree's limbs wrap around the trunk and small ports open along the trunk. Inside these holes live one or more species of rodent or insect that forage **nocturnally**, leaving droppings and dead bodies in the tree to nourish it during the night. Colony trees can be dangerous; if a living creature brushes against one, the limbs shoot out and smash the intruder, providing a ready source of carrion for their **symbiotes**.

Other encounters can include earthquakes (which are very common due to the wobble/drift in Orb's orbit; if the two worlds were not face-locked, the tidal effects and resulting earthquakes and **vul-**

**canism** would be much worse), bad storms, forest fires, and other accidents.

### VIII. Native Encounters

The SM should roll for encounters every day in the deep wilderness, every two hours in settled countryside, every hour in a town or large city.

**Large Town:** More than **1,000** people. Add six to the roll on the encounter table in a major town or city (more than 10,000 people) and add ten in capital cities and **starports**. There is a 50% chance per hour of an important encounter. Roll **1d100**:

1-50 Townsmen: Merchants, craftsmen, local officials, fortune-tellers, etc. They may have an opportunity for the PCs.

51-70 Commoners: Country folk, in town to sell their goods. They will be very suspicious, frightened, or fascinated by offworlders.

71-75 Backwoods trader: **He** or she may have interesting goods. He or she will generally be a Wizards' **Guild** spy or adept.

**76-80** Mercenaries: A group of **12d10** men with swords, armor, bow weapons, and excellent training. There is a 5% chance that **1d10** are offworlders seeking their fortune. Some of the mercenaries will be Wizards' Guild informers.

81-85 Noble: With **2d10+10** retinue. S/he will be eager to impress the PCs and

might invite them to his or her estate. Nobles from some countries will be less **polite** . . .

86-90 Conflict situation: A fight between gangs of workers, a noble or merchant fighting off thugs, a bar fight, a Wizard blasting someone who crossed him/her, etc. The SM may wish to involve the PC in the situation.

91-00 A major Wizards' Guild official: With retinue and assistants. He or she may be anxious to converse with the PCs to find out what is going on out in the universe. Employment and information may be available from the official.

**101-105** High noble and retinue.

**106-110** Offworlders.

**Farming Village:** There are thousands of these scattered about the countryside. Roll every two hours, 50% chance for an encounter. Note that strangers will always draw a crowd of local children, gossips, and curious folk. These people will not bother the PCs unless provoked. The encounters below are "active" encounters that deal directly with the PCs.

1-50 Commoners ask the PCs to tell a story, read a sign that the local noble put up, or ask them for advice on an obscure subject.

**51-80** Townsmen offer the PCs trade

goods, or ask the party if they have anything to sell.

81-85 The village Wizard meets with the PCs. He or she may be checking up on them or simply curious. The Wizard can report to his local HQ by a trained bird or animal in 4d6 hours, so the PCs may have a hard time keeping their movements secret.

86-90 The local noble and retinue are in town to administer justice or collect taxes.

91-95 A troupe of showmen comes through town. They are Wizards' Guild allies or informers and are excellent fighters. Important business is often carried out by the Guild under the guise of such a circus.

96-00 A troop of mercenaries or national troops. Both may be possible employers for the PCs.

*Wilderness:* There are two types of wilderness: the deep woods and settled areas. The latter is land within 1 hex of a major town or capital city on the map. Roll every two hours in these settled areas, with an encounter taking place 10% of the time. In the deep wilderness, roll once per day, with a 50% chance of an encounter taking place.

Roll 1d100, adding 20 if in settled land.

1-50 Wandering merchant on foot alone or on a wagon with 1 d 10+5 guards.

51-60 1d10+10 bandits on riding beasts. They have bows, leather armor, spears, and swords. Offworlders might be able to cow them or make them allies.

61-70 Showmen troupe, as in farming village encounter.

71-80 Mercenaries or national army. They will stop and question strangers.

81-90 Religious group on a pilgrimage: 3d10 people, unarmed, with 1d6+2 hired guards. Depending on the religion of the mob, they may be enthralled or enraged by the offworlder PCs.

91-00 Traveller's inn: This is a group of buildings with a protective stockade. Food and shelter are available here. There will be 3d6+5 guards on hand to protect the inn from brigands, about ten workers and servants, and a number of guests. Roll once on the farming village chart to see if any unusual guests are present.

101-110 Farm house and fields. If properly approached, most farmers will put up travelers for the night. There will always be work that needs doing, especially near nightfall, and the farmer will let his guests know this (nudge, nudge).

111-120 Farming village with 50xd6 people. An inn will be available. Roll for encounters on the farming village chart.

Nighttime travel: At night, all but the hardiest and most foolhardy travelers stay at home or make semi-permanent camps. The animals, people, and phenomena abroad at night are not conducive to long life. Temperatures drop 1d10°C per 24-hour day after nightfall for three days, then stabilize around the seasonal norm (see page 19). The light from Orb is more than adequate for travel, but provides no heat. Near seas, violent storms are a virtual certainty.

*The Night Dance:* No one is sure what it is, or what causes it, but the phenomenon known as the night madness or the "Night Dance" is a fact of life on Unnigh. When someone is out at night, away from large concentrations of people, there is a chance that he or she will go mad, running off into the woods, climbing trees and making funny noises, etc. The most common manifestation is the "mumbles": The victim talks in an unknown tongue, staring fearfully about at his friends and familiar objects, and generally acting "out of place."

There is a 10% chance per 24 hours spent on the road at night that a randomly-selected party member will become afflicted with the Night Dance. This chance is decreased by 1% for every 10 people in the vicinity. When someone contracts the Dance, roll 1d100 for the degree of effect and 1d10 for the duration in hours. A roll of 1-50 for effect indicates that the victim lies down and chants in a strange language; 51-80 indicates that the affected one runs into the woods and capers about shouting the words to a weird alien song; 81-00 indicates that the victim has become dangerously disoriented and may become violent.

Some Wizards have drugs that can shock a person with the Night Dance



back to reality. A strong stun bolt will have the same effect.

## IX. Scenario Ideas

*Unnigh* has many potential opportunities for adventure and PC employment. Below are a few suggestions, listed by employment type.

### *Mercenaries:*

1. On a nearby world (Alkast, if using *The Outworlds*), the PCs are approached by an agent for a Midgard-based corporation that manufactures tools and weapons designed for primitive cultures. The agent will ask the party leader to meet him at a restaurant to discuss business. The company needs a small number of mercenaries (around ten) to assist on a trade mission on Unnigh. The warriors will be given passage there and back, standard pay for security duty, plus 0.1% of the company's stock per man.

The mission will prove more dangerous than the agent indicated. The PCs and their NPC underlings will have to guard five very pushy and indiscriminating salesmen on a trip from Meddyfice to Xinguth. The Wizards of the intervening countryside will not be very happy about the visit, as the salesmen are trying to sell Xinguth large amounts of titanium and improved-design primitive weapons.

2. The Arddecan contact service requires the services of skilled off-world mercenaries to train and reinforce the armies of several nobles on the border of Gamotch and Mensod. The nobles were formerly neutral, but have now allied themselves to Mensod in exchange for support from the Wizards' Guild and off-world armsmen. Pay will be 1.5 standard combat pay to encourage *mercs* to brave the dangers of warfare on the primitive, hospital-free world.

3. Pirates running tech-four gunpowder weapons to rebellious clan heads in Xinguth need guards.

### *Merchants:*

1. A vast market exists for tools better in design than the crude iron and steel mechanisms made by the Unnigh folk. A caravan touring the backwoods of Byilikin or Iquazor can make thousands if it survives bandits and hostile animal life.

2. Unscrupulous traders can try to smuggle high-tech weapons onto the planet, but must be prepared to make a quick getaway: the Wizards of all nations will object to the local nobles arming themselves with superior weaponry.

### *Researchers:*

1. There are many unexplored places on Unnigh. Strange wildlife and odd cus-



toms abound. The Ardeccans will be glad to sponsor expeditions into the outback and may provide native guides.

2. Unnight and Orb have some very definite oddities: Neither world is old enough to have become **face-locked**; the orbits of the two worlds are much too stable: it is predicted that the worlds will remain in their present configuration for at least another four billion years; and Orb doesn't have anywhere near the mass it should for its size and apparent composition.

3. And then there's the Night Dance ...

#### *Whoops:*

Accidents can force a group of PCs to spend time on Unnight. The Pemzann-Ceti Nebula surrounds the Stuzak system; the pirates who are based there may release prisoners here or damaged ships may have to limp here to await a repair ship.

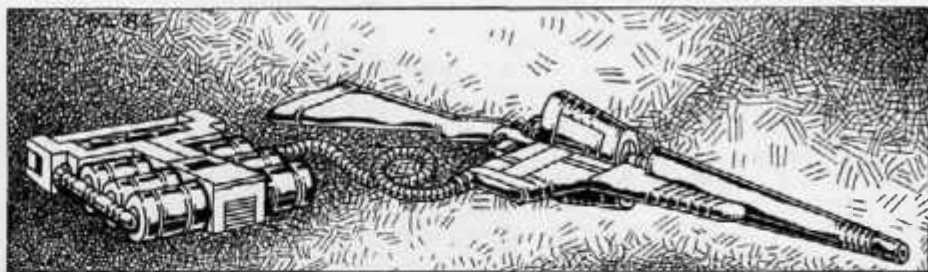
### X. Ancients and Artifacts

Though they never would have suspected it, the human settlers on Unnight were not the first colonists. The only apparent sign of these folk is the Night Dance; this phenomenon is literally a form of "possession."

The Ornon were a widespread and highly-advanced race extant some seven million years ago. The Forerunners familiar to the Federation were barbarians compared to these folk: Whole worlds were moved by them, and Unnight was one of these. For some unknown reason - perhaps whimsy - the ancients put the **newly-terraformed** world into a binary relationship with Orb, which they had hollowed into what is now essentially a planetary balloon. (An interesting campaign for the industrious SM might be to explore and find out what is inside the hollow world, once that planet's nature is discovered.) Orbette was also added into the system, possibly only for amusement.

The colonists left few traces of themselves or their tools. It is thought that toward the "end" the beings tended to rely more and more on psionics. Eventually, the creatures died out, or perhaps mutated into unintelligent life forms. They left one device in operation: a psionic record-keeper. This device is what causes the "Night Dance"; a scared or lonely person emanates the telepathic "phone number" of the storage device, and the mechanism sends out the requested information. Unfortunately, the average human will misinterpret the information meant for an alien mind, resulting in the erratic behavior of the Night Dance.

*Archaeology:* The SM may wish to have a peasant find an artifact or building site. The object may become a local



curiosity, or the basis of a weird religion. The PCs may have an interesting time convincing the locals to give up their treasure.

99% of all artifacts found will either be so simple as to afford no information, or so incredibly complex as to baffle the most advanced engineering lab. The remaining 1% will be usable objects, such as **PSI** crystals, solid rods that project holographic images when held, and "Black Boxes" that perform interesting tricks when analyzed or opened. "Magical" effects, within limits, are possible and sometimes used by Wizards.

Using hand tools, one man will have a cumulative 0.1% chance of finding an artifact per day. In a site area (50% chance of one per 10,000 square km of area) the chance is doubled. If high-tech instruments can be brought in, the chances of finding an object are increased by a factor of five. Note import and travel restrictions!

If Ardecco or its competitors find out about successful archaeological projects on Unnight, the competition to get a piece of the action will be fierce! **Mercenaries** and criminals will have a field day in the fracas that follows.

## Appendices

### Appendix I: Travel and Equipment

#### Restrictions

Upon landing at either starport, travellers will be under the jurisdiction of Ardecco contact services. All luggage and personnel will be **thoroughly** searched, and IDs checked. No vehicles other than beast-drawn or sail-powered are allowed. The latter may have a communicator or emergency signaling device installed, but the set must be tuned to the official emergency channel.

Travellers may carry personal **med-kits**, unpowered armor, and other equipment with a purely defensive function. Each person may carry a short-range (PC/5 maximum) communicator. No high-tech weapons may be carried, and complex equipment of all sorts is frowned upon!

Trade goods must be inspected by an Ardeccan official, and local Wizards will zealously guard their prerogative of dispensing knowledge and technology to the common folk.

### Appendix II: NPC Attributes

The NPC race section for humans in Volume Two of *Space Opera* can be used to generate NPC attributes. The following guidelines should help.

*Common folk:* The average peasant will be a Below Average human. Peasants will have a wide variety of skills related to survival and making a living; i.e., a fisherman would have marine survival, small-craft handling, and perhaps weapons skills in

crossbow and sword or brawling. Very few peasants will be literate, and even fewer will know what lies beyond the horizon visible from their home village.

*Soldiers:* Mercenaries will be better fed and educated than their commonfolk parents. Most will be Average, with about 30% Above Average, while officers are Competent or better. Skills appropriate to a low-tech **armsman**, plus a heavy assortment of survival skills, will be available to every soldier.

*Wizards:* The stats and skills are given for Wizards in Section VI. Weaponry skills emphasize ranged combat.

"Magic" weaponry equivalents:  
*Primitive rocket/fireball:* Disposable Rocket Launcher, range x ¼.

*Breath of Death:* H-sized grenade with a P4 poison gas chemical released on explosion.

*Demon:* A class L beast, 20 DF, 75 Stamina, HTH rating 20, class F weapon + P4 poison on metal spurs, "fast."

*Dragon's Breath:* A 20kg **Flamer Pistol**, range x ¼. Very dangerous to both sides in a battle. The "Greek fire" thrown burns for 1-6 rounds.

Other: All Wizards carry small (J- and H-sized) smoke and HE grenades. All are 2d6 heavier than their modern equivalents, and are somewhat unreliable. *All* of the above equipment will be **surrounded** by a "smokescreen" of useless parts, cryptic instructions, and booby traps. Soldiers who try to use wizardly weapons captured on the field don't live very long.

# Chainsaw Combat in Traveller

by Christopher Kupczyk



I recently had the (unfortunate) opportunity to view a movie involving a chainsaw-wielding murderer. Ten minutes into the film, between yawns, I realized that I should have stayed home and designed material for *Traveller*.

But my thoughts of the movie stayed with me and, when home, I dug out my *Traveller* set...

Book 3 states that the purpose of a chainsaw is felling, cutting, and shaping trees. But how about felling, cutting, and shaping people?

## Using Chainsaws

Any skill with a blade weapon will be considered enough expertise to operate a chainsaw without negative DMs. Apply a DM of -2 if no blade skill is used.

Required Strength: 9

Required Strength DM: -5

Advantageous Strength: 12

Advantageous Strength DM: +2

Weakened blow or swing: -6

Below are the to-hit rolls for the chainsaw as weapon. Chainsaws are only usable at close or short range, and do 4d4-4 damage when they hit.

The required strength and advantageous strength numbers are based more on the weapon's bulk and awkwardness than its weight; as is explained below, higher tech-level chainsaws tend to weigh less. However, their general shape and clumsiness remain essentially the same.

## Chainsaws Through the Ages

Due to the advances of science, weights and prices for chainsaws will tend to vary. In addition, the power source for the machine tends to become more advanced, from the very early gasoline-powered saws, through the electronic and solar-powered models, to the advanced fusion chainsaw.

Tech Level	Weight	Cost
4	12 kg	Cr2000 (gasoline)
5	10 kg	Cr 1000 (gasoline)
6	8 kg	Cr 500 (gasoline)
7	7 kg	Cr3000 (electronic)
8	6 kg	Cr2000 (electronic)
9	4 kg	Cr 1000 (electronic)
10	4 kg	Cr 1000 (solar)
11	3 kg	Cr 500 (solar)
12+	5 kg	Cr 500 (fusion)

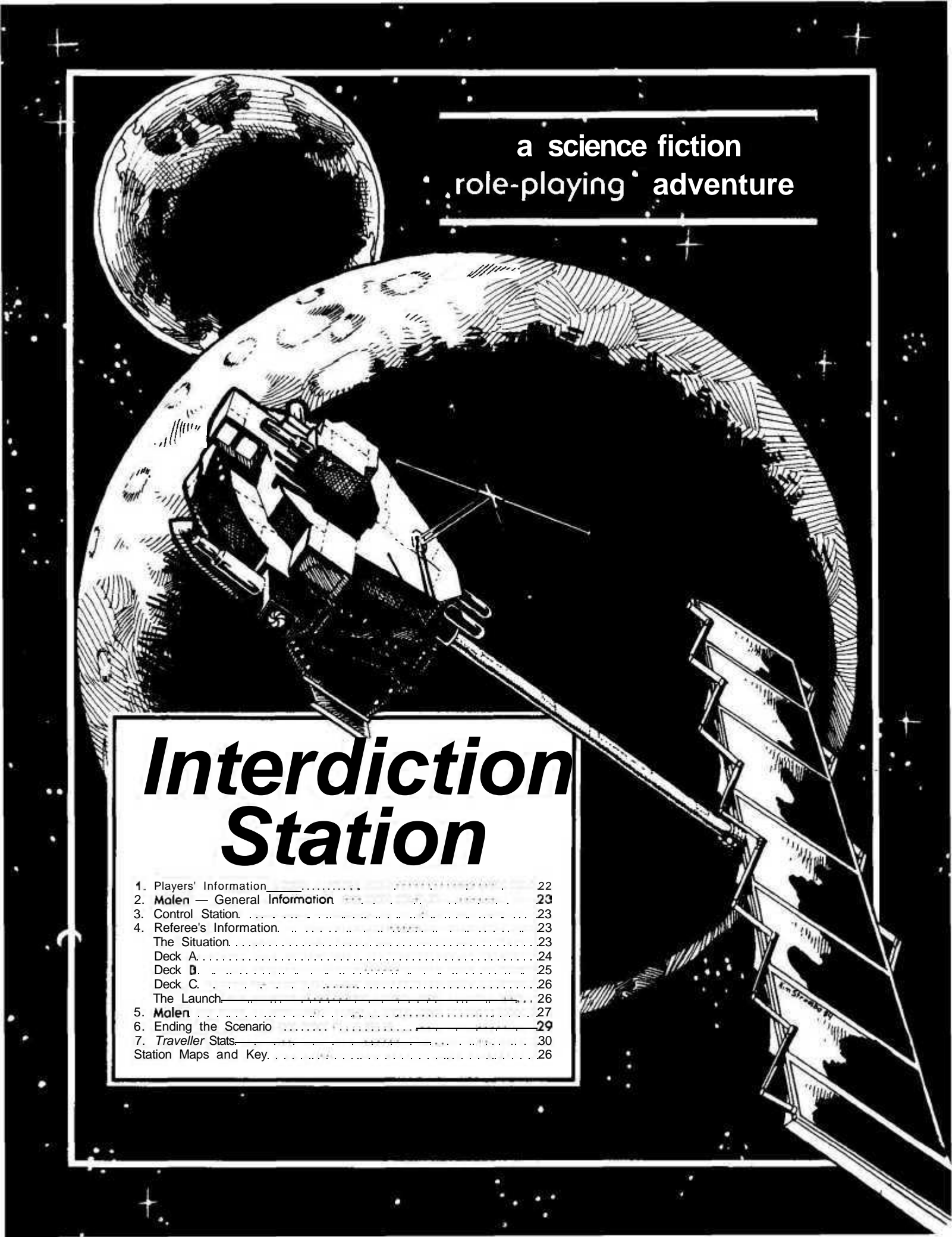
Gasoline chainsaws operate for approximately 30 minutes before refuelling is necessary. Electronic chainsaws must be recharged after 48 cumulative hours of use. Solar-powered chainsaws need never be recharged if they are used when exposed to sunlight; but if no sunlight is available, their internal battery still stores four hours of energy. Fusion-powered chainsaws need never be recharged.

Electric chainsaws are also available at Tech Levels 5 and 6; they are two kg lighter than their gasoline-powered equivalents and cost the same. However, an electric chainsaw is useless beyond the range (typically 20 meters) of its extension cord. There is also the possibility that an opponent may cut the cord (or simply pull it loose) during combat.

So there you have it: everything you wanted to know about chainsaws (as weapons) but were afraid to ask. Now Travellers, as well as murderous Texans, can enjoy all the benefits of chainsaw use.

## To Hit Table

Armor	None	Jack	Mesh	Cloth	Reflec	Ablat	Battle
Range	C S	C S	C S	C s	C S	C S	C S
To Hit	5 3	6 4	7 4	7 4	5 3	6 4	12 10



a science fiction  
role-playing adventure

# *Interdiction Station*

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# Interdiction Station

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map graphics by C. Mora Lee

playtested by Norman Banduch, Christopher Frink, Sharleen Lombard, and David Noel

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*Interdiction Station* is an adventure for three to six players. It was designed for use with *Traveller*, GDW's science fiction role-playing game. All statistics (for NPCs, weapons, equipment, aliens, and worlds encountered) are given in *Traveller* terms. In keeping with our policy of publishing only "generic" game supplements and adventures, we have tried to include detailed descriptions of all NPCs, weapons, equipment, aliens, and worlds. If you play FGU's *Space Opera*, TSR's *Star Frontiers*, SPI's *Universe*, Fasa's *Star Trek: The Role Playing Game*, or any other SF RPG, we encourage you to make use of these descriptions; any SF RPG worth its salt has **lasers**, space stations, vacuum suits, advanced **medical** facilities, and the like. With a little imagination on your part (and the descriptions we've provided of game-specific **items**), you should be able to find equivalents for just about anything your players will run into in *Interdiction Station*.

Of course, there are some elements of the *Traveller* system which have no equivalents in other science fiction role-playing games. None of the basic character attributes are too surprising. One of the *skills* is unique, however, and it may come into play no matter which game system you use to play *Interdiction Station*. The skill is called "**Jack-of-all-Trades**" (or J-o-T), and it represents a generalized ability to figure out how to repair or operate equipment encountered in the course of an adventure. J-o-T is a character's ability to "tinker" with things, to jury-rig mechanical and electronic devices. If you don't play *Traveller*, chances are your characters don't have J-o-T as one of their skills. If this is the case, you have two options: Ignore this particular skill when it comes into play during *Interdiction Station*, or "**jury-rig**" an equivalent skill (perhaps by using INT minus 10 to arrive at a simulated J-o-T skill level). All other *Traveller* skills necessary to the successful completion of *Interdiction Station* are sufficiently common that finding equivalents in any science fiction **role-playing** game should be relatively **simple**.

The use of these skills is a bit less simple and, since *Traveller-specific* die rolls are used **throughout** *Interdiction Station*, you will need to know something about how the *Traveller* skill-use system works in order to arrive at logical alternatives using your favorite game system.

At several points in the adventure which follows, the game

master is **instructed** to allow the players to make specific skill-use rolls in order to accomplish a task or find a bit of information. The format for such skill-use instructions is this: "The players can attempt to rig the computer so it will act as an electronic watchdog (Roll 8+, DMs: +Computer, **+J-o-T**)."  
This means, **simply**, that in order to accomplish the task, the players must make a roll of eight or better on *two six-sided dice*; they **will** be allowed die modifiers if they have Computer skill, or **Jack-of-all-Trades** skill. Sometimes, the specific die modifier will be provided ("DM +1 if Medical"). In the example above, no specific DM is suggested. This means the players add their *skill level* to their die roll. In *Traveller*, players begin with no skills; they have no computer experience, no vacuum suit experience, and so on. In the course of generating and playing a character, skills are, of course, **acquired**. Someone with limited computer experience has a skill level of one (**Computer-1**); someone with a bit more computer experience may achieve skill level two, three, four, or higher (**Computer-2, -3, -4**, etc.). When instructed to use a DM for **Computer**, then, the characters add their skill level.

If you choose to play *Interdiction Station* using a game system other than *Traveller*, you **have** several options concerning skill use. If your system uses percentile rolls (**1-100** rolled on 2D10), you can either use the 2D6 rolls provided in *Interdiction Station* (using DMs where provided, ignoring them where no specific DM is suggested) or you can use the percentile rolls required in your **system**. For example, if a character is required to make a roll of 8+ (DMs for Medical, Brawling), you *could* just go ahead and roll eight or better on 2D6. It may not be true to your game system, but it *is* simple. As an alternative, you could go down the list of your character's skills, noting that your character has First Aid, say, at **65%**, and Street Fighting at **23%**. You *could* assume that these skills are roughly analogous to the *Traveller* skills used as DMs in the example above and make a straight percentile roll against First Aid in order to accomplish the task. The game master must make the final decision about what *is* and is *not* an equivalent skill.

If the game you play uses 2D6 or 3D6 rolls, you also have some options as far as skill use is concerned. Like your friend who uses percentile rolls, you could just go ahead and use the 2D6 rolls given in *Interdiction Station*, applying DMs where they are **provided**, ignoring them where they are not specifically suggested. As an alternative, you could adapt your rules for skill use to this scenario, using your game's skills and skill levels. This requires a bit more work on your **part**, but you will be able to play *Interdiction Station* using your favorite game rules.

Game masters wishing to convert this scenario to other systems should note that it depends on the **team** being isolated for prolonged periods of **time**. If the rules under which you play allow rapid interstellar travel without long delay (in other words, if you play *Space Opera*, *Star Trek*, or a similar game), give some reason for keeping normal ship traffic out of the area. For example, in *Space Opera*, ships use the **TISA** drive, and are visible at interplanetary distances, **making** secrecy impossible. You could suggest that the Malene are known to have instruments capable of detecting vehicles the **size** of a starship, making it imperative that normal traffic be rerouted, and keeping supply runs to a minimum. Characters **must** depend on their own resources, rather than simply summoning help if trouble develops.

NOTE: Players may be given data from Sections 1-3 *only*. All other information is for the referee's use. Players will have to work to find out what is going on.

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## 1. PLAYERS' INFORMATION

The players **are** members of the crew of the **ISS Rim Warlock**, a converted **400-ton** armed freighter supplying scout bases and stations in various star systems. One such station is a concealed interdiction unit orbiting **Malen**, a world whose natives

are not yet ready for contact. Since the Malenese could detect a full-sized starship near their planet, normal procedure is to rendezvous with the station launch in the system's asteroid belt.

On this occasion, the freighter arrives exactly on time, but the launch is missing. After 24 hours the Captain risks maser and laser signals, but there is no reply. Eventually he decides to send the ship's boat and a small team (the players) to investigate.

While the boat is refuelled and supplied, the team is briefed. As soon as they are ready to leave, the boat will be launched. The ship will refuel at the system's gas giant and return to the rendezvous a week later. No communication will be possible until then, since the maser transmitters are directional, making it difficult to contact a moving vessel.

## 2. MALEN — GENERAL INFORMATION

Malen is a Terra-norm world, 8000 miles in diameter. Its atmosphere is dense, and well able to support human life. Seventy percent of the planet's surface is water. The thirty percent which is dry land supports a population of 100,000,000 Malenese. Malen was colonized many thousands of years ago by the first Imperium, but following the collapse of the Imperium, all contact with the human colony on Malen was lost. The colony reverted to barbarism. Over the years, the Malenese developed a "feudal technocratic" government. ("Ruling functions are performed by specific individuals for persons who agree to be ruled by them. Relationships are based on the performance of technical activities which are mutually beneficial.") Under Malenese law, it is illegal to own weaponry more deadly or technologically advanced than pistols, rifles, shotguns, and the like. Malenese technology corresponds roughly to that of late-twentieth century Earth.

These facts were learned about a century before this adventure takes place, when the Scout Service rediscovered the planet Malen. The Scouts learned the local language, and gathered enough data through long-range observation to deduce the colony's origins. The natives would normally be ready for contact, but for one unusual factor - through a combination of genetic drift, disease, and dietary deficiencies, the average height of Malenese natives is well under a meter. Service psychologists fear that allowing them to learn that they are the smallest race of humans would lead to the development of a devastating cultural inferiority complex.

The system consists of seven worlds. Malen is the only one capable of supporting human life. There is one ringed gas giant and a dense asteroid belt with a high potential mineral yield. Malen has three moons. The first orbits the planet at a height of 75,360 kilometers and has a diameter of 2000 miles. The second is in orbit 117,151 kilometers above Malen, and has a diameter of 1000 miles. The last is 312,875 kilometers up, and is 3000 miles in diameter. Malen is interdicted by a manned station supported by several small satellites. The station is in a stable orbit behind Malen's outermost moon.

## 3. CONTROL STATION

The interdiction station was built from prefabricated parts with a minimum of detectable electronic and nucleonic equipment. It has a 400-ton hull fitted with a solar power unit and a backup fusion power plant, usually shut down to minimum maintenance levels. Low power ion maneuver drives are fitted for a maximum 1g acceleration under fusion power, 0.25g with solar cells. The station is an unstreamlined dispersed structure. Normal crew is four, but it will accommodate up to ten. Supply endurance is 300 days' food and air supplies, 20 days' drive (without solar power). Weapons are a laser/missile/sand-caster mix in a triple turret.

A small launch (maximum acceleration: 4g; capacity: pilot

plus five passengers, six tons cargo, missile launcher) is provided for routine transport and emergency gas scooping.

Duty tours are four months (excluding transport time) with supply deliveries every second month.

The satellites which support the station are primarily designed to monitor communications, but they also mount four-shot missile launchers. Each satellite weighs 4.7 tons and costs MCr 6.74, and carries a powerful video camera, a recorder, all-wave communications receiver, a maser transceiver, and a small computer. They have low-power gas thrusters for orbital corrections, solar panels, and thermal demolition charges designed to reduce the satellite to slag without any visible explosion. In normal use each satellite monitors Malen (or its assigned target) and stores data for daily transmission to the station. If necessary, an operator can take direct control of the satellite for real-time monitoring of a particularly interesting event, or to use its weapons. There are five of these satellites, in the following locations:

- Two at Malen outer moon L4 and L5 stable points;
- One in 50,000-km polar orbit around Malen;
- One in orbit around gas giant;
- One at the asteroid-belt rendezvous point.

The belt and gas giant remotes are normally set to detect incoming vessels, concentrating on starship communication, distress frequencies, IFF (Identify Friend or Foe) beacon patterns, and drive radiation.

The station also carries 20 one-shot probes for close observation of the planet. They are designed to skim the atmosphere for later recovery, or to penetrate to a few kilometers above the surface and then self-destruct. Each probe carries a recording camera, atmospheric sensors, a squeal transmitter (for high-speed transmission of information), and self-destruct charges. Probes cost Cr 42,500 each. They look like small meteors, and are launched by solid-fuel rocket boosters.

## 4. REFEREES INFORMATION

Before leaving the ship, the team will be issued vacc suits and ration packs. They may also request additional equipment to supplement their own gear. The following equipment is available but it will not be provided unless the team requests it or asks the Captain for advice - the ship's quartermaster is extremely mean, and won't volunteer anything:

- 1 each Engineer, Electronic, and Electrical toolkits;
- 2 hand computers, 4 calculators;
- 1 radiation detector;
- 1 air analyzer;
- 2 medical kits;
- Filter masks — six boxes of 12;
- 4 hand lanterns;
- 1 pair light intensifier goggles;
- 1 vacuum welding set.

All other equipment is either unavailable, broken, or in short supply. The quartermaster will be very unwilling to part with the stores he *does* have, making several excuses before each item is produced. Unless the team is completely unarmed, the Captain will not provide any weapons. Those potentially available are two snub pistols (see Compartment 18, Deck B), a laser carbine, and four tear gas grenades.

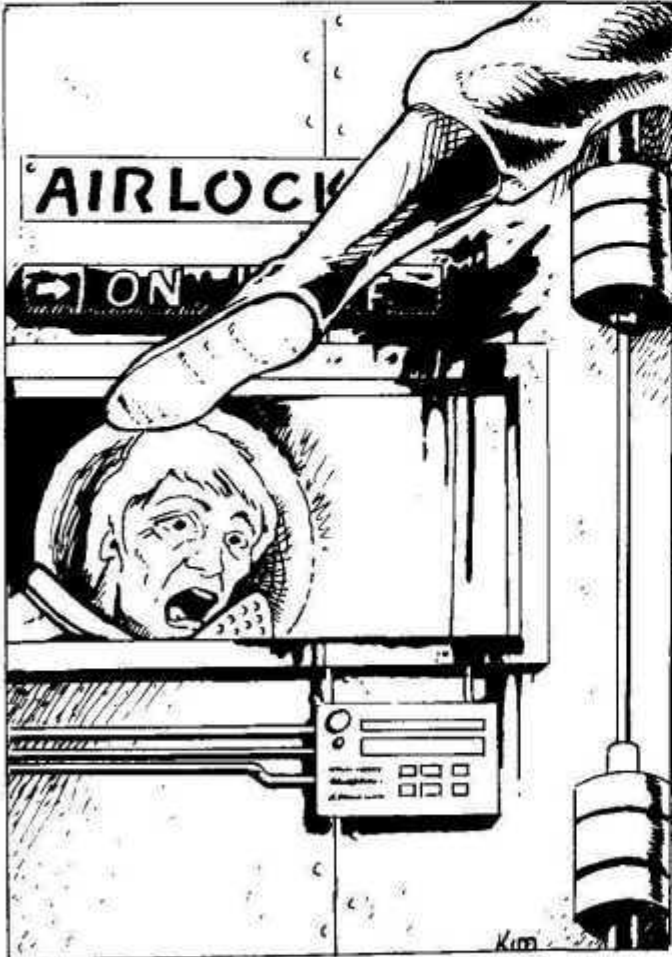
There is room for up to 200 kg of additional stores in the cabin of the launch, the hold being full of supplies for the station.

The journey to the station will take 18 hours, and will be entirely without incident. On arrival the team will find the station's launch docked to a lower airlock. The main lock is slightly open. There will be no response to any signals.

The station has four crew-members, all of whom are dead or unconscious: Four days before the team's arrival, an air-recycler malfunctioned, coinciding with an electrical short which cut out the air purity alarms. As a result, the atmosphere was fouled by carbon dioxide, alcohol, and other metabolic products. The smell was masked by the general aroma of

oil, ozone, food, old socks, and sweat generally found in closed environments, and the crew became intoxicated before noticing their danger. The station's air is noxious. Team members must wear vacc suits or filter masks at all times or they, like the station crew, will begin to act irrationally and eventually lose consciousness. If the players do remove their vacc suits, effects will be felt as follows: An unusual smell will be noticed immediately. After the first hour, the players will begin to feel lightheaded. After the second hour without vacc suits, the players may begin to feel drunk, giddy, or even dangerously deranged. (Specific effects during this stage are left to the discretion of the game master. Player characters should be told to act strangely, but stay in character.) After the third hour, players will begin to feel sleepy and lethargic. After the fourth hour, they will fall into a sleep verging on coma. Putting vacc suits back on will reverse the effects described above almost immediately. In order to determine what is wrong with the station's air, the players can check an air analyzer - if they thought to bring one along. If they didn't bring one, they will have to jury-rig something to perform the same function. This is only possible in the sick bay. A full explanation of how this can be done is included in the sick bay description (Compartment 15, Deck B).

The investigating team would, of course, have no way of knowing this, but in the hours before the station's original crew collapsed, all behaved irrationally, with the following specific effects;



Scout Mary Fong tried to use the airlock without suiting up, with fatal consequences.

The Team Leader, Jason Hobart, "played" with the computer and corrupted its programs badly, then collapsed in his cabin.

The medic, Assistant Team Leader Powell Johnson, programmed the autodoc to remove his own appendix, stomach, and spleen. He is still in the machine and won't recover without major transplant surgery.

The fourth member of the station crew, Scout Peter Tisley, is in a coma, suffering from kidney failure. Before collapsing, he punctured some of the emergency vacc suits in the station, wrecked the workshop, burnt his name into the bulkhead of his room, and fired a probe at Malen without bothering to arm its self-destruct charges.

Once the team reaches the station it will need to enter and investigate. With the station launch docked, the only entrance to the station is the main air lock, designed for docking with much larger craft. It will not form an airtight seal with the ship's boat, and vacc suits will be needed to enter the station.

The station description which follows contains some information which will be visible at a casual glance, and some which will not be apparent to player characters. Use your discretion in describing the situation aboard the station.

Devices found at various points around the station are EE-VAC suits, marked "\*", and fire extinguishers, marked "F":

EE-VAC suits are short-term emergency vacuum suits, made of thin plastic with a ten minute air supply. They are self-inflating once a rip cord is pulled, and can be donned in 30 minus DEX seconds. Some are faulty (see the notes on Tisley above) and will refuse to inflate. Roll 8+ for a suit to be faulty. On a second roll of 9+, players notice it without a careful examination. EE-VAC suits cost Cr 150, give no armor protection, and cannot be re-used. They are fairly common devices, and characters will be able to use them without instructions.

All fire extinguishers are dry foam types designed to work without polluting the air. Unfortunately, this type of extinguisher tends to leave a gummy residue which can disable delicate machinery. Characters won't automatically know this since most ships use gas-filled extinguishers.

If any attempt is made to use any computer terminal in the station see the notes on Compartment 16, Deck B.

#### Deck A:

1. *Maneuver control room.* All controls are standard, though slightly old-fashioned. This compartment is one of several with laminated photochromic glass windows. The glass is 15 cm thick and is equivalent to a minimally armored ship's hull. (Factor 1 armor, in *Traveller* terms.) The glass offers no protection against laser penetration. The iris valves in this compartment, and throughout the station, are an old design operating normally except that power is used to open rather than close them. If the motors or power cables are damaged, they will slam closed without sensing any obstructions that may be present. Each valve originally carried a warning sticker, but all are now missing or obliterated. There is an inconspicuous panel in the bulkhead by each valve, concealing a hand crank which will open the valve in 3-4 rounds, if it is not locked. (On a roll of 10+, the iris valve is locked. It takes 40 minus (DEX + INT) rounds to unlock. Shooting the lock mechanism *doubles* the number of rounds it takes to open the valve. Once unlocked, it will not lock by itself.)

2. *Shaft to dorsal turret.*

3. *Dorsal (triple) turret.* Sandcaster (lessens effectiveness of beam weapons) / Missile / Laser.

4. *Store room.* Houses launcher for probes, a rack of probes and solid propellant charges, and miscellaneous equipment and supplies. The floor is littered with hundreds of 5mm ball bearings, spilled by Tisley. Seven spaces in the probe rack are empty: once the computer is repaired, a log check will show that only six are recorded as used.

5. *Life support.* All machinery in this compartment shows signs of overheating, and three pumps are burnt out. All the stores needed to repair it are kept in Compartment 6. Repairs will take 15 hours, less D6 hours per level of *Jack-of-all-Trades* (J-o-T) or Engineering skill used. If players repair the life support system, they will no longer have to wear vacc suits. Once the unit is repaired, however, there is a slight chance of another failure, on a 3D6 roll of 16+. Roll each day, The alarm system must be repaired separately.



6. *Access to engines* and storage area for engineering spares.
7. *Greenhouse*. Filled with plants from various worlds. Characters with medical or botanical knowledge will recognize three mild narcotic herbs and a powerful **type** of laxative berry.
8. *Drive rooms*. Two ion drive units, combined thrust **0.25g** under solar power, **1g** under fusion power.
9. *Shaft to lower decks*. Hatches at each level are rigged to close automatically if air pressure on either side **drops** by 20% or more.

#### Deck B:

10. *Main air lock* with adaptor (5-meter extension). Mary Fong's corpse is floating in the lock, with a loose shoe stopping the outer valve from closing. The body is an unpleasant sight, and anyone seeing it must make a roll of 15+ (DMs: +END, +Vacc) to avoid vomiting. If team members are wearing space suits when this occurs and fail to save, a roll of 9+ must be made to avoid a suit malfunction. Roll D6 for possible suit malfunctions:

(1) Suit air supply **restricted**; occupant takes D2 points suffocation damage before suit removed.

(2) Suit exhaust blocked, pressure builds inside. Occupant must remove helmet, taking two points damage (decompression effects). Note: Unless the suit is cleaned and put on again, players forced to remove their helmets will begin to feel the intoxicating effects of the station's air.

(3) Electrical short, radio fails.

(4) Electrical fault, all power lost. Occupant takes 2-4 points damage from suffocation per minute until suit removed. All equipment (e.g., radio, beacon, **lights**) useless.

(5+) Visor obscured, occupant blinded until helmet removed or visor opened.

It takes an hour to clean and disinfect a suit after vomiting, more time being required for repairs if the suit malfunctions. It is considered extremely bad manners to ask someone else to clean a contaminated suit or to repair it before it is cleaned.

11. *Suit store and recharge room*. Able to recharge a maximum of eight vacc suits. There are four suits present. All have been refilled from the *contaminated* air supply (and will have the same effect as breathing the station air if used), but none will fit team members without some modification.

12. *Lavatory (Head)*.

13. *Workshop*. The workshop holds all normal Electrical, Electronic, Mechanical, and Plumbing tools, all made to Tech Level 11. (TL 11 is about halfway between where we are now and the world of *Star Trek* - high-powered lasers are old hat, but the transporter room is years in the future.) The tools are lying in a large heap on the floor, covered with a mixture of paint and epoxy resin. On top of the pile is an empty welding torch. There are several containers of paint and epoxy solvent in Compartment 4. They are toxic. It will require 1-3 cans of solvent to clean up all the tools, with a DM of +1 on the day's life support system failure roll for each can of solvent opened — this is strong stuff, and could overload the jury-rigged air purification system.

14. *Commons*. Facilities include a small robot chef unit, entertainment and **music** consoles, and a library of **hard-copy** books. The room is untidy, with broken chairs and torn books scattered over the floor.

15. *Sickbay*. Facilities include an autodoc (A) and two bunks with life support and monitoring facilities (B). Powell Johnson is in the autodoc, under heavy sedation. If characters are not wearing helmets or filter-masks (and are still lucid), they will notice a pungent smell in the room. A careful examination of the autodoc will also reveal the organs in the waste box. One of the bunks can be removed and used as a litter with minimal life support facilities, if required. On a roll of 8+ (DM: +Medical) this will keep Johnson alive on the journey back to the *Rim Warlock*. If the players move Johnson from the autodoc to a litter, the autodoc will report that the air is impure, and that moving him from his **stabilized** environment may endanger his life. If the players think of it, they can attempt to rig



the autodoc so it will perform a complete air analysis. (Roll 9+, DMs: Medical, Computer, and J-o-T). If successful, they will learn that the air has been fouled by large quantities of carbon dioxide, alcohol, other metabolic products, oil, ozone, **food**, old socks, and sweat.

16. *Computer and satellite monitoring and control room*. Linked to multi-waveband receivers (16A) and maser transceiver (16B). Capacities include translation of up to six simultaneous transmissions, and routine control of all the satellites. Although nothing shows externally, the computer is seriously deranged, and full debugging will take 30 hours less D6 hours per level of computer skill. It is a very bad idea to switch the computer off, since all data and programs would be lost. If the computer is switched off, it will take a week to reboot all of the programs from backup systems. Weapons (both offensive and defensive), library functions, navigation systems, maneuvering **systems**, and lighting will be inoperative until the computer is once again working. Three days after powering up, ship's systems will begin to come on. Roll 10+ (no DMs) for any particular system to return on any given day. (Bear in mind, the players will have to go about their business in the dark until they get the lighting system working again.) After 168 hours have passed, *all* systems not already operational will begin functioning again. Until the computer is debugged, the following events will take place:

(a) Any signal to the satellite monitors will activate the drives at 0.25g thrust. Each activation causes D6 thousand credits worth of damage to the solar panel system and reduces available solar power by 10%, since the panels should be locked in place before the engines are used. If the team has not docked the launch to the lower lock it will be left behind, since the main lock (10) is designed for a larger vessel.

(b) All attempts to access the current log or the observation records will result in a display of video games.

(c) Seventeen hours after the team's arrival the internal gravity system and lighting will cut out simultaneously. Once this fault occurs, all characters must make a save on 9+ (DMs:

+Vacc Suit, +1 if END 10+, -1 if END 6-) to avoid becoming disoriented and spacesick. Spacesickness gives a -2 DM on all skill use, and causes vomiting (see 10 above). It will take 20 minutes to override the computer's control of the grav system once a computer fault is suspected.

(d) The satellite destruct codes have been permanently deleted from memory. This will not be apparent unless the computer is asked to supply them, when a "NO DATA" signal will be produced.

It should be noted that, due to time lag, there is a -4 DM on missile fire from the satellites controlled by the computer, increasing to -6 in the asteroid belt and -8 at the gas giant. These factors will change if the station moves nearer to these satellites.

17. *Exercise/recreation area.* Equipped with exercise machines, hologram scene "windows," and other recreational items.



18. *Store room* (containing numerous frequently used items, e.g., power cells, suit tanks, etc.), with armory rack. Armory rack holds three military snub pistols, each with a belt of six 20-shot clips. The military snub pistol is an automatic designed for use on shipboard and in zero-G combat. Each clip holds 20 high-explosive cartridges. Each cartridge does 4D6 damage (or, a bit more than a modern assault rifle). The armory rack also holds three Advanced Combat Rifles (ACR) and four ammunition clips. The ACR is roughly equivalent to a modern assault rifle like the M16. It does 4D6 damage per high-explosive cartridge. The ACR is capable of semi- or fully automatic fire (four shots per pull of trigger). The armory rack also holds five cutlasses and three vials of combat drug. Combat drug adds two points to both STR and END. It takes effect two rounds after being ingested, lasts for 30 rounds, and does 1D6 damage to the user when it wears off.

19. *Single cabin.* This cabin has a computer terminal and is usually reserved for the team leader. The compartment is tidy, with the exception of some dirty linen on the floor. Jason Hobart is lying on the bed, snoring loudly. He wears his full ceremonial uniform and is clutching a battered teddy bear. He is in a coma but will recover after 4D6 hours breathing pure air.

20. *Single cabin.* Tisley is lying on the floor. His skin is slightly yellow and his pulse and respiration are extremely rapid. Burnt on the cabin walls are the words "Tisley Was Here." Tisley has vomited on the floor and bed. Unless promptly treated, he will die in 1-4 hours from total kidney failure. Characters with medical skill should roll 9 or better (DM: +Medical) to cure him. The autodoc gives a +4 modifier to this roll, but medical skill 2+ is required to use it.

21. *Lavatory (Head).*

22, 23. *Double cabins.* Each has a third folding bunk for extra personnel. 22 was occupied by Fong, and 23 by Johnson. Their clothing will be found if the cabins are searched, but nothing of any significance.

24. *Girder to solar panels.*

#### Deck C:

25. *Launch docking and reception area,* with airlock tube down to launch cabin and docking cradle controls.

26, 27. *Holds* (26 is refrigerated for food and medicines).

28. *Fusion power plant.*

#### Launch:

A: *Cabin* (six seats, rear four removable for extra cargo).

B: *Lavatory (Head).*

C: *Fuel scoops.*

A 5-ton hold is located under the cabin.

#### Overall

In addition to the faults described above, the station is in extremely poor general condition. The air purifier failure was not an isolated occurrence — sixty years have passed since the station was built, and it has never been given a full dockyard service. Continuous computer monitoring controlled most of the problems, but once the system was disrupted, minor faults started to turn into potential crises, which will become *actual* crises during the team's investigation. For each day that passes, roll 2D6; on 9+, a problem will develop. Roll 2D6 *again* to determine the severity of the problem:

2-7: Reroll on minor faults table

3-10: Reroll on serious faults table

11+: Reroll on crisis table

*Minor Faults:* (Minor faults occur in a single compartment or small area. Roll 3D10-2 to determine which compartment or area has been affected.)

2-4: Light failure

5-7: Intercom failure (one station only)

8-9: Jammed iris valve

10-11: Jammed hatch

12: Computer terminal breakdown (one terminal only)

*Serious Faults: Roll 2D6:*

2-3: Slow air leak

4-5: Slow fuel leak

6-7: Intercom failure (all stations)

8: Light failure (one full deck)

9: Gravity failure (one full deck)

10: Solar panel power reduced 10-60%

11: Power failure (one full deck)

12: Communications breakdown with D6-1 satellites

*Crisis Table: Roll 2D6:*

2: Catastrophic air loss (hatch or window fails)

3: Catastrophic fuel loss (valve or pipe fails)

4-5: Computer failure (see discussion of computer — Compartment 16, Deck B)

6-7: Total electrical failure

8-9: Total gravity failure

10-11: Fire, 1D4 compartments

12: Fusion plant failure (1-5 power lost, can be repaired in 2D6 hours; on a roll of 6, plant is a total loss)

Referees may apply modifiers to these tables determined by the amount of time characters devote to maintenance and by the skill (or lack of it) used in the work. Players should *not* be asked to make such decisions before the first failure occurs.

At the end of a week, the team will be able to make contact with *Rim Warlock*. The captain will tell the team member (or members) with the best piloting and medical skill to ferry the survivors to the ship, then order the group to take over the station until a relief crew can be transferred to Malen. He adds that this will take 6-8 weeks, and will give the team a **chance** to show what a good job they can do.

Once the team has settled in on the station, the referee should allow approximately two weeks before the next crisis develops. This problem is the culmination of several years of work on **Malen** , , .

## 5. MALEN

**Malen** is a typical Terra-type planet, with four large continents and numerous small islands. A **30-degree** axial tilt causes violent seasonal contrasts. The presence of three moons makes tides complex and tends to cause bad storms and frequent floods.

The Malenese are hardy and reasonably strong for their size, normal adults having the following characteristics:

Strength	<b>D6+4</b>	Dexterity	<b>2D6+2</b>
Endurance	2D6+3	Intelligence	2D6
Education	2D6	Social status	2D6
Height	75-85 cm	Weight	25-40 kg



Despite their small stature (30" to 34" in height, 55 lbs. to 88 lbs. in **weight**), the Malenese are a hearty people. Their strength is just a bit less than human, on average. Their average dexterity and endurance is a bit *higher* than the average Earth dweller. In intelligence, the Malenese **are** in every way our equal — their relative lack of technological progress is a result of climatic and other natural disasters. Their **life** has not been easy and their progress is admirable in light of the difficulties they have had to face and overcome. Despite their lack of contact with the mainstream of humanity, the Malenese have developed along the same lines as humans elsewhere. Like other off-shoots of humanity, the Malenese can **be** gentle and fierce, by turns. They can be understanding at one moment and pig-headed and narrow-minded the next. **They** can be remarkably cooperative and fiercely territorial. They are, in short, human. Many of their cultural, social, educational, and governmental institutions would fit in on any of the human race's myriad worlds.

Their Feudal Technocratic government developed as a result of centuries of natural disasters, mostly caused by high tides or storms. Organizations which coordinated relief work and the construction of flood defenses gradually took power from the former rulers, a hereditary religious aristocracy. This dependence on engineering has caused a general respect for all forms of technology and science. In a typical Malenese city, the chief government officials are the leaders of the Fire Brigade, Flood Control organization, and Police, **the** President of the local university, engineering guild members, and the senior doctor of the largest hospital in the area. All are active in their professions, and government meetings are held over computer and picture-phone links rather than in person. The leader of the city government is the city's representative to the planetary government.

There is one world-wide language, **Malenali**, with minor dialect variants in different regions. Most areas **are** linked to a world-wide communications net carrying news, entertainment, and educational programming. The most popular **form** of entertainment is a type of stylized serial resembling a soap opera with poetic and musical interpolations. After a few weeks, all Scouts in the interdiction station learn either to love or hate this style, which is used in approximately 65% of transmissions.

For over a century the Malenese have suspected that they are not native to Malen. No native mammals are sufficiently **humanoid** to make a close relationship likely, and there are no fossil records of any ancestral species.

The Malenese had developed large optical telescopes by the time the Scouts rediscovered their world. They sighted the L5 satellite monitor a few years after its installation. It was, however, assumed to be an accumulation of meteoric debris, and was often used as a benchmark for observations. **Over** the years, the natives have noticed two slight shifts in its orbit, both caused by micro-meteor impacts and followed by a return to the original orbit after a few days, as the thrusters pushed it back in place. Astronomers have also **detected** faint radio signals from other colonized systems, **the** nearest being eight parsecs away. They have yet to interpret these signals, but believe them to have intelligent origins.

Until recently these facts were seldom associated by the Malenese, but a computer program relating several scientific disciplines linked them as evidence of an alien origin. Malenese scholars did not deduce the presence of the interdiction station, but suspected the L5 monitor of being part of a larger craft which brought humanity to Malen. As a consequence, there was a world-wide search for further evidence, and a **manned** spacecraft is being prepared for an eventual **mission** to the L5 satellite. The flight has received some prominence in the local news media, but the fact that it will actually visit the L5 point has not been mentioned - there is religious opposition to the "Alien Origin" theory and the scientists prefer to announce any discoveries after the mission, rather than arousing controversy beforehand.



This was the situation until the day before the team reached the station.

The probe Tisley fired at Malen was launched very accurately, and penetrated to the surface, landing in a lake near a major university. The fall was witnessed by a group of students and teachers who recovered the probe after a few hours of trawling with nets and magnets. They believed it to be a normal meteor. The probe was taken to the university's geology laboratory for immediate examination, and cut open to reveal its surprising contents.

The obvious alien construction of the probe's cameras and recorders was immediately reported to the government, which asked the scientists to **keep** the incident secret until the situation could be properly assessed. Since the probe was obviously almost new (its power pack is a type which loses its charge after just a few days, and there are traces of volatile sealing compounds in various areas) there was some alarm, and the alien origin hypothesis has been amended to include the possibility that Malen is still being observed from space. Some scientists have even suggested that the "L5 object" is an observation device, making immediate inspection even more essential.

*Hshan Gusival* (Star Dove), the Malenese probe ship, is a Tech Level 7 rocket (we are on the verge of TL 7 in 1984) using solid fuel boosters to fire a reusable aerodynamic vehicle into space. As the Malenese are smaller and **lighter** than normal humans, they require less food, less air, and less room, thus making it possible for a relatively small craft to be equipped for a prolonged flight. At launch, it weighs 2100 tons, but after boosters have been dropped, it is reduced to 350 tons. The ship can sustain a maximum of four minutes at full thrust apart from re-entry maneuvers. The ship's computer is powered by fuel cells. The missile launcher carries four small scientific probes (equipped with cameras and transmitters) plus two hastily-installed wire-guided missiles (fired with -2 DM to hit, -1 DM on penetration, range 5 km). The price quoted below is

an approximation, based on the capital costs of the vessel's construction and development of the necessary industries. It has a four-week supply endurance.

The flight plan is for the vessel to rendezvous with the "L5 object," take pictures and instrument readings, and then fire its probes to other interesting positions - to the L4 stable point, and to orbits around the three moons. If anything interesting is detected, the Malenese ground controllers will launch a supply drone to rendezvous with the vessel, allowing it to continue investigating. Otherwise it will return to Malen after three weeks.













Since the L5 mission will be firing its probes near the orbits used by the interdiction station and its satellites, it is very likely that the Malenese will spot something. Unless the L5 observation satellite can be moved or destroyed before the *Hshan Gusival* reaches it, the Malenese crew will certainly spot it. They will make a full examination, and **may** even decide to take it back to Malen if their probes at L4 and in the vicinity of the moons uncover nothing else.

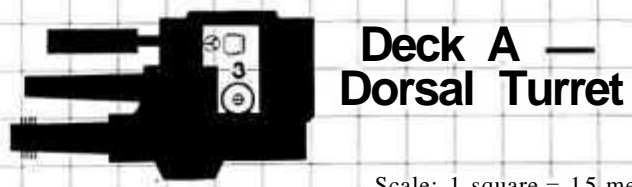
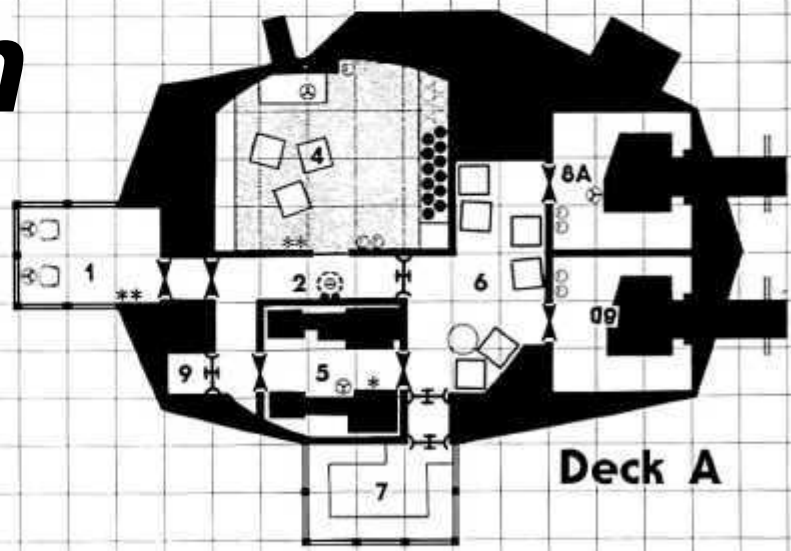
On a roll of 5+ on 2D6, the Malenese probes will sight the L4 observation satellite *in addition to* the one at L5. If the 2D6 roll was eight or more, the Malenese will spot the interdiction station. Ignoring the two satellites for the moment, they will turn their attention to the station itself. They will approach, dock, and board the station, conducting as thorough a search as they can - or, as the players choose to allow. If the players choose not to interfere with the Malenese, the astronauts from the planet below will spend a week investigating and then return to Malen to report. If the crew of the station choose to confront the Malenese, they will meet three Malenese, unarmed, in primitive (late-twentieth century) space suits.

Each team member should be allowed a roll of 12+ (DM: +3 if the character has prior alien contact **experience**, plus any other relevant modifiers — as determined by the game master) to realize that the L5 mission is an ideal opportunity to make

# Interdiction Station

## INTERDICTION SATELLITE

- |  |                    |   |                        |
|--|--------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Photochromic Glass |  | Floor Hatch            |
|  | Bulkhead           |  | Overhead Hatch         |
|  | Partition Wall     |  | Floor & Overhead Hatch |
|  | Sliding Door       |  | Computer Terminal      |
|  | Hatch              |  | Emergency Vacc Suit    |
|  | Iris Valve         |  | Fire Extinguisher      |



Scale: 1 square = 1.5 meters

contact with the Malenese without triggering an unfavorable reaction. The Malenese will be in a buoyant psychological mood if they discover the interdiction station through their own efforts, and will probably not feel inferior unless the player team makes very bad mistakes.

## = 6. ENDING THE SCENARIO

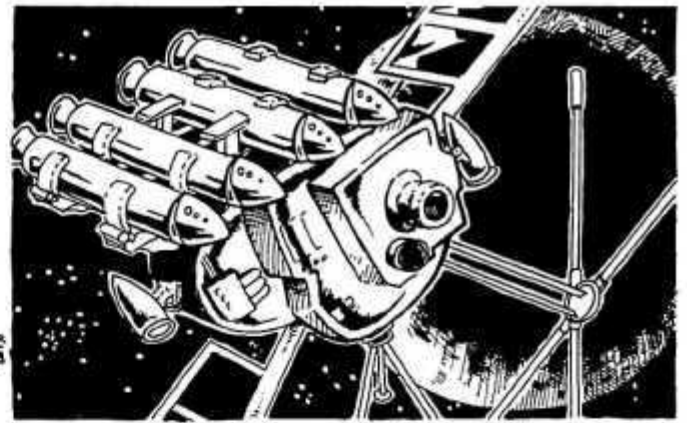
There are several possible outcomes to this scenario. These are summarized below:

1) The team avoids all contact with the Malenese and prevents them from learning anything significant from the flight. They accomplish this *without* resorting to violence. They will be **relieved** normally, congratulated on their devotion to duty, promoted, and assigned to another mission.

2) The team stops the Malenese from making contact or learning anything by *using force* (by destroying the *Hshan Gusival*, for example, and making it look to the Malenese on the planet's surface as though there had been an accident). They will be relieved normally and then brought before a board of inquiry. Although they will be exonerated, they will receive no further promotions and will be mustered out as soon as possible, after spending the rest of their terms in boring office jobs.

3) The team fails to make peaceful contact or to stop the Malenese from learning of their "quarantine." The reaction of their superiors will vary with the exact **circumstances**, but may vary from mild censure to dishonorable discharges.

4) The team contacts the Malenese but inadvertently triggers the expected psychological reaction. The team will be punished to an extent depending on the **eventual outcome**. If the ultimate result is a return to sanity and peaceful contact with the Imperium, team members may ultimately be congratulated and/or promoted. If there is a catastrophic reaction, the team will be court-martialled and possibly even shot.

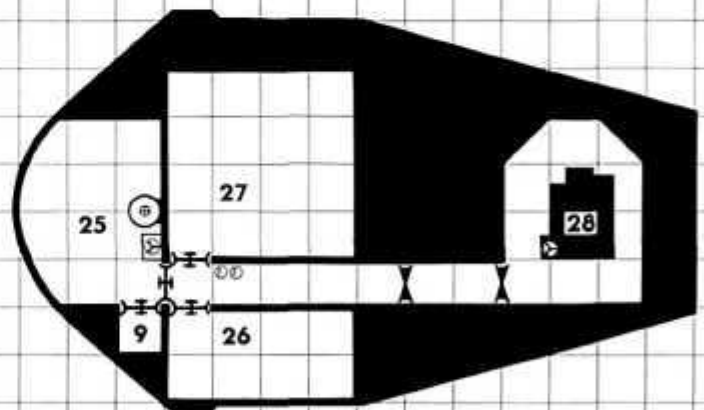
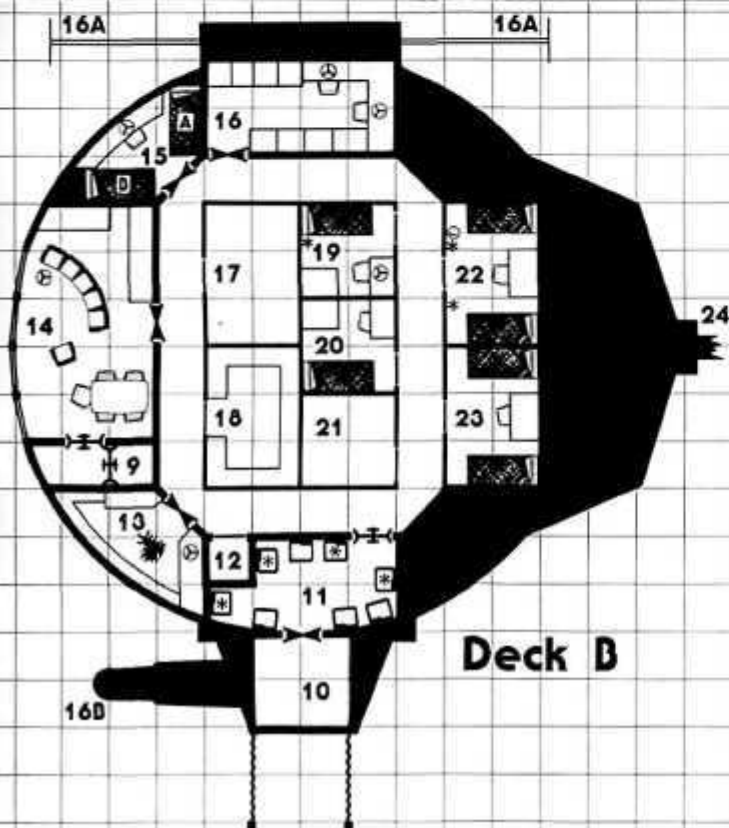


5) The team makes an entirely successful contact with the Malenese. A board of inquiry will be convened, which will eventually result in all the team members being promoted and decorated. On a roll of **10+** the team leader will be knighted or, if already of high social standing, raised another status step. If team members decide to leave the service at the end of this term, they should be given a +1 modifier on all material benefit rolls, unless some other event mars their records.

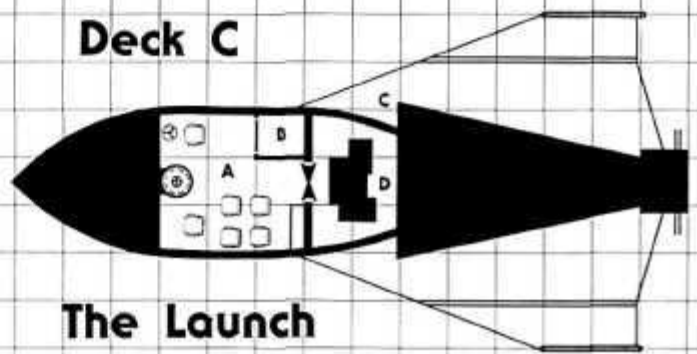
Should the scenario lead to some unexpected event (e.g., the team decides to plunder or conquer Malen), the referee should remember that Imperial forces are only a few weeks away, and that the *Rim Warlock* is more than a match for the station and the team's weaponry.

*The original ideas for this scenario developed from incidents in a Traveller campaign run in King's College, London, in Spring 1983; the song "Star Man" by David Bowie; and the film Dark Star. My thanks to all concerned.*

- Marcus L. Rowland



Deck C



The Launch

# Interdiction Station Traveller Stats

1. *Malen*: Location classified, UPP: X887854 7. Interdicted.

2. *Malen's Moons*:

- 1) Orbit 75,360 km, X200000 0.
- 2) Orbit 117,151 km, X100000 0.
- 3) Orbit 312,875 km, X300000 0.

3. *The Interdiction Station and support ships*:

Ship profiles as per Book 5, 2nd Edition - *High Guard*.

0413 Station MAL-1 SI-4701141-1 10000-10001-0	MCr. 186.16
Batteries bearing	1 1 Crew 4-10
Batteries	1 1 TL 12

Passengers-0; Low-0; Cargo-80; Fuel-10; EP-8; Marines-0; Agility-0.  
The Interdiction Station weighs 400 tons. Dispersed Structure. No interstellar capability. Maximum 1g acceleration. Type 4 computer (about halfway between 20th century and *Star Trek*). Normal crew of four. Maximum crew of 10. No armor. One sandcaster (to lessen effect of beam weapons). One laser. One missile launcher (with three missiles).

Launch for above: QG-0106610-000000-00001-0 MCr. 19.6 TL 12  
Passengers-5; Low-0; Cargo-8; Fuel-12; EP-1.8; Crew-1; Marines-0; Agility-6.

The Interdiction Station launch weighs 30 tons. Wedge/Needle-shaped hull. No interstellar capabilities. Maximum 6g acceleration. Type 1 computer (late-twentieth century equivalent). One missile launcher (with three missiles).

4. *The Malenese Ship (Hshan Gusival)*: LZ-3206611-000000-00001-0  
MCr. 5000 TL 7

Passengers-2: Low-0; Cargo-25; Fuel-150; Agility-1; Crew-2.

The *Hshan Gusival* is an experimental lab ship. Cone-shaped. No interstellar capabilities. Maximum 6g acceleration. Type 1 computer (late-twentieth century equivalent). One missile launcher (with three missiles).

## Interdiction Station — NPC Stats

Team Leader Jason Hobart (897AA7) 47 years old. 8th term in Scouts.  
STR-8; DEX-9; END-7; INT-10; EDU-10; SOC. ST.-7; Computer-2;  
Pilot-2; Air/Raft-1; Vacc-2; Pistol-2; Lcader-1; J-o-T-1.  
Snub Pistol Travellers Aid Cr. 4520

Assistant Team Leader/Surgeon Powell Johnson (788BA8) 31 years old. 4th term.  
STR-7; DEX-8; END-8; INT-11; SOC. ST.-8; Medical-3; Pilot-]; Vacc-0;  
Computer-2. Cr. 925

Scout Peter Tisley (AA898A) 25 years old. 2nd term.  
STR-10; DEX-10; END-8; INT-9; EDU-8; SOC. ST.-10; Pilot-1;  
Brawling-1; Nav-1; Vacc-0; ACR-0. Cr. 940

Scout Mary Fong (7C888B) 23 years old. 2nd term.  
STR-7; DEX-12; END-8; INT-8; EDU-8; SOC. ST.-11; Computer-2;  
Communication-1; Linguist-2; J-o-T-1. Cr. 1298

This information may be presented to the players if they ask for it (or if the referee feels such information would be a natural part of their pre-mission briefing). In any event, the players should be given no clue that the station's original crew is in any trouble. All they really know is that the station crew failed to show up at a regularly scheduled rendezvous and doesn't respond to signals from the *Rim Warlock*. The information above can be presented as the latest data on the station crew in the *Rim Warlock's* computer banks.

# TARSUS

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## GAMES

**TRAVELLER STARTER EDITION** (Game Designers' Workshop); \$10.00. Designed by Marc W. Miller. Contains game box, rules booklet, booklet of charts and tables, player's handouts, two adventures, and map. Three or more players, indefinite playing time. Published 1983.

The *Starter Edition* is the most recent incarnation of the *Traveller* rules (the others being *Basic Traveller*, *Deluxe Traveller* and *The Traveller Book*). In style and content, it most closely resembles GDW's hardbound *Traveller Book*, though at a \$3.00 reduction in cost, and some differences in components and contents.

*Starter Traveller* is a major revision in style and packaging, obviously aimed at the same people who would purchase the "Basic Set" of another major RPG. In my eye, *Traveller* is the better buy, with better artwork, better writing style and content, and better game mechanics.

Artwork, for the most part, is identical to *The Traveller Book*, the major exception being different cover art on each. The rules are laid out in a similar fashion, incorporating the old Books 0, 1, 2, and 3 into one volume. As with *The Traveller Book*, all various forms and charts have been organized by subject (all forms and tables on planets are grouped together, for example). However, unlike *The Traveller Book*, the *Starter Edition* places these all into one booklet, a vast improvement, I feel, as it cuts down on the amount of time one spends leafing and looking for a particular set of charts.

The major differences between the two products comes with the material designed for adventuring. Both contain the same "Patron Encounters" (taken from Supplement 6, *76 Patrons*). *The Traveller Book* contains a "Casual Encounter," the *Starter Edition* does not. *The Traveller Book* contains an "Amber Zone" reprinted from an early issue of the *Journal*, the *Starter Edition* does not. Both editions contain two adventures - *The Traveller Book* contains "Exit Visa" and "Shadows," the *Starter Edition* contains "Mission on Mithril" and "Shadows." The adventures are presented better in the *Starter Edition*, as the boxed format allows GDW to break things down into separate components. Therefore, you have a separate map, player's handout, and referee's booklet. This makes running the adventure easier, as the referee does not have to photocopy, cut and paste the player's information in order to make a handout, or to "cover up" his portion when allowing the players to look in the book, etc.

My only complaints are that too much of the artwork is the same between *The Traveller Book* and the *Starter Edition*. I wish that there could have been more diversity in the "action" illustrations.

I would recommend the *Starter Edition* for those who are interested in *Traveller* or those who are looking for a good edition of the rules to give to someone who is starting out in the game. The mix of material, rules and adventures makes it perfect for those who wish to play *Traveller*, want to run some adventures without much work, and desire enough information on the *Traveller* universe without having to purchase several of the supplements. For those who already have *Traveller* in one of its incarnations, it is almost worth buying again. The adventure material and the separate charts book-

let have proven very useful to me: I was not sorry to have bought *Traveller* again (for the fourth time!).

- Frederick Paul Kiesche III

**SIL0 14** (Jersey Devil/Centurion Games): \$9.95. Designed by Neil A. Rosenberg. One 17" x 22" color map; 100 mounted backprinted cardboard playing pieces; two six-sided dice; one eight-page rule book with accompanying errata sheet. For one to four players. Playing time 45 minutes to an hour. Published 1983.

*Silo 14* is a doomsday scenario from Jersey Devil's Centurion line of games and is suited for both solitaire and multi-player gaming. To win, you must maneuver your group of ten Commandos into the core of a missile command center and stop the plans of a berserk general who has set the missile to fire, beginning World War III. In ten turns, the Commandos must start at the upper level of the command center and fight through breaches and past highly skilled Silo Defenders armed with grenades and rifles.

The best thing about *Silo 14* is that no two playing sessions are alike. The placement of Silo Defenders is random according to rolls of the dice: It is difficult, if not impossible, to plan a fool-proof strategy. If you are playing with more than one person, you may not fire on each other (unless you are playing the Red Brigade scenario). Since it is never certain where the Silo Defenders will appear at any given time, your Commandos are sometimes easily ganged-up on, depending on die rolls.

The game's weak point is that too much depends on luck. Winning isn't easy and you're lucky to get enough men to the center of the silo to disarm the missile in the allotted time. Each turn takes a considerable amount of time, with players moving their men sequentially, one at a time.

When you manage to boat the odds, *Silo 14* has its exciting and gratifying moments, but the game is not for the impatient or the easily discouraged. For those ready for a challenge, however, *Silo 14* makes for an amusing hour of game playing.

- Suzanne Stevens

**JUDGE DREDD** (Games Workshop); \$18.00. Designed by Ian Livingstone. Boxed, with 4-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 17" x 22" mounted playing board, 54 large "Action" cards, 84 smaller cards, 6 pawns, one die, and the "Umpty Candy Card Album," which is not used in the game, but helps to explain background information.

Judge Dredd is a British comic-book hero, whose exploits are only now reaching the United States in reprint form. Dredd is a lawman in the next century. Tough (very tough) but fair, he faces a weird assortment of foes -



allow a player to miss one survival roll and still have the character survive, if the blown roll occurs in the first eight years of service. If a player blows a survival roll after that, I consult the "Unfit for Service" table in Paranoia Press' *Scouts and Assassins*. If you prefer not to have all your *Citizens* characters muster out for less than sterling reasons (or don't own *Scouts and Assassins*), there's **always** GDW's optional survival rule (outlined in Book 6).

## Position and Promotion

After position is attained, the player may roll once each year for promotion. The promotion roll is the same as listed in *Citizens*, but the player must make *two* successful promotion rolls before advancing to the next *Traveller* rank. In addition, a character may advance only one *Traveller* rank per four-year term, regardless of how many successful promotion rolls have been made that term.

## Skills

Each year, after survival and position/promotion are **determined**, the player may roll for a skill. If the 2d6 roll is 6 or **better**, the player may roll once on any of the skill tables under the appropriate service heading to obtain a skill. Note that characters must still have the requisite education to be entitled to a roll on the second Advanced Education table. I have found that it benefits players to stick to one table (the Service Skills table, for example) while making their skill rolls for one four-year term. Rolling in this manner increases a player's chance of duplicating skills and ending up with higher skill **levels**. This is optional, but most players will probably want to play a character with fewer skills at higher skill levels rather than play a character with a lot of **level-1** skills. Automatic or cascade skills are received normally as outlined in *Citizens*.

## Reenlistment and Mustering Out

Reenlistment and mustering out take place normally in accordance with *Citizens* guidelines. In my campaign, however, I require characters to serve four or more terms before they become eligible for a ship as a mustering out benefit. This prevents a character from serving one or two terms and getting a ship for it by making a lucky roll on the material benefits table (something which has always annoyed me). I have characters who have served less than four years treat "ship" rolls on the mustering out table as a roll entitling the character to a choice of any other benefit on the table. Characters who have served four or more years roll normally on the table.

To clarify the system, a format for keeping track of a character's service career appears in the accompanying chart (see Chart #1).

Using this **format**, let's send a character through two terms of the Pirate service in *Citizens*. The numbers in each column of chart #2 represent the dice rolls I made for survival, etc. that year. (The character's UPP is 786556).


As you can see, our pirate advanced to *Traveller* rank 2 (corporal) and gained 7 skills in his first two terms. Survival-wise, the pirate had a close call (a dueling **scar**, perhaps?) in the fourth year of his first term, and blew his survival roll in the second year of his second term (since the blown roll occurred within the first two terms, I allowed him **to** survive). The "rank 1½" notation in the first year of the second term is meant to indicate that the character must make another successful promotion roll before advancing to rank 2. Finally, the pirate character would receive the cascade skill of **Brawling-1** to bring his total skill pool to 8 (this is the total number of skill levels accumulated, including duplicated skill rolls). A pirate character generated from the basic system would have accumulated a total of 4 skills.

To illustrate further the difference my system makes, I took the rogue I used as an example at the beginning of this article and ran her through the expanded Rogue service in *Citizens*. Here is the result:

Rogue UPP: 77A5CA Age 34  
4 terms Cr10,000  
Bribery-4, Streetwise-3, Leader-1,  
Ship Tactics-1, Computer-1, Medical-1  
Low Passage Foil

The difference is striking. This rogue can certainly boast that her skill pool rivals that of the scout at the beginning of this article (although her skills are quite different).

A final note to **referees**: To maintain consistency and balance in your campaign, make sure you generate your **Citizens-type** NPCs with the expanded system if you are using it for your PCs. A speedy way to do this is to use the pre-generated characters listed in *Citizens*. Note the number of terms the NPC served and simply run the NPC back through the same service for that number of **terms**. Ignore survival, promotion and reenlistment rolls, but do roll for skills on a year-by-year basis (for example, 8 rolls for an NPC who served two terms). As before, the skill roll is 6 or better. The NPC's expanded skill pool takes the place of the previously listed one.

I have used the expanded system for generating characters from *Citizens* in my campaign for some time now, and it is very popular with my gaming group. More than half of them chose to generate characters through the system, and while the crew is a bit motley (a noble, a scientist, a **pirate**, and two rogues), they certainly spice up the campaign. Best of all, though, they enjoy equal footing with the **mercs** and merchants who make up the rest of the party. So dust off your copy of *Citizens of the Imperium* and **beef** up those PCs! 

### Chart #1:

Age	Term	Year	Survival	Position/Promotion	Skill (6+)
19	1	1	auto	none this year	two auto
20	1	2	roll	roll*	roll
21	1	3	roll	roll*	roll
22	1	4	roll	roll*	roll

\*roll for promotion only after position is attained

### Chart #2:

Pirate from *Citizens of the Imperium*

Age	Term	Year	Survival (6+)	Position/Promotion (9+/8+)	Skill (6+)
19	I	1	auto	none this year	two auto (Gambling, Blade Cbt)
20	I	2	8	11 (position: rank 1)	3 (no skill awarded)
21	I	3	7	5 (no promotion)	7 (Streetwise)
22	I	4	6	5 (no promotion)	10 (Streetwise)
— (reenlistment) —					
23	II	1	9	8 (rank 1½)	6 (Gunnery)
24	II	2	4 (okay)	4 (no promotion)	7 (Blade Cbt)
25	II	3	12	9 (rank 2)	5 (no skill)
26	II	4	9	2 (no promotion)	8 (Blade Cbt)

— (reenlist or muster out) —





# Pre-enlistment Skills in TRAVELLER

by Warren Okuma

Recently, it occurred to me that starting characters in *Traveller* were 18 years old and had absolutely no skills. What ever happened to computer whiz kids? How about members of the rifle team and the R.O.T.C. — they could reasonably be expected to have Rifle-1. And just imagine a war-torn country (or planet) with few adults left alive; such a country might send twelve-year-old kids into battle. How many skills would kids growing up in this country have upon reaching 18? This article offers some guidelines for creating characters 18 and younger and generating appropriate skills for them.

## Building a Character

First, players must decide how old their characters are. Younger characters will have lower starting characteristics than standard *Traveller* characters. Use the following chart to determine how many dice to roll for your character's basic characteristics:

17-18 years old: 2d6  
15-16 years old: 2d6 - 1  
14 years old: 1d6 + 2

Any character under 14 should begin with further reductions in Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Education.

## Skills

The standard enlistment procedures don't work very well for the under-19 crowd. Younger characters should select skills using a different system. To find out how many skills you can take, use this formula:

$(\text{Education} + \text{Intelligence})/4 = \text{Skill Points}$

Any fraction of .5 or more can be used to buy an extra skill at level 0. (The character gets no plus or minus when using that skill.)

*EXAMPLE: Mickey is a youngster with an IQ of 6 and an Education of 7. This gives him  $(6 + 7)/4$  skill points — a total of 3.25. Rounded down, this means he will be able to select 3 skills. (If his IQ had been 7, his skill point total would have been 3.5 —  $(7 + 7)/4$ . Had this been the case, he would have been able to select three skills plus one at level 0.)*

In determining which skills young characters have, use the Skill Tables provided with this article. Characters roll on the skill table a number of times equal to their starting skill point total. The basic skill categories are Personal Development, Street Skills, School Skills, Rural Skills, Special Interests, and War Zone Skills. Feel free to change these categories (and the specific skills within them) to fit the needs of your campaign and your players. Remember that only characters who have grown up in a war zone may select war zone skills. Remember also that growing up in a war zone has an adverse effect on material and cash benefit rolls.

*SKILL SELECTION EXAMPLE: Mickey has three skill rolls and chooses to roll twice on the Special Interests table and once on the Rural Skills table. His rolls are a 3, a 6, and a 2, giving him Mechanical, Gambling, and Bow Combat.*

In addition to the unique skill tables, younger characters should use the Cash and Material Benefits chart included with this article. Characters between the ages of 16 and 18 roll twice on this table; all other characters roll

once. Players are free to choose which chart they roll on.

This character generation system allows characters to make use of their education characteristic; it can be used to give an upset 1-term character a few extra skills; or it can be used to put together a team of precocious kid commandos. Most characters generated using this system are exceptional and should be played as such.

The system suggests several interesting scenario ideas: Let's say a 14-year-old runs away from home; he's a nasty kid who packs a shotgun. A bunch of kids his own age would be able to go a lot more places this kid is likely to go — without attracting a lot of attention — than a crew of 45-year-old cutthroats. And how about the problems encountered by younger characters? Where and how would they get gun permits? Where would they find a patron? (Probably not in a bar . . . at least not without getting into some trouble.) Sometimes just getting a job can be an adventure in itself.

Running an adventure with an all-under-19 gang can be a real challenge, but with the application of a little imagination, you can have all sorts of fun with gifted midget commandos. D

### BENEFITS

	Cash Allowances	Material Benefits
1 or less	20 Cr	Blade
2	50 Cr	+ 1 Dex
3	100 Cr	Gun
4	250 Cr	Cloth Armor
5	500 Cr	Ground Car
6	1000 Cr	Low Psg
7	2000 Cr	Med Psg
8	3000 Cr	High Psg

### SKILL SELECTION

	Personal Development	Street Skills	School Skills	Rural Skills	Special Interests	War Zone Skills
1 or less	+1 Str	Brawling	+ 1 Soc	Hunting	Gun Combat	Leader
2	+1 Dex	Forgery	Administration	Bow Combat	+ 1 Edu	Vacc Suit
3	+1 End	Blade Combat	Liaison	Recon	Mechanical	Fwd Observer
4	+1 Soc	Gambling	Mechanical	Blade Combat	Vehicle	Streetwise
5	+1 Int	Streetwise	Electronics	Survival	Computer	Hvy Weapons
6	+1 Edu	Jack-o-Trades	Computer	Vehicle	Gambling	Gun Combat

# Alternate Character Classes for SPACE OPERA

by Stefan Jones

Many, if not most, of the SF roleplaying games available today use some sort of "career"-centered character-generation system. *Traveller* characters have a choice of six military or other "service"-oriented backgrounds; *Space Opera* has a somewhat wider selection, including civilian and scientific careers. But while supplements and variant articles have added a veritable pile of career types to the *Traveller* system, the choice of occupations for the *Space Opera* character is still limited. This variant will present a few ideas for new character classes and add a few skills to the list.

## Character Careers

Military careers seem to be *de rigeur* for SF characters in roleplaying games. I suppose the major reason for this is to give the characters a reason for having the skills needed to use the goshawful weapons available in SF games, fly starships, and so on. If one looks at SF literature, however, one can find a fair heap of ideas on how an ordinary Joe, Jane, or J-17 got to be a hero. Starman Jones (no relation), of the Heinlein novel of the same name, received his slot on a liner by studying his late father's navigation books; Kirth Gersen of Vance's *Demon Prince* series was trained in the skills of assassination by an obsessed grandfather. Innumerable characters in SF grew up on the streets, farms, and so on. Non-military careers can also lead to interesting adventures. Journalists of today often go to dangerous places to get stories; those of the 25th century will undoubtedly be just as mobile. Diplomats, corporation representatives, missionaries, and muck-raking busybodies could all find star travel and adventure part of their jobs. Don't assume a character is a wimp because he doesn't possess weapon skills! Don't be ashamed to have a character who is motivated by more than bloodlust, greed, and a thirst for power. Unconventional characters are what make a roleplaying campaign more than *The A-Team* in outer space!

In this variant, I'm introducing four new classes: Businessmen, Bureaucrats, **Athletes**, and Rogues. *Businessmen* differ from merchants in that they are less concerned with moving products than making them; they are corporate execs, salesmen, headhunters,



industrial spies, and researchers. This type of character might seem a trifle dull at first, but consider the possibilities: **Imagine** playing a salesman who's just been dropped on an alien world with a sample case and a catalogue. Your understanding of the local culture isn't perfect, and to make things worse, the competition is on the planet distributing free samples to the local warlord. Good examples of this type of character are **Poul** Anderson's Nicholas Van Rijn and David Falkayn.

**Bureaucrats** in this instance aren't paper-pushers; they're information people. Journalists, diplomats, Assistant Inspectors for the Imperial Department of Restaurants and Inns (the most feared branch of the imperial bureaucracy!), and lawyers fall into this category. While their firearms skills and combat experience might be slight, they can work wonders with even more powerful weaponry: Governments, Media, and public opinion.

**Athletes** are people whose livelihood depends on physical skill and action, not just sports figures. They could be hunters, naturalists, perhaps even actors or dancers.

For each of these four new classes, some information is listed below: Skills available and limitations, Material Benefits, and characteristic bonuses. Following these are descriptions of the new skills and a few notes on the General Skills listed in the book.

#### Businessmen:

**Characteristic Bonuses:** +30 to **IQ**, Intuition, Leadership, and GTA.

**Skill Points:** 3 x Empathy, 2 x IQ, 5 x Leadership, plus 4 per year in the service. General Skills Bonus: 6d6 points.

**Available Skills:** General Skills, Rhetoric, Media, Civ. **Comp.** Programming, Linguistics, General Social Science, Merchant.

**Material Benefits:** Minicomp (Model = 5/2d6 + 1), 50 x IQ x 3d6 in credits, Pension if over 20 years of service (yearly stipend equal to CR 500 x 3d6 + 3, plus CR 1000 per position ... see below).

**Contacts:** 1d6 x (Intuition + Empathy).

#### Bureaucrats:

**Characteristic Bonuses:** +30 to IQ, Intuition, Leadership, and Empathy.

**Skill Points:** 2 x Empathy, 2 x IQ, 5 x Leadership, 5 per year. Bonus points for General Skills: 6d6.

**Skills Available:** General Skills, Historical Sciences, Psychology, Rhetoric, Law, Media, Civ. and Sci. **Comp.** Programming, Forgery, Administration, Counterfeiting, Diplomacy.

**Material Benefits:** Minicomp (Model = Rank + 1), Credits = (Empathy + Leadership) x 10 x 3d6, Pension (after 20 years) = rank squared x 3d6 + 3 x CR 500.

**Contacts:** Rank x Empathy.

#### Athletes:

**Characteristic Bonuses:** +35 to Physique, Strength, Constitution, Agility, Dexterity, Bravery, and Intuition.

**Skill Points:** 3 x Agility, 2 x Constitution, 5 x Strength and Bravery or (for actors, etc.)

Leadership and Empathy. 6d6 bonus for General Skills. 3 points per year in career.  
**Skills Available:** General Skills, Survival Skills, Media, Firearms and Archaic Weapons, Scout, Acrobatics.

**Material Benefits:** Target Weapon/Archaic Weapon, Sports and outdoor equipment (value = years x CR 1000), Cash = Leadership or Bravery x 3d6 + years x CR 500. No pension available; no rank for Athletes.

**Contacts:** Leadership x 1d6.

#### Rogues:

**Characteristic Bonuses:** +30 to anything but psionics.

**Skill Points Available:** 5 x Intuition, Intelligence, and Bravery, plus 2 x Agility and Strength, minus Empathy.

**Skills Available:** All general, restricted general, armsmen skills, Hacking, Cracking I, Cracking II. All Scientific, Technical, and Astronaut skills cost *triple* rather than double, because they are out of the typical rogue's element.

**Material Benefits:** Any two **sidearms** or melee weapons, light body armor, crime tools appropriate to skills possessed, Cash = CR 500 x 3d6 + 3 x (average of Intuition, IQ, and Leadership). Debts = 2d100 x CR 50. (The rogue trades off debts for enemies; each CR 100 of debts traded for enemies results in one bounty hunter, angry spouse, or disgruntled official looking for the character).

**Contacts:** Rank squared, plus Empathy and Leadership.

## Ranks & Prestige

To reduce complexity, the level of achievement that a character reaches in any of the above careers is reduced to one of six levels of prestige or position. A character starts off at the lowest level; a roll is made each year of the character's career to see if he or she has made a level jump. The percentage chance that a promotion is given is equal to: (years in career + IQ + Class attribute x 2) - (rank you're trying for squared + 1d6). If, for example, a rank 2 bureaucrat with an IQ of 12, Leadership of 14 (this is the "Class attribute" of the Bureaucrat), and with **five** years of service behind him tries for a promotion, he will need to roll under a 35 at most; possibly as low as a 30, depending on the random factor. A character who gets a promotion may not roll for another on the year after the promotion, and his/her chances of rolling one on the year after that are halved. The ranks are:

Rank	Businessman	Bureaucrat	Rogue	Athlete
1	Flunky	Gofer	Urchin	Beginner
2	Jun. Exec.	<b>Jun.</b> Exec.	Tough	Novice
3	Executive	Manager	Hood	Notable
4	Sen. Exec.	Sen. Exec.	Operator	Authority
5	Director	Director	Notable	Celebrity
6	<b>V.P.</b>	Secretary	Infamous	Hero

Note that Rogues and Athletes don't actually have ranks; the relative prestige of the character at the moment is his or her "**rank.**" The Class Attributes are: **Businessmen/IQ**, **Bureaucrats/Leadership**, **Rogues/Average of Bravery and Intuition**, **Athletes/Average of Agility and Strength**, or **Leadership and Empathy** (the latter two are used for actors and celebrity-types).

## New Skills

**Rhetoric:** The ability to argue a point, support a position, make a case. Combined with Media or the ability to write, the character possessing Rhetoric becomes an instant pundit, pedant, *vox populi*, or what have you. This skill is rated on a scale from 1 to 10, with variable skill-point costs. Lawyers, diplomats, and journalists may obtain the skill for 3 SP or six weeks of study; others must use 5 SP or ten weeks of study. The prerequisites (used when testing skills being learned during play of the game) are IQ, Empathy, and Leadership.

**Media:** While primitive societies depend on things like town criers, runners, and inquiries to spread news and inform people, technological civilizations often use electronic media. This skill gives the possessing character a familiarity with the workings of electronic media such as television, radio, computer networks, and modern print media. It is not a magical skill, and must be combined with others for full effect. Diplomacy and Media would allow the character to communicate with a population as a whole without going through official channels; Law and Media could help a character sue a nosy journalist or expose corruption. The skill costs 10 SP for journalists, PR men, and politicians; others must pay 25 SP. The skill cannot be **learned** during the play of the game; it represents years of experience and not actual **study**.

**Diplomacy:** This skill has a prerequisite of Social Science/5, Historical Science/5, and Rhetoric/2. This is the equivalent of Streetwise for Big Shots; it includes knowledge of protocol and etiquette, knowing one's limits in alien societies, and perhaps a bit of espionage. This skill costs 5 SP for diplomats, high-level businessmen and people in the Contact Service; others must pay 10 SP (20 weeks of study). Prerequisites: IQ, **Empathy**, and Leadership; Intuition may be substituted for any one of these.

**Hacking:** Because most of the societies in the *Space Opera* universe have been dealing with computers for centuries, techniques to protect data transfer have become ferociously tough. The skills required to bust into protected data systems are hard to come by,



highly risky to use, and dangerous to be caught using. The skill is rated on a 1 to 10 basis; each point of expertise costs 4 SP. Prerequisites: Advanced Math/5, Computer Tech Skills for each computer type/2, Civ. and Sci. programming equal to level in Hacking. To learn the skill requires actual practice and 10 weeks per skill level. IQ, Intuition, and ElecTech attributes are used when testing for success in learning the skill.

Cracking I & II: Cracking I is familiarity with locks, primitive alarm systems, vaults, safes, and other "old fashioned" security systems. Cracking II is familiarity with hi-tech security systems, including sensors, stun-fields, cameras, electronic fences, and so on. Cracking II requires Mechanical and Electronic Engineering/2 to advance beyond expertise/5. Cracking I requires 5 SP (2 SP for rogues and intelligence agents) per level, Cracking II requires 7 SP (5 for rogues, intelligence agents, or commandos) per level of expertise.

Law: This skill gives the possessing character knowledge of the law, and with sufficient practice and study the ability to practice the law. Increasing skill levels allows greater knowledge of things like loopholes, precedents, and legal politics. Rated on a 1 to 10 scale, each level of this skill costs 5 SP for lawyers, diplomats, and high-ranked businessmen to acquire; others must pay 10 SP per level. Study time to acquire the skill during play is 13 weeks; the skill is tested using IQ, Leadership, and Rhetoric skill.

Becoming a lawyer requires Law/3,

Rhetoric/1, Historical and Social Sciences each at /1. Bar Exams, which a character may apply for every four pre-game or campaign years, must be passed to become a practicing lawyer. The chance to pass the exams is equal to the total of the PC's Law Skill, Rhetoric Skill, Intelligence, Intuition, and Leadership. Being a lawyer in a military or other service position allows an increased pay scale (in most organizations, lawyers receive the same pay as scientists; if in doubt, increase pay of position by 50% over that of any ordinary worker), and provides contacts in the legal profession.

Acrobatics: More than the ability to do tricks, this skill allows other actions (swimming, climbing, combat maneuvers) to be more complex and successful. Indiana Jones (no relation), Tarzan, and Flash Gordon all have this skill. The skill costs 10 SP for athletes and intelligence agents to acquire, 25 SP for others. Learning Acrobatics during play requires ten weeks of practice, and is tested at level 5 with Agility, Dexterity, and Strength as prerequisites.

General Skills Reclassified: The list of "General" skills in Book One of *Space Opera* is a varied lot. Some are truly general, everyday skills, while some should be restricted. I'd like to suggest that the following skills be put on a special, restricted list. To obtain them would cost double or perhaps triple the Skill Points/time listed if a character cannot logically obtain them on-the-job. An armsman, for example, shouldn't be able to pick up Merchant skill unless he took time off and went out of his way to learn the ropes.

Restricted General Skills: Counterfeiting, Forgery, Bribery (unless endemic in culture), Merchant, Scout, Survival (in terrain not on home planet), Administration.

Similarly, skills that a character would have difficulty getting access to during his career or due to a lack of education should cost more. Scientific, Engineering, and Medical skills (other than basics like First Aid, Chemistry, Repair of Familiar Vehicles, Math, etc.) should cost double or triple for Rogues, Bureaucrats, and Businessmen unless germane to their careers.

Contacts: Friends in high places, strings to be pulled, connections, an uncle in the IPA. Half of all contacts a player character receives must be declared at the start of the campaign: the location of the contact, his or her position and rank, powers, and so on. Other contacts may be pulled out of the hat with the GM's approval when the character needs help. Contacts will either be very limited/untrustworthy/greedy (but they can be contacted at any time), or of higher power, ability, etc., and be "one-shots." The GM should ask each player to carefully describe and justify contacts; getting in touch with a "friend" should be a situation that is roleplayed, not merely done with mirrors and dice. If a player insists that his great-aunt is a TriVee star who just happens to live on the asteroid station they are on, the GM can have some fun making up the character of the great-aunt, taking into account the possibility that rich Auntie Agnes is flat broke, or has sworn to kill the next person who asks her for a favor.

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## SHIPS OF THE GALAXY

### Stiletto Class Yacht

By Gary Reilly

Every **small** troupe of Traveller adventurers needs to be mobile, to be able to travel among the stars. One just can't depend on the commercial starliners, especially when speed is of the essence and you need to leave at odd times. Sooner or later, owning your own starship becomes a necessity.

The Stiletto Class yacht may be just **what** you ordered. Although it displaces a mere **100** tons, this starship provides ideal transportation for small parties of wanderers.

The Jump Drive (**JD**) sits piggyback atop the main structure. A **Jump-2** capability provides reasonable interstellar mobility. The Tandem Starrunner Class **B** Maneuver Drives (**MD**) generate a maximum acceleration of 4 g's, enough power for most situations. Fuel scoops (**FS**) allow for emergency refueling by skimming unrefined material from gas giants.

The Stiletto may accommodate up to six adventurers. The three double occupancy cabins (**C**) offer comfortable inflight living quarters. These staterooms, a communal fresher (**FR**) and a galley (**GAL**) cluster around a small, but functional common area. A ship's locker (**L**) may hold a variety of equipment including weapons, maintenance tools, etc.

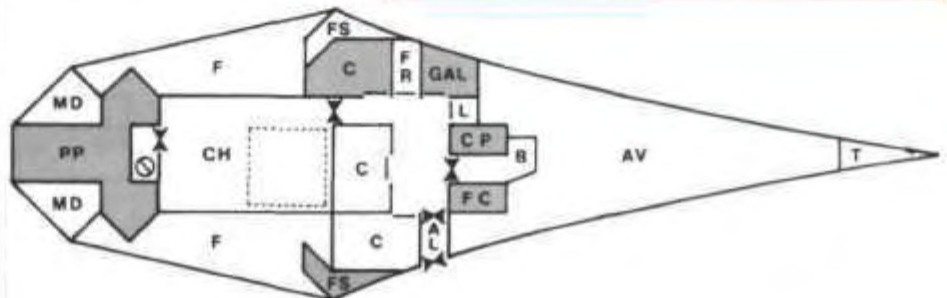
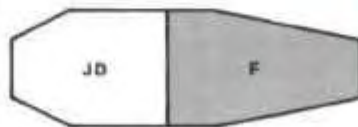
This compact ship requires but a single crewman for its operation. All systems are controlled from the forward pilot's bridge (**B**). The ship's avionics (**AV**) and computer (**CP**) may be accessed from this area. A reinforced iris valve allows the bridge to be isolated from the rest of the ship if necessary.

Ship's defense centers on a

single weapon **turret** (**T**) mounted in the nose of the craft. Fire control (**FC**) is located on the bridge. In the model pictured, the hardpoint sports a triple weapon system consisting of the universally accepted combination of pulse laser, missile rack and sand caster. The turret is operated remotely from the bridge.

Up to 12 tons of cargo may be carried in the hold (**CH**) located behind the crew's quarters. This represents a rather large capacity for a vessel of the Stiletto's size. An external ramp in the hold's deck may be lowered to facilitate the loading of cargo. The cargo bay is available for other duty as well. Several temporary staterooms can be installed to increase the ship's passenger capacity, or house an aircar in the bay for planetside transportation. Any such conversions would increase the ship's construction price.

The starboard airlock (**AL**) forms the primary access to the vessel. In addition, the small engineering section at the rear of the cargo hold contains an iris valve set in the deck. This compartment may be decompressured, doubling as an auxiliary air lock.



#### Technical Specifications

- Length: 48tn.
- Beam: 15m.
- Displacement: 100**Tons
- Hull Configuration:** Needle/Wedge  
Atmospherically **Streamlined**
- Star Drive: Sheldon **Lightjump A-10**  
Max Jump 2
- Maneuver Drive: Tandem **Starrunner**  
**Class B**  
Max Acceleration 4g.
- Power **Plant: Fuseli Pulsar Mod B**  
Power Rating 4
- Fuel Capacity: **24** Tons
- Avionics: **20** Tons
- Computer: **Starmind** Model 1 Bis
- Fire Control: 1** Ton
- Quarters: 3 **Crew** Cabins
- Ship's Armaments: 1 Triple Turret
- Cargo Capacity: **12**Tons
- Crew Roster: 1 **Pilot/Navigator**
- Auxiliary Vessels: None
- Construction Costs: 45.7 MCr
- Naval Architects: **Morgardi** Shipyards
- Universal Ship's Profile ((JSP):  
**Y - Stiletto**  
**Y - 11122A1** 010000-10001-0  
**Passengers = 5, Cargo = 12,**  
**Fuel = 12, EP = 4, Agility = 3**

#### DECK LEGEND

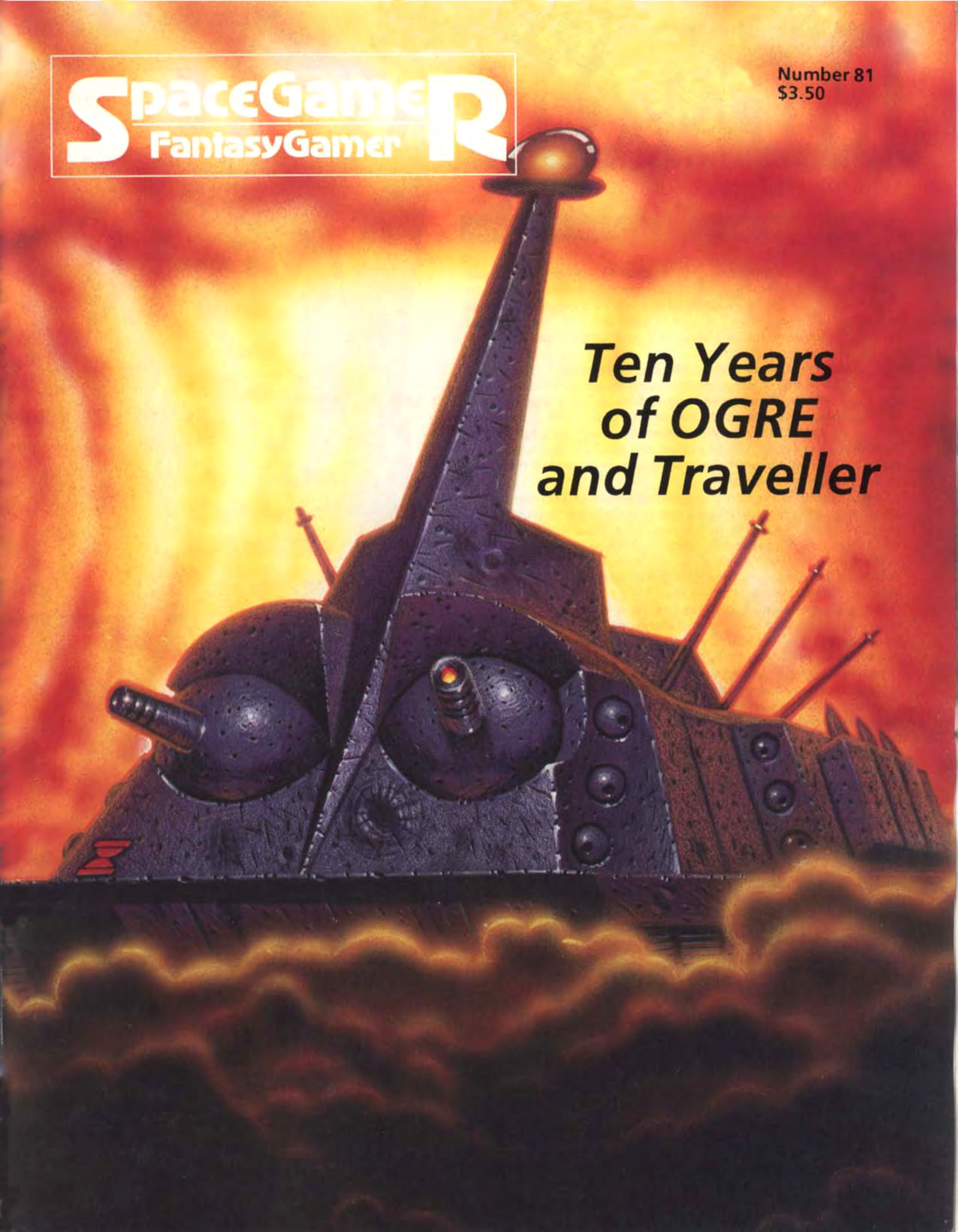
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|-------------------|---------------------|
| AL - Air Lock     | FR - Fresher        |
| AV - Avionics     | FS - Fuel Scoop     |
| B - Bridge        | GAL - Galley        |
| C - Stateroom     | JD - Jump Drive     |
| CH - Cargo Hold   | L - Ship's Locker   |
| CP - Computer     | MD - Maneuver Drive |
| P - Fuel          | PP - Power Plant    |
| FC - Fire Control | T - Turret          |



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**Ten Years  
of OGRE  
and Traveller**





*MANHUNT is a Traveller, science fiction, role-playing adventure. It takes place on the bustling merchant planet Diavlo, and involves a party of three to six player -characters.*

# Manhunt

by  
Bill Cassel

## DIAVLO

Diavlo, (A-962946-D) fourth planet of the star of the same name, is a very important merchant trading center located centrally in a dense cluster of stars. A large number of nearby systems depend on Diavlo as a supplier of shipping for both raw materials and manufactured goods; upon the prosperity of Diavlo rests the prosperity of a multitude of agricultural and industrial planets.

Diavlo's sun is an F-type star, and Diavlo is the only habitable planet of 11 in the system. Diavlo is approximately 9,000 miles (14,400 km) in diameter, has a standard oxygen/nitrogen atmosphere, and several small oceans. Diavlo's population is 5.6 billion. There are four major continents, all under the same government, a council of eight democratically elected representatives, two from each continent. The highest authority on Diavlo is the president, who is elected by the council from within their own ranks. The current president is Hallon Curero, who is in the second year of his five-year term.

## THE SITUATION

The player-characters are currently on layover on Diavlo. If they do not own their own ship, they are assumed to be a part of the crew of a merchant vessel; if they do own their own ship, they are making a delivery of cargo. In either case, the cargo is gems and the customer is a coalition of investors, through a resale agent. It will take two weeks for the agent to complete the

transaction, so the PCs are required to remain on Diavlo for two weeks until either the ship they crew will leave or, if it is their ship, they will receive their pay. It is Diavlo's summer season, and so it's not an unpleasant place to be stranded for two weeks. The coalition will provide lodging at one of the best hotels on the planet, the DeVoto, in the capital city of Azhiro, and 1,000 Credits per character per day expenses. The character's ship is being maintained and refueled at Flint's busy and elaborate dirtside starport, the size of a city itself, just outside Azhiro.

## AN OFFER

Five days through their stay on Diavlo, the characters are approached by an old man while dining at the hotel. Introducing himself as Kelton Amadiro, he tells them that he has a business proposition for them, and asks to adjourn to one of their rooms. If the PCs agree, he will propose to them a simple courier job, for which the fee is 250,000 Credits, no questions asked. If the PCs respond in the affirmative, he reveals the task for which he wishes to retain them, first swearing them to secrecy.

Amadiro informs them that he is a representative of an off-planet interest come to collect payment from several Diavlan who wish to invest in his employers' company against the wishes of the Diavlan government. Amadiro then hands the PCs a list containing six names and addresses, saying that each PC is to visit one address. The first two are to be visited the next day; the second two, the day after that, and the last two, the day after that. Upon reaching the assigned address, the PC is to find the person listed at that address and ask him/her for a package for "Kharybdis." The PC is then to receive a small metal package, locked and sealed, with a two digit numerical code on the underside, a different code on each package. There is one package at each address, for a total of six.

On the fourth day, when all of

the packages have been collected, the six are to be taken by a single character to a warehouse on the outskirts of Azhiro, the address of which is also listed on the sheet containing the addresses of the six contributors. The courier is to leave the six packages there and destroy the sheet of paper. He is then to string the six two digit codes together in the order in which the packages were collected. This will form a single, twelve digit code which will open a security safe in the warehouse. In this safe will be the address of an apartment in Azhiro and a key; exactly two weeks from the day of their first meeting with Amadiro, one of the PCs is to go to this apartment. In a drawer there will be 150,000 Credits. Amadiro provides the PCs with 100,000 Credits in advance.

The job may be carried out with no hitches. The GM should feel free to add his own embellishments, obstacles and perceived threats to make the actual execution more interesting. The packages, once received, may not be opened without using high explosives which would vaporize their contents. The PCs may retire to their hotel to await the pickup date, 11 days after the last two packages are collected. Attempts to collect the money before the appointed date will yield only empty drawers. The characters' departure from Diavlo will unexpectedly be delayed for one week by complications in the transferrance of the gems. This means that they are scheduled to leave one day after the pick up date. The PCs are to receive their cargo fee or commission upon completion of this transaction.

## UNEXPECTED OCCURRENCES

Four days before the characters are scheduled to pick up the final 150,000 Credits, one character (determine randomly) watching a news holograph sees a story about a man caught attempting to smuggle arms off Diavlo the previous day and detained by authorities. He may be recognized (5+ on 2d6) as the

holder of one of the six packages. The same holograph also features a story about President Curero's major policy speech, to take place in a public square in Azhiro two days later.

Indeed, two days later, Curero makes his appearance. Only a few minutes into his speech, Curero suddenly slumps forward onto his podium. Quick examination reveals that he has been shot through the head, by a weapon eventually determined to be a specially modified Gauss Rifle. He is killed on impact.

Diavlo is thrown into chaos; such violence is unknown in its history. Never before has any political figure been threatened, much less assassinated; Diavlo has a peaceful culture in which all cooperate to promote the planet's best interests. Diavlo's remaining political leaders are unsure of how to proceed. The Council's first action is to impose a ban on all travel to and from Diavlo until the assassin is found. To the characters, this will mean that they cannot leave the planet. To Diavlo, it means that many of the customers who depend on them to transport essentials will suddenly be without the supplies they must have, and will be forced to look elsewhere for transport. Therefore, if the killer is not located quickly, many of the planet's political and economic friends will become its enemies, and Diavlo's primary industry, transport, will be destroyed. The Council will then devote the entire police and military forces to the task of locating the assassin. There seem to be no clues to go on. The PCs may go on living it up since no serious restrictions other than the travel ban are placed on civilians.

Two days after the assassination, news reports say that the authorities still have no clues as to the killer's identity. This is the day that one character is scheduled to pick up the final 150,000 Credits from the Azhiro apartment. When the character (or characters, if they decide to disregard Amadiro's instructions) goes to make the

pickup, he/they will be surprised and surrounded by twelve armed soldiers. The PC will then be informed that he is charged with the murder of President **Hallon** Curero, arrested, and imprisoned to await trial.

The events leading up to the arrest will be described as follows: After Curero's assassination, the residence of the man arrested for smuggling arms several days earlier was searched. In a safe there was a telescopic sight matching that on the disposed Gauss Rifle found earlier that day and identified as the murder weapon. The charges against the man were raised from smuggling to accessory to murder. Also found in the safe was the lease to the apartment in Azhiro. When the apartment was searched, and 150,000 Credits discovered, it was assumed that the assassin would be coming to the apartment to pick up the rest of his fee. The apartment was staked out, and when the PC comes for the money he is arrested.

## THE TRIAL

The arrested character remains in jail, a trial is scheduled for three weeks later. Experts on Diavlo predict an easy conviction; though the evidence against the character is circumstantial, Diavloans are unaccustomed to political instability and wish to get the incident over with as quickly as possible, and the PC is the only suspect they have.

The man arrested for smuggling and later determined to have supplied the telescopic sight and Azhiro apartment for the assassin will confess that he is a part of a conspiracy to have Curero killed, and provides the authorities with the names and addresses of five others who provided other components of the Gauss Rifle. He insists, however, that he never knew the assassin's identity for reasons of the assassin's safety. The five that he names have long since fled Azhiro after the arrest of the person that could have, as well as they knew, been the assassin, but it is anticipated that they will not be

difficult to track down. It will be announced that the travel ban will remain in effect for one week, until the five can be located, arrested, and returned to Azhiro.

The characters at this point may have ascertained that the job for which "Amadiro" hired them was the transporting of the six components of Kharybdis' Gauss Rifle from a conspiracy of contacts to a pickup point for the assassin. In any case, the characters' compatriot is in prison and, unless they wish him to remain there indefinitely, they must locate the real assassin and be able to prove that he is the killer. They must do so within one week, after which the travel ban will be lifted and Kharybdis will disappear into the ether of galactic civilization.

The only real clue available to the characters is the code name "Kharybdis". Not much of a clue at all. The PCs have, in fact, met the assassin, as Kelton Amadiro, whether or not they figure this out. The police will not be of any help in the characters' search, as they believe they have found the killer. If sufficiently pestered, however, they will assign one detective to assist the PCs. This is detective **Alena** Vernon, a young and talented detective fresh out of the academy with little experience. Vernon is included in this adventure for three reasons: one, to give the PCs access to resources which would otherwise be closed to them; two: to allow the GM to introduce a Deus Ex Machina if the players stray too far afield, and three: to give the PCs a credible witness to reduce the amount of

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### ALENA VERNON

Strength	6
Agility	8
Endurance	6
Intelligence	9
Speed	6
Accuracy	6
Administration	1
Auto Pistol	1
Interrogation	1
Laser Carbine	1
Survival	1

physical evidence they must produce. Vernon will not solve the mystery, however. The players must do that for themselves.

## THE ASSASSINATION

In order to properly referee the search for the assassin, the GM is here provided with the full story of what really happened on **Diavlo**. The assassin is Arcon Idiere, a native of the planet Novoc. Idiere has made a career out of being a paid political assassin, renowned for his careful planning and flawless execution (no pun intended). He is responsible for seven prior assassinations at various locations in civilized space. His stats are:

### ARCON IDIERE

<b>Strength</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Agility</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Endurance</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Speed</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Automatic Weapons</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bribery</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Combat Rifleman</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Computer</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Demolitions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Electronics</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Forgery</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>High Energy Weapons</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Streetwise</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Submachinegun</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Survival</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Reconnaissance</b>	<b>3</b>

Late in the year before his death, rumors began to emanate from Hallon Curero's private circle that Curero was considering withdrawing an expedition from Diavlo intended to colonize and mine the nearby planet, Avatol. If this is true, it would mean the end of that effort and the loss of hundreds of millions of Credits by Diavlan businessmen who had invested in the project. These businessmen were understandably distraught at this turn of events. So, when the rumors

began to grow more concrete, a small conspiracy came together and, through an off-planet contact, hired Idiere, known to them only by the code name "Kharybdis", to kill Curero before he could officially withdraw the expedition.

Idiere accepted the job for 10 million Credits, intending to retire if he could carry it out successfully. He then, through the contact, sent a message to the conspirators instructing them to purchase two specifically modified Gauss Rifles (one extra to provide a backup) on Diavlo, break them into six components, and hand over one of each component in a sealed unbreakable container to couriers using his code name. Idiere also instructed his employers to rent a warehouse and apartment for his use. Upon arrival on Diavlo under a false identity, he picked up the names and addresses of the conspirators, the addresses of the apartment and warehouse, and the keys to the warehouse, apartment and containers from a starport locker. Idiere rented a hotel room and retired to plan the specifics of the operation. Under the identity of Kelton Amadiro, a week later, Idiere hired the PCs to deliver the components.

That same day, **Kharybdis** abandoned the identity he had come to Diavlo under, checking out, changing his disguise, and renting a new room in a different hotel. Several days later, Curero's speech was announced, and Idiere decided it was time to act. (Later investigation revealed that Curero did, indeed, intend to announce the withdrawal of the expedition to Avatol). He cased a hotel across from the public square where the speech was to take place, renting a room there under his present identity. Then, to secure a room from which to actually carry out the assassination, he stalked, killed, and disposed of a man named Simon Callon who was similar to himself in height and build and had a hotel room across from the square. Idiere

then disposed of Callon's body and assumed his identity.

On the day of the speech, Idiere assembled the Gauss Rifle. He opaqued the room so that he could see out without others being able to see in. He then awaited the right moment. When Curero began to speak, he opened the window a crack, took aim, and killed Curero with his first shot. Unseen, he closed the window. An hour later, he changed disguises and went to the room he had rented under his previous identity. The next morning, disguised as Callon, Idiere, checked out of Cation's room and returned to his other room, changed his disguise back again, and burned Callon's identification.

Two days after the murder, Idiere made his first mistake. He disposed of the murder weapon improperly, and it was found by the authorities. This mistake, however, eventually worked to Idiere's advantage; the telescopic sight was recognized as a duplicate of the one found in the safe of the arrested gun smuggler, and this led to the stakeout of the apartment, and the arrest of the PC for the crime Idiere had committed.

Believing the search for the assassin was over, Idiere is, as the PCs begin their search, staying in the hotel from which he shot Curero, under the name Ash Sherrak. He has booked a seat on a ship leaving Diavlo at 1140 hours on the first day after the travel ban is lifted

## THE SEARCH FOR KHARYBDIS

The exact structure of the adventure from this point on is left up to the GM. The mystery has been presented; the players have one week and almost twelve hours to follow the trail and locate the assassin.

It is suggested that the GM



allow the characters a certain number of hours per day to search, deducting the minimum necessary amount to rest. The players must then devise activities that they believe will bring them closer to solving the mystery. The GM tells them if the action is possible and, if so, how many hours it will take. If it is possible, the GM must make up a success roll to determine if the action is carried out successfully. If the action is successful, the GM reveals to the players any information that action would have realistically provided. Note that it is possible for an action to be successful and still yield no information, if the GM decides that such an action would have been useless in reality. The success roll should be more difficult if the action is more ambitious, and easier if the action would yield only a little information. The GM should make the success roll secretly, telling the players only what information (if any) they received, and not if the roll was made or not. If the players receive no information from any action, they may always try again. The required time is expended on an action whether it is successful or not; if it is tried again, the success roll and information available upon success is the same as before. Modifiers to the success roll should be based upon appropriate skills.

Following are a number of possible actions, with time required, success rolls, and information gained upon success. Together, all of these actions will lead to the solving of the mystery. The players must think of them themselves. However, the GM should not suggest actions, except perhaps one or two, through **Alena** Vernon. A particularly astute group of players may pick up almost all of them. Yet, it is possible to solve the mystery with some, all, or none of these actions. It is up to the GM whether the actions used by the players would realistically solve the mystery.

Interrogating the imprisoned conspirators will be of little use. All

they know is that **Kharybdis** is not a native of **Diavlo**, and that he came to **Diavlo** from off-planet three weeks before the killing. (Time required: 3 hours. Success roll: 2 + on 2d6)

The PCs will be unable, should they search, to find any trace of any **Kelton Amadiro** in any starship, hotel, or other records. This will lead **Det. Vernon** to assume that **Amadiro** was **Kharybdis** in disguise, if the players have not reached this conclusion already. (5 hours; 2 +)

A search of the records of all humans arriving on **Diavlo** for the last two months (**Vernon** will suggest this interval, to be safe), picking out all **men of Amadiro's** race, height, and general build from the starport computer records, will yield some 1,500 suspects. (6 hours; 3 +)

A further search to determine which of the 1,500 have already left **Diavlo** and are therefore eliminated from suspicion, will narrow the field down to some 672 suspects. Of these, 115 are **natives of Diavlo**. This leaves 557 possible assassins. (5 hours; 5 +)

A computer search of all hotel records in **Azhiro** to determine which of the 557 were in the city at the time of the assassination will reveal that only 192 of the 557 were in **Azhiro** when **Curero** was killed. This does not necessarily eliminate the others, as **Vernon** will point out; but it is easier to work with 192 with so little time. (6 hours; 5 +)

Further research will reveal that only 19 of the 192 were staying in a hotel in the block surrounding the square in which **Curero** was shot. (2 hours; 3 +)

Attempts to find and identify each one of the 19 will reveal that one of them, one **Simon Callon** of **Diro**, checked out of his room several days ago and has not been seen; all others are still in their hotels. (5 hours; 5 +)

A clerk on the morning shift in **Callon's** hotel (not able to be interviewed until the next morning) will say that he remembers **Callon** checking out and that, when the clerk inquired as to his destination with the travel ban still on, saying that he would be flying to the continent of **Uar** to conduct business. (1 hour; 4 +)

A search of the records of all flights from **Azhiro** to **Uar** will reveal no **Simon Callon**. (2 hours; 3 +)

A search of the bodies found in **Azhiro** in the last month, will yield a corpse matching **Callon's** photo in the computer records in **Azhiro** starport exactly. The body was found just a few days ago and is currently frozen, awaiting transport to **Diro**. The apparent cause of death was an overdose of a particularly effective depressant. (4 hours; 4 +)

The remaining suspects are now 18 men who were staying in the hotel block in **Azhiro** on the day **Curero** was killed. Seven of the 18 are traveling with a companion, effectively eliminating them from suspicion.

Finally, a search of the starport reservation records will reveal that 5 of the 11 remaining suspects are scheduled to leave **Azhiro** starport for off-planet on the day the travel ban is lifted, as it is likely the assassin would. If the PCs have reached this point on their own, the GM may suggest through **Det. Vernon** the following plan. (2 hours; 4+)

The plan she suggests will be that the PCs and herself show up on the landing platform at each flight where a suspect is scheduled to leave in police uniforms, briefly interview stewards, crew members, etc., and begin to approach the suspect, hoping that he will panic and show himself.

The first suspect leaves at 700

hours, and will exhibit no unusual behavior when approached. The next two leave on the same flight at 920 hours, and will also exhibit no unusual behavior.

Ash Sherrak, or Arcon Idiere, is scheduled to leave at 1140 hours for Carona. Idiere will be at the main hatch about to board when the PCs appear. He will recognize them from their searches of the hotel recently and, when they begin to move toward him, he will draw the undetectable Auto Pistol he has concealed on his person and take two shots, one each at each of the PCs nearest him, and then run into the ship. The PC with the highest Agility may take one shot at him at -2 (42% unmodified chance to hit). If he is not brought down, **Idiere** will close and lock the hatch behind him, hijack the ship, and force the pilot to take him to Carona. If he is pursued by another ship, he will threaten to

kill the passengers one by one unless the pursuit breaks off and return to the planet from which they came. At this point, Idiere has, by his actions, confessed to the assassination, according to Vernon, but will escape Diavlo unless felled by the first shot. If the players devise an alternate method of solving the mystery, the GM should try to bring them to a final duel with Idiere where he has a chance to escape to off-planet.

### AFTER THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs have succeeded in locating Kharybdis, their accused compatriot will be freed after an official investigation of the matter prompted by Alena Vernon's testimony. There is no "false arrest" legislation on Diavlo, but the freed

character will be awarded 200,000 Credits by the Council. If Kharybdis escapes unidentified, the arrested character will remain in prison indefinitely.

There are a number of possible follow-ups to this adventure. If the PCs were unsuccessful in locating the true assassin, the next adventure could be an attempted jailbreak on behalf of the accused PC. If the characters locate Kharybdis and he escapes, they could pursue him and attempt to track him down all over again, or he could come after them because they can identify him. If Kharybdis is located and jailed, he could later escape (one of his specialties) and attempt to revenge himself upon them for being responsible for his imprisonment. In either case, the possibility exists for Kharybdis to be used as a recurring villain in the campaign.

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# Ships of the Galaxy

## Ranger Class Courier

by  
James B. King

**Traveller** first saw the Ranger Class 100 ton courier when it made its debut to the space lanes over a decade ago as a commercial courier for a large, interstellar corporation. The ship was designed to meet the specific needs of particular business concerns, but has since proven its diversity in filling the requirements of many interests. Its aesthetic appearance and efficient performance have also helped to boost its popularity. The **Ranger** Class courier is now constructed at many quality ports as both a commercial courier and a private yacht.

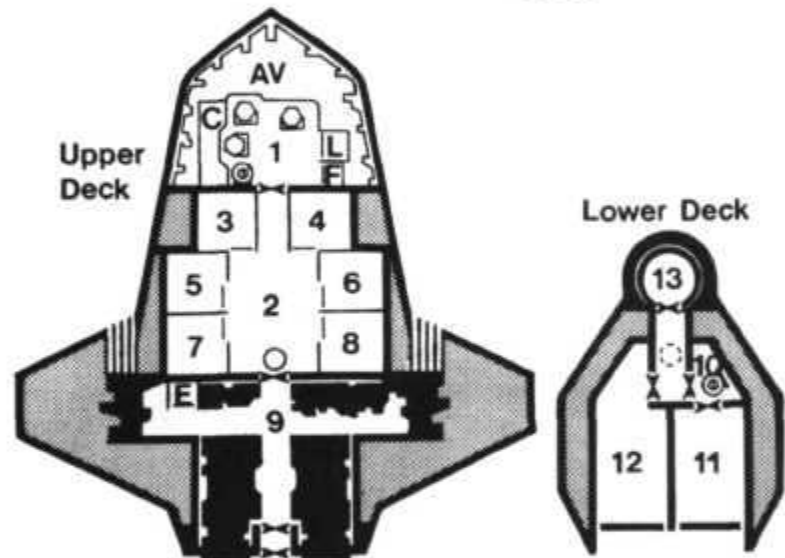
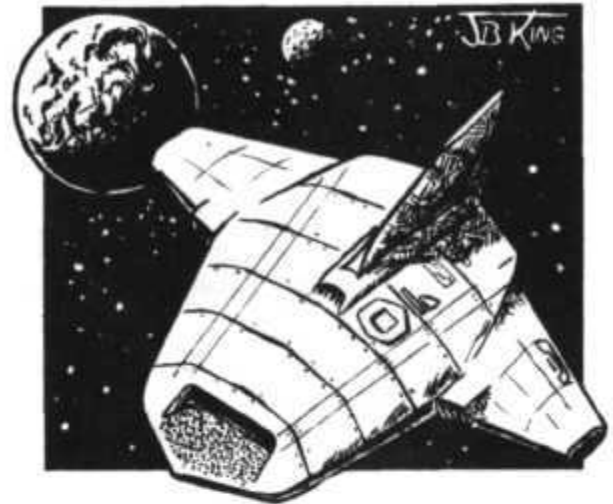
### Interior description

1. **Bridge.** All ship system controls are located here. There are 3 control couches; however, only 1 **pilot/navigator** is required for routine ship operation. Also in the bridge section are the avionics (AV), the computer (C), a fresher for on duty personnel (F), and the ship's equipment locker (L). There is also an emergency hatch piercing the floor bulkhead.

2. **Common Area.** Recreation and food preparation areas are located here. An iris valve through the floor provides access to the lower deck.

3-8. **Staterooms.** These are single occupancy private quarters. Each contains a bunk, closet, sanitary facilities, a small desk and chair, and a computer terminal.

9. **Engineering.** The Jump and Maneuver Drives, Power Plant and Life Support are located here, as well as access to fuel scooping and delivery equipment. There is also an Engineer's **Locker** (E) and a stern air lock, primarily used to obtain easy access to outside fixtures.



10. **Main Air Lock.** Access to the ship is usually through this air lock. It opens to either the vehicle bay or the lower passage way.

11. **Vehicle Bay.** A small ship's vehicle is stored here, usually a simple air/raft.

12. **Cargo Bay.** This small bay will hold 6 tons of cargo, including a second vehicle if it is desired.

13. **Fire Control.** This space is reserved for a turret and armaments, should they be installed.

The Ranger's modified wedge is fully streamlined and fuel scoops are installed. Fuel tankage surrounds most of both decks.

### Ranger Courier Class

**Displacement:** 100 tons

**Length:** 28m.

**Beam:** 26m.

**Hull Configuration:**

Modified Wedge - Atmospheric Streamlining

**Performance:** 1G Accel. Jump-2

Computer: Model 1/bis

**Hardpoints:** 1

**Crew:** 1 Pilot/Navigator

Passengers: 5

**Cargo:** 6 tons

**Ship's Vehicle:** 1 air/raft

**Fuel Tankage:** 30 tons

Construction **Cost:** MCr 27.815

-standard design discount-



## Tarragon's Heir a Traveller Adventure

by Michael O'Brien

Between jobs on Mmorden, the group is approached by Haaje Tarragon, a retired Merchant Captain, now the owner of a Type R Subsidized Merchant "fat trader." With this vessel he trades between Mmorden and a neighboring system some three light-years away.

He will buy the group's next round of drinks and explain his problem. Mmorden (B-9736CA-6) is governed by an extremely conservative Charismatic Oligarchy which enforces a highly restrictive legal code. Tarragon's problem relates to the antiquated laws of succession. Under Mmordani law property and chattels, including starships, cannot legally be left to a benefactor after one's death by means of a Will. In other words, Wills are not recognized by Mmordani Law. Rather, possessions have to be passed to an heir during the life-time of the benefactor. Any interstate goods are forfeited to the State.

The merchant Tarragon fears this will happen to his starship, the "Rourke's Drift." He wishes to give this vessel to a recently departed friend's niece, he himself being a bachelor with no children. The young woman, Tarragon explains, is currently off-world serving her final term in the Merchant Navy. This tour will be finished in three years.

Tarragon says he is suffering from a terminal disease and doubts if he will survive until the girl returns. Wanting to ensure she will get the "fat trader" rather than the State, he needs a group to take part in a "feoffment," a legal contract the crafty Mmordani lawyers created long ago to get around the restrictive succession laws. Upon signing this feoffment the group will own the "Rourke's Drift" in title only: Tarragon will still enjoy the use and profit of it until he dies. According to the contract, upon Tarragon's death the group will be custodians of the vessel until the heir returns to claim it.

In return for this service, Tarragon will employ the party as crew

on board the "Rourke's Drift." If he should die, he instructs the group to look after the Subsidized Merchant until the young woman's return. They may continue to engage in trade if they wish.

### Referee's Notes:

If the players agree to Tarragon's proposal he will transport them by taxi to a plush lawyer's office downtown to sign the feoffment contract. The document is in typically unintelligible legalese, but characters with Legal-2 or Admin-3 may note some particularly nasty "fine print", if they care to examine it in any detail. Both the lawyer and Tarragon will strive to ensure the players do not get more than a cursory glance at the contract.

Upon signing the feoffment Tarragon will then transport the group to the starport to acquaint them with the "Rourke's Drift", a standard Type R Subsidized Merchant ship armed with a single pulse laser.

Now the ship's crew, Tarragon wants to jump to Pavlov's Dog (B-4566B-4) (or any suitable planet in your campaign), which is a vassal world of Mmorden's one jump away. On board, stowed in the cargo bay is 30 tons of farm machines which he wants delivered to a local dealer on that world. This delivery should get the group about 120,000 Cr., which should be used to secure cargoes to bring back to Mmorden.

In addition to normal salaries Tarragon offers the group a 33% share of any profits made on the trip. He wants the group to leave immediately, explaining that the consignment of farm machinery is already over a week late. The "Rourke's Drift" is fueled and ready to go, and life support has been paid for the first jump.

Subsequent events on the trade mission are left up to the referee. The trip will take about a month.

Upon returning to Mmorden (indeed as soon as the ship docks), the group will be approached by a delegation of government officials, tradesmen and others, led by the lawyer who officiated at the signing of the feoffment. In the month that the group has been away, Tarragon has died, making the players the

legal owners of the "Rourke's Drift" until the heir's return.

Unfortunately, according to the contract, this also makes them legally liable for any debts that Tarragon left unsettled. These, it is announced by the lawyer, amount to some 1,240,800 Cr. Tarragon's creditors include several merchant firms, a starship overhaul company, the Mmordani Taxation Department, the lawyer himself, at least one criminal organization, and others. Naturally, all want their money... FAST! How the players can possibly recoup this money is left to the referee, but the obvious solution is trading with the "Rourke's Drift". Skipping with the ship will incur pursuit by Mmordani agents, and perhaps crack assassins hired by the criminal organization.

Once the money has been repayed, and before the players can leave the planet in the ship, a young woman will appear wearing a Merchant Navy uniform. Accompanied by the lawyer, she will produce documents indentifying herself as Tarragon's heir, and will demand her rightful property. She will also inform the players that they are no longer required as crew for the "Rourke's Drift." Also with the woman and the lawyer will be a squad of starport police, each armed with Auto Rifles and wearing ablath armour. The woman is carrying a laser carbine.

If the players return to the ship at a later date, either to try to get their old jobs back, or perhaps to exact revenge, they will see a familiar face: Tarragon! He and the young woman (actually his daughter) often use the feoffment contract to trick hapless off-worlders into paying off their debts. The lawyer is in on the deal too.

Subsequent events are left up to the referee. A possible scenario is having the players try to prove in court that they have been swindled. Another is for them to take the ship by force and run. Either way could possibly see them eventually gain possession of the "Rourke's Drift", a considerable prize for their efforts.

*Author's note: Feoffments were a legal practice in England during the Middle ages, when wills were not recognized by the law.*

## The Starjammer Class Yacht

A 200-Ton Starship for  
Traveller

By Gary Reilly

Despite the luxury accommodations offered by the major starliners, many wealthy starfarers prefer to operate personal starships in their travel. This allows them greater freedom of movement. However, the selection of a small personal craft does not automatically mean that one must give up amenities. The Starjammer Class Yacht is designed especially for the independently minded traveller with refined tastes. Packed into its 200-ton hull are many extras that make interstellar travel a bit more bearable.

The Sheldon Jump Drive (JD) provides the Starjammer with a jump-3 capability, allowing travel throughout many portions of the populated galaxy. The Royce Starrunner Maneuver Drive (MD) generates a respectable maximum acceleration of 4g's. Both drives receive plentiful power from the Sith'Asal Power Plant (PP) with its power rating of 4. The fuel tanks (F) hold a total of 68 tons of propellants. The fuel designated for the Power Plant is stored in the smaller tank on C Deck.

Accommodations for the ship's owner and up to three fellow passengers are found on A Deck. Two large double-occupancy staterooms (S), complete with freshers (FR), provide comfortable quarters. The spacious common area (COM) amidships contains the latest in entertainment equipment to help make the passenger's journey enjoyable. The travellers may also take their meals in this area, served by one of the ship's stewards. Meals for the passengers are prepared by the stewards in the galley (G) near the common area. Iris values separate the passenger section from the rest of the vessel to give the passengers maximum privacy.

The Starjammer's crew complement numbers six (Pilot, Navigator, two Engineers, two Stewards). They are housed in the crew's quarters located on B deck. The three double-occupancy staterooms (S) are less spacious than those of the passengers, but nonetheless, provide comfortable berths. In addition, the yacht provides a separate galley (G) and communal fresher (FR) for the crew's use. Two ship's lockers (L) may also be found on the crew deck. One is equipped with an electronically-locked iris value, providing secure storage for personal weapons and acts as a safe for the passenger's valuables. The other locker contains repair tools, spare parts and other common material.

The ship's bridge (B) occupies the forward section of A Deck. In addition to the avionics (AV), the bridge contains the Starmind Model 1 Bis computer (CP) and fire control for the yacht's two weapons turrets. The model shown includes triple turrets (one mounted with two pulse lasers and sandcaster, the other outfitted with twin pulse lasers and missile rack) in the base price. The two stewards double as gunners in the event that battle stations are sounded.

The passengers access the vessel via the air lock (AL) to the rear of their quarters on A Deck. The crew utilize the air lock on B Deck, whose exterior hatch opens through the deck floor.

At the rear of a A Deck lies a small cargo hold (CH) with a 12-ton capacity. A large sliding hatch on the sloping rear wall allows access by a variety of vehicles including air cars, grav sleds, etc. The base price shown does not include the additional cost of such an auxiliary vehicle.

### Crew Roster

1 Pilot  
1 Navigator  
2 Engineers  
2 Stewards

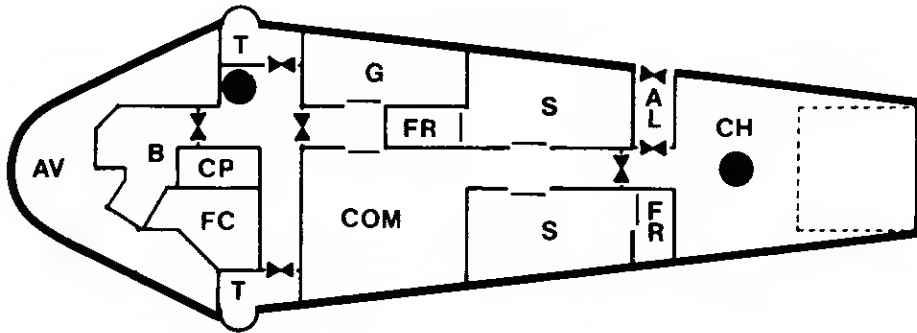
6 Total

### Technical Specifications

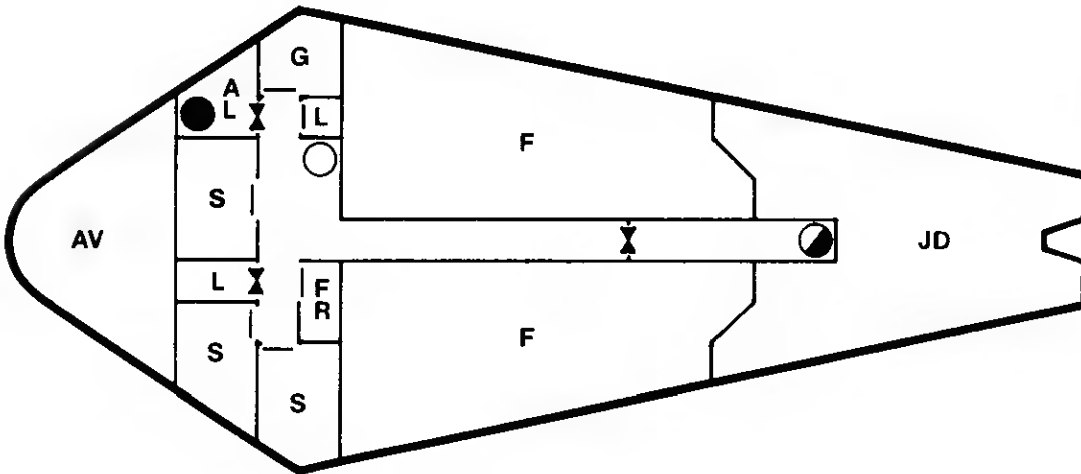
Length: 39.0 m.  
Beam: 16.5 m.  
Displacement: 200 Tons  
Hull Configuration: Modified Cylinder/Cone  
Atmospherically Streamlined  
Jump Drive: Sheldon Lightjump C-20, Max Jump 3  
Maneuver Drive: Royce Starrunner D7000, Max Acceleration 4g.  
Power Plant: Sith'Asal Pulsar Mod 13D, Power Rating 4  
Fuel Capacity: 68 Tons  
Avionics: 20 Tons  
Computer: Starmind Model 1 Bis  
Fire Control: 2 Tons  
Quarters: 2 Passenger Cabins, 3 Crew Cabins  
Ship Armaments: 2 Triple Turrets  
Turret #1-2 Pulse Lasers/  
1 Sandcaster  
Turret #2-2 Pulse Lasers/  
1 Missile Rack  
Cargo Capacity: 12 Tons  
Auxiliary Vessels: None  
Construction Costs: 102.2 MCr  
Naval Architects: Morgardi Shipyards  
Universal Ship's Profile (USP):  
Y-Starjammer Y-22344R1-010000-20001-0  
Passengers = 4, Crew = 6  
Cargo = 12, Fuel = 68, EP = 8,  
Agility = 2

### Deck Legend

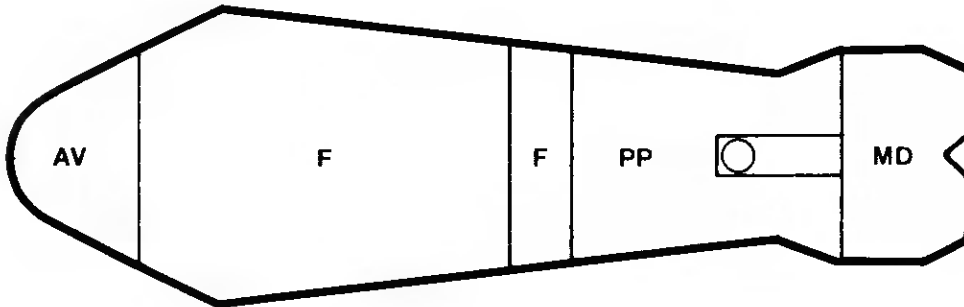
AL	Air Lock
AV	Avionics
B	Bridge
CH	Cargo Hold
COM	Common Area
CP	Computer
F	Fuel
FC	Fire Control
FR	Fresher
G	Galley
JD	Jump Drive
L	Ship's Locker
MD	Maneuver Drive
PP	Power Plant
S	Stateroom
T	Turret



A DECK



B DECK



C DECK



Deck Symbols

	Iris	Hatch
Floor	●	⊙
Ceiling	○	⊙
Floor/Ceiling	◐	⊙
wall	⌞	⌞
Sliding Door	—	—
Rolling Door	⋯	⋯



## Corsair Contention

### A MegaTraveller Scenario

By James B. King

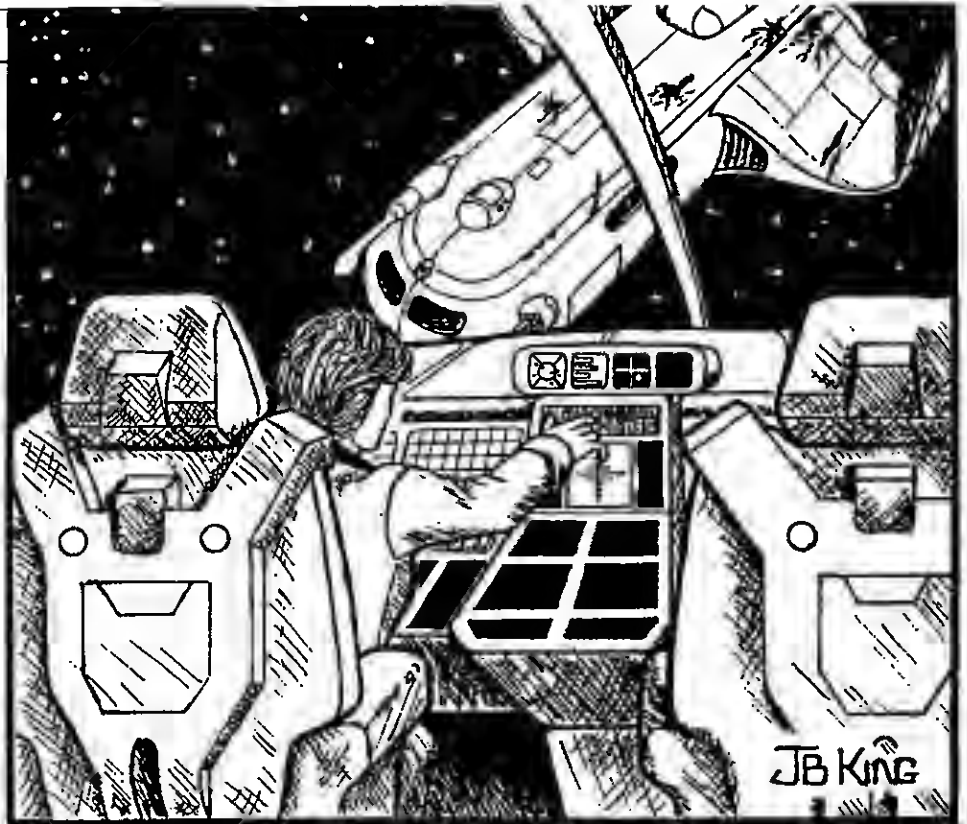
#### Introduction

This scenario is intended for use with **MegaTraveller**. To make it easier to use in a continuing campaign, no specific location of occurrence is mentioned; virtually any frontier location would be appropriate, though the actual planet this adventure begins near should likely be one with a lower star port rating. It is not required that the PC's have their own ship. With a little modification to this scenario, they may simply be passengers or crew aboard a vessel of other ownership.

#### Vessel In Distress

When the PC's ship exits jumpspace near their destination planet, they detect alternating signals GK and SOS ( see Signal GK - Imperial Encyclopedia). Radio communication reveals that the vessel, a subsidized merchant, was severely damaged by laser fire from a pirate corsair. Luckily, the merchant was armed and was able to return fire. Several hits were scored on the corsair, apparently doing damage, as the vessel ceased the attack and maneuvered away. Unfortunately, the merchant's maneuver and jump drives are now inoperative. As the vessel was decelerating to zero-manuever prior to jump, it is now heading into deep space at an uncontrolled speed equivalent to one gravity. However, it is currently only a few thousand kilometers from the adventurer's ship.

As the PC's are likely aware, Imperial law requires that they respond to a vessel in distress. There are no other vessels in orbit, and, as the stricken merchant is now beyond 100 diameters out, it would take several hours for a craft to reach it from the planet (assuming one were even available).



As communication continues while the adventurers' ship maneuvers to the helpless merchant, the picture becomes more grim. The merchant's hull is pierced in several locations. Engineering is in vacuum, as is the cargo deck, and there are hull fractures in the passenger section that are leaking the atmosphere out faster than the life support can replace it. Although the ship does have a number of vac suits equal to the number of persons on board, as required by Imperial law for commercial transport, in reality, many are nonfunctional. Though the situation is serious enough, there is another even more urgent. In the attack, several passengers and crew were wounded, and one crew member was killed - the ship's doctor. A passenger with some medical skill (level 1) is attending to the wounded, but she is afraid one of them won't last until they can be transported planetside. (A low berth is not available. Most have been removed; the remaining are occupied.)

The merchant captain, very much short handed, pleads with the adventurers to make all haste to reach his ship and give aid. It should be quite clear by now that

there is an urgent need for their assistance.

#### Aid And Assistance

When the group arrives they will need to divide to work on tasks fitting their individual technical skills. The most urgent needs are medical attention for the wounded, restoring the hull's integrity, and restoring maneuver. Other task needs, such as electrical, can be created to involve PC's of other skills.

This is a good opportunity for the group to make new acquaintances with grateful passengers - travellers often need a favor themselves, and they may run into some of these people again (hang on to those NPC's).

#### A Shadow

At least one of the group will have to stay aboard the PC's vessel as the pilot. If that person is operating detection sensors (which will likely be the case, knowing a pirate ship is in the area), they may detect a vessel maintaining a parallel trajectory at some distance. No transponder signal is detected, but radio transmissions are picked

up; they are in some form of code, or possibly an unfamiliar language.

The vessel is, in actuality, the damaged corsair. As the pirates lack beam communication gear, they are using a code to communicate with a second vessel that is maneuvering in from its station around a distant gas giant.

### Under Cover

After the adventurers have successfully restored the ship's systems (or possibly while they are working on it), the captain (or apparent group leader) of the adventuring travellers is approached by one of the merchant's passengers, Victor LeClair, who requests to discuss an urgent matter in privacy. When they find such a location the man declares himself to be a field operative of Imperial Naval Intelligence. LeClair claims he has been under cover for several months inside a pirate organization - the very pirates who attacked the merchant. After discovering the locations of field bases and cache sites, he faked his death before leaving, so as to not alert the pirates at his disappearance. But they are apparently on to him, as the pirates' operations planning did not include a raid near the world they are currently close by. LeClair must get his information to Naval Intel., and he wants the PC's to take him to the nearest naval or scout base as quickly as possible. He will pay all costs to do so, and assures the group that they will be rewarded when he gets there. (Note: The base should be at least a couple of jumps distant.)

The PC's may question the validity of Victor LeClair's story. Using a small knife, LeClair slits the side of his boot sole and removes a patterned, plastic card. Not only is it proof of his identification and rank in Naval Intelligence, it is a Naval Warrant of Provision, more difficult to counterfeit than Imperial currency. It is with this that he will pay transportation costs. When used, Imperium-member worlds must supply any and all needs requested by its holder

(within reason), which may even include the use of troop or commandeering a ship (LeClair can claim to commandeer the PC's ship, but he would prefer their cooperation, and he could hardly force them by himself if they resisted, though he may point out his official right). The proper naval agency later provides reimbursement for all provisions supplied.

(Note: The Spinward Marches, through Archduke Norris, has declared its continuing loyalty to the 3rd Imperium. In other regions of the fractured Imperium this loyalty no longer exists, and the Naval Warrant is useless in those regions. However, if this scenario is played out in such a region, and LeClair is an operative of the prevailing government's navy, similar Naval Warrants would likely be issued.)

After the adventurers have agreed to help LeClair, he will successfully bribe the merchant captain to record his as killed in the attack, after which his body was accidentally jettisoned into space during the confusion. He hopes to throw the pirates off his tail, and avoid placing the adventuring group in possible danger of revenge.

The shadowing corsair has now maneuvered out of sensor range. LeClair will want to refuel and leave the system as soon as possible. If there is cargo to unload or sell, that is acceptable to him if it is done quickly, but he will vehemently oppose attempting to acquire other cargo to take on before beginning the jump to the next system.

Lt Cdr Victor LeClair  
585A87 Age 34 4 terms  
Credits (Warrant)

Navigation-2, Handgun-2,  
Ship's Boat-1, Communications-  
1, Computer-1, Forward Obs-1,  
Liaison-1, Brawling-1, Bribery-1,  
Intrusion-1, Grav Vehicle-0,  
Laser Weapons-0, Vac Suit-0

**Starport:** B, Medium, Thin, Wet  
World, Mod Pop, Low Law, Avg  
Stellar

### Lying In Wait

When the adventurers arrive at the next system, they will find a pirate vessel waiting for them. The pirates determined where LeClair was likely going and beat him to the jump (figuring he would be on the adventurer's vessel). They will recognize the adventurers' ship by its transponder signal and attack.

If the PC's ship is roughly an even match for the corsair, then it will be the vessel that attacks (with its previous damage repaired for the most part). If the players' vessel is larger or more heavily armed, the GM should choose a pirate vessel more appropriate (this is the 2nd vessel that was in the system this scenario began in).

After this ship-to-ship combat is finished, the group can continue on to the Imperial base (assuming the PC's are victorious and their vessel is spaceworthy). LeClair will pay for any and all damages to the group's ship and, upon arrival at the base, will arrange for a monetary reward (amount determined by the GM).

About four or five weeks later, the PC's will see or hear a media report stating that naval elements staged coordinated attacks on 3 separate, confirmed pirate outposts in the subsector. The navy has not released further details or the number of vessels destroyed or captured.

The PC's will likely consider the possibility that some ships escaped and may worry about acts of revenge aimed at them.

### Referee's Notes

If the PC's do not have their own ship, the group can be passengers or crew on a commercial vessel that answers the distress signal at the beginning of this scenario. After LeClair obtains passage on the same vessel the PC's are on, he can hire them as bodyguards to escort him to the nearest Imperial base. In the next system, the PC's can actually be involved in the ensuing combat if they have to help rebel armed boarders trying to capture LeClair.

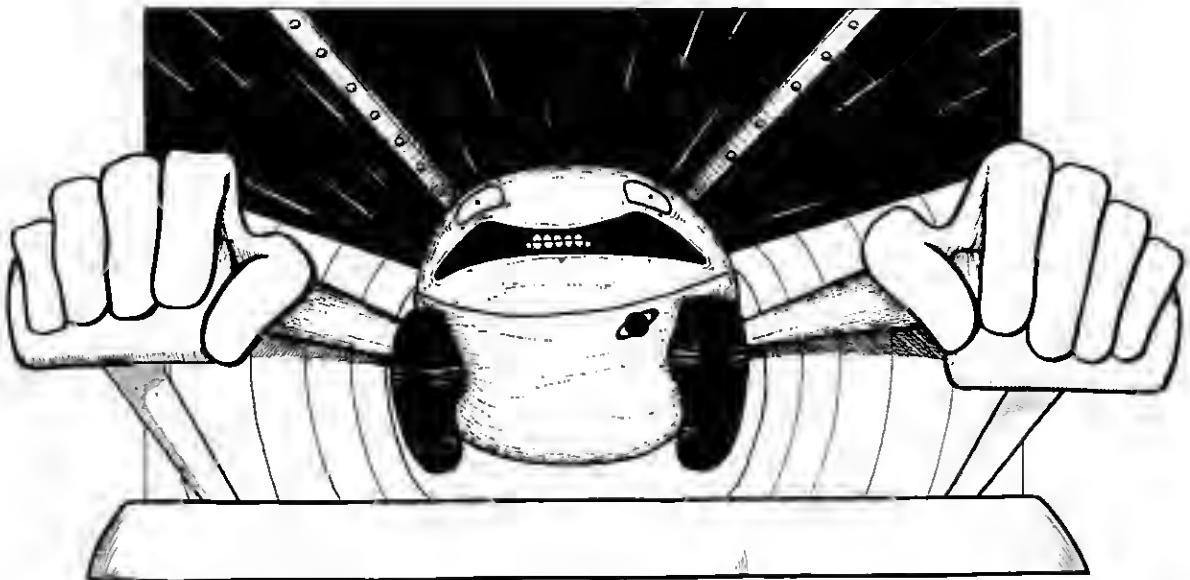
# MURPHY'S RULES



In **METAGAMING's** **IN THE LABYRINTH** a vampire of IQ 14 or higher does not believe in the superstition about crosses, holy water, etc. and is not affected by them - *Karl Dishaw*



In **TASK FORCE GAMES's** **STAR FLEET BATTLES** a 10-meter shuttlecraft can destroy planets in a matter of seconds - *Michael Iacca*



Spaceships in **YAQUINTO's** **SHOOTING STARS** have a minimum acceleration of 100 G's - *William Phillips*



# How to be a Holo-Jock and Not Get Your Butt Shot Off



By Michael Bay

## Holo-Jock Extraordinaire Prelude

*The Vargr Admiral steps out from the hatch of his cutter into the bright sunlight, all grey-brown fur and red and silver uniform, swaggering forward, tail twitching, a twisted snarl that must be a smile on that canine face. The crowd surrounding me gasps and murmurs as the arrogant commander begins to descend into the crowded plaza. I quickly switched on, hit the zoom and checked the shotgun microphone. Good pictures and good sound. My what big teeth you have. Even the TNS will buy this stuff; a Vargr raider gloating over his victory, surveying his conquest, delivering his list of demands for the world authorities. Jessail Yrophef made a quarter of a meg with the holoivid of the raids at Sotri, but the tingle in my spine tells me this could be something better. And more lucrative. I doublecheck the tracking, the sound, the picture; so far so good.*

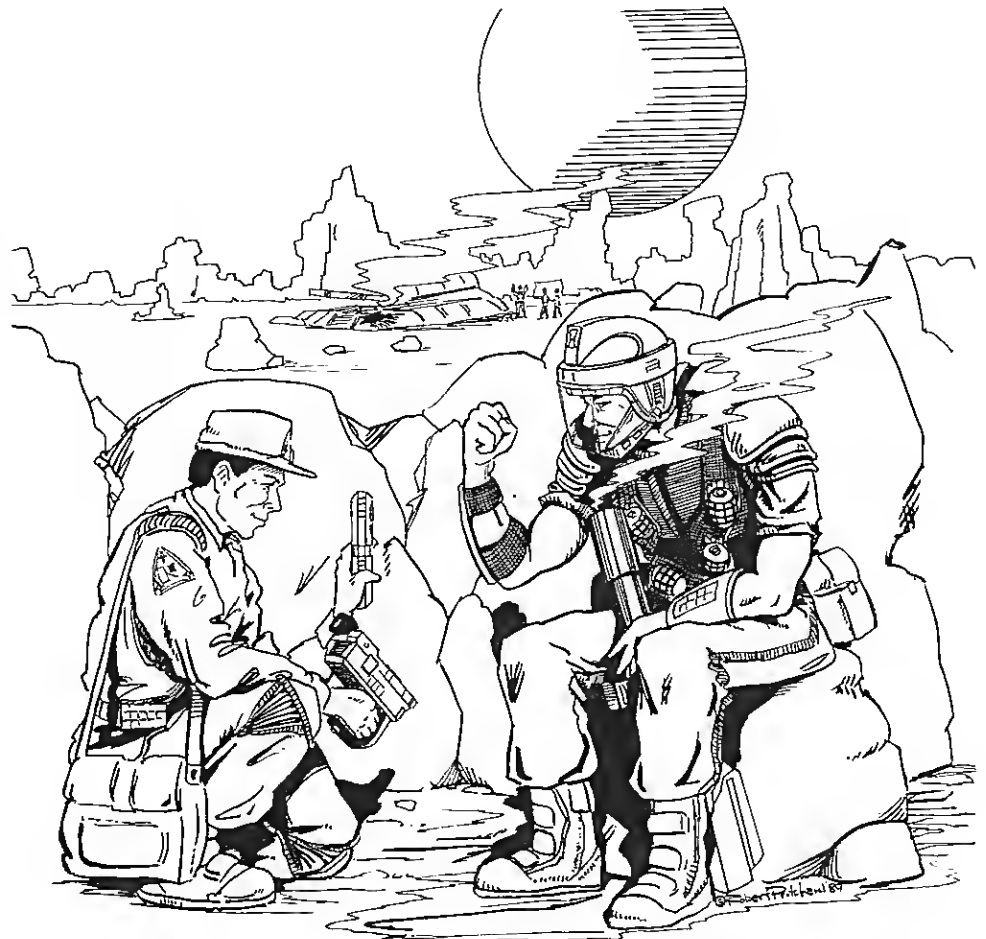
*The Admiral reaches the bottom of the landing stairs and I lose sight of him. I try to get a shot by holding the camera high above my head, flipping the optical receiver down over my right eye. No good, too many people in front. I begin to push my way forward through the crowd. The crowd is growing restless, beginning to push forward to where the delegation of the world government is seated. I can hear the distinct growling of the Admiral's bodyguard, and twist my left arm around to try to get a shot of the guards. There, over near the fountain. Same red and silver uniforms. Plasma guns. Big ones. The people begin moving toward the guards, surging forward toward the empty center of the square. The crowd around me is moving too, and me with them. Where is Admiral Wolf?*

*Suddenly there is chaos. Shouts, screams, furious human rage, snarls, growls, barks. Explosions, the skull shattering noise of the plasma rifles, the chatter of an autorifle somewhere behind me.*

*Wham, I'm knocked to the ground from behind, a shower of dirt and shards of masonry falling with me. I clutch the camera and roll, hoping to shield it with my body. People are running everywhere. I scramble to my feet, shaken, but unhurt. A blur of black, as four men dash past me. I throw the camera up, following on instinct. Uniforms! Black? Imperials? I can't tell, running, trying desperately not to lose them in the crowd. The autorifle is still firing, heard distinctly over the screams filling the square, but no more screaming plasma rifles.*

*Now I'm through the crowd, in the center of the square. Adrenaline surges*

*through my body as I quickly do a 360, surveying the scenes being played out in a sort of slow motion around me. Panicked humans fleeing wildly from the gunfire behind them and the carnage in front of them; a group of braver souls, humans, savagely beating a Vargr bodyguard; the government delegation splattered about their table, nothing more than blood and tissue; a clump of burning bodies; and there, racing up the landing stairs, four men in black uniforms, brandishing pistols. I pan up to follow their progress; this holodisk will be worth a half million credits. If I can get it to an Ops Man.*



## Introduction

Scenes like the one above are commonplace now that the Rebellion has split our Imperium, even if the situation is unique. The chaos and death, the horrors and atrocities of modern warfare are being seen by sophonts all across the galaxy, thanks to the courage of millions of holo-jocks who fear nothing and always want a commission twice their due. You see them at work everyday, carrying holocams on their shoulders, optical receiver flipped up, media badges hanging from every pocket, and these days, a sturdy firearm holstered at their sides. They live a dangerous existence, risking it all for the big picture, the holovid that will make them the hottest jock in the Imperium. Journalistic objectivity means you know when to duck. (*Objectivity = the tendency of objects to hit people who don't duck*) Journalistic privilege is the right to get executed as a spy. In the Rebellion, the pretensions of the media have come to an abrupt end. Freedom of the Media means nothing to Dulinor's troops when you are wearing a clearance badge issued by Lucan. The adage about two sides to every story doesn't hold anymore. Today, there are eight or nine sides, and with a little editing you can sell to them all. After one the early battles between ground forces of Lucan and Dulinor, Imlur Galaan sold edited copies to both sides, each version indicating that the other side had lost! Of course you can't always sell that stuff to the news services, some of whom cling to the fantasy of neutrality.

## Where the News Comes From

Today, anyone can sell news: Navy Cam-Ops, holo-jocks, independent operators, stringers, network affiliates and contractors, System and sector networks, and anyone who has a home holocam or microphone. All it takes is being in the right place at the right time, and of course being switched on. And the money is getting better all the time.

Of course, most of the good stuff is coming from the Indies. The network people are too concerned with saving their hides to hang it out in a laser show. There is no average holo-jock; I quit Naval Intelligence six years ago, picked up a camera and started to operate out here in Lishun. Jessail Yraphet says she was a socialologist (Probably in the Rule of Man. She looks that old.) in Antaries before she started operating. Imlur Galaan is a merchant

captain, late of the Dursha Star (which was pickled by Imperial fighters of unknown origin as it was loading cargo. The holovid is fantastic, and may help Galaan replace the D-Star.)

The network people seem to be poured from the same mold, all jack suited in the latest Capital fashion, travelling with six or seven assistants, and given to making loud pronouncements about the state of affairs as they see them. In many ways the resemblance to a noble is more than coincidental. Many are of noble families, second sons of second sons, all dressed up and nowhere to go. Before the Rebellion freed us all, they really were the top of the industry, making huge salaries, travelling at corporate expense, being received as dignitaries anywhere they went. Being a network operator doesn't take any extra skill. It usually takes standing and little grease money to help a Subsector Operations Manager (Ops Men) recognize your worth to the network. Fortunately, it doesn't work that way anymore. The flood of and demand for exciting holovid means that the networks are buying outside their operators. Anyone with the pictures can get on the network feed and get that fat network payoff.

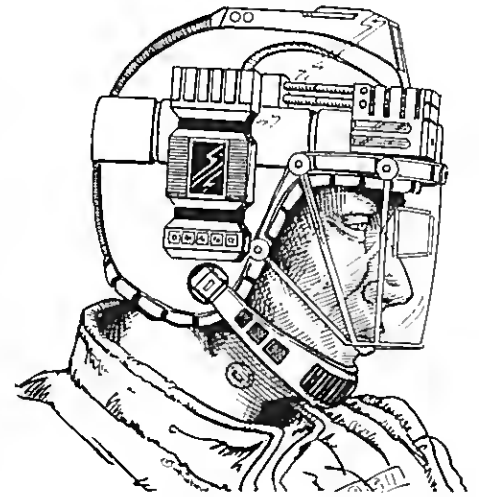
But that takes being in the thick of the action. I've talked with Ops Men who say they're sick of seeing the aftermath of a raid, or bodies lying about a battlefield, or another nuked city. They want see-it-happen pictures, and that takes timing and courage. The Imperium is too big for you to see it all, but the Rebellion means that eventually, you'll see something saleable.

## How the News is Distributed

Most of the networks operate with the same structure. In each subsector, there is usually one office, run by the Operations Manager, or Ops Men. The subsector office is used as a base by network operators

*Tech Level 14 Heavyduty Holo-Camcorder for "Hands Off" reporting.*

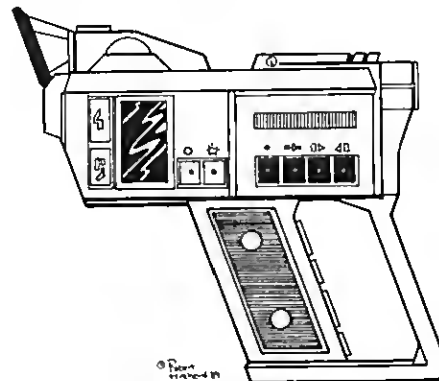
*Features: Tri-beam holocamera, multi-function holo recorder, heads up visor display, high intensity lamp, padded shock-proof helmet, mount comm interface*



and affiliates in the region. All of their holovid is shipped, usually by Express, but sometimes by private courier, to this central office. There the Ops Men sort through it, have the editors polish it up, Voices (readers) add narrative, writers add the information track. Then it's sent on the feed.

The feed is nothing more than a scrambled, encrypted data transmission shot out by the network computer system at that office to the Express Boats. The subsector feed is then carried along the Express boat routes and distributed to the Imperium. When the Express boat enters a system with a subsector network office in it, the network computer accepts the transmission of all of the subsector feeds, which are then decrypted and unscrambled. The Ops Men, using a huge expert system program, sift through the millions of entries to cull the report package they'll distribute to their subscribers in that subsector. It's easier than it sounds with the software they're using, and takes about 48 hours before they're ready to deliver to the subscribers. And most subscribers receive daily deliveries.

The subscribers, usually planetary broadcast media, then sort through the package themselves before sharing it with the ignorant masses. The package is a rectangle 25 centimeters long, five deep, and ten wide. There are four data channels on the package: Hologrid, audio, narrative, and information. The subscribers use what they need; Newspapers will take stills off



*Handheld Lightduty Holo Camera*

the Hologrid track and rewrite the information track. Radio often pulls the audio and narrative straight off the package, and Hologrid broadcasters make use of all four tracks. The cost of each package depends on the number of stories contained, and is kept secret by the networks and subscribers, but it's commonly accepted that the daily feed costs a quarter of a meg. Big money. Which is why subscriber demand big pictures.

The Ops Men also come up with assignments for their operators and writers, sending them where their inside knowledge or intuition suggests a good story will be. Outside work is screened by the Ops Men, and in the past was usually rejected. But not anymore. Many network operators either ran or quit or died early in the Rebellion. Now anyone can sell to a desperate Ops Man trying to fill his quota for the feed.

## How the News Media Manipulates and is Manipulated

Anyone who claims the media isn't biased is either stupid or biased. Impartiality means convincing someone you're not going to slam their side with the hologrid you just shot.

In the pre-Rebellion days, the Imperium had some strict regulations about tampering with interstellar transmissions, but unfortunately, no one has times for regulations any more.

*Consider this:* An Express Boat pops into the Criideu system late 1117 with the official news that the Emperor had been cooked by the Archduke Dulinor and that his nephew Lucan had succeeded Stre-

phon. On that same boat are two different net feeds from Core. The Imperial News Association has this heart wrenching holo of a tearful Lucan stepping out before the crowds who go wild with adulation. Data Service Interstellar has the same video but Lucan isn't crying! He's got this big grin all over his face! Same camera angle! Same location! Different images and different effects. The Data Service subscribers ran the story for about half an hour before their transmissions mysteriously stop.

*Consider this:* In the war for the hearts and minds of Imperial Citizens, one word, one phrase, one shot of the wrong picture can convince billions. Half the battle, according to an old Vilani philosopher, is convincing the enemy he has lost. How true that idea has become today.

The real truth is that no matter how hard they try, every network gets used once in a while. And that has become especially true in these trying times. Rumors have been circulating through the grape vine that Lucan has put a vice clamp on the news nets on Capital, installing his own people as Ops Men.

I've also heard tales of hijacked Express Boats, intercepted news transmissions, strategic revisions and omissions, and computer generated holo-vid (was Lucan smiling or weeping?). I'm sure most of the stories are exaggerated or false, but the only news I trust is the *news I shoot myself*.

## The Technology of the News Media

The tool of the trade these days is the Hologrid imager. I carry an Ikegami 9130 made by a subsidiary of Delgado Trading.

The Ikie is a shoulder mounted, self-stabilizing recorder powered by super-batteries. It weighs three kilograms. Your left hand holds it up on your shoulder, and the grip has the control studs for operation. The Ikie holds up to six four hour hologrid disks in the side mounted magazine, which also features an insty-wipe in case you don't want to get caught with incriminating holo-vid.

The system incorporates a number of other features, including: Night, thermal, and low spectrum radiation imaging; computerized light filtering; polarized lens; 200 X zoom; a shotgun mike that can pick up directional audio, like a whisper from 500 yards; a wide scan mike; a throat-mike receiver for narration; and an optical and audial headset. The headset has a tiny

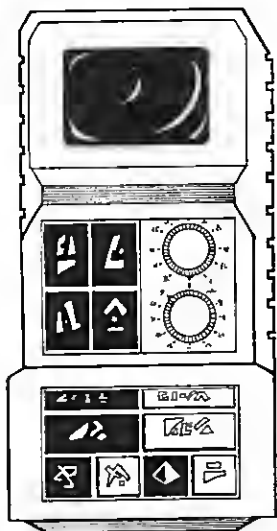


earphone and a 5 cm square optical receiver that flips up or down over the right eye, allowing the operator to see what the imager is seeing.

Of course, it isn't state of the art. You should see what the network boys in Core are using these days. But who can afford that stuff. The Ikegami 9130, a years-worth of batteries, and a magazine of disks runs about 75,000cr used. Of course I made that much shooting Baron Veselstauphen's wedding.

The next most important thing an Indie should have is an edit deck. I own two: A Bryson-Kimanika playback deck, and the Naasirka HVE 8256 edit system. The Bryson-Kimanika is an old model. You just slip the disk in and hit play. It's editing functions are limited to audio, adding a narration or music. It's small enough to fit in your pocket.

The HVE 8256 is altogether something more. I found it in the wreckage of a network shuttle last year, and after several thou credits repair work, I have a state of the art editor. The Naasirka allows you to completely edit any of your raw hologrid into network ready form. You can cut, fade, dissolve, flip, shade, split, rotate, enlarge, reduce, and squeeze the hologrid any way you can imagine. It also has standard audio editing, and text generation so



Portable Studio Editor/Mixer  
Built in Player (2D)



you can put names and dates on the pictures. The add-on translator module has been a big help dealing with the Vargr.

I also highly recommend the Tephany Armory's Carboni body Pistol. Shooting holo-vid may be your trade, but shooting with the Carboni that Vargr thug may keep you in business.

## Notes for Role-Playing Adventures

Obviously, Traveller game masters can use the news media in a variety of ways. The most important use is to kick off an adventure; i.e., the characters here or see something on the news that sparks the entire affair. Another important aspect is using the media as an information source, a place where the characters can turn to find out the latest news from the Rebellion. That role has been played well by the Traveller News Service column in the JTAS and now Challenge.

### Characters:

News gathering itself can be the source of many adventures. Akidda Laagiir's adventures have been well chronicled in the Travellers' Digest. Now that the Rebellion is rumbling through the Imperium, news is found where death and destruction happens. Getting the news is a risky and lucrative business.

Characters can be operators, working full-time or part-time like Imlur Galan, selling their disks to networks for commissions. Or they can be network operators, subsidized and organized. Where ever there is adventure, operators are sure to be.

Selling any holovid requires the use of the Interpersonal skills and should be role-played. Holovid of a meeting of the Subsector Agricultural Council might sell for a few hundred credits. Holovid of a planetary building council meeting won't sell to the nets at all, unless someone goes beserk. The holovid Marko shot of the Vargr Admiral (who managed to escape in the cutter) was sold to the Travellers News Service for 350,000 credits. Remember, the pictures have to make people want to watch. And the nets won't buy it if it's *not spectacular*.

## Encyclopedia Entries:

### Data Service Interstellar

One of the oldest news networks (q.v.) dating back to the Second Imperium.  
*The Imperial News Association*

An Imperium wide news network (q.v.) founded in 879 by a consortium of sector wide networks.

### Networks, News

Any information gathering and distribution organization that represents more than a single star system. Usually, networks cover single sectors although a small number operate throughout the Imperium.

### Traveller News Service

The first news network (q.v.) that attempted coverage of the entire Imperium. Founded on Capital by Mark Miller in the early years of the Third Imperium, the TNS has branches in nearly every subsector of the Third Imperium and a few offices outside the Imperial border. Highly regarded as the most complete and neutral source of news and information.

*Task Library:* Shooting holo-vid is a lot like combat; it's just a matter of pressing the button. Editing requires Artisan, Communications, or Jack-of-all-trades to do anything other than routine. Repairing damaged equipment can be very difficult because of the miniaturization involved.

## To repair a damaged imager or editor:

[varies], Electronic, Dex, [varies]

Referee: Difficulty and time increment depend on level of damage.

Repair must be done in a electronics shop; field repair is impossible.

Damage: Difficulty Time Increment  
Superficial damage: Routine 5 minutes

Minor damage: Difficult 30 minutes



Major damage: Formidable 4 hours

Destroyed: Impossible 16 hours

Anything less than destroyed will not damage the data on the holodisks.

Combat: It is possible to use one hand to run an Imager and the other to fire a weapon, but the GM should apply one negative DM for doing both and another if the character has the optical receiver down over his right eye. The receiver displays a transparent view of what the Imager is seeing. You can see through it, but it is distracting. Note that while the Imager is not on, the optical receiver remains transparent. ■

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